AIDING THE EDUCATION AGENDA? THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN LEARNER PERFORMANCE AND RETENTION IN JOZA, GRAHAMSTOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

This thesis describes the network of complexities that characterise the world and work of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). It examines the ways in which organisations navigate different internal, sectoral and contextual intricacies while operating under the command of their chosen developmental mandates. This description is drawn from a sociological analysis of the internal workings of education NGOs, their external affiliations as well as the negotiations which underpin their operations and survival. Collectively, the careful illustration of these underpinnings outlines both the role that NGOs play in the performance and retention of learners in the Grahamstown-east township of Joza and also their position in the town's basic education sector.

Private and non-governmental interveners have, particularly from the closing decades of the 20th century, been conceptually and operationally deployed as panaceas of the socio-economic scarcities which continue to pervade much of the 'developing' world. Their involvement in the socio-economic missions of populations living in the Global South has grown both laterally and in the depth of how development is understood and defined, carried out and also measured. NGOs, as widely acclaimed institutional arms of global development imperatives, therefore assume prominent positions in framing policy and implementation models, prescribing performance benchmarks and pronouncing non-compliance.

Likewise, education NGOs have obtained normative prescription status in global education policy and practice largely on the back of the Education for All (EFA) objectives, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the neo-liberal logics which have championed state retreat in favour of private sector ascendance in globalised development. This, in conjunction with the persistent struggles of educational transformation in the Global South, has given NGOs little trouble in legitimising their prominent presence in education and other sectors of socio-economic relief in these parts of the world.

Little illusion remains however, in many commentary circles, of the role of NGOs in advancing development ideals, the honesty of their altruistic intents, their ideological leanings as well as their efficacy in carrying out their mandates. As such, the logics which have been used to dethrone developing state structures in order to expand the space for private intervention along with the prevailing and deepening markers of educational underperformance, have been central features of the criticisms levelled against NGOs.

This thesis intervenes in these ongoing reflections by describing the role of NGOs in educational outcomes, particularly learner performance and retention in Joza. This analysis demonstrates the organisational, sector-level and broader community forces which influence not only the form which non-state interventions take on and the daily preoccupations of their carriers but broadly, the position they occupy in the town's overall educational profile.

By way of locating NGOs within Grahamstown's educational landscape, this thesis first demonstrates, the conflicted nature of NGO operations from an international, sectoral, national, local and organisational level. The discussion then illustrates how the preoccupations of NGOs are scattered between the different communities which they occupy within these levels. Their reliance on these players demands that organisations be tactical in guarding both their survival and, at times, the conflicting allegiances which grant them different forms of legitimacy. Internal struggles which characterise this imbalance of forces results in a trade-off which often favours organisational preservation mechanisms over systemic educational overhaul.

As such, while non-state interveners can be lauded for extending educational support to those who would otherwise not have such, the gains of NGO intervention are often absorbed by internal urgencies for organisational legitimacy and preservation. This, in a context which possesses a unique set of socio-economic and educational deficits that require, at the very least, radical and unbridled mediation, means that pre-existing inequalities in educational inputs and outcomes along with the resultant inequities in youth socio-economic prospects, can find refuge in the very sector whose support and intervention is sought out and justified for such. This thesis lays out the nuances of these tensions and contradictions and offers this case as a point of reference for further considerations of the persistent markers of underperformance which characterise developing communities that enjoy high concentrations of non-state educational intervention.

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Having enrolled for full-time PhD studies in 2017, I made contact with mentors and fellow scholarship holders of the National Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) doctoral scholarship. From numerous workshops, writing retreats and mentorship interactions with Professor Paul Maylam, Professor Fred Hendricks and Professor Kishore Raga, I was able to form part of a network of young scholars from universities within the Eastern Cape province of South Africa; a platform which has organically metamorphosed into friendships and support networks. I must therefore, thank the NIHSS and the Eastern Cape regional mentors for making this PhD journey one that is occupied, on every end, with support, advice and priceless moments of laughter. Additionally, I wish to thank my fellow scholarship holders for availing themselves and their inter-disciplinary expertise to offering advice on this project and also being generous with their support and companionship.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Mr Thembinkosi Nomsenge and Mrs Khangelwa Nomsenge.

Preface

A dinner table conversation between leading educationalists and civil society scholars in South Africa and further afield could make for an illuminating discussion. However, candid reflection on these two fields and their internal contestations, suggests that such a conversation may quickly warrant some form of mediation. This is due in part, to the intricacies of the fields themselves and as such, the even more complex collision of the two. Ideological, political and pragmatic points deployed with the view of mending the discord, function instead to only add fuel and oxygen to the fire. Some calm is brought over the room as delegates, in a unifying chorus, acknowledge that South Africa's education system is failing. This is then matched with a hesitant concession, borne largely out of the resolution of not biting the humanitarian hand that 'feeds', that non-state intervention is yet to live up to its promises in development broadly, and education more specifically. However, the story of how, in many parts of the 'developing world', these two sectors continue to, despite more than three decades of non-governmental championing, coexist in what appears to be an almost zero-sum game, remains murky and elusive at best.

As an undergraduate and Honours student at Rhodes University between 2009 and 2012, I often found myself disillusioned by what I have personally come to understand as a particularly unique and extreme infusion of rampant poverty and gross affluence largely imprinted in Grahamstown's diametrically dissimilar private and public schooling systems. It was during this time where I encountered for the first time, what is often hailed as the education hub of the rural Eastern Cape Province. However, my work as a student volunteer in Grahamstown-east townships quickly transformed the sense of pride often engendered by this label into a source of humiliation and disdain.

My involvement in different non-state basic education support initiatives during these years launched both my involvement in and observations of these two conjoining fields of education and NGO work. Many years into this journey and to the credit of my varied levels of affiliation with the engines of non-state initiatives and my familiarity with the fractures of basic education in South Africa, I was empowered to summon education and civil society scholars in what would later become a Master's Degree in Development Studies in 2014. Unsatisfied with the questions and uncertainties that lingered even after this undertaking, I then, with both hesitation and resolve, decided to go back to the source of my disillusionment, the education hub.

Returning to Grahamstown with what at the time seemed like the necessary experiential and academic tools to pursue a PhD gave me due impetus and insight to launch my inquiry in what is– at the very least– characterised by extreme fissures in educational input and output on the one hand, and a high concentration of non-state development support on the other.

Questions which haunted my process of drawing up a workable research plan quickly mutated into more questions with not a single instructive guide, until one day, I found solace in a casual reflective moment. "A dinner table conversation between leading educationalists and civil society scholars in South Africa and further afield would make for an illuminating discussion". From this, the insurmountable heights of my concerns and the monumental task of subjecting them to analyses which could serve observers within these two adjoining fields and beyond, became a more accessible task. As such, this thesis forms part of, and seeks to extend these ongoing engagements in these fields and, by furnishing commentators with rooted and contextualised reflections, beckons thinkers and practitioners to further the discussions of how and where these two fields of development converge and bifurcate.

While this project has been representative of personal moments of impermanent closure related to extreme inequity in Grahamstown amid heightened NGO intervention, I understand that its greatest value is to be decided by the reader. In part, I offer it not only as a meeting point for scholars, observers and practitioners who sit around dinner tables and board rooms across the world pondering on ways out of the education-NGO Catch 22. I also present it as a single and, hopefully, instructive set of reflections for those within its immediate dwelling of Grahamstown, the rural province of the Eastern Cape, South Africa and other developing communities in The Global South.

List of Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ACORD	Agency of Community Organisation for Reconstruction and Development
ADC	Assumption Development Centre
AMM	African Media Matrix
AMP	Access Music Project
ANC	African National Congress
APED	Association of Progressive Entrepreneurship in Development
ASECA	Adult Secondary Education Curriculum for Adults
BLL	Bureau of Literacy and Literature
CARE	Christian Action Research and Education
CBOs	Community-based Organisations
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
CSD	Centre for Social Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EC	Eastern Cape
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECDoE	Eastern Cape Department of Education
EE	Equal Education
EFA	Education for All
EOC	Educational Opportunities Council
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement through Pedagogy
FET	Further Education and Training
FMF	Fees Must Fall
FPE	Free Primary Education
GADRA	Grahamstown Area Distress Relief Association
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GER	Gross Enrolment Rates

GET	General Education and Training
GMS	GADRA Matric School
GNU	Government of National Unity
HISS	High Impact Supplementary School
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
IDP	Internally Displaces People
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IGOs	Inter-Governmental Organisations
ILAM	International Library for African Music
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
ISER	Institute of Social and Economic Research
IT	Information Technology
IY	Ikamva Youth
JMS	Journalism Media Studies
LNGOs	Local Non-Governmental Organisations
LRC	Legal Resource Centre
LTSM	Learner-Teacher Support Material
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEO	Multiple Examination Opportunities
NAF	National Arts Festival
NCS	National Senior Certificate
NDP	National Development Plan
NECT	National Education Collaboration Trust
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NLC	National Literacy Cooperation
NMU	Nelson Mandela University
NP	National Party
NPOs	Non-Profit Organisations
NSES	National School Effectiveness Study
NSNP	National School Nutritional Program

PECE	Province of the Eastern Cape Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PPM	Post Provisioning Model
PRUDA	Partnerships for Rural Development Africa
QUANGOs	Quasi Non-Governmental Organisations
RAAP	Rural Action Alliance Program
RMR	Rhodes Music Radio
RU	Rhodes University
RUBS	Rhodes University Business School
RUCE	Rhodes University Community Engagement
RUED	Rhodes University Education Department
SABC	South African Broadcasting Commission
SACHED	South African Committee of Higher Education
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SADTU	South African Democratic Teacher's Union
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SBDM	Sarah Baartman District Municipality
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGB	School Government Body
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SIDSEC	Sustainable Integrated Development Service Centre
SISS	Self-Help Initiative Support Services
SOMAFCO	Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
TEASA	Trust for Educational Advancement in South Africa
TEN	Tanzanian Education Network
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TPA	The President's Award
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United National Development Programme

UNESCO	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISA	University of South Africa
UPE	Universal Primary Education
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	Vice Chancellor
VGHS	Victoria Girls High Schools
VSA	Village Scribe Association
WB	World Bank

Chapter 1

Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is aimed at proposing an approach for considering the work of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) within a context gripped by educational inequality and substandard outcomes alongside a high concentration of non-state support and intervention. While there is certainly no shortage of inquiries into and commentary on the life and times of non-state actors in the developing world, the chosen research context provides a unique lens through which the dynamics of non-governmental work can be reflected upon and analysed. Informally crowned as the education hub of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, Grahamstown offers itself as an interesting location within which sociological considerations can be made in a context where NGOs are, on the one hand, lauded as the ultimate stewards of global and national education agendas while, on the other, they are infused in an educational space which continues to beckon such mediation.

International NGOs (INGOs) and their local non-governmental constituents have, particularly from the closing decades of the twentieth century, occupied central positions in the developmental efforts of post-colonial African states. However, their ascendancy during this time, predominantly in the areas of health, education, governance, social welfare and development broadly, has not been met with an ahistorical analytical lens. Instead, development NGOs working *on* and *in* Africa continue to occupy a highly contested social and political field tainted with the longstanding tensions that continue to characterise North-South relations. They wrestle on the one hand, with the persistent poverty which has centralised their efforts, while on the other hand, they must negotiate their survival under uncertain funding conditions which threatened not only their own existence but the extent of their efficacy in making lasting contributions towards poverty alleviation. Chief among these sector-based tensions is the active neo-liberal machine which, in many ways, counteracts with sustainable

efforts of complete socio-economic overhaul and also the contaminated legacy of and by extension, suspicion against western humanitarianism in the Global South.

Tracing the genealogy of humanitarianism in Africa as an antecedent of the space now occupied by Northern NGOs (NNGOs) in the modern and globalised developmental landscape, Manji and O'Coill (2002:5) propose that:

> *"The programmes of care they [colonial administrators] delivered did not seek to redress the social circumstances that caused impoverishment, but instead concerned themselves with the apparent failing of Africans themselves. The problem was not injustice, but being 'uncivilised' and suffering from the 'native condition'. And charitable welfare was the sweetener that made the colonial condition more palatable".*

Reflecting on the descendants of this social field of western-sponsored forms of charity and, more recently, development, Petras (1999:429) also proposes that "in more recent decades a new institution emerged that provides the same function of control and ideological mystification – the self-described non-governmental organizations". Trailing on the back of these colonial and apartheid legacies of Euro-American charity and humanitarianism in Africa therefore, the language of development, the largely inaccessible tools and mechanisms which have been made necessary for the attainment of socio-economic relief and, in particular, the stewards appointed with the task of dispensing development to the 'third world', continue to capture the scrutiny of scholars, experts and observers. Their growth has provoked public and intellectual suspicion, cautious embrace and some acquiescence which emanates on the one hand, from the prescription of not biting the humanitarian hand that 'feeds' and on the other, the irreconcilable concern of both the consequences of NGO 'action and non-action', particularly in view of persistent poverty and its multi-sectoral markers (Egeland, 2011; Davidson, 2012).

This highly contested space which development NGOs occupy in practice therefore, has translated into a tension-filled intellectual space which NGO and civil society scholars, observers and commentators occupy. While on the one hand, proponents have embraced non-state interveners as accelerants of the globalised development project, detractors have lodged international philanthropic initiatives within the ambit of criticisms levelled against western domination and its splinter models of modernity (Petras, 1999; St-Pierre, 2014). A mediating buffer between these is occupied by a network of cautious protagonists who, among other

things, advocate for contextualised, case-by-case analyses of NGOs and the spaces they occupy in national development efforts (Helliker, 2006; Barnett & Weiss, 2008; Davidson, 2012). In part, this thesis seeks to mediate some of the deliberations which have characterised this discord by describing the role that NGOs play in education within a local township setting. Additionally, this thesis also aims to chronicle the ways in which NGOs navigate the various social and political fields they occupy, negotiate their mandates and preserve the different sources of legitimacy and survival towards the advancement of the ideal of universal access to quality education and its numerous developmental gains.

1.2 The contested space of western intervention in Africa

To explore the world of development NGOs in part or otherwise is to wrestle with an unrelenting set of contradictions, tensions and contestations infused in the sector's genealogy, nomenclature, ideological foundations, operations and developmental intent and impact in communities of the South. These complications are then compounded by the intricacies of the contexts for which NGOs have been legitimised namely the 'Third World', and the host of struggles which continue to pervade its developmental form and the undertakings of dismantling it. As such, the growth of non-governmental organisations and the almost normative prescription of their centrality in development efforts carried out in the Global South has warranted mixed and diametrically opposed commentary.

The history of humanitarianism and western impulses of altruism in the Global South has been summoned for example, in the case of suspicions held against humanitarianism which is now assembled under the banner of a human rights and developing mission (Barnett, 2011; Douzinas, 2013). Within the parameters of these reproaches development itself, along with its inscriptions of universalised definitions of human rights and democratisation, has been called to account for the authenticity of its concern for *all* humanity (Douzinas, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2017) as it bears a striking resemblance to the enlightenment and civilising missions which sponsored much of the subjugation and underdevelopment from which Africa (and much of the 'developing' world) still seeks to extricate itself (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). To this, Manji and O'Coill (2002:7) argue that:

> *"The real problem was that the dominant discourse of development was framed not in the language of emancipation or justice, but with the vocabulary of charity, technical expertise, neutrality, and a deep paternalism (albeit accompanied by the*

rhetoric of participatory development) that was its syntax…White Westerners were still represented as the bearers of 'civilization' and were to act as the exclusive agents of development, while black, post-colonial 'others' were still seen as uncivilised and unenlightened destined to be development's exclusive object".

It is therefore believed that the inability to escape the hold of western subjection and underdevelopment even within the age of development has been on the basis of a more palatable form of intervention which advances its ideals and by extension itself, on the basis of universalised morality (Douzinas, 2013). Grosfuguel (2007: 214) recounts that "we went from the sixteenth century characterisation of 'people without writing' to an eighteenth and nineteenth century characterisation of 'people without history', to the twentieth century characterisation of 'people without development". This to the extent that terms such as 'imperial humanitarianism' and 'late imperialism' have been used to explode ingenuous beliefs of 'post-colonial goodwill from the west' and also advance an argument of the continuity of the imperial ambitions which inspired pre-'development' advances in the Global South (Forte, 2014). These terms, along with numerous other variations, have also been used to capture the scepticism held against Local NGOs (LNGOs) that derive much of their ideological and operational steam from the might of international donors, bilateral institutions and Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs). As such, ties with and dependence on International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and their largely Euro-North American state affiliates has been a dominant feature of the contentions held against NGO intent, operation and impact.

Notwithstanding these suspicions, an almost silencing moment of reflection which often quickly turns these discussions into a seemingly irreconcilable impasse, is the poverty and destitution which continues to almost inexhaustibly grip communities in the developing world alongside the envisaged consequences of non-action; western or otherwise. As mentioned above, alongside the overt criticisms held against NGO developmental intent and the scepticism which accompanies their 'noble' interventions in Africa, is a network of observers who contemplate, with equal steadfastness, both the consequences of NGO action and as proposed by Davidson (2012), "the consequences of non-intervention". With almost half of the peoples of Africa still living in poverty thirty and forty years after the NGO decade and that of development respectively, even our most modest and scrupulous appraisals of socio-economic progress do not permit a single moment's ignorance of the poverty which remains woven into the fabric of the continent. Despite this glaring and condemning irony however, poverty in

Africa and the widely circulated portrayals of it, have continued to sustain the 'need' and legitimacy of NGOs (Drewry, 2014).

Even with this in mind, scholars have remained resolute in the belief that such concessions to the necessity of NGOs need not overshadow reminiscence of the genealogy and engineering of Africa's underdevelopment (Rodney, 1972). To this, commentators have proposed that the affinity of the 'NGO decade', 'the decade of development' and the growth of neo-liberalism comes not by coincidence or as a reaction of the former to the failures of the latter two. Rather, they hold that all three phenomena are accessories of the deregulated capitalist and neoliberal design of undermining states, demobilising the grassroots and moderating– rather than dismantling – the condition of poverty (McMillan & Kelly, 2015). For example, while narratives of universalised morality and responsibility have been widely appropriated in international calls-to-action against poverty and by extension, have served to secure the relevance of NGOs, Petras (1999:430) argues that:

> *"There is a direct relation between the growth of NGOs and the decline of living standards: the proliferation of NGOs has not reduced structural unemployment, massive displacements of peasants, nor provided liveable wage levels for the growing army of informal workers. What NGOs have done, is provided a thin stratum of professionals with income in hard currency to escape the ravages of the neo-liberal economy that affects their country and to climb in the existing social class structure".*

What is evident therefore, is that the space that NGOs occupy in the thought and practice of Third World development is a highly contested one. Likewise, South Africa's non-governmental sector has not escaped criticisms sponsored by members of the public and intellectual domains. The sentiments of former Minister of State Security, David Mahlobo swept national headlines in 2005 when he accused NGOs of being agents of foreign powers whose fundamental assignment is to "destabilise the country" (Gastrow, 2016). Prior to this, remarks made by former President Thabo Mbeki to the National Assembly and former President Nelson Mandela at the African National Congress'(ANC) 50th National Conference in December 1997 enveloped firm suspicion and concern that non-governmental organisations, with their dependence on donor funding, are complicit in foreign aims of undermining the state and puncturing its sources of legitimacy thereby opening and legitimising global agendas in local spaces (O'Malley, 2005; Smith, et al., 2005).

Notwithstanding the mistrust which has characterised NGO relationships with members of the public service and the public as a whole, for the most part, NGOs in South Africa have enjoyed widespread embrace from the masses (Matthews, 2017). As disillusionment against the post-Apartheid government has mounted over the years as a results of state shortcomings, failures and neglect, NGOs have become a refuge on three fronts; as service providers, as activists/advocates for the poor and, in many cases, as a source of training, employment and skills development for a pool of young inexperienced professionals and unemployed graduates. Hailing the work of Grahamstown's non-state sector, Corke (2014) has even proposed that "if all the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Grahamstown were to stop working, the city would virtually grind to a halt". Similarly, Diana Hornby who is the Director of Rhodes University's Community Engagement arm considers NGOs to be a non-negotiable facet of any attempt at addressing Grahamstown's social developmental ills; one which government seems unable to match. So, while scepticism, suspicion and, often to their advantage, cautious concession, may characterise much of the social and intellectual spaces erected for NGOs over the past three decades, there has been little in the way of disputes relating to the gaping spaces which have necessitated their intervention. Alongside health for example, one field and canon of development which has epitomised both the growth of NGOs in Africa and the contested space which they occupy is that of education.

Despite the tensions detailed above, education NGOs are highly lauded the world over for their role in development, particularly in extending the service delivery arm of constrained and ill-performing states, building the capacity of local civil society groups, exposing state underperformance and catalysing civic involvement in national and international development spaces. In particular, education NGOs have played leading roles in framing education and universal access to it as an international imperative, securing its centrality in international development forums, setting and accelerating the spread of universal performance benchmarks, announcing non-compliance and intervening in state failures and/or negligence. In light of their ancestry however, along with the education ideals which remain elusive for many Third World communities, education NGOs have themselves, not evaded the bouts of scrutiny and questioning which prevail in the many circles of non-state development intervention in Africa.

1.3 The localised global of Education for All (EFA)

The centrality of universal access to education in global development policy and planning has been defended with largely no resistance. This consensus is owed in large part to the tireless efforts made by states and global donors of promoting education as an international imperative. Now centred within the ambit of non-negotiable basic human rights, education has been solidified as a leading channel of social and economic advancement and is therefore embedded in international development models and standards (Engelbrecht, 2006; Mwanza, 2015). The joint efforts of the United Nations (UN) Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank (WB), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) have been particularly salient in placing an institutional and traceable layer on the widespread consensus related to universal access to education (Ito, 2012; Munene, 2015; Mundy, 2016).

With the collective support of Action Aid, Oxfam, Education International and the Global March Against Child Labour mobilised around the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), these five conveners (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the WB) summoned world leaders and civil society representatives to what would become the most prominent signpost for global education imperatives in the post-Cold War era, the World Conference on Education held in Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990 (King, 1991; Archer, 2014). From this meeting, the Education for All (EFA) goals emerged and were used as an ideological and operational package which sought the concurrence and compliance of state and Non-Formal Education (NFE) providers across the globe (Goldstein, 2004; Kaag, 2018). Ten years later in 2000, these goals were then renovated and renewed during a similar meeting held in Dakar, Senegal and later that same year they became part of a highly regarded global development framework which now included the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were set up in New York (Antoninis, 2014). Though 15 years was the agreed-upon lifespan of both these frameworks, their road would certainly not end here. The MDG goals were later reframed as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a post-2015 Education Agenda started gaining momentum in 2012 (UNESCO, 2013; Sayed, 2015; Shulttz, 2015).

As such, the year 2015 was somewhat of an intimidating yet sobering landmark for national and international development and education practitioners. This year marked the end of one era and the beginning of another and brought along with it the formidable realities which continued to puncture the ideals set up in Jomtien, Dakar, and New York (Singh, 2013; Abdallah, 2014; Uvalic-Trumbic & Daniel, 2016). Domestically, this was also the year when

South Africa's democracy was entering its third decade and the country's education system continued to catalyse inequalities in student inputs and outcomes both at basic and higher education level and, by extension, provided a firm grounding for disparities in youth economic opportunities.

In particular, the nationwide Fees Must Fall (FMF) movement, spearheaded by students at universities across the country, brought the processes and results of these inequalities to the fore. By this time, it had become abundantly clear to national, regional and international education monitors that South Africa had failed to convert its financial investments in education into equitable opportunities and prospects for its youth (Van der Berg, 2008). For example, in 2015 South Africa recorded commendable Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) and gender parity trends in basic education compared to many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, however learner performance rates continue to fall far below those of many neighbouring and poorer countries in the region (Van der Berg, 2008; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; UNESCO, 2015). So, while the country's documented commitment to providing universal access to education has formed part of the global consensus towards this direction, its internal contradictions and tensions offer a unique context for mainstream and non-state actors seeking to accelerate the realisation of this ideal.

Coincidentally, the global spread of EFA sentiments in the 1990s overlapped with South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. During this time, the country was inundated with balancing both the need to reintegrate itself as a member of the global development community while also prioritising its domestic transitional needs. As a result, South Africa entered the EFA network later than the 155 state representatives which were part of the initial conference in 1990 (Mgijima, 2001) and fast became a notable reference of how resource redistribution, on its own, can fail to address poor learning outcomes and educational inequities for reasons which, in this case, include the country's recent apartheid past, its colonial predecessor and the lingering legacy of both (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Notwithstanding this, however, South Africa's Bill of Rights captured both the domestic and international urgency of redressing the educational injustices of the past and gave the newly elected government a unique mandate of dismantling apartheid's institutionalised exclusion of the majority of citizens by building a more inclusive educational framework which would now serve the needs of the majority (Badat & Sayed, 2014).

As was the case in South Africa, education has long been used as a tool of domination as well as social and economic exclusion (Freire, 1970; Bowles, 1978). South Africa stands as a prime

example of how centuries of oppression and colonial ambition can succeed largely on the basis of how racist ideology is imprinted into education systems, institutions and pedagogy. Undoing the legacy of colonialism and apartheid in education would therefore require the careful and consistent commitment of state and non-state actors collectively dedicated to addressing not only the institutionalised forms of educational inequity but confronting their ideological tenets. In large part this process was launched in 1994 and was marked by institutional adjustments, financial redistribution and structural curriculum revamps. The domestic commitments towards the paradigm shift in South Africa's education now formed part of a global education field which was already in motion towards these ends and as such, gave the country more incentive and operational steam to follow suit. Now, it was believed, education was a necessary tool for social and economic advancement and, though the state retained ultimate leadership in this process, the involvement of civil society was framed as a necessary feature of not only operationalising this ideal but also sustaining its benefits from the ground-up.

1.4 NGOs in the globalised quest for EFA

Given the fundamental contributions made by non-state actors, mainly through the GCE, in calling attention to the ongoing crisis in global education trends, it has long been suggested that NGOs form a permanent part of any global or national progress towards the achievement of EFA goals and the realisation of their developmental ideals (Archer, 2014). Non-state actors are therefore considered essential to universal access to education in four ways. First, the foremost contribution earmarked for NGOs in the early 1990s was in the area of resource mobilization where private funds could be channelled from International NGOs through Local NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to meet up with constrained state resources (WCEFA, 1990; Brass, 2010; Kabdiyeva & Dixon, 2014). Additionally, NGOs are considered an essential part of democratizing global education forums by including civic voices and centralising community experiences and priorities in platforms which remain largely inaccessible to the masses. Similarly, NGOs also seek to democratise national education delivery and decentralise state power by facilitating civic involvement in education policy and practice and also holding governments accountable for poor or non-delivery of education resources and services (Nqaba, 2017). Lastly, for geographically and socially remote communities with unique social, political, and structural needs, NGOs often take on the role of being primary, though largely non-formal, education providers (Lewis & Kanji, 2009; Lewis, 2009; Dar, 2015).

In addition to the global education agendas which have centralised NGO involvement, the sector-level ascendancy of non-state actors in global development has cushioned the involvement of non-governmental actors in education. Neo-liberal logics which have underscored much economic and, by extension, development frameworks, have been used first, to justify the retreat of state agencies in national welfare systems and secondly, to support the increased involvement of private and non-state agents (Harvey, 2005). With NGOs functioning either as development implementers, partners or catalysts (Lewis, 2007), Third World governments that have been unable to repel the might of the 'New World Order', have had to make significant allowances for the increased involvement of NGOs in domestic education policy and implementation processes. Moreover and despite the conceived potential of this shift eroding state capacity and legitimacy, governments have been unable to weather the global pressure from donors to either partner with non-state actors in order to maintain access to international funding reserves or concede operational hold of certain development functions to these actors for the same reasons (Mayhew, 2005). In many instances therefore, this maintains tension-filled yet largely unavoidable, relations between developing states and NGOs (Najam, 2000; Kudva, 2008; Spires, 2011). In some cases however, governments and NGOs have been able to harness their collective expertise, resources and legitimacy amicably in order to maximise their reach (Miller-Grandvaux, et al., 2002; Jowett & Dyer, 2012; Mwanza, 2015).

The increased involvement of NGOs in education, as in other sectors of development, has however, been met with much scepticism due in large part, to their strong ties with international donors and global powers. NGO financial and ideological dependence on foreign donors and, by extension, their state affiliates, has strengthened critical voices and posed numerous questions of their impartiality, routes of accountability, claims of 'goodwill' and efficacy. These organisations which, derive much of their operational frameworks and thrust from the well-established and globally-set imperatives, are considered, by many observers, mere extensions of western domination and modernised cloaks of 'imperial ambition' and rule in the Global South (Chomsky, 2005). As such, narratives of their comparative advantage which have been used to dethrone poorly performing post-independence states have also been used as a lens through which NGO efficacy and sustainability are considered (Edwards & Hulme, 1996; Fowler, 1996; Smith, 2007).

Flexible NGO initiatives, their efficiency and cost-effectiveness as well as proximity and responsiveness to beneficiary communities are said to be the hallmark of NGOs and their

competitive edge over state and market agencies (Weger, 2013; Banks, et al., 2015). However, persistent poverty, unemployment and inequality have brought these proclamations into question. For example, while the global consensus on universal access to education has given states incentive and non-state support to follow the international current, many of the 2015 targets remain unmet. Though notable improvements have been made in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly with learner enrolment rates (Hartwell, 2008), multitudes of children remain out of school with few of those who stay in school meeting the minimum standards of literacy and numeracy (Mwanza, 2015). Furthermore, by 2009 only a small minority of countries (37%) had met the gender parity targets (UNESCO, 2009) while in 2012, girl children still had a 56% chance of never having enrolled for school in comparison to boys who had a 42% chance (UNESCO, 2015).

Despite the ideological and pragmatic questions brought against NGOs in light of the persistently poor education outcomes in some settings however, they continue to form an integral part of education endeavours across the continent. For example, community schools run mainly by NGOs in many African countries have long been considered operative channels of education services for children living in remote and extremely disadvantaged communities (Miller-Grandvaux, et al., 2002; Carneal, 2004; Hopper, 2005). Through the financial and administrative backing of The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Save the Children, Christian Action Research and Education (CARE) and World Education have reached and established over 5000 community schools in Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Malawi, Mali, South Sudan, Uganda and Zambia (Miller-Grandvaux & Yoder, 2002; Glassman, et al., 2007). Additionally, NGO-provided support platforms and resources such as teacher training initiatives, support personnel, service grants, teaching material, policy and research support as well as service coalitions, have been readily welcomed as an essential part of many communities' progressive steps towards achieving domestic and international education objectives (Brass, 2010; Bandi, 2011). This thesis intervenes in this widespread embrace of NGOs in education by laying out the intricacies and contradictions that make up their work and form alongside the inequities and substandard performance which remain as common threads between many communities in the developing world which are said to benefit from non-state educational intervention. The discussion presented here endeavours to raise worthwhile reflections on the persistent paradox of heightened NGO intervention which stands beside and coexists with substandard performance and extreme educational inequity in some settings.

1.5 Education and NGOs in South Africa: From global to local

The past four decades in South Africa, marked perhaps from the 1976 Soweto Uprising to the 2015 FMF Movement, have much to tell. The years stand unequivocally as immovable landmarks in South Africa's history, particularly in the areas of education provision, equity and social justice. In particular, the road leading up to 2015 from 1994 was, as demonstrated above, filled with many ideological and operational developments in global and national education. These have been accompanied by intermittent moments of optimism and certainly, many of unprecedented distress. Following the first democratic elections held in South Africa in 1994, great strides were made by the Government of National Unity (GNU) to initiate a process of educational overhaul with as much radical precision as was necessary to wean off the institutional, structural, resource and curriculum-based imprints of apartheid and its colonial master. With the solid international backing of the EFA and MDGs' outlines, it was believed that the Bill of Rights, The South African Schools Act of 1996 and later, The National Development Plan (NDP) launched it 2012, would provide the necessary framework to build an education system that would not only articulate the country's newfound commitment to democracy and equality but would cater to the socio-economic imperatives of building a sustainably developing state.

Over a period of 24 years, however, it became abundantly clear that these textual commitments alone were certainly not a match for their inexorable apartheid predecessors and the systematised discriminatory frame which lent them post-apartheid continuity. Sobering moments which brought this to the fore included, among others, intermittent curriculum adjustments which often left teachers ill-equipped and disillusioned, the non-delivery of textbooks to schools in Limpopo Province in 2012 alongside the gross financial misconduct which accompanied it as well as the death of two learners in 2014 and 2018 who lost their lives after falling into pit toilets at their schools in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape (EC) respectively. Moreover, mud and dilapidated schooling structures again, in these same provinces, and the poorly maintained, unsafe or non-existent furniture and learning infrastructure, teacher shortages, violence and abuse as well as racism and intolerance in schooling environments continue to capture provincial and national headlines. Additionally, National Senior Certificate (NCS) results as well as regional and international measures, paint a bleak image of South African learners' literacy and numeracy performance. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016 results released in December 2017, for example, revealed that

78% of South African children in Grade 4 cannot read for meaning but, unfortunately these results are only the latest in a long line of evaluations which have, for some years now, revealed the dire state of learner outcomes in South Africa.

As was the case during apartheid, NGOs have stood at the ready at each of these points mainly to fill resource and service delivery gaps, monitor and confront state agencies on the basis of poor or non-delivery of basic education services or partner with government agents in formulating and implementing education policies (Mazibuko, 2000; Lewis & Steyn, 2003; Robins, 2008; Dlamini, 2017). NGOs such as Equal Education (EE), Section27 and the Legal Resource Centre (LRC) have, for example, made far-reaching contributions not only in exposing government shortcomings in service delivery and advocating for marginalised populations, but also in initiating state accountability mechanisms for example in the form of the The Basic Infrastructural Norms and Standards which now serve as a regulatory framework for infrastructure standards in South African schools (Mufamadi, 2014; Beckman & Prinsloo, 2015).

Despite the stampede of non-state interveners in education over the past two and a half decades and their most concerted efforts however, South Africa's education system is, for a host of reasons, still characterised by poor administration and leadership, resource mismanagement, inequity in the quality of education, poor learner performance and high drop out rates. On average, more than 50% of learners in the country still do not reach Grade 12 (matric) within the required time, if at all, and even fewer obtain the performance standards which qualify them for access to further education institutions (Spaull & Taylor, 2014). Despite the glowing impressions made by annual matric results, a gradual decline in learner pass requirements means that literacy and numeracy levels articulated by matric results are far worse than what they are often made out to be (Taylor, 2012).

Additionally, government policies implemented over the past 10 years, particularly the Progression and Multiple Examination Option (MEO) policies, externally facilitate the progression of learners through different phases of schooling. In essence, these twin policies are implemented in order to progress learners through different phases despite poor or under-performance and are therefore meant to maintain a constant flow of age-appropriate learners in basic education. In practice, however, this has had far-reaching implications on the trends of grade-appropriate academic competence and has meant that learners who, at the end of Grade 12, have not met the requirements of being in Grade 12 are largely left to their own devices by being given the 'option' of writing their final matric exams in two phases (in December of their

matric year and June of the following year) (Westaway, 2017). This has not only placed the often under-resourced and poorly-staffed schools under a great deal of pressure to infuse additional support mechanisms into the already constrained school structures, but means that poorly performing learners are gradually filtered out of the schooling system, making the highly lauded annual matric results an even more misleading reference of the state of learner outcomes in South Africa (Spaull, 2013).

With these seemingly insurmountable trends under consideration, education NGOs, which must simultaneously wrestle with their own host of organisational and sector-level tensions, have certainly had their work cut out for them. While the dominant voice of education NGOs in South Africa has been in the area of policy advocacy and activism, a greater number of organisations have maintained service-driven approaches to education which seek, in large part, to moderate the prevailing crises. As suggested by Petras (1999) and Rusznyak (2014), however, these initiatives have been little more than 'firefighting' mechanisms which, because of their preoccupation with addressing the immediate threats as they come, have been unable to make more lasting improvements to the inequities and poor performance standards which persist.

1.6 Research context and methodology

Grahamstown, a small university town located in the predominantly rural province of the Eastern Cape, is considered a compacted and unique case study of the dysfunction and inequity which characterises the country's education system (Westaway, 2017). With a high concentration of well-managed and well-performing private and formally desegregated public schools located in town within a looking distance of the ill-managed and poorly performing schools located in Grahamstown-east, the profile of the town's education system has beckoned much public attention and non-state intervention over the years (Hendricks, 2008; Vorster, 2016). Though organisations work independently, much of the NGO activity in the town has been the product of NGO partnerships with Rhodes University (RU), private and former model C schools as well as local businesses. The Joza Youth Hub is one such initiative which is the result of the collaborative efforts of Rhodes University, Makana Municipality and local NGOs aimed at providing a central point of access to educational support services for learners in the community.

This research is aimed at describing the work of these organisations and detailing their role in learner performance and retention trends in four local public high schools. On the one hand, this description provides a detailed narrative of the NGOs that form part of the Joza Youth Hub, the intricacies of their work and survival in this community along with the challenges and ambiguities which form part of their operations and their quest for survival. Organisational documents, annual reports, archival and print media along with semi-structured interviews with NGO officials and local partners provide the bulk of the data which make up this description. On the other hand, propositions of the role of these NGOs in learner outcomes are built largely on the experiences, views and observations of beneficiaries. This description is based on data obtained from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with NGO members, learners, parents, and community members. Together this data advances the central thesis which seeks to outline the role of NGOs in learner outcomes in Joza.

1.7 Thesis outline

After the introductory chapter, Chapter Two locates NGOs within the broader sector of civil society and traces how scholarly engagements have moved positional conceptions of associational behaviour and institutions through different intellectual eras. The chapter then goes on to uncover the inconsistency of the divides between the sectors from which civil society is often distinguished and how, in many ways, NGOs are rooted, in many ways, within the state and market sectors both for existence and survival. By exposing the contradiction between dominant NGO conceptions and the reality of their operations, this chapter forms part of a justification of more in-depth analyses of NGOs within a localised context in order to give a more detailed account of their role. The chapter concludes by introducing the work of NGOs in international and national education sectors, paying particular attention to their extensive work in apartheid and post-1994 South Africa.

The complications of tying NGOs and their work down to a single sector, presented in Chapter Two, sets the tone for the definitional disputes which are laid out in Chapter Three. The chapter begins by identifying in-sector heterogeneity, multi-disciplinary conceptions and context variations as the leading sources of this relentless definitional discord. Despite the complications however, key roles which are often earmarked for NGOs are identified namely, filling resource and service gaps, strengthening civil society members and institutions and also facilitating good governance and democratization processes in developing communities. These

broad development functions are then used to draw out the work of education NGOs working in different communities across the African continent in preparation for Chapter Four which discusses these in finer detail and on the back of empirical evidence offered by up scholars in the field.

Staying true to the urgency of contextual awareness in NGO analyses, Chapter Four begins by reflecting, first, on existing debates related to the relevance of civil society as a concept in non-western settings. While the language of civil society may be borne of western culture, this chapter suggests that associational life in Africa for example, whether it be used to advance personal or communal ends, is certainly a lot more than an Africanised version of a western invention. The persuasions of scholars on the continent and beyond are presented in order to illustrate that African associational activities over the years have been more than a development lab for the application of a western ideal. Furthermore, some scholars believe that the concept comes with its limits when considering the wide range of the forms of association in African society and the vastness of the political, cultural, religious and social contexts which have necessitated association on the continent. Concessions must therefore be made also on the basis of the heavy presence of organisations which are traditionally understood as institutional and ordered forms of civil society namely, NGOs. This chapter exposes the irony in this debate and goes on to detail the extensive work of NGOs, as civil society constituents, in Africa's developmental undertakings.

Furthermore, the chapter outlines the intricacies of NGO work on the continent particularly the multiple allegiances which organisations must maintain in order to exist and survive while simultaneously taking care not to disturb the developmental mandates which grant them legitimacy and relevance. For the most part, the chapter illustrates the multi-edged nature of NGO existence and work which compels organisations to service multiple and, at times, competing agendas that often prioritise donor satisfaction and NGO survival over community needs and priorities. NGO ideologies and operations are largely influenced by donors with peripheral input from state agencies or community members. So while the positive contributions made by NGOs across the continent are well-documented, persistent poverty and inequality which are also well documented necessitate a closer look at NGOs, their external relations and how these tie into organisations and their role in development and education specifically. As such, the chapter demonstrates how the convoluted nature of the development network of which NGOs are a part, not only has an impact on relations between donors, states and NGOs, as was detailed in Chapter Two, but also has an immediate bearing on NGOs' daily

tasks, responsiveness to beneficiaries and overall efficacy in carrying out their activities. The points of scepticism which emanate from these sector-level tensions are highlighted in this chapter and utilised throughout this thesis as points of consideration for the role of NGOs in education outcomes among learners in Joza.

The next chapter goes into finer detail in laying out the substandard performance which prevails in South Africa's education system despite increased non-state involvement at the policy, implementation and monitoring level. The chapter begins by positioning the country's education landscape within the broader international education scene over the past three decades and also within the context of the country's own political developments during this time. The chapter then goes on to trace the largely administrative, structural, resource and curriculum-related changes made to South Africa's education system since 1994 as a precursor to an outline of the sustained dysfunction which prevails at the administrative, classroom and learner levels of schooling. In particular, poor national performance and retention trends among learners are described after which a closer look is taken at these same trends within the context of the Eastern Cape. The chapter then goes on to present the propositions made by scholars of the largely contextual and socio-economic factors which play into the face of learner outcomes in South Africa.

Having carved out the contextual settings within which NGOs operate in Chapters Two and Three along with those which are said to influence learner outcomes in Chapter Five, Chapter Six presents the methodological map which is used in carrying out a study on how and where these two worlds converge. This begins with a brief introduction of the constructivist paradigm adopted in carrying out this research and the qualitative research design implemented in collecting, managing and analysing data for the study. On the basis of the literature reviewed and presented in Chapters Two to Chapter Five, the conceptual framework which is used as an outline for data collection and analysis tools is then laid out after which the descriptive case study strategy adopted for this research is presented. Finally, the chapter describes the study context and the unit of analysis –the Joza Youth Hub– and lays out the details which make this context a worthwhile point of reference to advance the central thesis presented here.

Chapter Seven and Eight respond to the considerations brought forward in Chapter Two and Three but with particular reference to four local education NGOs in Joza. First, Chapter Seven presents the Eastern Cape, Grahamstown and Joza as the contextual backdrops within which non-state education actors carry out their interventions. Alongside this, is an introduction of the different players that form part of the network of education providers in the province

broadly and the town more specifically. Great care is taken here to illustrate the closely knit Grahamstown schooling network so as to properly locate the work of NGOs as well as the relations and external forces which tie into their operations. In particular, the small size of the Grahamstown schooling network which is dominated by a single actor– Rhodes University– means that small changes driven by this dominant player, have confounding effects on organisations and their operations. The dynamics within this schooling network are presented in this chapter. Finally, the chapter describes the persistent poor learner performance and retention trends which have been used to legitimise the increased involvement of the actors within this network which include NGOs.

Having presented the multi-levelled context within which NGOs in Joza operate, Chapter Eight goes into finer detail on how organisations function within and navigate this network. The chapter considers these NGOs as individual organisations which, though tied together by their commitment to advancing the ideal of universal access to education, carry out their persuasions through different operational models, educational approaches and priorities, challenges as well as resource bases and constraints. This chapter presents these variations while also identifying and highlighting common threads which make them alike such as resource constraints, external relations with schools and Rhodes University as well as membership profiles. Finally, the chapter concludes by tying these variations and commonalities together so as to set up for the description of their collective role in education outcomes among learners which is discussed in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Nine acts as a connecting point, particularly, of the two preceding chapters. First, the chapter presents the different roles which NGO are said to play in performance and retention trends among learners in Joza and the benefits of NGO participation which can improve learning experiences in and out of NGOs structures. These benefits, the chapter proposes, are largely localised to the individual and peer levels. Due, however, to a number of factors and constraints, the chapter illustrates the forces which restrict NGOs from making wider and more far-reaching contributions to the town's education agenda and profile.

Finally, Chapter Ten concludes by using the chosen case study to advance a central thesis of the complicated, multi-levelled, multi-relational and double-edged roles which NGOs play within a context of persistently poor learner outcomes. This chapter raises this case study as a worthwhile reference for its own context and as a frame of contending with the dire state of learner outcomes which persist despite the national and global embrace of NGOs as the panaceas of development and education across the globe.

Chapter 2

Civil Society and its parts: NGOs, states, donors and beneficiaries

2.1 Introduction

Civil society is an intricate and highly contested sector filled with uncertainties, contradictions and conceptions which are almost as vast as are the thinkers and practitioners within it. To make sense of these complexities, for theoretical and pragmatic purposes, a careful and in-depth analysis is essential. Here, the sector is conceptually and carefully disentangled into its encompassing parts and then re-assembled to formulate as detailed a description of the whole and its contents as is possible. This chapter represents the first step in analysing the world of NGOs by first taking a brief historical glance at the conceptions of civil society as a sector within which NGOs are traditionally located. The different analytical grounds upon which modern conceptions of NGOs have been based as well as their convoluted relations with other sectors of society are then discussed. The chapter then contextualises education NGOs within the broader world of NGOs particularly within the South African context by highlighting their position in the country's education system over the years. By setting off a careful process of analysing NGOs as intricate and inconsistent sums of their multiple parts, this chapter provides a grounding upon which considerations of NGOs, their work and their role will be made throughout this thesis. The next chapter will then build from this by presenting the equally convoluted and highly contested definitions of NGOs and their roles in development and education.

2.2 Civil Society: A historical glance

Civil Society – as an analytical tool and operational field – is an age-old concept which pre-dates both the late twentieth-century proliferation of CSOs as well as the origin of the term as it is understood today (Lewis, 2002). While some scholars trace it back to the eighteenth century when it was used to refer to a peaceful space of organized action and mass mobilization (Anheier & Salamon, 2006; Kaene, 2009), the concept itself has historically been associated with the work of Greek philosopher, Aristotle (384 B.C – 322 B.C) (Kocka,

2004; Sulek, 2010). DeWiel (1997) proposes that Aristotle's idea of *koinoniapolitike* may have become distorted through translation, however, the basic tenets of association and political organisation which encompass his ideas became the base of much civil society scholarship in the centuries which followed.

For Aristotle, *societas civilis* constituted a sphere of political organisation which emanates from humankind's natural inclination towards association. It is within this sphere where, according Aristotle, free and equal humans possess the utmost capacity to pursue common interests (DeWiel, 1997; Forbrig, 2004; Laine, 2014). Following this initial introduction into public discourse, scholarly engagements on civil society mainly took on the form of terminological disputes (Forbrig, 2004). It wasn't until the eighteenth century where additional conceptual variations began to emerge, mainly in response to events and changes accompanying the Enlightenment era (Reichardt, 2004; Anjum, 2010).

Locke (1632-1704) and Montesquieu (1689-1755), for example, described civil society as a sphere which relates to individual interactions among citizens whereas the political society relates to interactions between the state and citizens (Spurk, 2008). Though they did not view these spheres as entirely separate entities, they both considered the emergence of civil society to be a space of opposition; against the state of nature for Locke and against absolutism for Montesquieu, as with Immanual Kant (Reichardt, 2004; Anjum, 2010; Kastrati, 2016). During this time, civil society became largely synonymous with anti-absolutist ideology and was understood as a sphere of the idealization of an alternative society governed by citizens (Kocka, 2004).

Modern conceptions of civil society are, at times, accredited to Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, the most prominent of which include Adam Ferguson (1732-1816) and Adam Smith (1723-1790) (Forbrig, 2004; Reichardt, 2004; Anjum, 2010; Laine, 2014). It was also Ferguson and Smith who began to conceptualise civil society as both a distinct and separate entity. However, while both agreed that the sector should be understood as separate from the state, Smith proposed that it was also separate from the markets (DeWiel, 1997; Kastrati, 2016). Moreover, Smith's ideas on civil society, which were later advanced by Hegel, were predicated on the belief that although individuals do not pursue association solely for selfish ends (Forbrig, 2004; Laine, 2014), their convergence in the realm of civil society came under the pretext of personal economic and commercial interests (Anjum, 2010). Hegel later expanded on this although, for him, civil society was a historical product of economic modernization (Kaene, 1988; DeWiel, 1997) which is predominantly characterised by the

pursuit of private property and the satisfaction of individual needs (Forbrig, 2004; Anjum, 2010; Laine, 2014). Given the influx of selfish pursuits, such as the accumulation of private property within this realm, however, Hegel suggested that civil society is also a sphere of conflict and negotiation wherein a system of mediation – which includes the system of needs, the administration of justice and police and corporations – is constantly applied (Cohen and Arato, 1991 cited in Forbrig, 2004; Reichardt, 2004; Anjum, 2010; Laine, 2014;).

Karl Marx, though aligned with Hegel's overall economic conception of civil society, viewed his stance as subtle in that it understates the oppressive nature of the sector (Anjum, 2010). For Marx, civil society – or 'bourgeois society' as he referred to it – was not only a sphere of economic relations between individuals and groups but also one of oppression born from and used by the bourgeoisie to assert and retain their multi-sector supremacy (DeWiel, 1997; Spurk, 2008). Furthermore, while Hegel envisioned a near positive coexistence between the state and civil society, Marx considered both to be harmful and needing to be overcome (DeWiel, 1997). It was thus suggested by Marx that civil society must be viewed as an extension of the oppressive rule of the elite and an accentuation of the societal division between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' (Reichardt, 2004; Spurk, 2008; Anjum, 2010).

Central to the modern conceptions of civil society is the work of Italian Marxist philosopher, Antonio Gramsci (1805-1859) whose ideas on civil society run through the expanse of his extensive work on hegemony and congestion of power within the ruling class. Much like Marx, Gramsci aligns civil society to the capitalist model that rests on asymmetrical distributions of power and material possession. He then locates it within the superstructure that is comprised of the cultural, systematic and ideological content of the dominant social order (DeWiel, 1997; Kaviraj & Khilnani, 2001). According to Gramsci (1971:209), "between the economic structure and the state with its legislation and coercion stands civil society". However, due to the dialectic interplay between these spheres, civil society can itself function both as a counter-hegemonic force and also as a perpetuating centre of the oppressive rule of the elite (Spurk, 2008). Thus, Katz (2010) writes that for Gramsci, civil society, while conceptually divisible from the state and the market, can be "an instrument to maintain the current relations of power in society" and can also be an "arena of creativity where counter-hegemonic forces develop alternatives to the hegemonic ideologies and practices, and from where, under specific conditions, reformist processes can emerge".

Contemporary modes of these deliberations on civil society's position relative to states and markets are largely sponsored by *third sector* scholars who have either aligned themselves to

or rebutted Etzioni's (1973) sponsorship of the concept (Lyons, 2001; Corry, 2010). While the idea of society comprising of three sectors, which underpins modern conceptions of NGOs, is widely accepted, several scholars have provided some notable detractions to the logic. Uphoff (1998:17), for example, suggests that, while society does consist of three sectors, the third sector "belongs not to NGOs but rather to people's associations and membership organisations". Rather than occupying the third sector independently, he separates them only from the state; suggesting that despite their unique functions, NGO operations and 'take it or leave it' relationships with beneficiaries resemble those of market institutions (Uphoff, 1998).

On the other hand, other scholars believe that NGOs occupy neither of the three sectors but should be understood as part of a fourth sector situated between the primary sphere – constituting families and households– and the public sphere made up of political affiliates, ministers and elected councillors (Streeck & Schmitter, 1985; Savage & Roodt, 1998; Kuruvila, 2015). Alessandrini (2004) for example, though aligned to Uphoff's (1998) belief that the competitive operations of NGOs often resemble market institutions, does not subscribe to the idea of them being an extension of the private sector. Rather, she proposes that NGOs should be thought of as forming part of a fourth sector consisting mainly of entrepreneurial civic service organisations which, though non-profit, do not bear the same altruistic convictions which underpin organisations in the traditional civil society sector. Much like Uphoff (1998) and Dekker (1998), she goes further to suggest that organisations within this fourth sector operate and are driven by efficiency, effectiveness and competition frameworks similar to those of the market and as such cannot be accommodated within or defined by their membership to the traditional 'third sector' (Alessandrini, 2004).

Fowler (2000) also recommends that NGOs should occupy a fourth sector of society though he – diverting slightly from the fraternity of traditional 'fourth sector' scholars – proposes the creation of an additional sector as a coping mechanism owing to the escalating civil society funding crisis. For Fowler (ibid), this possible 'beyond-aid-scenario' provides NGOs with the possibility of redefining themselves in order to retain public trust and relevance outside the traditional third sector they are currently thought to occupy.

In part, what this brief history demonstrates is that dominant conceptions of the sector are largely predicated on its relative positioning in society; whether separate or in unison with the markets on the one hand and to the state on the other. Some scholars advance the view of the sector being distinct and separate from both, while others acknowledge its distinct

position but couple this with a proposal of civil society being squarely positioned within the realm of the state. Though resolutions of this discord fall far beyond the mandate of this thesis, the debate itself is instructive. For one, it compels any inquiry into the operations, efficacy or role of NGOs to pay particular attention to the external relations they maintain as these bear heavily on organisational ideology and operation. In particular, relations with states and donors are important to consider in the analysis of the world of NGOs as constant negotiations between these spheres have intimate ties with the base operations of organisations as demonstrated in the next sections.

2.3 NGOs and 'The State': A distinction without a difference?

The conceptual positioning of NGOs away from the state and markets has long been at the centre of definitional discord in the field. This logic, to be discussed in finer detail in the next chapter, is immediately discernible in the two terms which are often used to characterise the sector namely, *non-governmental* and *non-profit*. By definition, these two negatives separate the sector from government on the one hand and the profit-making market on the other. By doing so, a conception of NGOs which is grounded on their positioning in society relative to different social classes, structures and resources is established (Bebbington & Hickey, 2006; Lewis & Kanji, 2009). As such, Bratton (1991) has defined NGOs as a sphere of activity which is separate from the state and the household wherein varied networks and structures of cooperation are found, while Corry (2010) considers the sector to be one which encompasses a variety of different organisations which are outside both the state and the market.

Spatial conceptions of NGOs have been widely accepted, however, for some they are an insufficient grounding upon which to base a universally applicable understanding of NGOs as they often fail to delineate what they are in and of themselves (Tendler, 1982; Streeten, 1997; Lewis, 2009). Additionally, the distinctiveness of NGOs from these two spheres is questionable and feeds into the contradictions which have been long associated with the sector itself. Petras (1999:433) contends, for example, that:

> *"In reality NGOs are not 'non-governmental' organisations. They receive funds from overseas governments, work as private sub-contractors of local governments and/or are subsidized by corporate funded private foundations with close working relations with the state. Frequently they openly collaborate with governmental agencies at home or overseas".*

While 'independence' has been a major selling point for the sector, Forte (2014:10) also proposes that "when organizations begin to take over the most basic functions and powers of the state, it becomes only too clear the 'NGOs' are not as 'NG' as they might wish us to believe". As such, consensus on the most accurate classification of these organisations and the extent of their independence from domestic and, more especially, foreign states, remains at large. As a settling gesture to these disputes, it has been proposed that NGOs can be one of two things– and quite often both. These, often overlapping, taxonomies describe organisations either as *service providers* and/or *advocates/activists*. Even within these two categories, however, NGOs are certainly not a homogenous unit (Mercer, 2002; Hilhorst, 2003). For example, they differ significantly in their aims and objectives (Reed & Howe, 1999) scope and field of operation (Martens, 2002; Dugle, et al., 2015), levels of professionalism (Lewis, 2009), institutional structure as well as operational models (Willetts, 2002).

The 'schizophrenic' nature of NGOs (Fisher, 1998) along with the vastness of the contexts within which they apply their efforts has, among other things, also brought on varied relationships with states. This is partially manifested in ambiguities such as Government Organised NGOs (GONGOs) and Quasi-NGOs (QUANGOs) which are functioning extensions of government agencies though apparently located within the traditional 'third sector'. Political, economic and social variations between countries have also understandably laid varied groundings upon which NGO sectors operate and thrive. To this, Habib (2003:11) proposes that "a recognition of the heterogeneity of civil society must as a corollary recognise the inevitable plurality in state-civil society relations". As such, inquiry into NGOs must not only pay attention to NGO-state relations which influence NGO groundwork, but must also consider the historic, socio-political and economic contexts within which these relations occur and, by extension, how they impact organisational operations (Greenstein, 2003; Teamay, 2007).

Additionally, an analysis of NGOs and their work must go beyond this to consider the variations which exist even within this level of investigation. Within geographic boundaries and across similar political environments, for example, relations with states differ and change depending on the socio-political climate within which they are established at a particular time (Jennings, 2006). According to Asad and Kay (2014:5), "political contexts are not static; states and political environments change, which requires a renegotiation of priorities and alliances". In view of this, one NGO may forge cooperative relations with one state and have

confrontational relations with another as a result of differing political climates at a given point in time (Najam, 2000). It is, therefore, important to consider NGO-state relations within the compass of their contextual backdrop while simultaneously considering the time-bound socio-political climate within which they are negotiated (White, 1999; Whaites, 2000; Greenstein, 2003; Jelinek, 2006; Tanga & Fonchingong, 2009; Matei & Apostu, 2014).

However, this in-sector heterogeneity and constantly evolving socio-political contexts has certainly not deterred scholars from proposing broad frameworks through which NGO-state relations can be viewed and perhaps analysed within certain contexts. Although these differ in some respects, they often overlap in their dominant view that NGO-state relations ought to be understood as a continuum where relations are neither entirely oppositional nor completely cooperative (Conston, 1998; Kabdiyeva & Dixon, 2014). Within this continuum, different types of NGO-state relations have been identified, ranging from oppositional and antagonistic to cooperation and co-optation. Though certainly not limited to these, notable contributions to this analysis include the three-part NGO-state relation model proposed by Clark (1991), the eight-point typology sponsored by Coston (1998) and Najam's (2000) Four C's of NGO-state relations.

First, Clark (1991) proposes that the mutual needs between states and NGOs results in a situation where these sectors cannot ignore each other and, therefore, some form of interaction between the two is inevitable. So, while NGOs may challenge a government and pose threats to its legitimacy, they certainly cannot ignore it due, in part, to the inescapable legal and policy frameworks set by governments for the sector (ibid.). Likewise, governments are said to also benefit from NGOs due to the comparative advantage of non-state development work often demonstrated through cost-effective, innovative and flexible practices, proximity to disadvantaged populations and their ability to fill gaps left by mainstream development agents (Lillehammer, 2003; Jennings, 2006; Tanga & Fonchingong, 2009; Batley & Rose, 2010; Marcinkutė, 2011). Hirsch (2003) also highlights the expertise possessed by NGO agents which are not possessed by state representatives, their role in identifying social needs and priorities and their implementation of programmes which state officials are either unable to do, refuse to do or choose to delegate.

Moreover, the global landscape over the past four decades has seen a shift in development stewardship courtesy of neo-liberalism and its founding principles of deregulated capitalism. Whereas the task of carrying out socio-economic advancement models was previously delegated solely to governments (Canon, 1996; Haque, 2002), failed implementation by post-

independence states has been appropriated by champions of neo-liberalism as validation of vacancy in the provision of social services and as such, has been the basis of calls for the necessity of non-governmental intervention (Sanyal, 1994; White, 1999; Haque, 2002). In practice, this has meant that NGOs either work with government as implementing partners, take over traditionally government-allotted tasks and/or compete with government for funding (Kennedy, 1999; Habib, 2003). According to Mayhew (2005 cited in Teamay, 2007:27):

> *"Donors have increasingly funded NGOs rather than government and pressurise government to build 'partnerships' with NGOs to deliver basic services and become a third party in development. Because of this pressure from donors, many countries have created legislation to enable this process".*

As such, governments rarely enjoy the luxury of simply ignoring a sector which, in many instances, threatens the state's legitimacy and access to funding (Kennedy, 1999). Given this inescapable coexistence, NGO-state relations are often characterised by mutual distrust and suspicion (Spires, 2011). This is further exacerbated by an insecurity which emanates from the threats that the presence and effectiveness of the one sector is equal to a loss of legitimacy and usefulness in the other. Despite this insecurity, however, there is often a subtle acknowledge from both sectors that reducing poverty and dispensing the benefits of development is too great a task for either of the two to bear without additional input and expertise. In light of this, some states concede by maintaining collegial partnerships with NGOs and are thus able to achieve notable development outcomes while others maintain highly adversarial relations with non-state actors. Kudva (2008:1) proposes that:

> *"NGO relations with the state are best characterised and marked by uneasiness. Individual organisations are often simultaneously involved in collaborative and conflictual relations with the state and walk a thin line between establishing pragmatic partnerships even as they acknowledge the need to keep some critical distance from the state".*

To properly maintain this divide, scholars centralise the concept of autonomy particularly as a strategy for NGOs to retain their legitimacy and comparative advantage (Banks, et al., 2015). Therefore, when close ties with governments are maintained, it is believed that the risk of co-optation is heightened (Hirsch, 2003; Lillehammer, 2003; Jennings, 2006; Batley & Rose, 2010). On the other end, when NGOs are able to maintain a largely autonomous

relationship from the state, competitive and oppositional relations can emerge (Kennedy, 1999; Spires, 2011).

While autonomy is often used to delineate spaces of operation between states and NGOs, Najam's Four C's model probes deeper into the more operational principles which influence how NGOs interact with state agencies. Central to this are the concepts of 'needs' and 'means' which draw out the dynamics and motivations of NGO-state relations. According to Najam (2000), these can range from cooperative or complementary to confrontation and co-optation. Each of these points of the NGO-state relationship continuum can be marked by the level of synergy between the needs of both sectors and the means by which these are pursued. For example, in cases where government and NGO priorities along with approaches to pursuing them are aligned, cooperation may characterise relations between the two sectors. On the other end, confrontational relationships may emerge when NGO and state priorities as well as the means of achieving them are at odds. Between these points, lie complimentary and co-optation-based interactions both of which underscore constantly negotiated deviation between collegiality and absolute dissent (Najam, 2000).

A central part of this thesis is aimed at disentangling the world of NGOs and by so doing, lay a grounding upon which the base operations and role of local education NGOs can be considered and described. A significant part of this involves teasing out the relations which NGOs must maintain – from a global and sector level to an organisational level– in order to operate, protect their survival and play their role in a given sector. Clark and Najam's models of NGO-state relations are instrumental to this, primarily because they highlight the constantly negotiated relations between these sectors depending on the needs of each and the means by which these are met. Resources and their bases, as will be demonstrated in the next section and throughout this thesis, maintain power asymmetries in the development sector and these manifest themselves in NGO-state relations as much as they do in NGO groundwork (Nyamugasira, 1998). This often results in NGO base operations being scattered –globally, nationally, regionally and organisationally– between multiple players upon which NGO survival, legitimacy and operations rest.

2.4 NGOs and donors: 'Partnership' as a placating myth

Relations between NGOs and state agencies must be viewed under the shadow of the more dominant player which makes NGO operations possible, namely donors. Tvedt's (2006) ''

‘*DoStaNGO-system’* identifies the dominant actors within this network and places ‘Donors’ at the forefront, followed by ‘States’ and then NGOs. Though this term is not aimed at relegating NGOs to passive recipients of financial aid and policy frameworks, it does underscore the power-laden and often asymmetrical exchanges between these actors and how they have a towering effect on NGO ideology and operations. Furthermore, while a context-based analysis of the extent to which state and donor agendas preside over NGO work is essential (Bornstein, 2005; Orjuela, 2005; Nancy & Yontcheva, 2006; Tvedt, 2006; Kareithi & Lund, 2012), a dominant view in the field holds that donors, primarily due to their financial might, retain a level of clout which remains unmatched by Third World governments, NGOs and by extension, beneficiaries (Kennedy, 1999; Rauh, 2010; Mugo, 2015).

The global development mandate executed over the past three decades rests on performance standards set for every sector in the developing society (health, education, sanitation, housing etc.). These are centred on neo-liberal ethics and carried into the developing world by the ideology packages of human rights, good governance, democratisation and people-centred development (Cornwall & Brock, 2005; Leal, 2007). International Financial Institutions and Intergovernmental Organisations have played a central role in setting these standards, assigning implementers and deploying monitors. Again, the promotion of NGOs as the ‘sweethearts of development’ has seen them rising to occupy spaces which are neglected or completely unoccupied by states (White, 1999; Kabdiyeva & Dixon, 2014; Banks, et al., 2015). This has inadvertently promoted the institutions which fund their work both on a sector level and on a global development scale (Haque, 2002; Rieth, 2010)

In pursuit of these global development ethics, ‘partnership’ has been a term which underscores the highly sought-after ideal of symmetrical donor-NGO relations. It is believed that worthwhile interactions between these two actors deepen and maximise the reach of development efforts by homing in on the collective expertise, resources, skills and input of donor agencies and community-based implementers (Rieth, 2010). While donors provide ideological structure, financial muscle and administrative guidance, NGOs implement complex development programs in ever more complex contexts.

Soothing as the concept of partnership may be, however, it has come under immense review over the years, primarily in light of the power imbalances between donors and NGOs (Brehm, 2004; Orjuela, 2005; Rauh, 2010). In her seminal work, *Power in Partnership? An analysis of an NGO’s relationships with its partners*, Lister (2000) uncovers the deceptiveness of the concept when one considers the largely asymmetrical relations between donors and NGOs.

In particular, she suggests, the unequal resource – and by extension 'power' – bases between the two rarely produce what can be traditionally described as equal partnership but rather reinforce power imbalances which favour donors.

First, the existence and operation of NGOs depends on the availability of funding. Operations are then applied against the backdrop of ideological leanings and global development priorities for which donors avail funding at a given time (Mortif, 2011). Finally, NGO survival rests on portrayals of positive results and impact which subscribe to administrative and reporting processes established by donors (Jensen, 2016). As such, Bornstein (2005:97) proposes that: "donor organisations can, and do, wield power over those organisations they fund, in respect to what the organisation does, how it does it and how success is measured". Similarly, *Resource Dependence* and *Neo-institutional* theorists (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Davis & Cobb, 2010; Blomqvist, 2014) propose an external locus of NGO survival which often requires that organisations configure their internal processes to retain the legitimacy and resources that protect their continued existence.

The ever-changing global development arena has, however, seen donors constantly adjusting their orientations to fit the development priority of the day (Petras, 1999). Morfit's remarkably titled paper, "*AIDS is Money: How donor preferences reconfigure local realities"* (2011), captures the mobility of global development urgencies which often compels donors and, by extension NGOs, to modify their mandates accordingly. The inclination among NGOs to 'follow the money' (Bornstein, 2005; Rieth, 2010) has, for example, resulted in a swell of organisations which focus on women's rights and girl-child education, HIV/AIDS, environmentalism, climate change and what Handlin (2015) refers to as '*post-material issues*' over the past two decades in particular (Rauh, 2010; Albertyn & Tjonneland, 2011; Mugo, 2015). As indicated by Edwards and Hulme (1998 cited in Rauh, 2010:34): "aspects of power and dependency have resulted in some NGOs shifting their focus from important areas for their beneficiaries, towards areas of donor interest that will attract a large amount of funding".

The imminent shifts in donor agendas and narrow performance standards have had a discernible impact on NGOs on a sector and often an organisational level. Finite and project-specific funds have, for example, instigated competitive inter-organisation relations where NGOs seek to portray the most donor-acceptable images of themselves either in their levels of professionalism, actual and projected impact as well as their overall value-for-money (Orjuela, 2005; Dosbayeva, 2010; Jensen, 2016). To achieve this, organisations must endure

arduous and time-consuming reporting and fundraising processes complete with all the necessary claims of capacity building, empowerment and sustainability (Rauh, 2010; South, 2012).

By way of unveiling these internal mechanisms and the organisational cultures which emerge therefrom, Petras (1999:434) elaborates:

> *"Projects are designed based on guidelines and priorities of the imperial centers and their institutions. They are then 'sold' to the communities. Evaluations are done by and for the imperial institutions. Shifts of funding priorities or bad evaluations result in the dumping of groups, communities, farmers and cooperatives. Everybody is increasingly disciplined to comply with the donor's demands and their project evaluators. The NGO directors, as the new viceroys, supervise and ensure conformity with the goals, values and ideology of the donors as well as the proper use of funds".*

For the most part, it seems, these processes are carried out in order to ensure efficiency in program implementation, facilitate internal and outward accountability, and to eliminate, as much as possible, the threats of financial mismanagement (Bornstein, 2005; Jordan, 2014). However, common criticisms brought against NGOs in this regard are that contact with and responsiveness to communities is endangered by the amount of time required to professionalise organisations and that secondly, inclinations towards accountability are often tilted more towards donors than beneficiary communities (Lister, 2000; Blomqvist, 2014).

Pressure to retain legitimacy and donor confidence has also resulted in organisations opting for depoliticised and short-term issue projects which yield quick results rather than long-term interventions aimed at systemic transformation. As indicated by Rauh (2010:34), "frequent fluctuations in funder priorities increase environmental uncertainty and the pressure to implement programs that are likely to be seen as "successful" rather than addressing the root of the problem which usually involves complex, long-term processes". Again, Petras (1999:435) weighs in to propose that "NGOs with their 'apolitical' posture and their focus on self-help" not only mystify and fragment grassroots movements but alienate communities from both the fundamental source of their destitution and also their most sustainable escape patterns. In the greater scheme of things, this has had real implications not only on NGOs' and the sector's limited ability to make lasting contributions to the eradication of poverty (Bornstein, 2005), but also means that some communities and development needs may

remain neglected because they do not possess the potential for rapid success upon which cycles of funding rest (Ibrahim & Hulme, 2010; Banks, et al., 2015).

While many organisations simply acquiesce and adjust to these pressures, others seek to curtail the external foothold on organisational operations by pursuing some level of autonomy from funders– as with state agencies discussed in the previous section. Organisations often do this by either maintaining multiple sources of funding, generating supplementary funds independently or, in some cases, pursuing funding from specific donors with which they share ideological and administrative impulses (Rauh, 2010; Abouassi & Trent, 2015). By so doing, organisations seek to decentralise power within the development network and expand their own room to manoeuvre (Brehm, 2004). This not only allows them to maintain a hold over their development orientation but also preserves their responsiveness to beneficiary communities both in project planning and implementation.

Operating within a highly competitive sector with ever-changing players, priorities and performance standards, the luxury for NGOs to maintain absolute control over funds and funding sources is quite limited. To operate, organisations must harness funds from domestic and, quite often, foreign donors that often rely solely on textual knowledge of the systems which maintain poverty in the grassroots. Additionally, the financial dependence and intricate administrative processes required to obtain and retain funding expand the physical and social distance between communities and NGOs, obstruct the urgency for downward accountability (White, 1999; Lessard, 2010) and weaken the responsiveness to community needs and priorities (Whaites, 2000; Tanga & Fonchingong, 2009; Weger, 2013). As such, with the sources of NGO existence and survival being located upstream, it is little wonder that, in many contexts, the concept of 'partnership' has perhaps been little more than just another 'euphemistic development buzzword' rather than a reliable reference for NGO-donor relations.

'Resources' and 'power', in addition to 'needs' and 'means'– highlighted in the previous section– bear heavily on the engagements between actors in the global development network. Not only do these require constantly negotiated power reserves– which in itself brings about tensions– but they also play a central role in NGOs' day-to-day tasks. Top-heavy resource bases maintain a power imbalance that elevates donors and continues to banish beneficiary communities to the margins of development design and appraisal. Lessard (2010) goes so far as to suggest that this power matrix results in the ideals and priorities of donors taking precedence over the needs and priorities of poor communities because, as noted by Bornstein

(2005:49), “the ultimate power lies in the fact that the donor can pull the plug on funding”. NGOs must therefore, be tactical in balancing the resource and power stocks which are congested in the upper echelons of the network while simultaneously maintaining the performance standards which grant them legitimacy in the public and donor eye.

2.5 Beneficiaries in the matrix of development

Relations between *Dostangosystem* players are filled with tensions which are constantly negotiated around power reserves, access to resources, needs, means and sources of legitimacy. Likewise, interactions between organisations and beneficiary communities centre on many of these same elements. In particular, dominant discourse has highlighted legitimacy, routes of accountability, power disparities and the conflict between systemic change and organisational survival as pertinent features of NGO-beneficiary relations.

While NGO approaches and practices are largely influenced by the more domineering players within the network – states and donors – relations with beneficiaries appear to be more negotiable. However, poor communities and their socio-economic needs provide organisations with a source of legitimacy which states and donors cannot provide. Put plainly, donor funding which makes NGO existence possible is preceded by a socio-economic condition that is identified, announced and prioritised by international development stewards. According to Forte (2014:12):

> *“In order for NGOs to intervene and take on a more dominant role, something else is required for their work to be carried out, in addition to gaining visibility, attracting funding and support from powerful institutions, and being well placed to capitalize on the opportunities created by neoliberal structural adjustment. They require a ‘need’ for their work. In other words, to have humanitarian action, one must have a needy subject”.*

In order to justify their existence and be considered relevant therefore, NGOs must, again, be tactical in securing both their relations with poor communities and the perceptions of their role as sources of emancipation and relief. This often requires that organisations carefully sustain their ties with states and donors by also sustaining the image of the ‘bottomless’ well of their relevance – poverty and disadvantage (Forte, 2014). To this end, NGO-beneficiary relations, much like ‘*DoStaNGO*’ relations are rarely ever symmetrical and uncomplicated (Walsh, 2016). In addition to sources of complication located upstream, organisations must

also contend with their multi-layered target populations that harbour their own cultures, philosophies and structures. It comes as no surprise therefore that organisations are in a constant process of balancing multiple external associations while taking care not to abandon their mandates and altruistic obligations (Andrews, 2014; Risal, 2014).

Claims of NGO legitimacy and comparative advantage are often based on how organisations interact with and respond to beneficiary needs and priorities. In comparison to donors and states, proximity to beneficiaries and, as is often assumed, flexible responses to their needs, makes NGOs the preferred development channels (Weger, 2013). This is especially the case for communities living in extreme poverty and deprivation which are often excluded from mainstream development initiatives. Alongside this flexibility, a deeper level of accountability to communities is thought to be a feature which gives NGOs a competitive edge. As noted by Edwards and Hulme (1996:967) "the concept of accountability – the means by which individuals and organizations report to a recognized authority (authorities) and are held responsible for their actions – is a crucial component to legitimacy". Based on this proposition alone, two considerations are worth making. First, it is necessary to reflect on who within this development network (i.e. which development actor/s) is recognised by organisations as an 'authority' to which accountability is not negotiable. To this, the most obvious answer – donors– is more likely to be the closest to reality. A second, and more operational deliberation to make, is which of these actors are able to realistically hold NGOs responsible and accountable for their actions? and to what extent? Again, the most obvious answer –donors– lends itself to the most accurate representation of who holds the power of accountability in the global and local development network. Again, what these questions serve to do is accentuate the fundamental power imbalances that characterise this sector and the relations between its members from donors to beneficiaries. Locked between these different routes of accountability which – each for its own very important reasons – must be honoured, it seems that NGO powers of negotiation are quite often exercised in respect to downward accountability rather than upward (O'Dwayer & Unerman, 2010; Rahmani, 2012; Andrews, 2014; Banks, et al., 2015). At this point, it is necessary to take a brief moment to reflect on the different ways in which NGOs seek and claim to mend these fissures of power and influence between organisations and program beneficiaries– mainly through participatory frameworks– as this forms a central component of this thesis.

2.6 Unmasking the promise of 'participation'

The concept of 'participation' has been a central feature in dominant development discourse. At one point or another during the late 1900s' swell of development rhetoric, it has co-existed with other catch-phrases such as 'empowerment', 'democratisation', 'good governance' and 'people-centred development' (Leal 2007). As with the concept of 'partnership' discussed earlier, 'participation' has been yet another development buzzword which has, both on ideological and pragmatic grounds, sought to flatten the vertical structures of power within this network and reduce the social distance between organisations and beneficiaries (Hickey & Mohan, 2004).

Participation, as an organising code and a highly sought-after ideal of development intervention, has been a central feature in non-governmental programs on three ends; first in program planning, then in implementation and finally, program appraisal and evaluation. The involvement of beneficiaries in these stages in considered worthwhile and necessary as a means to an end, and also, as an end in itself (Oakley, 1991; Cleaver, 2001; Cornwall & Brock, 2005). By decentralising power to and strengthening communities as seminal development practitioners, programs are implemented in response to the needs and priorities of beneficiaries which can improve program efficiency and cost-effectiveness (Oakley, 1991; Coelho & Favareto, 2008; Morgan, 2016). As such, democratic design and appraisal which prioritises community participation is said to establish a solid base for sustainable development initiatives which are 'equally' owned by locals (Johnson & Wilson, 2000; Stiglitz, 2002; Bechange, 2010; Tonegawa, 2014).

Furthermore, scholars and practitioners have opined that participation is also valuable in the implementation of development intervention for its own sake (Oakley, 1991). This is to say that the participation of beneficiaries in program design, implementation and appraisal can be valuable to communities on the basis of its ability to empower them to become active players in their socio-economic advancement process; a sense of empowerment which is said to be of value in and out of NGO structures (Baranauskiene, Gerulaitis and Radzeviciene 2011, Goldman and Little 2015, Morgan 2016).

The noble intentions of participation notwithstanding, the concept has, much like other development buzzwords, had to withstand various forms of reckoning (Leal, 2007; Weger, 2013). Cornwall (2006) suggests that subtle acknowledgments of theoretical and operational failure by development practitioners have ushered in new versions of the concept over the years

from passive ‘community participation’ and ‘involvement’ to active ‘community-driven development’. These versions of participation, which are predominantly aligned to people-centred and sustainable development policy packages have, much like their predecessors, captured the attention of critics on the basis of theoretical volatility, operational shortcomings and certainly, prevailing poverty in the developing world and global inequity broadly. At best, it is believed that development programs have perhaps been a little more than just institutionalised poverty and inequalities stitched up in feel-good rhetoric such as participation (Chambers & Pettit, 2004; Hickey & Mohan, 2004; Cornwall & Brock, 2005). Furthermore and in addition to the ideological questions relating to power disparities between communities and practitioners, several operational criticisms are levelled against NGOs and their claims of fostering widespread and meaningful forms of community participation in development (Vivian, 1992; Cleaver, 2001; Weger, 2013).

First, in a sector where competitive edge is retained through quick and positive results rather than systemic transformation, meaningful community involvement in the design and implementation of development programs is often a logistical burden that is unsuccessfully traded off against organisational survival (Streeten, 1997; Weger, 2013). Secondly, the physical and social distance between communities and NGOs, which this concept seeks to address, ironically, often restricts the possibility of equal engagements between organisations and beneficiaries with impenetrable donor agendas being passed off as negotiable program outlines (Mohamed, 2010; Weger, 2013).

Finally, development programs are implemented within fully-formed societies that have long-standing socio-economic, political and cultural realities and systems to which NGOs must relinquish a significant portion of their independence and impact. As such, though-well-meaning, participatory frameworks actualised by NGOs, either in NGO or in NGO involvement broadly, often take on the shape and identity of these societies (Shivji 2007). Gaventa (2004:34) cites Cornwall (2004) who proposes that “spaces of participation are not neutral, but are themselves shaped by power relations that both surround them and enter them”. He then goes on to propose that “power relations help to shape the boundaries of participation, what is possible within them, and who may enter, with which identities, discourses and interests” (Gaventa, 2004:34). To a significant extent therefore, access to and participation in spaces of negotiating participation are prepacked and shaped by the societies within which they are located physically, socially and politically.

Moreover, the chasm between participation rhetoric and practice is further expanded by sector and organisation-level cultures of fundraising and reporting. These arduous and time-consuming undertakings are said to encourage, explicitly or otherwise, tokenistic forms of community participation in NGO planning and evaluation. Here, relatively fortunate stratums of the poor population participate in NGO leadership structures and in NGOs as a whole (Makuwira, 2004; Walsh, 2016). In light of this, a fundamental, yet less dominant, question brought forward by participation scholars centres on whether NGOs reach and interact either with the poorest populations or with populations which, by relative fortune, are able to access both mainstream and non-state development initiatives.

In this regard, commentators have made two overarching propositions. First, they suggest that NGOs often fail to reach the poorest populations thereby recreating the unequal access to development opportunities which prevail in poor communities (Kelly & Van Vlaenderen, 1995; Mohamed, 2010; Weger, 2013; Tonegawa, 2014). Secondly, by reaching a select few, it is believed that a local elite, which benefits both from mainstream and non-state development initiatives, is created and serviced by multiple actors (Makuwira, 2004; Coelho & Favareto, 2008). In light of this, Uphoff (1988) proposes that, in many instances, community participation in development programs is often an 'illusion' rather than a reality, while others consider it to be a little more than a 'cursory myth' which glosses over the fundamental inequities that maintain poverty (Guijt & Kaul Shah, 1998; Akerkar, 2001).

Notwithstanding 'participation's' most noble and concerted efforts of mending the power and resource gaps between NGOs and beneficiary communities, these relations remain externally predestined and internally sustained by organisations. While participation aims and claims to draw communities closer to opportunities for development and empowerment, organisational urgencies of preservation and their depoliticised approaches to poverty actively counteract with this ideal. Failure to strike an equitable balance between these forces results in organisations being complicit, knowingly or otherwise, in a power matrix that reduces beneficiary communities to consumers of development products with *take-it-or-leave-it* engagements. This manifests itself either through the implementation of programs which are not of priority to beneficiaries or short-term, isolated projects which do little to uproot the sources of development deficits (Sooryamoorthy, 2005; Andrews, 2014; Risal, 2014; Banks, et al., 2015).

This, by extension, means that NGOs themselves become channels of power which they wield over beneficiaries who, though their needs feed and sustain organisations, remain

unable to match the power and resources that these organisations derive therefrom. With poor communities generating revenue for the sector while running at extreme losses, Haque (2004 cited in Teamay, 2007:48) proposes that this network tends "to empower NGOs whilst weakening the power of the poor". Moreover and unfortunately to their own peril, NGO reformist initiatives such as 'capacity building' and 'empowerment' which often accompany 'participatory frameworks', though aimed at collapsing these imbalances in resources, power and benefits, often serve to advance criticisms of the narrative of NGOs being 'saviours' of the 'powerless'. By so doing, they also strengthen the belief of the sector being guided by imperial ambition and paternalistic rule over disadvantaged communities which, as discussed in the previous chapter, is said to echo the founding principles of enlightenment and civilisation (Lessard, 2010; O'Dwayer & Unerman, 2010).

The global development network is thus an active organism which operates on the basis of power and resource exchanges between players. Beneficiaries, being at the bottom of the 'food-chain', are often mere recipients of remotely designed development initiatives based on dominant development-centred ideologies. As such, their involvement in fundamental project design and evaluation processes can either compete– often unsuccessfully– with other organisational needs or be completely done away with. Edwards & Hulme (1996:966) bring the implications of this power matrix to the fore by contending that:

> *"The increasing funding of NGOs by official donor agencies thrusts the question of legitimacy into center stage; for if NGOs are becoming more responsive to external concerns, are substituting for government and are growing larger on the basis of foreign funding, what is happening to the links – to their values and mission, and to their relationships with "the poor,"supporters and others – through which they derive their right to intervene in development?"*

With these questions in mind, an assertion which emerges is that to a noticeable extent, the concept of 'participation', though lauded as the key to drawing communities towards development, also functions as a clogged filter of power that benefits an echelon of the poor while banishing the masses to the margins of socio-economic prospect. Organisations, in their pursuit of the eradication of poverty on the one hand and their own survival on the other are therefore, knowingly or otherwise, active 'participants' in this sector's mischief in disadvantaged communities. This not only sustains a highly contested and tension-filled NGO sector but has confounding implications for the world and work of organisations which,

while faced with the dire markers of poverty in the grassroots, must also carefully navigate the reality and culture of their sectoral dwelling (Helliker, 2006).

2.7 Education NGOs: A global and local balancing act

The global development network described above acts as a lens through which the world and work of local education NGOs, as civil society constituents, can be analysed. As partners in the globalised development mandate, education NGOs have been essential players in the advancement of education ideals and services to marginalised populations. Whether it be through the provision of supplementary resources and services or advocacy and monitoring initiatives aimed at addressing government failures, these organisations have secured a prominent position in global education planning and implementation (Rose, 2009). Not surprisingly though, education NGOs are not unlike other non-state actors in that they, too, operate within this "tension-filled social field that is bounded by their ongoing relationships with global donors, local nation-states and rural communities" (Helliker, 2006:18).

Non-state involvement in education is certainly not a new concept. However, their renewed prominence in the global education scene over the past two and a half decades comes in the wake of recently adopted education ideals embedded in EFA and MDGs' policy frameworks. These frameworks have served, first, to establish globally acceptable standards of educational attainment under the banner of basic human rights and secondly, to detail operational benchmarks to be met by states aligned to these ideals. Intergovernmental Organisations and their international financial allies have led much of the deliberations on these logics and, through various modes of globalisation, have been used to petition and facilitate the compliance of governments across the globe. Advancements in the mobility of information and resources have further extended the reach of education-based human rights ideology to remote parts of the globe. Carnoy (1999:14) suggests that:

> "*Globalisation is having a profound effect on education at many different levels, and will have even greater effects in the future, as nations, regions and localities fully comprehend the fundamental role education institutions have, not only in transmitting skills needed in the global economy, but in reintegrating individuals into new communities built around information and knowledge.*"

Though national governments have exercised largely uncontested control over domestic education policy and delivery, existing and operating successfully within a globalised

development field compels states to relinquish portions of this dominion to external monitors and supplementary implementers (Rose, 2009). Calls for the education of girl-children, for example, have taken centre stage in many, previously unreachable communities as a result of the globally set urgency towards ensuring gender parity in schooling. In many instances, initiatives to carry these ideals out are led by local NGOs in partnership with International NGOs and IGOs. NGOs infiltrate local settings in an attempt to partner with active but constrained governments or expose inactive or poorly performing ones. A large part of this involves international and regional evaluation mechanisms carried out to monitor state compliance and progress. These have also been used as points of reference when calling out the states which, due to conscious abandon or capacity restrictions, fail to adhere to the acceptable performance standards.

Nationally, education NGOs, much like their broader development counterparts, are confronted with the challenge of managing multiple allegiances to donors, states and communities while balancing the unique web of local socio-economic, political and historic characteristics. As noted by Sabatini (2002 cited in Banks et al, 2015):

> *"In the growth of funding to NGOs in order to foster a 'vibrant' civil society, civil society has been treated as a political magic bullet without a nuanced understanding of how it fits into a more complex network of relationships with the state, political parties, and citizens within diverse country contexts".*

At several points in their existence, NGOs and their internal workings are constantly leaning towards multiple directions– donors, states communities– each of which is necessary for organisations' existence, operations and legitimacy. These multiple allegiances vary in their level of operational demand on organisations and are also unequal in the extent of their passive and active influence on NGOs both on a global sector level and also on individual organisations. Though there is certainly no shortage of views on which of the actors in this network have a greater ideological and operational pull, a detailed description of this requires further analysis so as to pay necessary credence to the contextually relevant features which also play into the face of local education NGOs. The next section lays a base for these contextual considerations specifically with respect to education NGOs in South Africa.

2.8 Education NGOs in South Africa

The story of South African education has long included Civil Society Organisations broadly and NGOs more specifically. Their involvement in the sector is often traced back to the early 1900s when the Anglican and Catholic Church as well as other CSOs were primary providers of education to much of the black population (Mazibuko, 2000; Lewis & Steyn, 2003). Beyond this and during the period approaching the establishment of apartheid policies and structures in 1948, constestation and dislussionment with the discriminatory command of the white-led colonial state catalysed the founding of several prominent community-led associations which either sought to disrupt oppressive colonial rule or mend the systematic exclusions of the majority of the population. The Night School Movement, for example, formed initially as a community-led initiative in the 1920s, grew to become one of the sole providers of education in many black, coloured and Indian communities in the 1960s (Mazibuko, 2000; Aitchison, 2003). This, alongside several other formations, sought to counteract either the structures of apartheid and/or the multi-sectoral violence visited upon the black population. These included the National Literacy Cooperation (NLC), the Educational Opportunities Council (EOC), the Trust for Educational Advancement in South Africa (TEASA), the South African Committee of Higher Education (SACHED) Trust, the Bureau of Literacy and Literature (BLL), The Literacy Project (2004) –and many more– all of which were essential to the extension of education rights to excluded populations during this time (Bhola, 1998; Nonyongo & Ngengebule, 1998; Aitchison, 2007)

The 1980s, though primarily associated with the liberalization of South Africa's economic and political landscape, were also characterised by a significant growth in the NGO sector (Habib & Taylor, 1999; Morrow, 2004). During this time, non-state interventions had become even more distinctly split between NGOs that were involved in the delivery of social welfare services (Pieterse, 1997) and those which worked to dismantle the oppressive rule of the National Party (NP) with those in the latter category dominating the field of associational life both in discourse and operation (Taylor, et al., 1998).

During the first decade of political transition from apartheid to democracy, NGOs of every kind found themselves faced with a two-part crisis of identity and resource depletion. Organisations which, according to Morrow (2004:319), "emerged from a bitter political conflict had to start redefining themselves given the fact that the oppressive rule of the National Party, which necessitated much of their work during apartheid, had been overcome". Due to the fear of imminent obselescence, many NGOs closed down while others opted for

reconfiguring their purposes in order to retain relevance (Pieterse, 1997; Volmink & van der Elst, 2017). Morrow (2004:323) proposes that the trend of "mass extinction" in the sector impacted education NGOs in the mid-1990s compelling many to abandon their oppositional posture towards the state in favour of a more coorperative one.

With the state being increasingly overwhelmed with operationalising the transition from apartheid to democracy, NGOs repositioned themselves to become viable partners in policy formulation processes, personnel training as well as development project planning and implementation (Pieterse, 1997; Volmink & van der Elst, 2017). In the field of education, NGOs became active partners in school personnel capacity building aimed at the implementation of education reform policies mainly through workshops and material support (Roberts, n.d.).

In addition, NGOs were faced with depleting financial and human resources, both of which were moving towards government (Pieterse, 1997; Habib & Taylor, 1999; Weideman, 2015). In the case of decreased sources of funding, two reasons are often cited in NGO literature, the first being South Africa's classification as being a middle-income country resulting in the diversion of international donor funds to other countries, and the second being that of international funds being rerouted directly towards the state which was then tasked with dispensing funds to projects as it saw fit (Morrow, 2004; Weideman, 2015). Moreover, the massive exodus of skilled NGO personnel and financial resources to government departments not only depleted the capacity of an already struggling post-apartheid NGO sector but also posed real threats to the sector's legitimacy and claims of relevance (Pieterse, 1997; Weideman, 2015).

However, the early 2000s brought calm over the sector's turbulence as a new set of realities confronted and challenged the euphoria of a post-apartheid state. The lingering might of apartheid and its colonial predecessor became apparent as the state wrestled on the one hand, with settling domestic uncertainties and securing foreign pressures while on the other, rebuilding a broken system of governance into one which would now serve all its citizens. These struggles, with the help of international neo-liberal trends, availed numerous spaces, particularly in health and education, wherein NGOs could once again, assert their relevance and counteract their imminent demise (Morrow, 2004).

Much like in the 1980s, the activist voice of 'new social movements' dominated the field of associational life in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Robins, 2008). Similar to those formed

in the 1980s, many of these organisations (including the South African Homeless People's Federation (1994), the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) (1998), the Concerned Citizens Forum (1999), the Anti-Eviction Campaign, the Anti-Privatisation Forum, the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (2000), the Landless Peoples Movement, the Coalition of South Africans for the Basic Income Grant (2001) and Abahlali baseMjondolo (2005) were formed in response to the neoliberal economic policies adopted by the government which had extremely adverse effects on the delivery of social services to the poor. In particular, high levels of unemployment, limited housing and sanitation, water and electricity necessitated and lent traction to these interventions (Madlingozi, 2007; Willems, 2011).

While advocacy and activist work dominated public non-state discourse, the majority of non-governmental actors retained their position as service providers (Morrow, 2004). Again, education NGOs were classified as either *service providers* that extended the social welfare arm of the state or *policy advocates/activists* that maintained a more distant orientation and acted as "watchdogs" of the government's policy processes and service provision (Habib & Taylor, 1999). Organizations such as Section 27 and The Legal Resource Centre, for example, have worked extensively in policy reform and advocacy efforts while others such as The Ubuntu Education Fund and Miet Africa have focused more on the provision of resources and education services. Given that "there is no overt objection by government to the critical and advocacy role of NGOs" (Morrow, 2004: 325) some organisations have been able to successfully straddle this division between service provision and advocacy. Equal Education's operational model, for example, centres on activities aimed at advocacy, activism as well as service-delivery (Equal Education, 2017).

While instrumental in the establishment of The Basic Infrastructural Norms and Standards, in collaboration with the Legal Resource Centre, Equal Education has also been a key source of community capacity building (Mufamadi, 2014). The organisation's implementation model, which centralises learners, parents and community members' voices in shaping the priorities and activities of the organisation, has been effective in vocalising the plight of excluded communities which are usually unable to access platforms of influence (Mufamadi, 2014). Likewise, Section 27, though aimed at holding government accountable for safeguarding all human rights, has done extensive work aimed at advancing the right to education to poor and excluded communities (Section27, 2013; Dlamini, 2017). Some of the most notable contributions made by the organisation in this regard include the class action brought against the Minister of Education following the non-provision of learner support

materials in Limpopo in 2012 (Beckman & Prinsloo, 2015) and pressuring the state to prioritise access to education for learners with disabilities in KwaZulu Natal (Section27, 2015). The LRC is another non-state initiative which has been instrumental, for example, in expediting the eradication of mud schools, the filling of vacant teaching posts across the Eastern Cape and also in the establishment of the legally binding Basic Infrastructural Norms and Standards to be upheld by government which include the provision of water and sanitation facilities, electricity and furniture (LRC, 2015).

The first two and a half decades of democratic South Africa have proven to be a turbulent operational sphere for NGOs. The pressure for organisational flexibility in responding to the needs of poor communities while maintaining a hold of organisational survival and legitimacy has been quite evident during this time. As it appears however, a great number of NGOs have successfully weathered the imminent threats to their relevance and existence and they continue to be prominent players in the pursuit of socio-economic advancement in all the corners of South African society. Their activist and advocacy work has brought a citizen voice to key issues of poor service provision, education, poor service delivery over the years. Futhermore, they continue to extend services and resources to poor and excluded communities not reached by maintstream development agents. As such, though inherently borne of a contested space, the importance of NGOs in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa has been largely undisputed. However, a combination of the trends in the global development network discussed thus far, the tension-filled South African NGO sector and particularly, the persistent poverty and educational inequities which prevail, do warrant more careful analysis of the world and work of education NGOs in advancing the country's education ideals.

2.9 Conclusion

Ancient and contemporary conceptions of NGOs are largely relational; often highlighting the relative aspects of organisations which make them non-governmental and/or non-profit. From the work of ancient theorists such as Adam Ferguson to more contemporary scholars such as Antonio Gramsci, a central feature in NGO discourse has been the positioning of organisations in society relative to the state and market. Though scholars agree that these lines are indistinct and are constantly being negotiated on the basis of the needs and transactions of power between sector members, NGOs are still largely perceived of as a third

and separate sector of society. However, a closer look at the internal workings of this sector– which this chapter sought to initiate– alludes to the fact that NGO ideologies, their approaches to development, operations and relations with poor communities and their socio-economic need are in large part, influenced and even informed by the very development actors from which organisations by definition, distinguish themselves.

This inconsistency aside, the need and space for non-governmental operation is then defended on the basis of poverty and the socio-economic deficiencies which pervade much of the developing world. Their comparative advantage – derived from their apparent flexibility, cost-effectiveness, proximity and responsiveness to beneficiaries – grants them legitimacy and justifies their work in poor communities. Their operations are then secured by states and more importantly, donors and the global development actors that inform in large part, their ideological and operational impulses.

A key proposition which this chapter sought to make is that the organisational form of NGOs, their ideology, their operations and their orientations towards development and education are built and adapted from their relationships with both donors and states as they rely heavily on the former for funding and the latter for the policy and legal frameworks necessary for operating in-country. As will become apparent throughout this thesis, despite the dominant claims of separateness, NGO base operations involve constant oscillation between distinctiveness from and dependence on states, markets, donors and beneficiaries. This chapter initiated the process of untying these multiple links and relations and laying out how they collectively influence the world and work of NGOs.

The chapter also addressed and interrogated some of the fundamental features which are said to initiate and inform the competitive edge possessed by NGOs, namely their distinctiveness and their innate ability to facilitate widespread community participation in development programs and development broadly. By holding these concepts (*'non-governmental-ness', 'partnership', 'participation'*) up to scrutiny having touched on the harsh legacy of their ancestry in the previous chapter, this chapter sought to interrogate the often taken-for-granted assertions of NGOs, their almost normative place in the development of poor communities, the beliefs of their innate potential for socio-economic overhaul and their neutrality in the condition of the South. The intention for these reflections is to disrupt the widely circulated idealisations of LNGOs and their parentage so as to build a firm grounding for an emperically founded description of their work and role in education which this thesis seeks to advance.

Chapter 3

NGOs: Definitions and global perspectives

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter identified and described the relationships which form a part of the world and work of NGOs, the inconsistencies which mystify delineations of the sector and its members along with the tensions that accompany them. This began with a discussion of dominant conceptions which position NGOs outside state and market institutions. The chapter then challenged these conceptions by demonstrating first, the fluidity of the divides between these sectors and secondly, the extent to which NGO operations are in fact often embedded within domestic and foreign state institutions and their market-based appendages. The power disparities between actors in this development network and how they influence NGOs at a sector level and an organisational level were then presented and discussed. The chapter paid particular attention to how the relations which organisations must constantly manage with states and donors tie into the mandates which grant them ultimate legitimacy with beneficiaries and their socio-economic needs. As a corollary to these relations, the chapter also examined and dismantled the widely-held and vehemently-defended assertions of NGO comparative advantage and the beliefs which sustain them. The present chapter draws from the background of these intricacies and inconsistencies and continues this deliberation by first, presenting the definitional disputes which have captured the attention of scholars and practitioners in the field and also discussing their actual and envisaged role in global development efforts. The chapter will then take a closer look at the world of education NGOs paying specific attention to the global context within which their mandates are formed and how local organisations carry these out. The aim here is to set a base for the

next chapter where evidence from South Africa and the continent as a whole will be used to detail the contributions made by NGOs in advancing education rights in Africa.

3.2 The challenge of defining NGOs

The world of NGOs and the literature related thereto can often be thought of as an infusion of different, and at times contrasting, organs, conceptions and classifications. Alongside the rapid proliferation of these organisations in the mid to late 1900s, were mounting debates among scholars and practitioners alike on the true nature and definition of the sector and the organisations encompassed therein. What emerged from this discord was a large pool of definitions and terminologies each of which attempts to either contribute to a universally applicable definition or, at the very least, provide clarity on the sector within a specific context. A number of reasons are proposed for this discord in civil society nomenclature with three towering over the rest. First, the extreme heterogeneity among sector members is said to bring about great troubles in establishing some consensus of what these organisations are and what they are not. Secondly, variance in the application of the term in different contexts across the globe along with the discipline-specific conceptions and applications of the term expand the multiple conceptions of sector members.

Widely accepted within civil society research is the idea that institutions which form part of the sector differ significantly in their internal structures, external relations, ideologies, organisational models as well as operational systems (Howe, 1999; Martens, 2002; Mercer, 2002; Willetts, 2002; Dugle, et al., 2015). Lewis (2009) proposes 14 ways in which civil society organs vary, and how these can complicate any definitional undertaking. Among these are the varied organisational sources of funding, ideological leanings, proximity to government and market institutions as well as types of membership and beneficiary representation (Lewis, 2009). As suggested by Princen and Finger (1994) therefore, the foremost challenge in defining this sector emanates, in large part, from its tremendous internal diversity and differences among sector members.

The difficulty of defining civil society members and NGOs more specifically is further attributed to the different forms that the sector takes in different parts of the world. Borne out of and associated predominantly with the work of ancient European thinkers from Aristotle to Gramsci, the concept is, according to some scholars, defined by its application in Western societies (Maina, 1998; Howard, 2005). Despite being well-rooted within these contexts,

however, the concept is still characterised by vast intellectual discord in these contexts of the alleged invention of associational tradition (Kaviraj & Khilnani, 2001: 3). Lewis (2002) has thus suggested that varied cultural, historical and political contexts in non-Western societies complicate an already complicated concept both in discourse and application. For example, while the concept was largely associated with volunteerism emanating from the advancement of charity law and Christian value systems in the United Kingdom (UK), its application in the United States (US) was often centred on the dominance of the market which rewards non-profit efforts by citizen organisations (Howe, 1999; Lewis & Kanji, 2009; Kuruvila, 2015). The longstanding divide within societies traditionally associated with inceptions of the concept is thus said to have taken on a different level of complication in non-western societies.

Debates on the contextual variations which bring with them numerous definitions of NGOs have brought about compelling considerations of the application and relevance of the concept in non-western settings. While some question the relevance of the concept in communities located in the Global South (Bratton, 1994; Haberson, 1994; Orvis, 2001; Greenstein, 2003; Howard, 2005; Opoku-Mensah, 2009), Lewis (2002) contends that questions into the existence or significance of civil society outside of its European 'birthplace' are unreasonable in that they deny localised meanings of associational life which have existed for centuries in these settings. Neubert (2014) goes further to suggest that not only is the idea of self-organisation applicable and relevant in Africa, for example, but there are applications of it that exist on the continent which the concept does not cover. More compelling evidence in support of this lies in the fact that even within the African community, self-organization has taken on numerous shapes and forms (Opoku-Mensah, 2009; Neubert, 2014). While this brings on a necessary layer of analysis to the global NGO sector, it does also compound the complexity in defining the sector and developing a workable framework for its analysis.

Furthermore, the obstacles in this definitional pursuit are also attributed to the plethora of discipline-specific inquiries which often extract and highlight specific elements of the sector in their classifications (Jenei & Kuti, 2008). While taxonomies sponsored by economists will centralise the "not-for-profit" element of non-state actors, legal and political inquiries will base definitions on the legal identity and "non-governmental" stance of NGOs respectively (Howe, 1999; Martens, 2002; Corry, 2010; Kuruvila, 2015). Lewis and Kanji (2009) therefore note that a sector which is largely classified by "*what it is not*" rather than "*what it is*" will present a significant challenge with being conceptualised.

3.3 NGOs are what they are not

Despite these definitional deliberations, the actual term " non-governmental organisation" is credited to the United Nations Charter which first made use of the term in 1945 to formally acknowledge the involvement of international non-state institutions as UN consultants. Since then, and especially from the 1970s, the use of the term has spread widely across the globe developing several splinter constituents in different parts of the world some of which are illustrated in the table below.

Figure 1- NGO Acronyms

AGNs -	Advocacy groups and networks
BINGOs	Big international NGOs
BONGOs	Business-organized NGOs
CBOs	Community-based organizations
COME'n'GOs	The idea of temporary NGOs following funds!
DONGOs	Donor-oriented/organized NGOs
Dotcause	Civil society networks mobilizing support through the internet
ENGOs	Environmental NGOs
GDOs	Grassroots development organizations
GONGOs	Government-organized NGOs
GRINGOs	Government-run (or -inspired) NGOs
GROs	Grassroots organizations
GRSOs	Grassroots support organizations
GSCOs	Global social change organizations
GSOs	Grassroots support organizations
IAs	Interest associations
IDCIs	International development cooperation institutions

IOs	Intermediate organizations
IPOs	International/indigenous people's organizations
LDAs	Local development associations
LINGOs	Little international NGOs
LOs	Local organizations
MOs	Membership organizations
MSOs	Membership support organizations
NGDOs	Non-governmental development organizations
NGIs	Non-governmental interests
NGIs	Non-governmental individuals
NNGOs	Northern NGOs
NPOs	Non-profit or not-for-profit organizations
PDAs	Popular development associations
POs	People's organizations
PSCs	Public service contractors
PSNPOs	Paid staff NPOs
PVDOs	Private voluntary development organizations
PVOs	Private voluntary organizations
QUANGOs	Quasi-non-governmental organizations
RONGOs	Royal non-governmental organizations
RWAs	Relief and welfare associations
SHOs	Self-help organizations

Source: (Najam, 1996; Lewis & Kanji, 2009)

As can be expected from such an internally diverse sector, the definitions used to define it are just as vast (Howe, 1999). While there are far too many to discuss, many of them often

bear spatial as well as operational overtones in outlining the nature of NGOs and their allocated space in development (Bebbington & Hickey, 2006).

As noted in the previous chapter, the spatial element in many NGO definitions is demonstrated by the two negatives which characterise the sector as *non-governmental* and *non-profit* (Brown & Korten, 1989; Atack, 1999; Chenoweth & Mcauliffe, 2012). These descriptions are often accompanied by more operational connotations which highlight the perceived purpose and function of non-state actors (Kuruvila, 2015). Streeten (1997) suggests that the fundamental purpose of NGOs is to contribute to the reduction of human suffering and the advancement of development processes in poor countries. Similarly, White (1999) proposes that NGOs can be classified as organisations which employ selfless methods of providing for the poor as an extension to state development efforts.

These development initiatives are often classified into two, largely intersecting, categories; 'goodwill' and 'gap-filling'. Firstly, NGOs are understood as institutions aimed at safeguarding common interests and upholding the public good (Martens, 2002; Anheier, 2005). Secondly, they uphold and pursue these common interests, largely, by occupying social welfare vacuums left by governments. (Brass, 2010; Dugle, et al., 2015). According to Howe (1999:62) some of these functions include:

> *"Remedying (some) injustices; providing mutual aid; affirming values, beliefs and ideals; rebalancing mal-distributed resources; providing offsets to formal rights and responsibilities; supporting social innovation; reproducing grassroots and social structures; providing the mechanisms of communication and consent that are essential conditions for democratic social order; and generating normative and infrastructural social capital".*

By addressing these social needs, NGOs are conceived of as 'gap-filling' agents which support and, at times, supplement the state's failed service provision efforts (Whaites, 2000). In instances where governments lack the necessary capacity, resources or innovative resolve to attend to these social needs, NGOs are often contracted to occupy the gap by extending the service arm of the state (Lillehammer, 2003; Brass, 2010; Lessard, 2010).

Furthermore, neo-liberal economic policies and, by extension, the gradual retreat of state agents from the provision of social welfare services has also provided the necessary impetus for the presence and function of NGOs especially in developing countries (Madlingozi, 2007; Krenz, 2012; Kantanka, 2013). As noted by Hirsch (2003:20), "growth in the number of

NGOs and in the amount of attention given to them, both by political scientists and in society as a whole, can rightly be regarded as part of the neoliberal paradigm which has now become dominant". This has translated to NGOs being understood and even defined by the more prominent position they occupy in economic, developmental and democratization processes globally (Teamay, 2007; Tanga & Fonchingong, 2009). In addition to these *implementer* and *partnership* roles, Lewis (2007) adds the *catalyst* role assumed by NGOs which is often associated with advocacy and activist initiatives. In this role, NGOs seek to bring about socio-economic and political reform through conscientization efforts and the implementation of innovative development strategies aimed at pressurising or compelling governments to fulfil their developmental tasks (Lewis & Kanji, 2009).

While these functional conceptions of NGOs have received much traction among scholars, they have also been subjects of extensive scrutiny. White (1999:311) illustrates this intellectual discord by noting that:

> *"NGOs are characterised as either selflessly dedicated to the poor or self-interested charlatans; supporting where government provision falls short or agents of foreign powers; able to act effectively with a minimum bureaucracy or a bunch of amateurs with funds beyond their managerial skills"*.

In addition to this, the notion of NGOs upholding the 'common good', which underpins many functional definitions, is widely interrogated. According to Tvedt (2002:365) the 'good' and 'humanitarian' elements associated with NGOs have been grossly overemphasized both in NGO literature and definitions thereof. For some, the 'selfless' qualities often ascribed to NGOs overly romanticise organisations' intentions and are ignorant of their potential to act as extensions of western domination (Haque, 2002). Close ties to and over-dependence on foreign donors has, for example, cast doubt on the 'goodwill' of NGOs, the extent of their altruistic convictions and genuine devotion to servicing disadvantaged communities (Habib & Taylor, 1999; Mercer, 2002).

Likewise, discussions on NGO definitions and operational boundaries has included debates on whether organisations which utilize force and violence to achieve ends should be considered as sector members (Savage & Roodt, 1998; Steytler, et al., 1998). While some believe that 'violence entrepreneurs', for example, are part and parcel of the non-state sector (Kasfir, 2008; Thomas, 2001) others hold that the definitions of NGOs are or should be predicated on 'the common good' and therefore cannot include institutions which apply force

or engage in illegal activities to achieve their socio-economic ends (Willetts, 2002). Stewart (1997), however, notes that some of the most notable contributions made by NGOs – including the end of apartheid in South Africa – are owed, in large part, to extra-legal activities employed by NGOs and as such cannot simply be discarded.

Despite the extensive intellectual discord on the definition of NGOs, one of the most prominent and widely accepted attempts towards defining them is accredited to Salamon and Anheier (1992). Through the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project, Salamon and Anheier sought to define the sector and provide clarity on its characteristics and dimensions and also propose a definition that would be widely applicable to NGO research being conducted in different contexts. During this undertaking, they contended with several definitions many of which they found to be either partially useful or – as discussed in the previous section – sponsored by a single discipline and therefore not applicable to wider fields of inquiry (Martens, 2002; Lewis, 2009; Kuruvila, 2015). From this project, Salamon and Anheier developed what is now known as the structural-operational definition of the non-profit sector. This definition is largely drawn from prevailing definitions as well as research conducted in different parts of the world (Morris, 2000) and it highlights the basic structure, common features, and operations of NGOs and not just the purpose or organisational structure as was often the focus of preceding functional definitions (Kuruvila, 2015). The structural-operational definition identifies five basic features which, according to the authors, are native to organisations classified as NGOs. According to Salamon and Anheier (1996), NGOs are institutional bodies which are:

1. *Organizations, i.e., they have an institutional presence and structure;*
2. *Private, i.e., they are institutionally separate from the state;*
3. *Not profit distributing, i.e., they do not return profits to their managers or to a set of owners;*
4. *Self-governing, i.e., they are fundamentally in control of their own affairs; and*
5. *Voluntary, i.e., membership in them is not legally required and they attract some level of voluntary contribution of time or money*

Although it is a vastly used definition within NGO research it, too, has garnered some critical reflection especially when it is applied retrospectively (Morris, 2000; Kenny, 2013; Kuruvila, 2015). Morris (2000) for example, criticizes the definition for being too time-bound and thus unable to provide clarity on historical contexts either for themselves or for the sake of

comparison between different eras. As such, according to Morris, this definition can hardly be used to compare associational structures which existed in the 1950s with those which emerged in the 1980s. She further notes that the definition is strictly limited to the non-profit sector and thus has limited usefulness to inquiries on other CSOs.

Similarly, Kenny (2013) criticizes the definition for excluding a vast number of organisations mainly by its non-state and non-profit elements. Firstly, he questions the non-profit element of the definition citing that many non-state actors are profit-generating institutions and, as such, are not covered by the definition. In addition, he casts doubt on the element of 'separateness from the state' given that many organisations work closely with government with a considerable number of them being set up by governments and, as such, not falling within the purview of the definition (Kenny, 2013).

According to Lewis (2007), finding a definition is not simply a mindless or semantic undertaking but rather a deeply-rooted task filled with conceptual implications. This can be more pronounced when attempting to inquire on a sector which is inherently characterised by ideological and operational inconsistencies. As contested as it may be, however, the definition sponsored by Salamon and Anheier (1996) throws a wide enough analytical net which pays necessary credence to the conceptual ambiguities which characterise the sector. It therefore acts as a suitable framework which can be applied in a wide array of contexts which may "vary by level of economic development; by political, cultural and legal systems and by size and role of the non-profit sector (Salamon & Anheier, 1996:1). The proposition of five broad features which are widely accepted as unique elements of sector members provides a suitable lens through which contextualised versions of the actors can be viewed. This definition is therefore considered a useful and flexible enough framework through which to consider the world and work of education NGOs operating within the educational, historical, political and socio-economic landscape chosen for this thesis.

3.4 Global perspectives on NGOs: "Filling gaps"

Definitional disputes related to NGOs do not only bear witness to the heterogeneity between sector members but also expose the varied meanings which have been attached to their presence, operation and overall role in development efforts across the globe. While some observers consider NGOs to be essential actors in the reduction of poverty and alleviation of human suffering, there is also a resounding voice from critics who cast doubt on the

motivation behind NGO interventions, their sustainability and scale-up potential as well as their overall efficacy (Manji & O'Coill, 2002; Miller-Grandvaux, et al., 2002; Makuwira, 2004; Rose, 2007; Ismail, 2012; Nummenpää, 2012). Dominant views do, however centre on non-state actors being either effective or impotent in occupying service provision vacuums or "filling gaps", strengthening local civil society institutions and communities as well as being central features of the democratization of development (Clark, 1991).

The history and rise of NGOs, in the modern sense of the concept, is often traced along the same lines as the rise to power of IGOs and donors such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the UN (Mercer, 1999; Joachim, 2003). Likewise, global perspectives on NGOs have been either influenced by these global powers or shaped by scholars who have observed the relationships between the two entities. Having taken up the mantle of addressing the developmental backlogs across the globe and in developing countries particularly, these and other multilateral institutions were central actors in the global movement of, firstly, discrediting southern governments on the basis of failures in implementing neo-liberal development models and secondly, appointing NGOs as the preferred carriers of development ideals to poor and disadvantaged communities (Sanyal, 1994; Mercer, 1999). Given their role in this process, NGOs are, as proposed by Kennedy (1999:503), viewed as:

> *"handmaidens of international donor agencies who have deliberately harnessed NGOs to service their purpose bypassing less-efficient and much more politically difficult to control conventional statal institutions. According to this view, donors have bypassed the state in order to avoid the delays associated with working with statal institutions–the messiness of bureaucratic red tape, political instability, and other ills associated with government. To others, NGOs are more a symptom than a cure. They have developed because states have failed or are failing to provide the creativity needed to address global issues concerning the environment, poverty, health and so forth".*

As a result of the dual "anti-state" and "pro-NGO" movement, non-state institutions fast became conceived of as development agents which fill resource, innovation and capacity gaps left by government (Sanyal, 1994; Whaites, 2000; Haque, 2002; Joachim, 2003; Teamay, 2007; Batley & Rose, 2010; Kabdiyeva & Dixon, 2014). These gap-filling initiatives, often justified by things which government "either refuses to do, does not do enough of, is incapable of doing or is unable to do, are linked to government failure being

the rationale for non-profit organizations (NPOs)" (Najam, 2000: 5). So, while governments may retain ultimate hold over state functions such as health and education, it was believed that their efforts are limited and thus require non-state involvement. These narratives of post-independence states failures and inadequacies were carried far and wide into the developing world to promote NGO and private development actors and were accompanied by increases in the availability of donor funding to NGOs, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. As such, in many developing countries, NGOs began to assume development tasks and roles which were previously known to fall squarely within the mandate of the state (Jennings, 2006; Offei, 2011). Kennedy (1999), for example acknowledges the dominating nature of BRAC and Grameen Bank in sectors such as education which were previously dominated by government in Bangladesh.

Writing also in relation to NGOs in general but those in Bangladesh more specifically, White (1999) predicts that this stance could pose a significant threat not only to state capacity and legitimacy but also to the long-term provision of services to the poor. As citizens reroute towards NGOs in accessing social services, NGO capacity may become strained given that, first, they may not be configured to handle the same population sizes and needs as does the state and that, secondly, they are not answerable to communities in instances where these shortfalls may exist (ibid). Amid the concerns, however, a combination of poorly performing states and the continued existence of funding reserves, maintain a space for NGOs to operate within their dominant capacity as gap filling agents.

3.5 Strengthening civil associations and communities

Concessions have often been made – predominantly on the basis of capacity shortages and external resource dependence – that NGOs and their gap-filling interventions are constrained and that systemic transformation is out of the league of non-state actors. However, this has not deterred NGOs from, at least, attempting to mitigate the ongoing crises of poverty and underdevelopment. Whaites (2000) condemns the shift towards NGOs as primary development agents citing its potential of eroding national service capabilities by outsourcing them to external actors (*see also* Brass, 2010; Marcinkutė, 2011). To expand on this, he proposes that "unless there are mitigating circumstances, such as a particularly repressive regime, NGOs should also seek to build up the capacity of the state as an integral part of this local grassroots work" (Whaites, 2000:134). Failure to do this, as proposed by Schuller

(2009), will mean that NGOs, by trading solely on their ability to 'fill gaps', strengthen and legitimise the neo-liberal logics which are founded on bypassing and undermining states in the provision of social welfare services. Therefore, strengthening local capacities and civil societies has, though certainly not uncontested, become a role which has been more restfully bestowed upon NGOs (Mercer, 2002). Miller-Grandvaux, et al., (2002) for example, propose that the most worthwhile and sustainable contribution which NGOs can make lies in their ability to strengthen communities and local civil society institutions.

The space and opportunity for NGOs to operate as strengthening agents for local civil societies is, again, availed by weaknesses which have been identified in developing states (Whaites, 2000; Helliker, 2006). These efforts often involve NGOs using innovative measures to build capacity, influence policy and pressurize governments to fulfill their development mandates. This approach is then carried out through efforts aimed at strengthening communities and civil societies which include employing participatory methods of providing social services as well as empowering community members and local civil society institutions to hold government accountable (Midgley, 1986).

Again, Whaites (2000) once offers a word of caution stating that: "the problem is the belief that NGOs are inherently bound to strengthen civil society, an assumption which, if acted upon, might in fact weaken the evolution of civil society in certain contexts". Similarly, Mercer (2002) observes that "the new space for NGOs, which has emerged amid discourses about participatory and empowering development, does not represent a new movement in which the poorest have a greater role". She goes further to state that "far from being a vehicle for the participation of the poorest, the NGO sector in Tanzania is emerging as a new mechanism for the reproduction of inequality and also means that, despite the discourse of participation, the very poorest will continue to be excluded" (ibid). Related specifically to education NGOs, Rose (2007:26) observed that although NGOs have gone a long way in filling the necessary gaps in service provision, there still remains a concern of whether "those living in extreme poverty and suffering from the most acute forms of vulnerability continue to be excluded".

Although global perspectives on NGOs include widespread agreement that non-state actors possess the potential of strengthening states, civil societies and communities, for some, the alternative is more likely the case. In some instances, it has been observed that NGOs also possess the potential of undermining or eroding the capacity of the state, inducing a sense of competition among civil society organs which may lead to intervention overlaps or vacuums

and lastly, perpetuating inequalities at a community level by extending access to services only to those who are able to access and participate in NGO interventions (Manji & O'Coill, 2002).

3.6 Good governance and democratization

Central also to the globally-held perspectives on NGOs is the role which non-state organisations have played at different points of political transition in developed and especially in developing societies (Bratton, 1994). Either through passive resistance campaigns, conscientization and civic education efforts, training and capacity building, election monitoring or outright active protest, non-state actors have been intimately involved in strengthening civil society and pressurizing governments to uphold their human rights obligations. Some of the earliest forms of such associations include the Anti-Slavery Movement (1839), Red Cross (1863) and Save the Children (1919) (Hall-Jones, 2006). Hashemi & Hassan (1999) for example, vouch for the commendable role played by civil society organisations at different points in the Bangladeshi political progression towards independence in 1971. Even within the South African context, civil society's most notable contributions are often tied to different points in the country's political reform against colonialism, oppressive neo-liberal models and, of course, apartheid (Habib & Taylor, 1999).

Lewis (2002), distinguishes between two prevailing conceptions of civil society; the 'organisational view' and the 'good governance' agenda, the latter of which speaks to the catalytic contributions which CSOs make in framing societies which are conducive for the implementation of development initiatives. Much like the role which NGOs are often advised to play in steering national policy frameworks in a more development and people-centred direction, their role in influencing governance models is also said to be geared towards bringing about systemic reforms which will be conducive for the long-term implementation of development models. As such, some hold, as does Haberson (1994), that "civil society is hitherto a missing key to sustained political reform, legitimate states and government, improved governance, viable state-society and state-economy relationships, and prevention of the kind of political decay that undermined new African governments a generation ago".

As a result of various forms of globalisation and the subsequent internationalization of the state following the Second World War, governments all across the developing world have not only become increasingly dependent on global donors for resource support but are also

largely influenced by these and other IGOs for the establishment of national imperatives and the necessary policy frameworks related thereto (Joachim, 2003). As highlighted in the previous chapter, human rights movements and internationally-framed development priorities embedded in 'human rights', 'global citizenship' and 'good governance' packages, have sought to decentralise power previously localised to the state and brought to the fore central issues of concern such as women's rights, environmental prudence, universal access to healthcare and education as well as freedom from different forms of discrimination (Clark, 1991). In this regard, NGOs took on the role of being stewards of these ideals and ensuring compliance among governments especially those in The Global South.

Again, the view of NGOs being channels of democratization has been widely contested. A prominent band of sceptics casts doubt on the levels of impartiality which NGOs possess and, by extension, the grounds upon which they can, or should, assume a position of prescribing processes of democratization to third world governments. The indistinct divide between NGOs and other sectors of society– the state and markets– as well as their resource dependence and the resultant power imbalances, do not only exist on national and regional levels but also at an international scale. Petras & Veltmeyer (2001), for example, suggest that by being financially dependent on single, and at times, multiple states to which they are accountable, NGOs forfeit their impartiality. NGO intentions and operations of democratising development, therefore, are said to rest on foreign ideologies and interests rather than local needs (Nishimuko, 2009; Pillay, 2010; Tota, 2014). Manji & O'Coill (2002) state that the discourse of development:

> *"offered a confused audience a more palatable perspective of Africans and Asians. It was more palatable because it was similar in many respects to the racist discources of the past, this time with a vocabulary consistent with the new age of modernity. It was no longer that Africans were 'uncivilised'. Instead, they were 'underdeveloped'. Either way, the 'civilised' or 'developed' European has a role to play in 'civilizing' or 'developing' Africa".*

Furthermore, democracy and equality even within the world of NGOs is itself a contested idea. Tota (2014) exposes the inequality within the world of NGOs at a global scale by calling into question the composition and country representation at the World Bank. Eight countries (USA, UK, France, Japan, Germany, China, Russia and Saudi Arabia) are the dominant shareholders at the World Bank. Out of the 25 seats on the Board of Executive Directors,

they occupy eight, with the remaining 17 seats being shared by 179 countries. Tota (2014: 97) therefore proposes that "this unequal power distribution, in an organisation which provides loans and policy frameworks to countries around the world, indicates who draws the policy agenda and also what its content is; the promotion of economic neoliberalism in the education systems of the borrowing countries".

At a local level, NGO structures and operations are said to mimic the same power assymetries and skewed forms of democracy which exist on the global scale. Being unelected deployees of the 'self-appointed' international drivers of development with largely upward streams of accountability to states and donors, has brought the democracy within and, by extension, the democratising function of NGOs into the full view of critics. Petras (1999:433) contends, for example, that:

> *"NGOs, despite their democratic, grassroots rhetoric are hierarchical – with the director in total control of projects, hiring and firing, as well as deciding who gets their way paid to international conferences. The 'grassroots' are essentially the object of this hierarchy…More important none of these decisions are ever voted on. At best after the deals have been cooked by the Director and the overseas funders, the NGO staff call a meeting of 'grassroots activists' of the poor to approve the project…In this sense NGOs undermine democracy by taking social programs and public debate out of the hands of the local people and their elected natural leaders and creating dependence on non-elected, overseas officials and their anointed local officials".*

While governments retain legitimacy by being elected and, as such, being accountable to the public, NGOs "are not publicly appointed, they do not hold any public mandates, and thus, they are not answerable to the general public" (Paul, 2000). Therefore, the power asymmetry between communities and NGOs, discussed in the previous chapter, and the compromised democratic ethic within the sector means that power is centrally congested and unequally distributed between international sector leaders and their local implementers (Haque, 2002). This, in a sector which prides itself and is widely accepted as a democratizing feature in the development of poor and marginalised communities, is a paradox which raises more questions than answers.

3.7 Education NGOs: Global perspectives

Though no significant efforts have been made towards defining education-NGOs – separate from other types of CSOs – it can perhaps be assumed that their form and functions are unique mainly in light of the fact that their mandate is directed towards the extension of education rights and services to disadvantaged populations. Much like widely understood development NGOs, they are also characterised by varied relations to state organs, markets, donors and beneficiaries as well as the need to be understood through specific context and historic lenses. As such, education NGOs bear almost the same features of ambiguity, tension and fluidity as do NGOs working in other sectors of development.

Different forms of globalisation and the globally-held ideologies such as human rights, global citizenship and good governance (discussed above) have diversified international education efforts and infiltrated national education agendas especially over the past three decades (Carron & Carr-Hill, 1991; Nishimuko, 2009; Tota, 2014). As stated by King and Rose (2005 cited in Rose, 2007:15), "international agencies have had an important role to play in changing priorities towards education over this period, both through conditions placed in countries receiving aid, as well as indirectly through the setting of international targets". Although steps towards the agreed-upon ideals may take on different shapes in different parts of the globe, there has been widespread urgency among governments all across the global South to gravitate towards the fulfilment of precepts such as Universal Primary Education (UPE) which are drawn from EFA guidelines and the MDGs.

Education is commonly understood as a core state function and thus, the responsibility of government agencies. However, different forms of disenfranchisement, as well as resource and capacity constraints have warranted the increased involvement of non-state actors in filling service provision gaps, strengthening civil societies and communities and shaping national education policy frameworks within these contexts (Miller-Grandvaux, et al., 2002; Rose, 2007; Moriarty, 2015). As gap-filling agents, education NGOs have been known to assume a complementary and/or supplementary stance, depending mainly on the needs of a given population and their level of exclusion from mainstream educational provision (Carron & Carr-Hill, 1991; Rose, 2007). Within communities which experience extreme forms of poverty and exclusion, NGOs can, at times, replace the state as the sole provider of education services whereas, in other societies, their efforts are geared towards providing support services and resources.

A significant portion of education-NGO literature has highlighted the work of NGOs as Non-Formal Education providers (Miller-Grandvaux, et al., 2002; Sukontamarn, 2005; Mohammed, 2006; Rose, 2007). According to Davaadorj (2011:19) this type of education is "a life long process delivered through independent but nevertheless complementary channels". These institutions often run education programs parallel to the state and are located in communities not reached by governments due to geographic remoteness, conflict and unrest as well as extreme socio-economic deprivation. A number of developing countries have vibrant NFE sectors which hold equal legitimacy to state-run schools. Community schools in countries across the African continent are examples of NGO-operated schools which are considered official and legitimate institutions for learning to the extent that children who obtain primary education from these institutions are later able to enrol in state-run schools having already acquired the requisite grounding at community schools (Miller-Grandvaux, et al., 2002; Nkosha & Mwanza, 2009; Batley & Rose, 2010). Likewise, BRAC, a Bangladesh-based NGO operating in 14 countries worldwide five of which are in Africa, provides NFE to children after which a significant number of them go on to register in government schools (Sukontamarn, 2005).

As noted above, NGOs are often hailed for the participatory methods they employ in empowering communities and strengthening civil societies. Research conducted in Ethiopia, Guinea, Malawi and Mali, however, demonstrated that community participation, which is a central element to community and civil society empowerment, is not sufficient enough to enhance long-term efficacy of education interventions at a community level (Miller-Grandvaux, et al., 2002). Pillay (2010:116) found that in Ethiopia there is almost no contact or conversation with community or grassroots organizations" while Makuwira (2004) found that in Malawi, ready-made plans were imposed onto communities with minimal involvement from local community members or civic organisations. In these and other cases, local civil society participation in education interventions takes on the form of passive consultation rather than active participation which could translate to empowerment (Moriarty, 2015). These largely paternalistic relationships with communities and local civil societies do not only manifest themselves in the planning and implementation of educational interventions but according to Makuwira (2004) and Khan, et al., (2012), also exist in the monitoring and evaluation of program efficacy.

Trends of inequality and power disparity between education NGOs and beneficiaries manifest themselves at a community level and are largely drawn from the unequal relations

which characterise the sector. Such trends are recorded both at a national and global sector level where relations between local NGOs, INGOs, governments and donors are fraught with inequalities. Tota (2014) demonstrates this by stating that:

> *"Indeed, the current transnational policies are made away from democratic politics first and foremost because they bypass national and local institutions, where such politics are possible. States continue to exert power over their citizens, but citizens cannot access the transnational space of policy-making, which is dominated by business, political, bureaucratic elites and appointed experts and decision makers. There is no space therefore for open participation or equality".*

As illustrated in the previous chapter, power asymmetries between NGOs, governments, IGOs and donors do not only translate to the ideologies which NGOs employ but also in their operations. This goes further to influence the relationships which NGOs form and maintain with beneficiary communities. Tota (2014:92) states that: "in transnational education policy, most contributions focus on IGOs, nation-states and markets (i.e., global business) and rightly so, because of the power they hold in setting agendas and mobilising resources". These power disparities are, again, not only observed in the planning and implementation stages of projects but are evident in processes of monitoring and evaluating their impact and efficacy. In much of the available literature within the field, the direct beneficiaries are alienated in favour of more distant and power-wielding benefactors (Makuwira, 2004). As such, the role of NGOs in filling gaps, democratizing and strengthening local civic engagement towards systemic transformation in local education trends is largely tainted and constrained by the multiple allegiances which influence their form and operation.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter began by outlining the widely-attempted task of defining NGOs. Again, the ambiguities and contradictions in the form and work of NGOs emerged as sources of further difficulty in presenting a single and vastly applicable definitional framework. Some relief comes, however, when considering the dominant ideas of the roles often earmarked for NGOs in advancing global development tasks. Where governments and markets fail to provide for excluded and disadvantaged populations, NGOs have stepped in to fill the gaps. Where domestically available human and financial resources have not been enough and where the state's innovative resolve has also fallen short of responding to the increasingly volatile

conditions in some contexts, NGOs have utilised flexible methods to reach those who would otherwise remain excluded. As such, their role in development sectors such as education is considered vital to the reduction of poverty and the alleviation of human suffering. The chapter then went on to present the longstanding criticisms which have accompanied the roles which NGOs play. Dominant reservations are held mainly in relation to the effectiveness and sustainability of NGOs in filling gaps, strengthening civil society and contributing to democratization processes have dominated. On the basis of these dominant roles earmarked for NGOs in development, along with the criticisms raised up by scholars against these, the next chapter seeks to draw out the work of NGOs and detail how they have operated within and beyond these roles in carrying out education ideals in South Africa and across the African continent.

Chapter 4

NGOs and education in Africa

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have detailed the tensions and ambiguities which characterise the NGO sector and how these unfold in the envisaged and actual roles which organisations play in advancing development ideals. Specific attention was paid in the previous chapter to the dominant positions which are associated with NGOs in the alleviation of human suffering and the reduction of poverty. It is believed that NGOs pursue development-related ends by filling social welfare vacuums left by governments, strengthening civil societies and communities as well as accelerating democratisation processes in various parts of the globe. Building from this background, the current chapter explores the evidenced role of NGOs in development efforts in Africa and within the field of education more specifically. Drawing from research conducted on the continent as a whole and within South Africa specifically, the space which education NGOs have assumed in advancing education rights and the contributions which they have made in different contexts will then be discussed. Lastly, the chapter will briefly touch on South Africa's education agenda along with the gaps in progress which remain despite increased NGO involvement. This will lay the foundation for the next chapter which goes into finer detail in describing these persistent progress gaps which NGOs have sought to fill in the country's education sector.

4.2 NGOs in Africa: The question of contextual relevance

The concept of civil society, in as far as it relates to development in Africa, is one which has been subject to extensive deliberation, briefly outlined in the previous chapter. Helliker (2006:76) notes for example, that "considerable debate exists amongst social scientists about the applicability of the concept of 'civil society' to nations of the South and East, and about the pervasiveness and strength of civil society in these regions". Obadare (2004), partly echoing sentiments previously articulated by Lewis (2001), illustrates the intellectual divide among scholars by outlining three distinct persuasions. The first he terms the "civil society-

as-Atlantic society" school which, much like Lewis' school of 'western exceptionalism', holds that the distinctive space and time within which civil society was formed, lies at the heart of the definition of the concept and can, therefore, not be reproduced or extracted for application in non-Western societies. According to this school of thought, civil society is rigidly bound to a set of values, historic moments and processes, such as the European Enlightenment era, which are native only to the Western society and can, therefore not find relevance elsewhere.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is a school of thought which holds that not only is civil society applicable in Africa, but it has long been a necessary part of the continent's development and survival processes (Bratton, 1994; Obadare, 2004). Scholars aligned to this idea are, however, split between those who hold that civil society exists "as part of a policy package transferred to Africa by official donors and INGOs (Lewis, 2001:6; Howard, 2005), and those who consider self-organisation to be an inherent part of African societies, though in varying forms across the continent (Bratton, 1994; Neubert, 2014).

A mediating buffer between these two schools of thought is another which, though acknowledging that the concept is borne of western experiences and values, holds that it can and should be adapted to fit the unique socio-political profile of non-Western settings (Maina, 1998). To expand on this, Neubert (2014:3) goes further to suggest that:

> *"There is a realm of societal self-organization which cannot be captured adequately within the concept of civil society. This includes local forms of political organization such as chiefs, councils of elders, local defence units, militia groups, militant social movements, or violence entrepreneurs, which are part of newly negotiated arrangements…The concept of civil society within its strict normative standards is too narrow to cover all these complex African socio-political structures".*

In addition to the above, there is yet another group of scholars who find fault either with the argument itself or the concept of civil society which is said to have varied meanings even within the Western society. Lewis (2001), representing the former, holds that the argument is not of much value, given that there have been numerous points in African history which have proven the active existence of civil society, mainly against colonial powers prior to the re-emergence of the concept in the 1980s. As a result, Lewis proposes, as does Bratton (1991), that this debate restricts the potential of learning which can come from the various

dynamics of African associationalism and could possibly enrich policy discussions as well as the implementation of development processes.

Notwithstanding these different persuasions, however, it can be said that the relevance of the argument is almost neutralised by the commanding presence of CSOs in Africa, whether as inherent elements of the African culture of association or as a borrowed concept accompanying globalised modernity. What could perhaps be of greater value, as proposed by Lewis (2001) is to explore the role of civil society within the African context and describe the various forms which CSOs have taken in different parts of the continent. These organisations have been, for example, an essential part of the development efforts which have been carried out in different parts of the continent, and have often been formed mainly in response to the unmet needs of citizens and also as response mechanisms to different points of political and economic transition. According to Bratton (1994:5):

> *"Africans constructed fresh forms of voluntary association in response to the disruptive effects of urbanization and the market economy during the colonial period…These associations became explicitly political, first by protesting the indignities of colonial rule and, later, by forming the building blocks of nationalist political parties".*

Across different contexts on the continent, civil society organs contributed immensely to the fight against various forms of colonial oppression. Following independence still, many African states contended with different forms of authoritarian rule to which civil society became an opposing force. Autocratic regimes brought on the upsurge of citizen associations particularly in the 1980s (Bratton, 1994). Coupled with the spread of neoliberal ideologies in the developing world during this time, NGOs played a leading role in the provision of social services; a role which became systematically neglected by states under the guise of the resultant Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) (Offei, 2011). Moreover, the widespread availability of international funding for NGOs which accompanied this paradigm shift resulted in non-state actors taking on core "state functions" in the provision of social services in areas such as health, education, housing and sanitation (Agbola, 1994; Manji & O'Coill, 2002). As a result of this, NGOs which had previously dominated in development as forces for mass resistance, advocacy and policy reform have since devoted a significant portion of their efforts to the provision of services (Salisbury, 2004; Rahman, 2006).

4.3 Non-state service delivery in Africa

The service delivery work of NGOs has cut across a broad spectrum of development fields ranging from relief and humanitarian aid to health, education, housing, financial services as well as water and sanitation (Fruttero & Gauri, 2005; Dugle, et.al, 2015; Lewis, 2009). As vastly noted in NGO scholarship, these efforts emanate, firstly, from an urgency to uphold the common good and also, the need to address the social welfare vacuums left by governments. Due to the extreme levels of deprivation and disenfranchisement in many developing societies as well as the limited capacity of states, NGOs are often the preferred sources of social services especially in light of the innovative, cost-effective and flexible methods they are said to employ in the delivery of services (Brass, 2010).

In an attempt to address the development backlogs in many African states, INGOs such as Oxfam, Plan International, CARE, Action Aid and Save the Children have implemented numerous relief and poverty reduction programs on the continent. Many of these organisations work in partnership with local civil society organisations in the implementation of these programs while, in other instances, local NGOs launch and implement poverty reduction initiatives, often with the material support of international donors. In any event, NGOs, whether headquartered in Western countries or launched locally, are found to be an essential and immovable part of Africa's development agenda.

A study carried out by Offei (2011) for example, explored the role of NGOs and local government agents in socio-economic development efforts within a district in Ghana. Here, Offei found that many of the development programs being carried out in the district achieved much of their success through the efforts of NGOs. International NGOs such as Care International and SNV Netherlands alongside local NGOs such as Karni Community-Based Rehabilitation Centre, Karni Water Users Association, and Partnerships for Rural Development Africa (PRUDA), School for Life/Literacy for Change, Send-Ghana, Rural Action Alliance Program (RAAP), and Professional Network Association (Pronet-North) have collectively opened a space which is viable for civic involvement in local development programs. Organisations provide socio-economic advancement programs such as animal rearing and agricultural supplies, micro-credit schemes as well as education and primary health care services with the aim of alleviating poverty and alleviating disadvantage among the poor.

As suggested by Offei (2011), the positive contributions made by these organisations within the district however, are not without reproach. The impact of the programs offered for example, is significantly constrained by their limited scale-up and sustainability potential. Over-dependence on foreign donors, the study finds, has pressured organisations to use top-down program design and implementation frameworks. This translates to NGO programs being articulations of donor priorities rather than beneficiary needs. While NGO officials claim to implement programs for the sole purpose of addressing the needs of their host communities, program participants on the other hand, identified a distance between their most immediate needs and the programs implemented by the organisations (Offei, 2011).

For example, research participants highlighted some significant constraints in their daily lives as well as stringent NGO loan-repayment terms both of which hampered the long-term benefits of programs such as micro-credit schemes. Likewise, Offei (2011) also found that program designs and stipulations held the potential of excluding community members living in extreme poverty in that they are unable to participate in any self-sustaining economic activities and are therefore also unable to access loans or adhere to the weekly repayment terms required by NGOs. As such, community members also expressed disillusionment in the fact that, despite their involvement and commitment to NGO programs, their level of destitute and standards of living remained largely unchanged. Again this, according to Offei (2011), throws the scale-up potential and widespread sustainability of the work of NGOs in this district into question.

A study conducted by Riddel & Robinson (1992) over two decades prior to this, presented similar findings which relate to the conditional impact of NGOs working in poverty alleviation. In this study, the performance of 16 NGOs working in four developing countries (Bangladesh, India, Uganda and Zimbabwe) was assessed. Though 12 out of the 16 organisations had reportedly achieved some of their set objectives– with only one achieving all objectives– their overall contribution towards the eradication of poverty and improvement of economic outcomes in study sites was limited. According to the authors, programs were rarely accessed by populations living in extreme poverty and when this was the case, modest and unsustainable improvements were made to their lived experiences (Riddel & Robinson, 1992).

Furthermore, and contrary to dominant discourse on NGO cost-effectiveness, sustainability and their scale-up potential, this study found that the achievement of objectives by organisations came at a high cost and possessed limited potential for post-intervention

sustainability (Riddel & Robinson, 1992). Lack of coordination with host governments and the limited participation of community members in the implementation of programs is said to have an immediate bearing on whether or not there is longer term progress towards poverty reduction without NGO mediation. The authors proposed that "where NGOs take an active role in promoting self-help initiatives, the problems of over-dependence are lessened and [NGO] withdrawal becomes easier to attain over the longer term" and that "relationships with host governments also play a role in project sustainability and prospects that exist for gradual [NGO] withdrawal" (Riddel & Robinson, 1992:30).

A constraint to the contribution of NGOs in poverty reduction was also attributed to their limited scale-up potential. Programs were often rigidly designed for small-scale implementation within a population with which organisations are able to maintain consistent contact (Riddel & Robinson, 1992). The Silvera House group loan scheme implemented in Zimbabwe by NGOs, for example, was scaled-up and adopted by government. According to the authors, the program failed when applied at this level because it was designed for community-level application. Even when applied at a community level however, success was not guaranteed as programs such as revolving credit schemes were found to not have the potential of being self-sustaining without NGO involvement.

More recently, Mohamed (2010) carried out a study in Kibera in Kenya–the largest informal settlement in Sub-Saharan Africa. The accounts of NGO personnel and community members recorded in this study sought to uncover the role of NGOs in poverty reduction initiatives and the nuances of carrying out such programs in this setting. Microcredit schemes, education, water and sanitation as well as community health programs are considered vital players in socio-economic relief in Kibera (Mohamed, 2010; Farrell, 2015). In particular, solid waste management programs have been instrumental in improving levels of sanitation and disease control in this community. Recycling and refuse removal programs have, in addition to improved sanitation levels, also become a source of employment for local youth (Mohamed, 2010). Furthermore, home-based healthcare programs carried out by locals have also been a source of employment as well as an extension of health services in the community while community partnerships with local schools which are facilitated by NGOs have accelerated the implementation of reproductive health clubs and the identification of spaces within the community which are safe and friendly for young girls.

Alongside the positive role played by organisations towards poverty reduction in this community, the study also identified fundamental hurdles experienced by organisations. As

part of the operationalisation of microcredit lending schemes and skills development, for example, community members are assigned to groups which act as points of contact for poverty relief programs. This group-based approach is, according to NGO officials, adopted in order to ensure the repayment of loans and monitor recipient progress. The approach is, however, also said to perpetuate the exclusion of the most vulnerable members of society such as women, people living with disabilities and the poorest populations (Mohamed, 2010). According to study participants, important information regarding NGO programs and developmental opportunities for locals is disseminated within these groups and, as such, acts as a routinized way of excluding community members who are not part of any group. NGO officials expressed a concern that "this approach meant they can only reach a minority of residents, and that consequently, their interventions tended to exclude the vulnerable and marginalised" (Mohamed, 2010:48).

Community members echoed similar reservations to the group-based approach adopted by NGOs by highlighting how this approach benefits certain groups of people in the community, thus failing to address the fundamental needs of the entire population. Literate and 'sensitised' individuals were identified as those who would be enlisted to participate in the formulation and implementation of programs and also benefit from them, "thus excluding the poorest and most vulnerable within the community" (Mohamed, 2010:41). The study has therefore considered that this systematised exclusion of certain population groups from the formulation and implementation of programs has significantly constrained the impact and efficacy of NGOs working in poverty reduction within this community.

Similarly, a study conducted by Julius (2014) investigated the impact and effectiveness of Compassion International in Kisoro District, Uganda. Based on the accounts of community members, Julius proposes that, though the organisation has implemented a host of much-needed developmental programs in education and training, health, environmental conservation and child safety, its role in poverty reduction has been grossly overstated. Given the strict selection guidelines of project participants, the organisation is said to not reach as wide a population as it can, or should, in order to make a significant contribution to transforming the current trends of poverty in the district.

This study echoes some of the findings generated by scholars in many other African countries. It is, for example, believed that, though NGOs in some African regions have gone a long way in servicing the immediate needs of beneficiary communities, their long-term impact and efficacy in addressing the most fundamental precipitating factors of poverty

remain modest. (Adjei, et al., 2012; Chitongo, 2013; Fraser, 2013; Weger, 2013). According to scholars, some of the notable impeding factors associated with this limited impact include an overdependence on donors which often translates to top-down programs and implementation thereof, and also the alienation of community members (Weger, 2013). Donor dependence is also said to result in conditional participation of certain population groups – on the basis of religious affiliation for example– which is routinized and sustained by NGO rules and regulations. In large part, this further increases the social and geographic distance between NGOs and the community members who remain most in need (Julius, 2014).

What these studies demonstrate in their respective contexts and eras is that, though it is vital to view NGOs as individual development organs which seek to carry out programs aimed at alleviating deprivation and its impact on people, it is equally important to view them as parts of a broader network of relationships with communities, governments and donors. Additionally, it becomes ever more imperative to consider the collective impact that organisational cultures and processes within this sectors – such as the widely adopted group-based approach – and how they may collectively act as an insurmountable force of structural inequality in some settings.

The commercial orientation of NGOs which, again, emanates from their dependence on donors, is often framed as a precipitating factor in the social distance which often exists between NGOs and beneficiary communities (Pillay, 2010). Due to the pressure of retaining funding, NGOs may firstly, neglect the deeply-rooted precipitating factors of poverty in favour of more easily-identifiable symptoms and secondly, sacrifice the inter-organisational coordination which may result in broader and longer-term impact. According to Streeten (1998:198), the competition between NGOs which is also a by-product of this pressure to retain funding, results in 'overlaps and gaps' in NGO interventions, both of which run the risk of excluding those experiencing extreme forms of deprivation.

Similarly, Mohamed (2010) found that the lack of coordination between development actors in Kibera resulted in the duplication of services as well as the creation of a new social class of community members who benefited repeatedly and immensely from the work of different organisations while other parts of the community, remained 'untouched'. It can thus be said that, while NGOs are known to fill service and capacity gaps left by governments, lack of coordination between sector members may, in fact lead to an emphasis of some gaps which already exist in communities. As such, Anarwat (2003:6) proposes that "though NGOs are

playing a vital role in filling resource gaps for development, the lack of coordination of their activities appears to render the impact of their efforts on their target beneficiaries insignificant”.

Furthermore, scholars openly acknowledge the strength of political, ethnic, religious and environmental factors and the role they play in the efficacy of NGO interventions (Riddel & Robinson, 1992; Agbola, 1994; Salisbury, 2004). Anarwat (2003) for example, found that ethnic conflict in Ghana’s Northern region was the most substantial constraining element in the work being carried out by NGOs. Similarly, the political framing of community leadership as well as ethnic demarcations in Kibera Informal Settlement were also cited as barriers to the work and impact of NGO programs (Mohamed, 2010), while in Zimbabwe, political sensitivities have placed a great deal of pressure on the operation and impact of NGOs (Helliker, 2006).

4.4 Education NGOs: Problems and prospects

Education, as a central feature in the development agenda of the modern world, has received much attention from donors, governments, Inter-governmental Organisations and International Financial Institutions. In particular, neoliberalism, globalisation and the ideological packages linked thereto have, according to Carnoy (1999), transformed the global field of education in five ways. First, pressure for market productivity has translated into a heightened urgency for skills and productive qualifications. Emphasis has thus been placed on citizens obtaining higher levels of education in order to contribute to the required levels of production. Secondly, governments in developing countries have been under a great deal of pressure to, on the one hand, reduce public government spending on education while on the other hand, harness other sources of funding for the sector while ensuring that national education systems are able to produce the skills necessary to contribute to a productive and competitive economy. Thirdly, globalisation has resulted in less distinct boundaries between (inter)national educational achievements. Acceptable and desirable standards of learner achievements in mathematics, science and English have, for example, become more internationalised through the implementation of regional and international tests and evaluation systems. Fourthly, the introduction of information technology (IT) into national education systems has been hailed as a central part of ensuring that quality education is delivered to wider populations at lower costs to the state (Celik & Gomlesiz, 2000). Lastly,

Carnoy (1999) proposes that the globalisation of education has resulted in the advancement of a global culture and value system.

Alongside these outcomes to globalisation, have been other, perhaps more incidental, consequences. For one, some scholars propose that globalisation and the resultant involvement of private institutions in the provision of education holds the potential of further highlighting the disparities between the rich and the poor (Tooley, 2004; Okoli, 2012; Geo-Jaja & Majhanovich, 2016). Central to addressing these disparities and also to the advancement of globally set standards on educational achievement–such as Education for All and the Millenium Development Goals–have been non-governmental organisations which have acted as service providers, policy advocates and donors.

The work of NGOs in these developmental areas has been widely recorded across the continent and their contributions are undeniable. Education NGOs working in Ethiopia, Guinea, Malawi and Mali have, for example, played an important role in extending the arm of the state in the provision of education services to the poor (Miller-Grandvaux, et al., 2002). In Mali, community schools, which are run by NGOs, have been a viable alternative to state-funded schools since the 1990s especially for children living in extreme poverty and remote communities (Carneal, 2004). Similarly, Plan International in the N'Zérékouré region of Guinea has also been effective in supporting both the state and local NGOs in education through the provision of annual grants as well as the training of teachers, both of which are aimed at addressing the shortage of teaching staff in the region (Miller-Grandvaux, et al., 2002).

A report compiled by the Tanzanian Education Network (TEN) identifies some of the innovations which have been implemented by NGOs in the provision of education to the poor (Tanzania Education Network, 2009). The Ngorongoro Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programme, for example is an Oxfam-implemented teaching centre which services community members living near a Massai homestead. This program seeks to ensure the accessibility of education services for children living in the community and does so by employing and training locals to run and sustain the programme. Similarly, Oxfam implemented the Education Quality Improvement through Pedagogy (EQUIP) Programme which was aimed at improving the quality of teaching in schools within the region of Shinyanga by training and providing professional support to teachers (Tanzania Education Network, 2009).

Plagued with poverty, poor learner outcomes, high teacher-pupil ratios, increasing learner drop-out rates and insufficient learning support materials, this region is said to have benefited immensely from the implementation of this programme. In particular, the report highlights the significant transformation in teaching environments resulting from EQUIP. Furthermore, the program is said to have contributed to a 30% improvement in pass rates since it was first introduced in Shinyanga. The training, mentoring and support provided by the NGO has benefited more than 2000 teachers and, by extension, contributed to the improved learning experience of 117,000 pupils in the region, the majority of whom are girls. In addition to the support provided to teachers, EQUIP's school feeding program implemented during a drought season contributed to a 30% improvement in learners' school attendance rates while infrastructural support channelled through the project has improved access to clean, running water for 31 schools and 14 rural communities within the region.

The work of NGOs such as SNV International, SOS Children's Villages and ActionAid Kenya has also been particularly instrumental in supporting government efforts aimed at the achievement of the MDGs and EFA objectives in Kenya (Bandi, 2011). Rapid improvements in national school enrolment following the introduction of the Free Primary Education (FPE) Act in 2003, exerted an incredible amount of pressure on government to ensure that institutions, infrastructure, material as well as human resources were reconfigured to meet these demands. During this time SNV, along with other international NGOs, responded to the 76% hike in learner enrolment by building schools and also through the provision of learner and teacher support materials, teaching staff, stationery, and internet access. Similarly, following the post-election unrest in Kenya in 2007, SNV endeavoured to provide education by organizing teaching for learners through makeshift schools located within the Internally Displaced People's (IDP) camp. Also, ActionAid Kenya sought to provide safe and reliable teaching centres during this time by building 17 boarding schools within the IDP camps (Bandi, 2011).

Central also to Africa's development endeavours is the empowerment of women which is often framed as the centre of empowering society as a whole (Ansoglenang, 2006; Alhassan & Sulemana, 2014). Organisations such as the Association of Progressive Entrepreneurship in Development (APED) and the Self-Help Initiative Support Services (SISS) in Ghana have channelled a multitude of resources into such programs. Micro-finance services offered by these organisations have contributed to women's capacity to financially sustain businesses and households (Akanbasiam, 2011). Through the acquisition of these skills women are,

therefore, better able to decrease their levels of vulnerability in households and communities and ultimately improve their general health and levels of education (Krenz, 2012).

A central component to the empowerment of women is ensuring the education of girls. A number NGOs have adopted an approach to poverty reduction which is centred on improving the enrolment of girls in school especially in African societies plagued with political unrest, ethnic conflict, famine and natural disaster (Leach & Shashikala, 2002 cited in Krenz, 2012). NGOs in Ghana's Northern Region have, mainly through advocacy work and campaigning, had a positive impact on school enrolment, more especially among girl children (Alhassan & Sulemana, 2014). NGO provision of infrastructure, as well as workshops aimed at parents and community members, have also improved the enrolment and retention rates of girl children in schools within the district (Alhassan & Sulemana, 2014).

In addition to the active role they play in the direct delivery of education services across the continent (Fielmua & Bandie, 2012; Mwanza, 2015), NGOs are also said to be instrumental partners in strengthening local civil society through the creation of coalitions and non-state networks aimed at supporting policy formulation processes (Miller-Grandvaux, et al., 2002; Kadzamira & Kunje, 2002). A review of over 4200 NGOs in Kenya found that these organisations are not only effective in extending state efforts in service delivery, thereby increasing its capacity and legitimacy, but also in partnering with the state in its efforts of improving governance by influencing service delivery policies (Brass, 2010). In countries such as Malawi and Tanzania, many NGOs have in fact abandoned their work in education service delivery in favour of a longer-term approach to transformation which is centred on influencing national education policies (Chipo & Demis, 2002; Tanzania Education Network, 2009).

Evidence collected in this study demonstrates that, at least in part, NGOs have indeed emerged as dominant implementing partners in various sectors of African society. From the improvements in health, education and environmental conservation through the efforts of Compassion International in Uganda (Julius, 2014) and Kenya (Mohamed, 2010), to the extension of education services in Ghana through the efforts of the Sustainable Integrated Development Services Centre (SIDSEC) programs (Fielmua & Bandie, 2012) the role of NGOs in providing education services is undeniable.

As is vastly noted, however, there has been longstanding uncertainty on the overall impact of NGO interventions on education outcomes in the communities within which they work

and also in the achievement of universal basic education for all (Strutt & Kepe, 2010). In particular, scholars have often questioned the sustainability and scale-up potential of NGO work, their ability to reach those living in extreme poverty as well as their potential of empowering communities and local civil society institutions (Carron & Carr-Hill, 1991; Streeten, 1997; Strutt & Kepe, 2010). While glowing reports of NGO interventions are far too many to enumerate, Rose (2009) proposes that "it appears that there is almost a fear of being critical about an approach that has gained exemplary status in the eyes of some international agencies". This discomfort, she proposes, partly emanates from the fact that the retention of donor funding and universal trust in the legitimacy of NGOs rests on the portrayal of positive impact (ibid). Notwithstanding this, however, it could be said, that some of the reasons which are used to maintain the image of a positive NGO impact on development could be used also to justify a closer look at their limited impact in instances where such is the case. The reasons include the dependence of vulnerable communities on non-state service provision, NGO dependence on foreign donors as well as the centre stage they have assumed as drivers of development.

The limited ability of CSOs to reach the poorest and most vulnerable populations resonates within the field of education NGOs as much as it does in the work of other CSOs working in development. Reporting on education NGOs in Malawi, for example, Kadzamira and Kunje (2002:5) observed that:

> *"their areas of operation and scope of work tended to be small and limited usually confined to one district or single location in one district. Partly because of financial constraints, local NGOs with the exception of the religious-based NGOs have tended to work in urban areas, with very few serving rural areas"*

Carron & Carr-Hill (1991) have therefore proposed that complementary or supplementary forms of education provision do little to rectify the disparities in access to education which already exist in society and as such, those who are most likely to benefit from formal and mainstream education provision, are the same populations that are likely to benefit from NGO-provided services. Rose (2009:220) echoes this concern and opines that "while NGO providers are potentially extending educational opportunities to the marginalised, concern remains that children living in extreme poverty or suffering acute forms of vulnerability continue to be excluded".

Davaadorj (2011) carried out a study which sought to uncover the experiences and challenges faced by NGO officials in carrying out education programs. According to study participants, one of the significant constraints to the success of education-NGO interventions is the unequal access to education institutions as this often leaves certain population groups further excluded from accessing services. Davaadorj (2011) thus states that "the main challenge brought forward by the NGOs lies in the unequal access to education, especially for girls, children with disabilities and the least advantaged children such as children from poor families, migrants, indigenous and/or street children".

Chipo & Demis (2002) propose that the foremost constraining factors to NGOs reaching the most vulnerable populations and making a lasting impact in transforming their educational outcomes is the overdependence on donor agencies which prescribe NGO operations and can, thus limit NGO responsiveness to the needs of communities. This often results in a high concentration of NGOs in specific development fields and communities which also translates to duplicated efforts and the perpetuation of inequalities between rich and poor communities. This also induces a sense of competition among NGOs to retain funding, pressure to portray good results, duplicated efforts and limits in the overall impact in transforming educational outcomes (Kadzamira & Kunje, 2002).

In the case of Sierra Leone, Nishimuko (2009:293), notes that "considering that still over 30% of children are out of school and about 40% of children do not complete primary education", much work still needs to be done in order to attain the required standard of access to quality education. Davaadorj (2011), has proposed that despite the strides made in this area, gender parity in schooling remains a central issue of concern in many countries while Pillay (2010), contends with the idealised role of NGOs as drivers of development by noting that the top-down and non-participatory methods employed by organisations has denied locals the opportunity to be active players in the transformation of their educational experiences. In the case of South Africa Volmink and van der Elst (2017:7) draw out a similar contradiction by noting that educational problems in the country have garnered the collective attention of government, donors and NGOs but unfortunately "these initiatives have had little, if any lasting or scale-up impact on improving the quality of education". To this, they propose that critical reflections on the role and effectiveness of the NGO sector as well as their contributions to improving teaching and learning in the country are in order (ibid).

4.5 Education NGOs: Aiding the education agenda?

South Africa's non-profit sector is both vibrant and pervasive. The work of non-state actors in the provision of services as well as in advocacy and policy reform has contributed immensely to the progress of the country in areas such as health, human rights, political reform, housing and education. The past two decades, in particular, have witnessed the strong presence of NGOs such as The Right to Know, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), Equal Education, Ubuntu Education, Abahlali baseMjondolo and many other organisations which have all towered as leading actors in their respective fields of interest. In particular, organisations have commanded a greater presence in poverty alleviation efforts, community development, human rights advocacy, HIV/AIDS as well as education (Kumaran, et al., 2012). Since their modern reincarnation as development agents in the 1970s, NGOs in South Africa have undergone numerous time-bound transformations and have continuously been compelled, by several national and international forces, to reconfigure their ideologies and operations to fit the development needs and requirements of their time (Julie, 2010).

According to Julie (2010), the story of South Africa's non-governmental sector, as it is understood today, can be divided into three historical periods each of which is characterised by specific socio-economic and political conditions which inspired or necessitated the non-state associations of each era. Although formulated mainly to trace the emergence of organisations commonly understood as 'struggle' or advocacy NGOs, a similar progression trend can be used to trace the emergence of service provider NGOs, many of which also engage in advocacy initiatives (Pieterse, 1997).

The first historical period, spanning from 1973-1991, though primarily associated with the liberalisation of South Africa's economic and political landscape, was also largely characterised by the growth and increased presence of NGOs in South Africa (Julie, 2010). During the mid to late 1970s and in response to the repressive policies of the National Party many NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) were formed in order to mobilize citizens towards different forms of opposition against the ruling party. On the other hand, some organisations responded by mobilizing financial and human resources towards the provision of welfare services for population groups which were systematically excluded from mainstream government provision (Habib & Taylor, 1999; Morrow, 2004).

Parallel to the 2nd historical period of struggle, spanning from 1992-2000 (Julie, 2010), service- provider NGOs also found themselves faced with a two-part crisis of identity and

resource depletion. According to Morrow (2004:319), NGOs which, "…emerged from a bitter political conflict, had to start redefining themselves given the fact that the oppressive rule of the NP, which necessitated much of the NGO work during apartheid, had been overcome". Due to the fear of imminent obsolescence, many NGOs – which were also faced with challenges of retaining funding – closed down while others opted for reconfiguring their purposes in order to retain ideological and operational relevance in a democratic South Africa (Pieterse, 1997; Julie, 2010).

As a response to the changes in the political and economic scene in South Africa during this time, NGOs experienced a further depletion in human resources with many leaders, who were central to the non-state resistance movements, moving to form part of new government structures (Habib & Taylor, 1999; Chisholm, 2004). The largely antagonistic posture employed by NGOs during apartheid became obsolete and was traded in for one centred on mutual benefit and mutual need with NGOs playing supportive as well as expert roles in policy formulation process, research, training of government personnel and consultancy (Morrow, 2004). In the field of education, NGOs were faced with many of the same challenges related to funding, depleting human resources and operational relevance. Morrow (2004:319) states that these organisations had to contend with several responses to these challenges in order to 'stay in business':

> *"they could continue to seek non-governmental funding and attempt to survive independently, or semi-independently, from government; they could attempt to integrate themselves more closely with government initiatives, become implementers of official policies; they could become consultancies, losing the characteristic NGO service ethos and becoming little different from business; or they could close, tacitly acknowledging that the aims for which they have been striving had been achieved".*

Despite the post-Apartheid turbulence experienced by the sector, Morrow (2004) proposes that many education NGOs obtained this stability by assisting government agencies in the formulation of teaching approaches and responses to citizens needs from Early Childhood Development to Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), though not immediately involved in the formal schooling system. Furthermore, NGOs became active partners in school personnel capacity building aimed at the implementation of education reform policies mainly through workshops and material support as well as the implementation of programs in the fields of drug abuse, school safety as well as health and wellness (Roberts, n.d.)

Another, yet less common, response to depleting donor funds was for NGOs to reemerge carrying with them business-like traits; an approach adopted by Project Literacy, one of South Africa's most prominent non-formal education providers (Morrow, 2004). Trading on its long-standing reputation, Project Literacy safeguarded its survival by adopting a semi-corporate approach to the provision of services, though with strong financial support from government as well. Though this approach presented the very real risk of the organisation forfeiting its "non-profit" and "non-state" status, it has retained its legitimacy as well as its seat at government policy tables especially in the area of ABET, and has also extended its reach in the provision of learning materials beyond South Africa's borders to Botswana, Namibia, Kenya and Mozambique (Morrow, 2004; Aitchison, 2007).

Likewise, many NGOs in the field have survived with the significant financial support of the government and in light of the non-repressive state of political affairs, centralised their efforts towards the provision of services and, at times, support in policy formation. As the first decade of democracy drew to a close, however, the impact of the global neoliberal political and economic paradigm reached every sector of South African society. In particular, greater pressure was placed on education systems across the world to ensure the provision of free basic education for all citizens. The adoption of MDG and EFA guidelines and the international support which became widely available towards the attainment of these goals in the post-2000 era opened up a new space of operations for NGOs and thus preserved the necessary financial and ideological backing necessary for the advancement of universal access to free primary education.

NGOs responded to available funding by, on the one hand, occupying central spaces in the provision of formal and non-formal education services and on the other hand, pressuring government to meet their national and globally-set educational obligations. Again, the emphasis placed on market productivity and the need for qualified and skilled citizens placed great emphasis on the need for non-formal methods of education. In many African countries, the provision of non-formal education is often earmarked for CBOs, religious organisations and NGOs. Such institutions are usually configured to meet the specific needs of often remote and destitute communities that aren't reached by government. Examples of non-formal education institutions are community schools in Kenya and Zambia which have become widely accepted as legitimate forms of schooling which run parallel to government-provided education.

Within the South African context, however, the term 'non-formal' education has often been used interchangeably with 'vocational training' both of which are forms of knowledge and skills acquisition which take place outside of formal learning structures and are more responsive to the employment and skills needs of out-of-school youth and adults (Aitchison, 2007). While the support of these organisations has been seminal to the extension of services to the poor, the provision of education still falls squarely on government.

Organisations which have taken up this role include Project Literacy, the South African REFLECT Network (SARN), the Adult Secondary Education Curriculum for Adults (ASECA) (Aitchison, 2007) as well as the Grahamstown Area Distress Relief Association (GADRA) located in Grahamstown (GADRA Education, 2017). Founded in 1958 as a school feeding programme, GADRA has expanded its areas of operation to include a Teachers Professional Development (TPD) series, a computer skills course, the GADRA Matric School (GMS) and the provision of several other services to the Grahamstown community (John, 2014; Msindo, 2014).

A study carried out by Msindo (2014), for example, described the varied ways in which Gadra Education has been an essential partner in the extension of education rights to disadvantaged learners in Grahamstown. The study found that initiatives carried out by the organisation, its values as well as its orientation relative to government agencies and other stakeholders in the community have been the hallmark of the organisation's long-lived success. Though officially a non-formal provider of education, John (2014) notes that the Gadra Matric School, which offers out-of-school youth the opportunity to obtain their National Senior Certificate, was the second largest Grahamstown feeder school to Rhodes University in 2014. Dr. Ashley Westaway, the manager of GMS, notes that graduates from the school accounted for half of the working-class bachelor passes in the city for the year 2014. According to him, this success is owed, large part, to GMS' value-based model that is centred on good management, love and care (ibid). Similarly, Msindo (2014), found that the principle of *Ubuntu*, which speaks to communality, compassion and love, is a value which is enshrined in the organisation's model and is central to its impact and efficacy. With an annual pass rate of above 90% and an average improvement of 25% in individual students' results, the organisation has opened up new education and employment opportunities for disadvantaged learners thereby also possibly expanding their livelihood outcomes (Msindo, 2014). Alongside these direct forms of education service delivery, have been other, more supportive forms of NGO involvement in the sector; ones which have been geared more towards

ensuring that government policies and implementation thereof are in line with the state's mandate. Prominent players in this area of education provision have included the likes of Equal Education, Section27 as well as the Legal Resource Centre, all of which have, in their own devices sought to act as a voice to government of the needs of populations and the prevailing shortfalls in the provision thereof.

In response to poor upkeep of school infrastructure at a Khayelitsha high school in Cape Town, namely 500 broken windows, Equal Education mobilized learners, community members, and local officials in an effort to pressurise government to provide the resources required for the windows to be fixed (Harini, 2011). Through the use of various mediums including various forms of print media, petitions and meetings with government officials, Equal Education was able to obtain a financial injection of R671, 000 from government towards the improvement of infrastructure at the school; well over the R7000 they had requested (ibid). EE's 500 Windows Campaign launched an ongoing sequence of movements aimed at monitoring government's commitment to the provision of free quality education for all. These included the establishment of guidelines aimed at the provision of school librarians in 2010 as well as the class action brought against the Minister of Education where, again, EE emerged victorious in its efforts of compelling the minister to establish legally-binding Norms and Standards for school infrastructure (Smalley, 2014).

Beckman & Prinsloo (2015), commend the role which litigation against the national and provincial education departments has played in ensuring the provision of education in South Africa since 1994. They state that a significant portion of the cases brought forward against the state have often been led by community members, parents and, on many occasions, NGOs. In addition to those spearheaded by Equal Education, these include the case brought against the Limpopo Education Department by Section27 in response to the non-provision of textbooks in 2012, as well as a case brought forward by the Centre for Child Law aimed at the eradication of mud schools in the Eastern Cape (Beckman & Prinsloo, 2015). Whether as immediate providers of education or as policy advocates, what is evident here is that NGOs have become increasingly hands-on in the provision of education in South Africa, particularly in disadvantaged communities. NGOs within the Eastern Cape, a predominantly rural province, have, for example, assumed a more supportive posture by providing supplementary learning materials and platforms to disadvantaged communities and learners. Axium Education, for example, a Non-Profit Organisation located in Zithulele Village, 85km from Mthatha, provides after-hours tutoring in Mathematics, Science and English along with the

Chatterbox Club which is a literacy development programme (Axium Education, 2013). Similarly, Ikamva Youth, and Ubuntu Pathways, located in Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth respectively, work with vulnerable youth by providing support materials, resources and spaces aimed at improved educational outcomes (Ikamva Youth, 2010; Ubuntu Pathways, 2018).

4.6 Conclusion

NGOs have long been a central player in Africa's development agenda. Many disadvantaged communities all across the continent have relied partly or entirely on NGOs for the provision of services and advocacy towards social justice. Limited state capacity, resources and expertise as well as shortfalls in the state's adherence to social justice and human right's standards has provided the necessary impetus for the increased presence of LNGOs and their international associations. Furthermore, internationally-set development ideals have elevated NGOs to the centre of carrying out development programs on the continent through the resource support of IGOs and IFIs (Carnoy, 1999; King & Rose, 2005). Despite their best efforts, however, poverty and destitute still characterise a significant portion of African society. NGO failure to reach those living in extreme poverty is for example, is said to perpetuate many of the inequalities which prevail in poor communities. In addition, many organisations are known to implement unsustainable programs which cannot be scaled-up and are thus designed to benefit only a small portion of the poor.

Much like in other countries, South Africa's education sector has benefited immensely from the work of non-state actors in the advancement of education rights to the poor. The advocacy work of NGOs during apartheid and in post-apartheid South Africa has been instrumental in ensuring policy implementation by the state and the provision of education services. In addition to the role they have played as policy advocates and activists, NGOs have maintained a permanent position as service providers within the sector. This chapter has demonstrated that NGOs continue to assume a central position in South Africa's education system and have partnered with the state in this regard. The next chapter, however, seeks to outline the progress gaps which prevail despite the increased involvement of NGOs in the sector. Whilst they have been instrumental in extending education services to disadvantaged communities, the chapter seeks to highlight the poor learner outcomes which persist, primarily among these target populations.

Chapter 5

Education in South Africa

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter located NGOs within the context of developmental backlogs and deepening socio-economic need in South Africa and the continent as a whole. Responding to prevailing poverty and disadvantage on the continent, NGOs have taken up three main stances, namely, service and resource gap-filling, strengthening civil society members and institutions as well as facilitating good governance and democratization processes. The chapter illustrated the nuanced nature of the contributions which NGOs make in carrying out complicated development tasks in ever-more complicated contexts. The chapter then went on detail the context and organisation-level factors which maintain a rift between NGO interventions and systemic developmental transformation in some settings. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the current state of South Africa's education system paying specific attention to learner outcomes as a developmental area which has garnered much NGO attention and intervention over the years. This begins with a background of the country's education sector and how it fits into the broader development frameworks which have been developed, particularly since 1994. A description of the current state of two fundamental learner-level education outcomes in South Africa; learner performance and retention then follows. In the main, this chapter acts as a conceptual link to the previous chapter with the chapters collectively highlighting the paradox of increased NGO involvement in education and poor learner outcomes which persist, particularly within the chosen research context. Together these chapters lay a grounding for the gap which thesis seeks to fill in providing a contextualised analysis and description of the role which organisations play in learner outcomes within this context.

5.2 South Africa's education agenda

The National Development Plan – hailed as an authoritative roadmap to a free and progressive South Africa – emphasises the role of education in the creation of employment

and opportunities as well as the enhancement of capabilities (National Planning Commission, 2012; Spaull, 2013). Due, in large part, to South Africa's legacy of apartheid, however, many of the elements which symbolise a free and progressive nation remain elusive to a significant portion of the population. South Africa's education sector, in particular, is one, among others, through which the violence of the apartheid regime was carried. In addition to racially-differentiated access to education and an inequitable allocation of financial resources, the system was designed to offer black pupils an inferior form of education (Case & Deaton, 1999; Taylor, et al., 2008; Harini, 2011). The motivation here, as stated by the then Prime Minister of South Africa, Hendrik Verwoerd was that: "natives must be taught from an early age that equality with Europeans is not for them…What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice?" (South African History Online, 2011). Policy frameworks and laws, particularly the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 were, shaped around this notion and were deployed to institute discrimination and racially segregated access to education (Nonyongo & Ngengebule, 1998; Mazibuko, 2000).

Through the collective efforts of domestic and global actors, South Africa finally began its transition from apartheid to democracy. This transition was characterised by a complete transformation of the country's policy framework, mainly through the adoption of the Bill of Rights which sought to redress the injustices of the past and usher in a democratic society wherein all citizens are equal. Broadly speaking, the newly elected government introduced a new education agenda which set out to increase access to education and respond to the needs of the country. This agenda is drawn from nationally and internationally set ideals which include EFA, MDGs, South Africa's Bill of Rights, the South African Schools Act, the National Development Plan as well as many other, more operational implementation frameworks (Murungi, 2015). At the heart of these policy frameworks is the belief that education is a basic human right and, as such, it is the mandate of the state to ensure that it is extended to all.

In practice, the transition from apartheid to democracy involved the introduction of a new policy framework and was characterised by financial and human resource redistribution, a restructuring of the national, provincial and district administrative structures as well as curriculum reform (Jansen & Taylor, 2003; Jukuda, et al., 2011). First, 19 racially divided departments were combined to form nine provincial education departments which work under the leadership of the National Department of Education (DoE) headquartered in Pretoria

(Jansen & Taylor, 2003; Spaull, 2013). At a national level, the department sets out education policy which is then operationalised by provincial executives who are also responsible for dispensing funds allocated to the province by the National Treasury (Lemon, 2004).

Secondly, concerted efforts were made by the newly elected government to rebalance the annual budget allocations as well as the allocation of teaching staff so as to address the backlogs and inequities inherited from the apartheid dispensation (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). Despite the best efforts put in by government towards this, however, the results were short-lived. Though there was a sharp increase in government spending on education from 1995-1996, Taylor, et al., (2008) as well as Carnoy & Chisholm (2008), note that real allocations by government, and their value in light of inflation, were on a steady decline from 1996 to 2003. Furthermore, aims made towards achieving equity in the deployment of teaching staff was slowed down by the ability of more affluent schools to supplement government allocations with private funds (Jansen & Taylor, 2003; Carnoy & Chisholm, 2008; Spaull, 2013). Despite this, however, education continues to receive the largest portion of the national budget in annual allocations (Jansen & Taylor, 2003; Taylor, et al., 2008).

Lastly, curriculum reform has been yet another hallmark of the post-apartheid education system. Though widely contested, Curriculum 2005 (C2005) symbolised the government's first attempt at adopting a new philosophy of learning and teaching for South African schools. Based on the philosophy of outcomes-based (OBE), the curriculum sought to centralise the learner within the process of learning with the teacher taking on the role of a facilitator rather than an instructor (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). Due to widespread criticism related to the operational hurdles of implementation, a streamlined version of the curriculum was then introduced (Jansen & Taylor, 2003; Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

South Africa's education sector is currently divided into two tiers, basic education and higher education, each with its own national department. Basic education is then further divided into two learning phases, namely, Early Childhood Development and General Education and Training (GET), which marks the end of the compulsory phase of schooling; Higher education comprises the Further Education and Training (FET) as well as Adult Basic Education and Training phases. Currently, the National Senior Certificate, which replaced the Senior Certificate in 2008, is the exit point for learners from the basic education phase (Taylor, 2012). Beyond the GET phase, which ends at Grade 9, learners are encouraged to stay within the system in order to obtain their NSC in the hopes of qualifying for institutions of higher learning. The examinations taken by learners at the end of their Grade 12 (matric)

year and the results obtained, are currently the "only measure of quality for which annual figures are continuously available" (Taylor, et al., 2008:44) and, as such, have been the most valued domestic gauge of learner outcomes by government officials as well as the general public (Gustafsson, 2011; Mouton, et al., 2012; Spaull, 2013). A report compiled by the ministerial committee on learner retention in South Africa states that: "the education system should strive towards retaining learners in schools for as long as possible" (National Department of Education, 2008:9). Though loosely worded, the essence of South Africa's education agenda has, indeed, been premised on the extension of the right to basic education to all. This requires that learners are retained within the schooling system for the requisite number of years and are able to perform at a level which will enable them to access further education and training and, by extension, expand their employment and livelihood prospects.

5.3 Learner performance and retention

Often described as 'dysfunctional', South Africa's educational landscape is still largely entrapped within the snares of colonial and apartheid systems of exclusion and black subordination. Systematised forms of discrimination, manifested potently in education-related legislation and their supporting ideologies, have survived the post-apartheid euphoria with a racially defined education system whose disadvantages and failures continue to befall the majority black population (Spaull, 2013). Spaull (ibid) classifies the system as consisting of two sub-systems; the 'dysfunctional system' which caters for 75-80% of the population and the 'functional system' which caters for 20-25% of the population. According to Spaull (2012), the former is characterised by poor school management and accountability, the absence of a culture of learning, high teacher absenteeism, inadequate learner-teacher support materials (LTSM), slow curriculum coverage, poor learner performance and extensive grade repetition which is often a precursor to high drop-out rates. Conversely, the latter comprises of good school management, adequate infrastructure and resources, discipline, a strong culture of learning as well as high levels of learner performance and retention.

Van der Berg (2008) joins the band of scholars who propose that policies aimed at operationalising resource equity on a national and provincial level have, unfortunately not translated to an equitable improvement in the performance of learners in predominantly black schools. This is evidenced by the work of Taylor and Yu (2009) which demonstrated that while the availability of resources can do much to alleviate the strain brought about by socio-

economic conditions on education outcomes, the management of these resources can have more of an impact on school performance. Taylor and Yu (ibid), have thus proposed that the allocation of resources on its own, can do little to overcome the web of other constraints which bring about the performance and resource inequity among schools and in the broader society. Similarly, Shepherd (2011:8) has proposed that, even in light of the "increases in the resources transferred to historically disadvantaged school, inequalities in South Africa's education system persist".

The performance of learners in South Africa is measured by a number of nationally, regionally and internationally set guidelines. It is essentialised to represent the performance not only of individual learners, but the system as a whole. On a national scale, the most prominent measure of learner performance–as a way of ascertaining how much knowledge learners possess and retain, as against the agreed-upon progression standards set out within a curriculum framework–is the National Senior Certificate. Although the annual NSC results have painted a glowing image of learner outcomes, work done by scholars and other national literacy and educational quality tests paint one which is diametrically opposed to them. Results from the National School Effectiveness Study (NSES), for example, demonstrated that Grade five learners in historically black schools are performing considerably worse on average than Grade three learners in historically white schools (Taylor, 2011). On a regional and international scale, South Africa has participated in a number of regionally and internationally-set tests, the most prominent of which are Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), the Progress in International Reading and Literacy Studies (PIRLS) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Both on a domestic scale as well as on a broader level, the performance of South African learners has fallen far below the average of many, often poorer, neighbouring countries (Taylor, 2008; Gustafsson, 2011; Spaull, 2013).

Poor learner performance, which often leads to and is accompanied by an alarming number of learners not completing school within the required time, repeating grades or eventually dropping out, is therefore a central issue of concern. Out of 100 learners who start Grade one, for example, 50 of them will drop out before Grade 12 (many of whom will do so between Grade 10 and Grade 11), 40 will pass their matric examinations and only 12 will qualify for university admission (Spaull, 2013). Spaull (2015:36) further illustrates this by stating that:

> *"There are roughly a million children in each grade from grade one to Grade nine; so for example, there are one million children in Grade one , one million*

children in Grade two and so on. However, there are only half a million learners in matric (Grade 12), the rest having dropped out mainly in Grades 10 and 11. In 2014, only 532,860 leaners wrote matric (and 403,874 passed) even though there were 1,085,570 learners in the cohort that started Grade one 12 years earlier"

Considering that the above statistics do not differ significantly from one year to the next, they go a long way towards highlighting the extent of national learner drop-out rates. When using the same lens to look at drop-out trends in the Eastern Cape, the numbers differ significantly but only to the negative.

24% of the Eastern Cape learners who enrolled for Grade 11 in 2008 dropped out before the end of year in 2009; in 2010, 36% of all enrolled Grade 11 learners in the province dropped out with only 59% being promoted to Grade 12 (Eastern Cape Department of Education, 2011:40). Furthermore, 20% of the 2002 cohort of enrolled Grade two learners in the province went on to pass matric in 2011 (Spaull, 2013). Related to this Taylor (2012) notes that among all provinces, the Eastern Cape is exceptional in maintaining the lowest conversion rate of Grade two learners to matric passes.

When looking further at the conversion rate of Grade one enrolment as opposed to Grade 12 enrolment, The Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2003:13) states that in 2001, 268,348 learners enrolled for Grade one. Twelve years later, only 77,939 (29% of the 2001 cohort) learners enrolled for Grade 12 (DBE, 2015:20), 77 138 wrote their NCS examinations with only 64,9% of them passing matric (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council, 2015:20). This is to say that, out of ten learners who enrolled for Grade one in 2001, less than two (18,9%) of them met the nationally accepted measure of post-matric opportunity by obtaining their NSC.

The performance of Eastern Cape Grade 12 learners maintains the same distressing trends illustrated above. Matric results for the province maintained a steady upward move from 2011 until 2015 at which point they dropped by 8.7% from 65.4% to 56.7% (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council, 2016:10). Even during the upward movement in years preceding the 2015 dip, the Eastern Cape had, and still has, the lowest matric results among the nine provinces. Moreover, dropout rates, as illustrated above, are still alarmingly high and subject performance very low. This indicates that in two of the weaknesses within the classroom realm of the education system – poor learner performance and high learner drop-out – the Eastern Cape has been seen leading the charge for a number of successive years

with the poorest matric results and the highest rate of learner drop-outs in the country (Spaull, 2013).

Futhermore, although annual matric result statistics go a long way towards illustrating, at least in part, the state of South Africa's education system, they have often been described as misleading (Taylor, 2012; Spaull & Taylor, 2014) in that they do not factor in the multitudes of learners who drop out of school before reaching matric (Rademeyer, 2014; Spaull, 2013), the standardization of matric results implemented by Umalusi (Mouton, et al., 2012), as well as the gradually decreasing pass requirements implemented for core high school subjects (Taylor, 2012). This means that while they illustrate a bleak picture of the education system, the matric results may very well just be the equivalent of the tip of an iceberg.

Moreover, Spaull (2013) states that grade progression in primary and lower-secondary grades is often an unreliable indication of learning as many learners proceed to higher grades without having acquired the requisite competence levels to progress from one grade to the next and eventually make it to Grade 12. As such, the picture painted by annual matric result statistics, therefore, becomes even more questionable and unable to single-handedly act as a reliable reference of the true educational outcomes of South African learners.

Pressure to increase access to education and redistribute resources has resulted in a trade-off between quantity and quality which, as is vastly illustrated by scholars, often favours quantity (Taylor, et al., 2008; Gustafsson, 2011; Spaull & Taylor, 2014). It is, therefore, widely accepted that learner outcomes, good and bad, come about as a result of an intricate web of different inputs which exist in and beyond the school level, the least of which is financial resource allocation. Instead of improvements in the quality of education, what has been done is an adjustment of measuring tools and requirements which often illustrate a glowing –albeit inaccurate– image of the levels of learning which actually take place in schools. Learner performance and retention are thus understood as an interplay of different factors which include poverty and inequality, community characteristics as well as the contributing stakeholders such as teachers, School Governing Bodies (SGBs), families and communities (Ncanywa, 2014). Scholars have therefore worked tirelessly in an attempt to disentangle this network, identify the most pressing contributors to learner outcomes and address them accordingly.

Case & Deaton (1999), for example, propose that parents play in important role in determining learner outcomes in three ways. First, parents, who themselves possess an

urgency for learning may align their choice of residence along with the choice of good schools which are available. Secondly, they may demand greater accountability from school officials and lastly, parents may be more hands-on in their child's education by implementing close monitoring mechanisms. Similarly, Taylor and Yu (2009) found that a learner's background, their socio-economic status, the level of disruption and the amount of help at home, all play an important part of their reading achievement and overall performance in school. Again, these findings are reiterated by Shepherd (2011:26) who, having conducted a study on the constraints to school effectiveness, found that "parents education, parent employment, household socio-economic status and language spoken at home were the most important factors influencing performance in English/Afrikaans testing schools". These findings have been corroborated by numerous other scholars (Jukuda, et al., 2011; Modisaotsile, 2012; Grace, 2013; Spaull, 2013; Ncanywa, 2014).

It has also been found that, in addition to the individual socio-economic status (SES), community profile and SES plays an even greater role in school performance (Taylor & Yu, 2009; Yamauchi, 2011; van der Berg, et al., 2011). Spaull (2013) has therefore proposed that enrolling a poor learner in an affluent school may go a low way towards compensating for the shortcomings presented by their own low SES background (Spaull, 2013). Community characteristics such as safety and substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS for example, have been found to hamper learner outcomes in Grahamstown (Johnstone, 2015). Pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, in particular, are considered significant factors constraining learner performance and, more especially, learner retention (Modisaotsile, 2012). In a study carried out by Gustafsson (2011), findings illustrated that 27% of respondents listed pregnancy as the reason for learners dropping out with 37% listing financial constraints. Similarly, in a study which sought to explore drop-out rates among learners in the township of Phillipi in Cape Town, respondents highlighted pregnancy as did participants of a household survey reported on by Spaull (2015).

According to Jansen and Taylor (2003), HIV/AIDS is yet another social challenge which has impacted South Africa's educational output in five ways, two of which directly impact either the performance or retention of learners or both. First, they propose that HIV/AIDS erodes the envisaged *participation gains* of the education; this, in light of the heightened possibility that those who are either affected by or infected with HIV may be unable to either participate or participate consistently in schooling. Learners either drop out of school in light of the personal impact of the disease or are unable to perform or continue with school due to illness.

Secondly, they propose that HIV/AIDS compromises the *quality gains* presented by the availability of trained teachers who are able to efficiently carry out their duties in class. Similarly, staff members are often unable to sufficiently play this role due to the personal impact of HIV from living with the illness or being affected by it. In order to counter the impact of HIV on learner performance and their retention in school, the Department of Education, through life skills programs in school and the introduction of a television program called *Takalane Sesame,* sought to educate the youth on HIV and the prevention and support measures which are available. Jansen & Taylor (2003), however, note that the impact of such programs and policy implementations has been minimal due, in part, to the stigma surrounding the illness and its impact on program and curriculum implementation. According to Mouton, et al., (2012), HIV/AIDS has, thus not only significantly infringed on the potential school performance but has also negatively impacted overall development outcomes in the country.

In sum, efforts to address these negative trends have included budgetary prioritisation by government, (Jansen & Taylor, 2003; Taylor, et al., 2008), increased funding to NGOs (Weideman, 2015) and the seminal involvement of CSOs. However, this collective force has failed to allay the dysfunction in the system. Volmink & van der Elst (2017:5) emphasise this paradox by stating that:

> *"High rates of failure and drop-out offer further testimony of the poor quality of teaching and learning in South Africa. About half of the 1.3 million learners who started school in 2004 dropped out before reaching Grade 12 in 2015, and, of these, only about 70 percent passed their matriculation examinations; if one considers the large proportion of learners who drop out over the 12 years of schooling, the real pass rate is closer to 35 percent".*

Additionally, they propose that:

> *"Problems of quality are well recognised, and numerous initiatives, supported by significant private, donor and public funds, have been implemented by multiple stakeholders, including NGOs, in a bid to address them. However…these initiatives have had little, if any, lasting or scaled-up impact on improving the quality of education in South Africa".*

To this, they propose that a critical look at the role played by NGOs in alleviating some of these constraints is necessary in order to better understand the space which they occupy within the South Africa's education system.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has described both South Africa's agenda and the state of learner outcomes related thereto. Attempts to address the multi-layered legacy of apartheid compelled the GNU to make concerted efforts to extend access to education rights to disadvantaged communities which were systematically excluded from quality education spheres. This transformation was characterised mainly by human and financial redistribution as well as curriculum reform. The education sector now receives the greatest portion of South Africa's budget allocations; a transformation impulse which has not translated to an improvement in the quality of education delivered to learners or their outcomes. The performance of South African learners both on domestic and international standards remains poor. Furthermore, the number of learners who, having enrolled for school, remain in school is far below the acceptable or desirable standards. This, in light of the increased involvement of NGOs in education, is a gap worth exploring and describing. The next chapter details the steps which have been taken to address this gap.

Chapter 6

Methodology and data collection

6.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have provided a background of NGOs and the nuances of their work in development and education more specifically. The chapters have outlined the space which NGOs have occupied within the global development scene and especially in Africa. In particular, limited state capacity and resources, globally-informed urgency towards specific developmental ideals such as human rights, democratisation and good governance as well as the widespread availability of global funding towards the attainment of these ideals has both launched and propelled the work of NGOs internationally and particularly in the Global South.

Having identified the position occupied by NGOs in the global development scene, the two preceding chapters engaged, in more detail, with the work of education NGOs in Africa and South Africa. While they have made far-reaching contributions in the sector, particularly with regards to ensuring that children in poor communities are able to gain access to education, the chapters demonstrates that their work has often done little to allay poor learner performance trends or uproot the structures which enable the prevailing underperformance of the sector as a whole. As two of the agreed-upon hallmarks of educational performance – on an individual and sector level– learner performance and retention trends were then discussed against the backdrop of heighten NGO involvement at both these levels.

Proceeding from this paradox, the present chapter outlines the methodological map which was used in operationalising the study and disentangling the intricacies of the tensions within and between the two sectors. First, this entails a presentation of the overarching paradigm and research approach upon which this study is based along with an identification of the most suitable research strategy which has been utilised. This is followed by a discussion of the conceptual framework which informs the study. The chapter then concludes by presenting the operational processes undertaken to, first identify the chosen research site as well as collect and analyse data. As a whole, the purpose of the chapter is to outline the processes

applied in carrying out this study and provide justification of how each choice and step were arrived at.

6.2 Research paradigm- constructivism

NGO research is, on its own, an intricate undertaking which involves a myriad of considerations to be made. Given the intricacy and multi-dimensional nature of their work and the complex relations which encompass their existence and operation, studying their role, impact, effectiveness and/or efficacy is an equally convoluted process. Commenting on this, Clark (1991), proposes that research on NGOs "should be thorough" even if it is localised to the work of NGOs in a few or small communities. Beyond looking merely at the work of NGOs and their presence in communities, he goes further to suggest that such research is more meaningful if it goes deeper to explore the lived experiences of communities which result from these interventions. Research questions should endeavour to find out, for example:

> *"whether there have been any changes in the health services, such as the availability of essential drugs at the local dispensary; has the policy of liberalization offered the poor more opportunities for petty trading; has the emergence of a black market affected them at all; what response has the community made to the deteriorating situation they are experiencing; and so on"* (Clark, 1991:171).

In particular, he suggests that rather than just looking at the effectiveness of NGO work as measured by their own objectives, it is vital to look at their efficacy which is more concerned with the story of the impact that these interventions have had on communities and their livelihood. Examples of such questions may be:

> *"Have the poorer farmers, especially the women, managed to increase their production to take advantage of farm-gate price increases? If not, what are the constraints they experience and what policy changes or assistance would help dismantle the barriers? Does the adjustment program have any impact on the amount of land allocated to women, the availability of credit for agricultural inputs, the provision of animal traction, help with marketing the other needs of small farmers? What impact is adjustment having on the provision of the social service and infrastructure that the poor require? Are roads damaged in the rainy*

season being repaired? Are local primary school teachers disappearing because of non-payment of salary?"

According to Clark, this detailed approach to research presents the opportunity to not only disentangle the highly elaborate network of which NGOs are only one part, but also tease out the varied internal and external factors with which they must constantly contend. Also, this approach is able to provide a more intricate account of the role of NGOs, their progress in dispersing development benefits to and transforming the lives of the poor as well as identifying the constraints related thereto.

Research on educational outcomes is an equally convoluted process and thus requires unique attention. Though there has been an epistemological divide among scholars within the field, with qualitative research approaches receiving prominence only recently (Howe & Eishenhart, 1990; Morrison, 2002), there seems to be mounting consensus in the belief that contextual variations along with the purpose of study, are the foremost reflections to be made in research within the field. Statterfield (2002) acknowledges the shortcomings related to the dominance of quantitative approaches to education-related inquiries by stating that the helpfulness of this approach has been significantly hampered by the fact that "not all educational concerns are composed of variables that can be measured with numbers and analysed through statistical procedures…some problems may only be evaluated subjectively; i.e. appraising the merit, value, or worth of a thing".

The present study converges part-way between these two individually elaborate fields of inquiry and seeks to uncover the nature of this convergence and the lived experiences related thereto. This necessitates a qualitative research approach which is widely acknowledged as the most appropriate framework to adopt when seeking to uncover the subjective and individually constructed experiences of a phenomenon or social state (Erickson, 1973; LeCompte & Preissle, 1994; Hancock, 2002; Marvasti, 2003). Rather than attempting to extract certain contextual variables from their most natural state or condition, qualitative research thrives on the emphasis it places on studying individuals and their experiences within their most natural settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1994; Creswell, 2003; Pandey & Pandey, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Kelly, 2016). This approach is, therefore, not concerned with controlling for external factors or isolating the subject of study from its context or natural state, a process referred to by Lincoln and Guba (1994) as "context stripping". Rather it seeks to understand how people make sense of and construct meaning of their own lives and experiences in relation to these 'external' factors (Marvasti, 2003). This view emanates from

a research paradigm often referred to as *naturalistic inquiry* or *constructivism* (Lincoln & Guba, 1989).

The consensus among scholars is that constructivism or naturalistic approaches emerged in response to the limitations identified in positivism. First, constructivism rejects the notion of an externally-existing reality which can, or should only be understood through the use of objective statistical measures and processes. According to Lincoln and Guba (1989:223-224),

> *"Positivism's fundamental ontological premise is that there exists an actual reality, a 'way things really are', that can be discovered (converged on) by the methods of science. This actual reality operated according to a series of natural laws, the 'way things really work', which is also the business of science to determine…Given this ontological position, it follows that scientists, in their work of discovery and determination, must be objective, that is, assume a detached stance…"*

This approach was widely criticised and accused of being grossly reductionist in its belief in an "absolute truth of knowledge" (Creswell, 2003); to the extent that, on the one hand, a post-positivist posture was later adopted while on the other hand, social scientists opted for constructivism and naturalist approaches to research. The proposed approach differed from the traditional positivist stance both in its belief of the existence of multiple realities" and the processes necessary for generating knowledge of them. Unlike positivism, therefore:

> *"Naturalism has no underlying premise that there is 'a way things really are', or a 'way things really work'. Instead, social realities are social constructions, selected, built, and embellished by social actors (individuals) from among the situations, stimuli, and events of their experience…As a result, the naturalist is not interested in pursuing some single 'truth' but rather in uncovering the various constructions held by individuals and often shared among the members of socially, culturally, familiarly, or professionally similar groups in some social context"* (Lincoln & Guba, 1989:227)

Given the emphasis that it places on multiple socially constructed realities and the meanings formulated around them, a constructivist paradigm also, as a corollary, pays due credence to the relationship between the researcher and members of the study populations. First, due to the multiplicity of worldviews, experiences and ways of articulating them which are uncovered from such inquiries, a great deal of pressure rests on the researcher who, in essence

and unlike in the quantitative research paradigms, become the ‘research instrument (LeCompte & Preissle, 1994; Patton, 2001; Maxwell, 2009). Elaborating on this, Lincoln and Guba (1989:228) have even suggested that proponents of this paradigm “reject the idea that the researcher-researched relationship ought to be objective and distanced”. In fact, the researcher plays the role of translating human meaning and detailing the processes and interactions involved in the construction of these meanings (LeCompte & Preissle, 1994). In this way, Lincoln and Guba (1994) go further to propose that the interactions between the researcher and study participants make the divide between ontology and epistemology in this paradigm indistinct due to how “the investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the ‘findings’ are *literally created* as the investigation proceeds”. According to Baxter and Jack (2008:545) this is one of the main advantages of this approach to research.

The emphasis that constructivism places on socially, historically-created and subjectively-held meanings of social phenomena makes naturalist inquiry ideal for this present study. The converging fields of inquiry in this thesis present, on their own, a multitude of experiences, views, perceptions and meanings. A qualitative research approach, discussed in the next section, which feeds immediately from the basic tenets of constructivism was, therefore, deemed ideal and suitable for uncovering these varied meanings and experiences towards a pursuit of the goals of this study.

6.3 Research approach- qualitative

Qualitative research is an approach to scientific inquiry which is unique in the emphasis it places on understanding the nuances of human behaviour and social phenomena through the development of in-depth explanations of each or both from the perspective of those who experience them. This emanates from the belief that either of these two phenomena can be described by obtaining information from human subjects by asking questions which begin with: why? how? and in what way? (Hancock, 2002). Data collected within this qualitative framework is thus geared towards answering questions about “why people behave the way they do, how opinions and attitudes are formed, how people are affected by the events that go on around them and how and why cultures and practices have developed in the way they have”(Hancock, et al., 2009:7).

Though there is no shortage of definitions of qualitative research, it is worth noting that their vastness does not necessarily denote divide in the conceptions of the approach. LeCompte and Preissle (1994:15), for example, describe qualitative research as a form of investigation which seeks to expand knowledge about the attitudes, values, beliefs, and meanings held by certain populations through interactions which take place in the most natural settings. Similarly, Hancock (2002:9) notes that "qualitative approaches to data collection usually involve direct interaction with individuals on a one on one basis or in group settings" while Williams (2007) identifies it as a unique approach to research which involves discovery of phenomena which are then described from the viewpoint of those being studied. Again, Hancock et al., (2009) consider this approach unique in that it is concerned with generating detailed narratives of social phenomena and in proposing different explanations of how and why the social has taken on a particular form within a given setting. What is evident from these and many other definitions is that this approach is partly characterised by the emphasis it places on the subjective experiences and views of those being studied and its urgency with research taking place within the most natural settings thus devoid of any attempt to manipulate or extract the context where phenomena take place.

Furthermore, and as was briefly touched on in the previous section, qualitative research embraces the variations between contexts and does not seek to generate universally applicable theories or generalisations. Maxwell (2009:233) proposes that "there is no "cookbook" for doing qualitative research"; rather, the value of qualitative research lies in its responsiveness and adaptability to natural settings. This has, however also been identified as a threat to the rigor and trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry and, by extension, the value of findings generated therefrom (Hancock, 2002; Hancock, et al., 2009). To counter such assertions, scholars have stressed the fact that, the core purpose of qualitative research is to uncover the lived experiences and views of a given population and as such, the value of such inquiries and their findings can therefore not be measured on the basis of quantitative research standards (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). Where quantitative inquiry seeks to generalise findings to great populations, qualitative studies draw out in-depth details of a specific group, culture or institution (Hancock, 2002; Elliot & Timulak, 2005; Creswell & Poth, 2016). In essence, where quantitative approaches to research pursue breadth and lateral contributions, the value of qualitative research lies in the depth of the inquiry and its resultant findings. By focusing ever so much on the 'bigger picture'– through the application of techniques which prioritise the generalizability of findings to wider populations– quantitative approaches often fail to

provide a ‘full picture’ of a phenomenon or social state and how or why it has emerged or persists. The current study seeks to provide an in-depth narrative description of the role played by NGOs in learner outcomes. A qualitative research approach provides the necessary framework with which the goals of the study can be pursued.

6.4 Conceptual framework

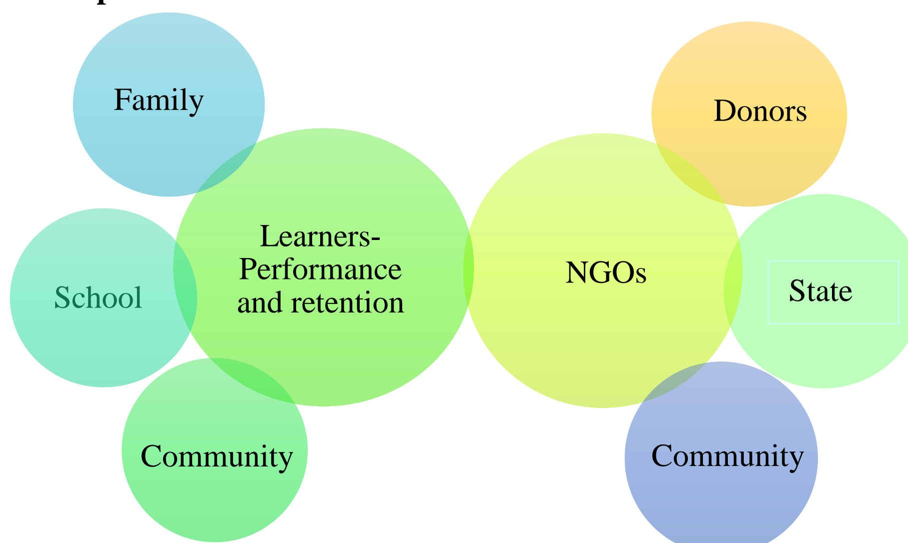
As noted earlier, the world of NGOs, the work they do, the external relations which contribute to their form and operation as well as their contributions to development initiatives is an elaborate and interconnected construct. Likewise, education and education outcomes, in particular, form part of an intricate network of relations and external influences. Despite this however, there is a space within many societies, where these two fields of development converge. NGOs, through several domestic and international devices, enter communities with the aim of alleviating poverty and its resultant forms of disadvantage. Within the field of education, NGOs have been identified as extensions to state-provided services and partners in policy formulation. The space where these two fields meet has, however, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, failed to allay the poor learner outcomes in South Africa and the Eastern Cape, in particular (Volmink & van der Elst, 2017). The limited impact of NGOs in this regard has often been recorded as resulting from pressure from donors and states as well as the strict implementation guidelines and standards set by both (Haque, 2002; Hirsch, 2003; Teamay, 2007; Pillay, 2010; Weger, 2013; Julius, 2014). This is said to steer NGOs away from their beneficiary communities which, in themselves contend with a myriad of deeply rooted factors which may constrain the impact of state or NGO-implemented development programs.

Prevailing NGO discourse presented in the preceding chapters has demonstrated that these “push and pull factors” are significant elements with which both NGOs and beneficiary communities must constantly contend. While a number of studies have reported on the constraining factors which impact the work of NGOs (Riddel & Robinson, 1992; Kadzamira & Kunje, 2002; Adjei, et al., 2012; Chitongo, 2013; Fraser, 2013; Weger, 2013), little work has focused on the ‘push and pull factors’ which may hamper the positive response of communities to NGO interventions, especially within the context of prevailing poor learner outcomes. Studies conducted within the field of education have, however, identified a number of external factors which impact the performance and retention of learners (Van der

Berg, 2008; Taylor & Yu, 2009). According to prevailing research, these challenges exist at three levels of society, namely at the family level, school level and community level (Case & Deaton, 1999; Jansen & Taylor, 2003; Gustafsson, 2011; Jukuda, et al., 2011; van der Berg, et al., 2011; Yamauchi, 2011; Grace, 2013; Spaull, 2013; Ncanywa, 2014; Johnstone, 2015). Given that these have been identified by scholars as possible determinants to learner outcomes, they are therefore identified as the fundamental concepts which frame the design and implementation of this study. This is often referred to as the *conceptual framework* and it informs the collection and analysis of data necessary to answer the overarching research question and address the identified research problem (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Maxwell, 2009). For the purpose of the study, this conceptual framework was utilised as a guiding frame for the overarching approach to the collection and analysis of data and was also instrumental in development of research tools and questions. With the two broad sectors of study in mind(illustrated below), for examples, the conceptual framework also informed the sampling of study participants who were, in some ways, affiliated to either of the two sectors or both.

The diagram below (figure 2) illustrates the interlocking network of which NGOs and learners are both singular and interwoven parts and it demonstrate how their two worlds converge both with one another and also with other external factors and relations. This provided both a conceptual and operational guide to the collection and analysis of data and also to the sampling of participants who would be best placed to respond to the research questions. This broadly included, learners, parents, community members, NGO and school officials as well as commentators and observers of the Grahamstown schooling and NGO communities.

Figure 2- Conceptual framework



Source*:* author (2018)

6.5 Research Design

Despite the iterative and fluid nature of qualitative research, a research design is still necessary and vital to any project both as a guiding and reflective tool. Unlike in the case of defining qualitative research where the large pool of definitions does not denote multiple conceptions, the definition of research design has undergone its fair share of intellectual challenging especially within the context of qualitative research (Maxwell, 2009). LeCompte & Preissle (1994:2) note for example, that "social science methodologists have failed to make definitive distinctions among research designs…the names commonly given to research designs do not clearly discriminate between designs and methods of data collection and analysis". Starman (2013) echoes these sentiments by noting that some scholars view certain 'research designs' as qualitative research types while others consider them to be methods of data collection, especially with case studies. Hancock et al., (2009:7) attribute this indistinct divide between research designs to the variations found in the populations being studied as well as the methods of collecting, interpreting and presenting data related thereto.

Despite the slight confusion, however, there is some consensus among scholars on the key steps which every study must include and interpret depending on its own unique characteristics. These include, research goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods, validity, and ethics which cuts through each stage of conducting a study. Baxter & Jack (2008) propose that key components for the design of a study include propositions, a conceptual framework, research questions and the logical progression to be made between data and the propositions as well as the criteria to be used in interpreting findings. In general, therefore, research designs can be understood as road maps, with varying degrees of flexibility, to research which seeks to collect and analyse data with the view of answering a given research question. The components of this roadmap, vary according to the research paradigm chosen, the research approach, whether qualitative or quantitative as well as the overarching research questions. Marvasti, (2003:9) provides a broad enough definition to encompass a number of variations among studies and defines research designs as "steps that researchers follow to complete their study from start to finish". It can perhaps be suggested therefore, that key aspects of a research design include, the research strategy, sampling framework and methods, data collection and analysis tools, research instruments as well as data management techniques. Having already articulated the research paradigm and approach as well as the conceptual framework, the next sections will briefly touch on the steps taken in this study from the chosen research strategy to the collection and analysis of data.

6.6 Research strategy: descriptive case study

Though qualitative research is a constantly evolving process which partly derives its value from its adaptability and responsiveness to ever-changing contextual dynamics, scholars have identified a number of dominant strategies which can be used in carrying out studies of this nature (Creswell, 2003; Elliot & Timulak, 2005; Hancock, et al., 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2016). These strategies include case study, ethnography, grounded research, phenomenological study and narratives with some scholars including content analysis (Williams, 2007). Other, though less dominant, strategies include surveys, discourse analysis, biographies, conversation analysis and many others (Hancock, et al., 2009). Given the inherent value in all these approaches, Yin (1984:4) proposes three factors upon which the choice of strategy should rest, namely; "a) the type of research question posed, b) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events and c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events".

In instances where a study seeks to answer "how" and "why" questions, for example, qualitative strategies such as case studies, ethnographies and narratives are often chosen. According to Yin (1984) case studies would, for example, be the most suitable choice of strategy for studies where the researcher has limited or no control of behaviours and events; which is unlike in experimental research where a researcher is able to manipulate and control behaviours as needed. Where a study seeks to explore contemporary, rather than historic events within their most natural context and "especially where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident", again, this approach would be appropriate (Yin, 1984:13). Starman (2013:37) also notes that case studies are "very suitable for serving the heuristic purpose of inductively identifying additional variables and new hypothesis" and they present the opportunity to "analyse qualitatively complex events and take into account numerous variables". A case study approach to research is thus deemed beneficial for researchers who seek to uncover and describe contextual factors in the anticipation that they may have a significant influence on the phenomenon under investigation (Hancock, 2002).

There are several defining features of case study research some of which include the depth of the focus on a single or a bounded entity, the bounded nature of time within which a given case is explored as well as the use of multiple methods of data collection in uncovering as many factors relating to the state of the entity or phenomenon as possible. Creswell and Poth

(2016:73) provide an elaborate definition for this strategy by proposing that rather than being a mere choice of research site, case studies should be understood as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audio-visual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes". As proposed by this definition and others, what makes case studies a unique approach is the depth with which phenomena are studied, first through the identification of a single or bounded context of study and, second through the use of multiple methods of data collection (Zainal, 2007).

Given that this approach should not be understood as a mere choice of research site but rather an approach, it is further divided into three categories; namely exploratory, descriptive and explanatory case study, each of which responds to the purpose of a given project. It is, however, worth noting that the boundaries between these three categories are not as cut-and-dry as the terms themselves. As such, Yin (1984) proposes that rather than mulling over remaining within the bounds of a single category of case study, it is more advisable to ensure that the category chosen is the best suited for the study.

Despite the widely accepted flexibility inherent in qualitative research it is important to not overstate this but rather recognise which approaches are best suited to fulfil what purpose. Exploratory case studies, as the term suggests, are concerned with exploring previously unchartered research territory where little is known about a context of study, a phenomenon or the variables which are important to it (Creswell, 2003; Skovdal & Cornish, 2015). This strategy can, for example, prove useful for generating hypothesis to be later used in quantitative studies or for uncovering important elements within a given setting for further qualitative inquiry. Descriptive case studies on the other hand, are implemented when the purpose of a study is to describe a phenomena along with its contextual factors while explanatory case studies are conducted with the view of drawing causal links–based on in-depth data obtained–between complex phenomena and the factors which relate to them (Yin, 2003) Therefore, according to Starman (2013:37), "case studies are able to accommodate complex causal relations, such as equifinality, complex interactions effects and path dependency".

Again these categories of case studies are hailed for their ability to provide detailed information, descriptions and explanations to naturally occurring phenomena with an amount

of depth which other forms of research strategies–perhaps with the exception of ethnography–may not be able to achieve. Hancock (2002:5) thus notes that:

> *"As a research design, the case study claims to offer a richness and depth of information not usually offered by other methods. By attempting to capture as many variables as possible, case studies can identify how complex sets of circumstances come together to produce a particular manifestation".*

This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008:544). Similar sentiments are echoed by Starman (2013:8) who states that "a case study is important for developing different views of reality, including the awareness that human behaviour cannot be understood merely as an act that is driven by a rule or theory".

Despite its multitude of benefits, several points of criticism have been waged against case study research and thus require careful consideration. First, due to its unique focus on single or bounded contexts of inquiry, case studies are often accused of having limited potential for scientific generalisation (Yin, 2003; Hancock, 2002; Zainal, 2007; Hancock, et al., 2009; Starman, 2013). The value of research has been traditionally measured on the extent to which findings can be generalised and be of benefit to wider populations in addition to other measures. According to Denzil & Lincoln (2000), this "draws on the degree to which the original data were representative of a larger population". Case study research, however, betrays this very premise in that it thrives on studying phenomena, people, organisations, events and groups which possess very unique and exceptional characteristics. Hancock (2002), thus proposes that the criticism of non-generalisable case study findings emanates from a misunderstanding not only of case study research but qualitative inquiry as a whole. What makes case study research unique and valuable to research rather is the depth of inquiry, often into less understood contexts. By virtue of this, it is clear that case study and, indeed qualitative research as a whole, cannot or should not be held to book on the basis of standards designed for quantitative inquiry (Golafshani, 2003).

Rather than measure the value of case study research and qualitative research as a whole on quantitative standards, scholars have proposed new frameworks of appraisal. Yin (1980:10) resolves this dilemma by positing that case studies are generalisable to "theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes". He thus asserts that, rather than statistical

generalisability, case study research aims towards *analytic generalisability* which seeks to "expand and generalise theories and not to enumerate frequencies" (ibid).

As noted in the previous sections, qualitative research places emphasis on the researcher-researched relationship. Building such relationships to a satisfactory level is time consuming and requiring of the researcher as the instrument of research. Case study research, in particular, has thus been criticised for being too time-consuming, producing a great deal of documentation to be handled often resulting in limited rigour (Yin, 2003; Zainal, 2007). To this, Yin (1984) proposes that the inconsistent and disordered implementation of some case study research has often been unfairly used to discredit the strategy as a whole (Krefting, 1991).

The last of the more dominant detractions cast against case study research is related to selection bias. An essential step in conducting case study research involves a selection of the unit or units of analysis which will stand as the case/s under investigation. Often this choice is criticised for depending far too much on the researcher's subjective preferences rather than the objective needs of research and thus compromising the reliability of a study (Yin, 1984; Starman, 2013). Again, Yin (1984) proposes that selection bias can occur in many other forms of research, including quantitative strategies which appear objective and devoid of researcher subjectivity such as experimentation.

This is, however not to say that such biases must be overlooked on the basis of their possible existence in all forms of research. Yin (1984), therefore proposes that proper documentation of the research process and transparency in justifying the steps taken, are an essential part of safeguarding the reliability of a study in this regard. Some scholars even propose that the transparency of the research process in such studies and the acknowledgement of unavoidable subjectivity can, if managed and reported transparently, make a positive contribution to any study (Howe & Eishenhart, 1990). Furthermore, prolonged time spent with research participants as well as researcher reflexivity, which is an essential part of qualitative field research, are considered to be an opportunity for researchers to ensure that their preconceived notions are kept at bay, as much as possible, so that they are able to report on cases as they are, rather than how they first appear from their personal lens (LeCompte & Preissle, 1994).

After thorough consideration of both the gains and drawbacks of carrying out qualitative research using a case study approach, it was, nonetheless deemed the most suitable strategy for several reasons; with two towering over the rest. First, the conceptual framework of this

study has proposed that there are contextual factors which relate to the work of NGOs and the performance and retention of learners which must be considered in carrying out this study. Hancock (2002) is quoted above stating that, this research approach is particularly advantageous to researchers who seek to uncover and describe contextual factors in anticipation that they may have a significant influence on the phenomena being studied. Starman (2013:37) has, in the same vein, noted that the approach can assist with "identifying additional variables and new hypothesis" in order to "analyse qualitatively complex events and take into account numerous variables". This strategy was the most suitable approach for carrying out the study and answering the research questions.

The second reason for choosing this strategy feeds immediately from the first but is more related to the fact that case study research has been identified as an approach which can be beneficial for developing in-depth descriptions about naturally-occurring phenomena which the researcher has little control over (Yin, 1984; Patton, 2001). As noted above, education and NGO research are very elaborate fields of inquiry with a myriad of contextual features acting as "push and pull" factors in the performance and retention of learners. A descriptive case study approach provided the most promise as a guiding strategy of describing the features and intricacies within which this chosen network of people, organisations, occurrences and phenomena interact and coexist. The next section briefly describes the context of study, the cases which were studied as well as the units of analysis after which the more operational steps taken are then presented.

6.7 Research context and unit of analysis

Grahamstown can be thought of as somewhat of an educational oasis in the Eastern Cape. Located 126km from Port Elizabeth, the provincial educational hub (Westaway, 2014) is home to three of the 20 most expensive high schools in the country (Vorster, 2016). It is, however, concerning to note that it also holds a disturbing reputation for producing some of the poorest learner outcomes and attrition rates (Rhodes University Education Department, 2013:9). Hendricks (2008:6) argues that "the Grahamstown education district provides a microcosm of the educational inequalities in the province". Here, she notes, "a few long-standing expensive schools and well-resourced desegregated state schools exist side by side with a majority of poorly-resourced state schools". Additionally, Westaway (2017:108) goes

on to propose that Grahamstown can be viewed as a snapshot of the “fissures and inequalities that characterise the South African education system”.

Furthermore, on the far western hills of the city sits Rhodes University, the economic centre of the city and a highly celebrated institution of learning and research, while on the far opposite end, the Grahamstown east township of Joza can be seen facing the 1820 Settlers Monument and more affluent Grahamstown west. The spatial make-up of the city couldn’t be a more descriptive reference of the inequality inscribed in its education sector. While the uniquely extreme form of educational inequality in Grahamstown (Westaway, 2015) falls beyond the purview of this study it does provide an interesting lens through which to explore the role of NGOs in this particular context.

The Joza Youth Hub with the amalgamated efforts of four education NGOs working in Joza, namely Upstart Youth Development Project (Upstart), Access Music Project (AMP), Village Scribe and Ikamva Youth, was considered an ideal point of reference for this study. Launched in 2013, the Joza Youth Hub, is the result of collaborative efforts by Rhodes University, Makana Municipality and NGOs in the city aimed at providing a central access point for educational support services for learners in the community (Rhodes University, 2013). Several features of the Joza Youth Hub and its encompassing players made it a worthwhile lens through which to explore and describe the role of education NGOs in improving learner outcomes. First, with the exception of one NGO which moved its base of operations out of the community during data collection, all NGOs are located within the research site. Two of these are centrally situated partway between two local high schools which constitute a significant portion of the target population, with another operating from within one of the local high schools. Moreover, all these organisations are within a looking distance of the busiest point of entry to the community from town and other surrounding townships.

Additionally, what makes these organisations a suitable case to study are their diverse approaches to educational advancement. While Upstart and AMP offer various platforms and spaces wherein learners are able to enhance their music literacy and artistic skills, Village Scribe Association provides various learning support tools such as Khan Academy, Siyavula textbooks and Geogebra each of which is aimed at improving learner performance in different subjects (NGO Pulse, 2016; Access Music Project, 2018; Upstart , 2018). Ikamva Youth combines the aforementioned approaches and adds to its model HIV/AIDS education, computer literacy programs and leadership training (Ikamva Youth, 2010). As a collective therefore, services which come out of the Joza Youth Hub endeavour to extend education

rights by offering supplementary services, mainly in the form of tutoring and material resources, support services such as mentoring, music, media and arts education as well as career guidance and computer literacy programs. As such, a broad population of learners from Joza and surrounding townships are targeted by these core organisation programs and other activities and events. For the purpose of exploring the role of NGOs in the performance and retention of learners, it was considered worthwhile to study an establishment that, first, combines different non-governmental educational intervention designs and secondly, does so in such close proximity to its target population.

6.8 Data collection

Qualitative data collection is often described as constantly evolving and iterative. This is to say that, first, the process of data collection takes place concurrently with the analysis of data and secondly, that data collection techniques are flexible and responsive to the emergent observations, experiences and changes encountered during the research process and respond to the impulsive nature of research contexts (Guba, 1981; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Zucker, 2009; Anney, 2014). Marvasti (2003) notes that while positivism acknowledges the importance of the context within which research is conducted, it considers contextual factors as variables which must be controlled for such that the main phenomenon under investigation is extracted from these surrounding factors. Qualitative data collection, on the other hand, embraces the fluid nature of research contexts, treats them as part of the story which must be told and, often, shapes data collection and analysis techniques around these emerging conditions.

Several methods which have been identified as pivotal to the collection of qualitative data in case study research include interviews, observations, focus group discussions, document analysis, as well as the collection of audiovisual material and artifacts (Williams, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2016). A hallmark of case study research is that data is often collected through the use of several of these collection methods in order to diversify the types of data and safeguard the credibility of the study (Baxter & Jack, 2008); a process referred to as *triangulation*.

Different methods of data collection are utilised in case study research. As previously noted, this research strategy thrives on the basis of drawing from different sources of data and using several forms of data collection (Williams, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Baxter & Jack, 2008). The most dominant of these forms of these methods, however, has been the interview

which entails face to face interactions where study participants, either individually or in group settings, are prompted to provide different forms of information relevant to the study (Hancock, 2002; Marvasti, 2003; Elliot & Timulak, 2005). Interviews are then further divided between structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews.

Different types of interviews are chosen by researchers in order to fulfill the differing needs of their projects. As the term suggests, structured interviews are used to facilitate tightly controlled engagements with research participants. The same structured questions, which are at times designed to "limit the range of responses", are posed in order to solicit very specific information from all participants (Hancock, 2002:9). While acknowledging that this style of interviewing can be inexpensive and less time consuming, Marvasti (2003) proposes that it can also be restrictive in two ways. First, given that questions move from predetermined deductions and codes, structured interviews are unable to provide explanations or shed light on the meaning of certain responses provided. Secondly, and due to these predetermined codes, the depth of participants' experiences, which may fall beyond the purview of the questions posed, is excluded from the conclusions drawn by the study.

On the opposite end of the continuum are unstructured interviews which use questions as the equivalent of topics of conversation rather than prompts for specific information. Unlike the structured kind, unstructured interviews do not proceed from predetermined ideas which will be covered during encounters with participants, rather the ideas emerge from these encounters (Hancock, 2002). In between this style of interviewing and the former, are semi-structured interviews which, though not as bound as structured interviews, are also not as flexible as unstructured interviews. In fact, semi-structured interviews draw from these two approaches by ensuring that while interviews are guided by a set of questions, participants are given room to express, to the most necessary extent, the depth of their experiences, perceptions and views (Hancock, et al., 2009).

The use of semi-structured interviews was beneficial to the study because it presented the opportunity to obtain the data needed to answer the research questions in a guided manner while leaving room for participants to introduce information which may also be important to the study. Moreover, the iterative characteristics usually ascribed to this qualitative data collection method were particularly beneficial for this study because participants were given room to volunteer information which was not only necessary for answering the research questions but also instrumental for ensuring that the study was being carried out in the most effective manner. As new themes and data emerged during these interviews, for example,

this approach to proved to be vital for certifying the research tools and ensuring that processes used were those which were best suited for answering the research questions in the necessary amount of depth and rigor and if not, what changes needed to be made.

Semi-structured interviews also proved to be beneficial for the analysis of data collected in that they provided a framed yet reflextive and iterative guide for the analysis of data. On the basis of literature reviewed and the conceptual framework developed therefrom, a coding framework emerged. This included broad codes which were accompanied by an inductively developed set of other themes that were both guided by and also guided the data collection and analysis processes to completion. Both sets of codes were then used to condense field data into decisive themes through which field and desktop data were analysed and research questions were answered.

Another method of data collection commonly used in qualitative research are focus group discussions which typically include the researcher as the facilitator of discussions and often involve four or more participants (Bloor, et al., 2001; Morgan, 2002). Marvasti (2003) proposes that focus group discussions can be beneficial to a study in that data collected can be particularly insightful when not much research on a particular issue has been done and also, the researcher is able to gather more in-depth data as participants are able to, through their interactions, jog more reflection and examination of an issue. It is on the basis of these reasons that the present study made use of focus groups in collecting data.

Document analysis, which accompanies interviews and focus group discussions, is a seminal strategy through which data were collected for this study. Though not widely reported on, as compared to the preceding data collection methods, document analysis was essential to this study through its provision of detailed information of the contextual features of a study and providing some background on the issue under investigation (Hancock, et al., 2009). Marshall (2006:107) also suggests that the review of documents can shed light into the "values and beliefs of participants in a given setting" and are "useful in developing an understanding of the setting or group being studied". For this study in particular, the detailed analysis of government reports, newspapers as well as organisational documents and reports, provided a firm grounding for an understanding of the educational context of Grahamstown, the life and times of the organisations under investigation, their internal workings as well as the broader context within which they operate.

6.9 Ethics

One of the most important considerations to be made by a researcher before and while carrying out a study are the ethical implications of a project. This is emphasised by Maxwell (2009) who proposes that ethical considerations should not be understood or treated as a single step in the design of a study, but rather as an overarching principle which must inform all decisions made by a researcher at each step of the research process. This is to say that ethical considerations in research not only inform legal and institutional obligations to be upheld but should underlie a researcher's convictions and conduct at every step of undertaking a study. Tracy (2010) distinguishes between four forms of ethical considerations to be made by research; namely procedural, situational, relational and exiting ethics.

Procedural ethics are the practical obligations which are set out, often by an institution with which a researcher is affiliated, which inform specific steps to be followed. These encompass data management standards such as password protected or fireproof data storage protocols, disclosure of how a researcher will carry out processes of informed consent, privacy and confidentiality. Situational ethical standards on the other hand usually fall beyond the purview of institutional bodies but speak to the considerations and steps which researchers must take in order to respond to field-based changes and observations in the context of research. Upholding situational ethics requires constant reflection and sensitivity on the part of the researcher in order to always ensure that research is both beneficial and harmless to participants.

For example, Grahamstown's non-governmental network is small and very interconnected. As will be demonstrated in the next chapters, organisations work with very limited human resource bases and rely heavily on small and irregular volunteer availability. Though the thesis often refers broadly to "NGO officials" when reporting findings from volunteers and employees, situational ethical obligations have compelled concerted efforts to be made to not link participants to the organisations with which they are affiliated as this may not only neutralise the rationale for the use of pseudonyms in this particular context, but may also compromise the obligations of maintaining participant confidentiality given the uniqueness of the research context.

Relational ethics feeds immediately from this but rather than looking at the context within which research is conducted, these ethical considerations require researchers to be introspective of how their own character and personally-held values impact research

participants. It is, for example, widely acknowledged by scholars that power imbalances between researchers and participants are an integral part of research that requires constant monitoring and reflexivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1989; Howe & Eishenhart, 1990; Finlay & Evans, 2009). In many ways, therefore, the purpose of relational ethical standards is to enable researchers to balance these power disparities by developing frameworks for respect, honesty, parity and reciprocity. Lastly, beyond the data collection phase, researchers have the obligation to ensure that they present research findings with integrity and honesty "so as to avoid unjust or unintended consequences (Tracy, 2010:847); this is referred to as 'exiting ethics'.

Generally, there have been four principles which have been identified as the more dominant ethical considerations to be made in research; these are autonomy–sometimes referred to as 'respect for persons', beneficence, non-maleficence and justice. First, autonomy can be loosely understood as the freedom of self-determination and independence. Within the research context, this denotes a researcher's obligation to respect participants and their right to self-determination and self-identification (Tayie, 2005; Gallardo, 2012). Non-maleficence and beneficence are often thought of concurrently with the former being concerned with ensuring that research or participation in research brings no harm to those who participate and the latter establishing the obligation for researchers to work to either remove harm or facilitate benefits for research participants. Lastly, the principle of justice in research is applied in order to ensure that researchers treat people with equality and that the chances of participating in a study along with the risks or benefits of such participation are equally distributed among people (Kass, 2006). Gallardo (2012) thus advances the notion of justice being grounded on the equitable distribution of risks and benefits with no undue exclusion of certain groups of people from research participation, unless such exclusion is informed by the hypothesis and research questions embedded in the design of the study.

Informed consent and formal institutional review are two ways in which researchers practice their commitment to these ethical principles and are held accountable first to the institutions to which they are affiliated and secondly, to the participants and communities within which they conduct their research. This study was reviewed by the Higher Degrees Committee of Rhodes University which symbolises an approval that it meets the ethical standards required to carry the study out. Furthermore, written and/or verbal informed consent were obtained from participants and revisited at different points during the study. Three matters are emphasised to participants whilst negotiating consent; a) participation in the study is

voluntary, b) participants are encouraged to, at any point where they feel it necessary, exercise their right to discontinue their participation in the study and informed that this will come with no consequence to their lives or services they receive, c) confidentiality is upheld through the use of pseudonyms with research being reported in a way that participant identities and affiliations cannot be linked back to the data presented.

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the design of this study as well as the philosophical and paradigmatic persuasions which underlie it. Constructivism was first described, among other research paradigms, as the most appropriate paradigm to inform this study. Given the two interlocking fields of inquiry which this study seeks to explore–NGOs and education–and the amount of detail it seeks to pursue in such an exploration, this paradigm offered the most appropriate philosophical underpinning in order to best draw out the data which were needed in order to answer the research question. A similar process of elimination was done and presented here with regards to the choice of a qualitative research approach as opposed to a quantitative one.

Based predominantly on literature reviewed and the goals of this particular study, the conceptual framework which informed the data collection and analysis phases was then presented. The key concepts identified in this framework informed the process of data collection through the tools used for field data collection and provided a framework for the analysis of this data and the sampling of research participants. For example, participants representing both the schooling and the non-governmental sectors in Grahamstown were sampled both on the basis of their level of affiliation with the concerned institutions and also on the basis of their familiarity with how the intersecting points of the two sectors.

The chapter then delved into a discussion on the design of the study which, included the strategy that was employed along with the data collection tools that were used. This was concluded by a background of the ethical considerations that were made prior and during the field research phase. The chapters which follow present the data obtained from field research conducted and documents analysed and the seek to use the data to respond to the overarching questions of this study

Chapter 7

Joza: A remote centre of the Grahamstown schooling community

7.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have sought to disentangle the world of NGOs, unveil the intricacies and contradictions of their work in developing communities and also present some of their contributions to global education endeavours. Having undertaken the arduous task of identifying a workable taxonomy of NGOs in chapters two and three, it became evident, first, that an understanding of these organisations requires an acknowledgement of their variations as well as their ideological, financial and legal dependence on donors and state agencies. Furthermore, it is equally important to acknowledge the global ideological leanings, particularly neoliberalism, under which International Financial Institutions and global powers dispense finances and other resources internationally. As such, it becomes apparent that the non-state, non-market and altruistic characteristics which are used to define NGOs are often ambiguous, filled with tensions and constantly being negotiated around global development priorities, organisational and, at times, community needs. The high concentration of power in the upper echelons of the NGO world thus often results in a trade-

off between resource retention, protection of legitimacy claims, altruistic commitments and community needs.

Education NGOs have, particularly over the past two decades, taken on the mantle of advancing global education ideals in the developing world. They have, however, also operated within this tension-filled arena which includes multiple actors with different sources and dynamics of power, the least of which, as is vastly evidenced, are beneficiary communities. Despite widespread reservations waged against NGOs, however, their contributions have, at times, gone a long way not only in extending access to education services but also in holding governments responsible for non-delivery or subpar delivery of these services. Conversely, their contributions have, at times, done little to allay substandard education outcomes.

Chapter five presented indicators and characteristics which have often been used as references to the dysfunction in South Africa's education system. The persistently poor learner outcomes, namely performance and retention, as central issues of concern nationally, provincially and for the purposes of this thesis, were then unpacked. With less than 50% of learners in the country making it to matric within the required time (if at all) and even fewer obtaining the requisite performance standards for accessing further and higher education institutions, NGOs have had no trouble in legitimising their prominent presence and operations in the sector. Moreover, despite the persistent standoff between state agencies and NGOs, characterised by distrust and feelings of threatened legitimacy, non-state organisations and their work has become a central component of many communities in South Africa with Grahamstown being an exception perhaps only with regards to the immense concentration of non-state initiatives received by such a small town and the apparent absence of the commensurate learner outcomes expected therefrom.

The intersection of the work of NGOs and the education sector is one which combines two monumental spheres of interactions, sub-communities and relationships. On the one hand, as noted above, NGO operations are characterised by a constant oscillation between the relationships they maintain with donors, state-agencies and beneficiary communities and on the other hand, learner outcomes are said to be the product of an intricate schooling community which includes players at the family, community, state and school sphere. The relationships within this schooling community have individually and collectively received an incredible amount of attention producing an almost accepted level of discord in what are believed to be the fundamental determinants of learner performance and retention. Due

however, to the momentous task of providing the most accurate composite sketch of each of these spheres–NGOs and education outcomes–, the point at which they converge has likewise been left largely unchartered. Having unravelled the intricacies of both these spheres separately, what the preceding chapters have thus collectively sought to do is lay a grounding upon which a description of the work of NGOs in Joza and their role in learner outcomes can be provided.

The current chapter will build from this foundation by, first, presenting as detailed a description of the Grahamstown schooling community as is necessary. This will provide a document and archive-based backdrop upon which the apparent education hub of the Eastern Cape can be viewed. The chapter will then present the dynamics of learner outcomes in Grahamstown, paying particular attention to the four secondary schools located in the Grahamstown east township of Joza. As beneficiary to a number of non-state education initiatives, this community provides a unique opportunity through which NGO interventions can be described and partly, understood. The chapter will then, conclude by describing the work of education NGOs in Joza and the space which they occupy in learner outcomes, thereby responding, at least in part, to the central inquiry of this thesis. The next chapters will build from this background so as to collectively address the central point of this study.

7.2 Education in the Eastern Cape: Structure and operation

The Eastern Cape is a province rich with an educational heritage which has apparently been securely locked in the history and corridors of numerous nationally and internationally renowned institutions of learning and training. The Healdtown College in Fort Beaufort, Lovedale College in Alice, King Williams Town and Zwelitsha, Fort Hare University, St Matthews College in Keiskammahoek and Rhodes University have been the training grounds for notable national leaders and international figures such as Steve Biko, Chris Hani, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Robert Sobukwe, Tiyo Soga and of course, the first two presidents of democratic South Africa, Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki. In recent years however, the province has, quite accurately, been associated with high levels of poverty and unemployment, mismanagement of public funds and resources, a poorly performing provincial education system characterised by infrastructure backlogs, teacher shortages and poor administrative accountability, all of which translate to poor learner outcomes.

Perhaps inundated with assuming responsibilities and functions previously spread across the former Cape Province, the Department of Education and Training as well as Ciskei and Transkei homeland structures pre-1994, the Eastern Cape has experienced constant turbulence, first in ensuring the equitable distribution of financial, human and material resources as well as ensuring that these translate to an improvement in learning outcomes and youth prospects (Lemon, 2004).

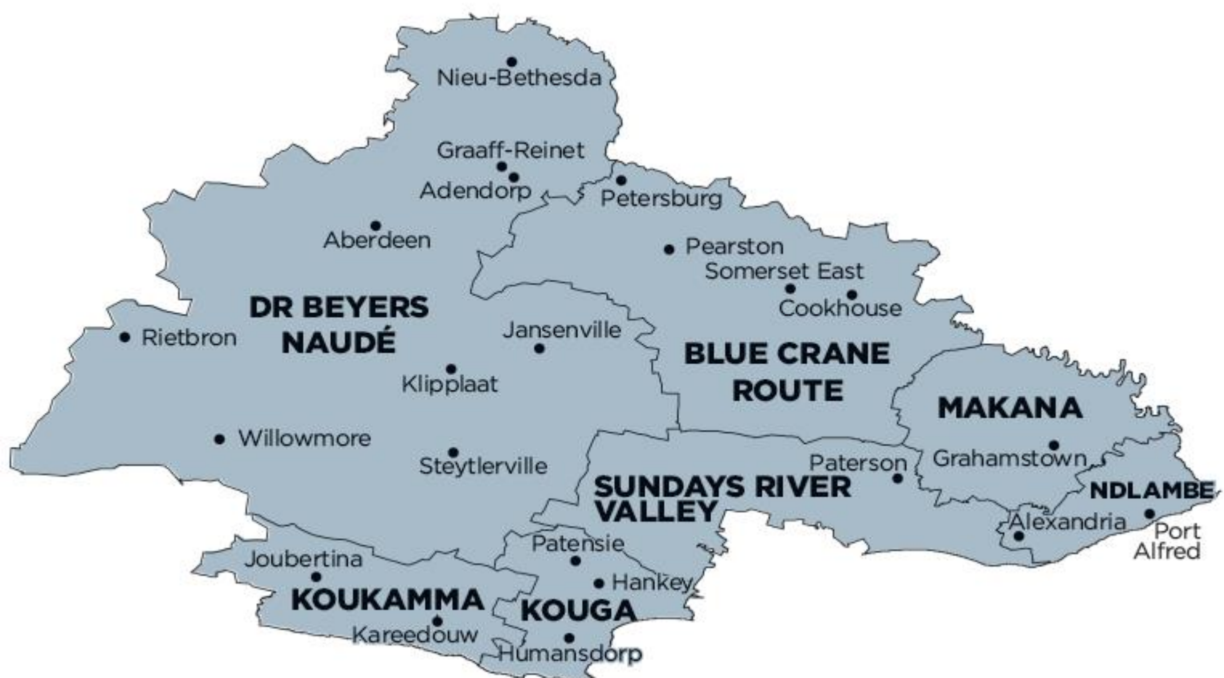
The extent of the dire straits under which the Eastern Cape continues to operate– related specifically to poverty, unemployment and inequality– is partly evidenced by the fact that the province receives a significant portion of basic education fiscal allocations annually (Ncanywa, 2015), is the biggest beneficiary of the National School Nutritional Program (NSNP), is a consistent contender for first place in national unemployment rates (Statistics South Africa, 2017), records the lowest urbanisation trends nationally (Lemon, 2004; Hendricks, 2008) and has the highest domestic out-migration, mainly to the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces (Statistics South Africa, 2013). Furthermore, 95% of schools in the province fall under the quintile one to three brackets and, as such, operate as 'no fee' paying schools (Ncanywa, 2015).

Divided into six District Municipalities and two Metropolitan Municipalities (Figure 3) each with its own local municipal offices, the Eastern Cape is home to 6, 498, 700 people (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Sarah Baartman District Municipality (SBDM), the largest of the six (58,243 km^2), is located in the southwestern part of the province and is made up of nine local municipal offices of which Makana is one (Figure 4) (Makana Municipality, 2017). This municipality accounts for 18,3% of the district population and 1,19% of the provincial population with an average annual growth of 1,23% (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council, 2017).

Figure 3- Eastern Cape District Municipalities

Source: (Municipalities of South Africa, 2018)

Figure 4- Sarah Baartman Local Municipalities



Source: (Municipalities of South Africa, 2018)

The Eastern Cape, specifically the Province of the Eastern Cape Education (PECE) is, again divided into 23 educational districts all of which report to the provincial head office located in Zwelitsha just outside King Williams Town. In 2017, 5569 schools were spread across these districts and along with 63, 459 educators and 1, 795, 563 learners (Department of Basic Education, 2018). Of the 5569 schools in the province, 51 are located within Makana Municipality and are classified as either junior secondary, secondary, combined or farm schools (Table 5) (Makana Municipality, 2017).

Figure 5- Schools in Makana Municipality

Schools	School Type
Andrew Moyake Public School	Junior Secondary
Archie Mbolekwa Junior Secondary School	Junior Secondary
George Jacques Junior Secondary School	Junior Secondary
Hendrik Kanise Combined School	Combined/Farm
Khutliso Daniels Secondary School	Secondary
Nathaniel Nyaluza Senior Secondary School	Secondary
Nombulelo Secondary School	Secondary
Ntaba Maria Junior Secondary School	Junior Secondary
Ntsika Senior Secondary School	Secondary
Hoërskool PJ Olivier	Combined
TEM Mrwetyana Secondary School	Secondary
Victoria Girls' High School	Secondary
CM Vellem Junior Secondary School	Junior Secondary

DD Siwisa Primary School	Primary
Fikizolo Public Primary School	Junior Secondary
Grahamstown SDA Primary School	Junior Secondary
Makana Public Primary School	Junior Secondary
NV Cewu Public Primary School	Junior Secondary
Samuel Ntlebi Primary School	Junior Secondary
Samuel Ntsiko Primary School	Junior Secondary
Tantyi Public School	Primary
Victoria Primary School	Junior Secondary
George Dickerson Primary School	Junior Secondary
Good Shepherd EC Primary School	Junior Secondary
Graeme College Boys' High	Combined
Grahamstown Primary School	Junior Secondary
Johan Carinus Art Centre	Junior Secondary
Mary Waters Secondary School	Junior Secondary
Oatlands Preparatory School	Junior Secondary
St Mary's RC Primary School	Junior Secondary
Kuyasa Special School	Primary
Riebeeck East Combined School	Combined/Farm
Sidbury Primary School	Primary/Farm
Grahamstown Amasango Career School	Junior Secondary
Carlisle Bridge Primary School	Junior Secondary/Farm
Holy Cross School	Primary
Farmerfield Intermediate Farm School	Junior Secondary/Farm
Fort Brown Primary School	Junior Secondary/Farm

Hope Fountain Junior Secondary School	Primary/Farm
KwaMhala Primary School	Primary/Farm
Manley Flats Mission School	Junior Secondary
Masakhane Combined School	Combine/Farm
Zintle Primary School	Primary/Farm
Wilson's Party Farm School	Junior Secondary/Farm
Heidi	Junior Secondary
Kleuterlland	Junior Secondary
Diocesan School for Girls	Private
Kingswood College	Private
GADRA Matric School	Private
St Andrews Primary	Private
St Andrews College	Private

Source: (Makana Municipality, 2017)

7.3 Education in Grahamstown: A microcosm of inequality

The story of education in Grahamstown is one which continues to draw the collective interest of scholars, practitioners, and the public for several reasons. For example, annual coverage of the 20 most expensive private schools in South Africa have, for several years now, included three which are located in the rural province of the Eastern Cape (Bronkhurst, 2014; Vorster, 2016). All three of these schools are in Grahamstown. Their close proximity to their absolute opposites located in the not-so-far east end of the town is not nearly as alarming as are the extreme inequities in resource allocations and the resultant learner outcomes which they represent. For example, school fees at St Andrews College (figure 6), 2018's third most expensive school in the country, stand at R252, 990 for the year with Kingswood College and Diocesan School for Girls (DSG) trailing at 13th and 14th position respectively (Business Tech, 2018). In addition to this, St Andrews is of particular interest in that it alone, owns, among other things:

- Six rugby fields
- Six cricket fields
- Three squash courts
- 23 cricket nets
- Seven tennis courts
- Three swimming pools (one of which is an Olympic sized pool)
- Three basketball courts
- One football field
- One grass athletic track
- One aquatic centre etc. (St Andrews College, 2016)

These sporting infrastructures are additional to the individual tutoring received by learners from Grade 8 to matric and the numerous other sporting, extra curricula and academic support facilities which centralise the school's ethos. Contrasted with schools in Joza which are, at most, located a mere 5-6kms away (discussed in the next section), the sense of pride which may be elicited by legend of Grahamstown being the education hub of the province (largely on the basis of its schools and Rhodes University) can quickly mutate into a source of derision and humiliation.

Figure 6- St Andrews College

Source: (Business.co.za, 2007).

With this glaring infusion of rampant poverty and gross affluence in the town's schooling systems under consideration, it comes as no surprise therefore that while 66,6% of the population of 86 600 are under the age of 35, 45,5% receives some type of social assistance from the state and 46% are non-economically active (Makana Municipality, 2017). So while this young population has centralised education, skills development and employment in the municipality's development agenda, the state of its education landscape gives little promise of the realisation of these ideals within the foreseeable future; not without radical mediation at least. Lemon's (2004:278) illustration of Grahamstown's socio-spatial make-up (also depicted in the images below) acts as a worthwhile reference to the configuration of the city's resource, economic and opportunity disparities:

"Grahamstown's physical location in a basin, it's relatively small size, makes it possible to view the whole city at once from the Settlers' Monument. Unusually for an apartheid city, the African townships were, and are, a prominent feature of the landscape visible from many 'white' parts of the city. Distances within Grahamstown are small, and thus a much less significant obstacle to school desegregation than in larger cities. The apartheid legacy could hardly be plainer. Former all-white suburbs in the west are well treed and relatively spacious. The major schools, several with extensive boarding facilities, are prominent features in the landscape. A small Indian area can be identified by the prominence of its modern Hindi mandir. The coloured area which formed a "buffer strip" in apartheid days – is now covered with African people's homes. Beyond the older township – Fingo Village, Tantyi, Makana's Kop – more recent formal and informal African housing stretches for two or three open spaces, with only a few schools, a sports stadium, small churches and the towering floodlights that provide economic if intrusive street lighting in most of South Africa's African urban areas".

The socio-spatial make of Grahamstown is again, only but a microcosm of the inequalities which are embedded in the educational sphere mainly at three levels; first, in the provision

of education services and resources, then in teaching and education processes and lastly, in education outcomes. The next sections will discuss these in more detail, paying specific attention to the educational experiences of learners in Grahamstown east schools and the stakeholders involved therein.

Figure 7- A view of Grahamstown from the 1820 Settlers Monument

Source: (Makana Tourism, 2014)

Figure 8- A view of Grahamstown from Joza Township

Source: (Interstudy Study Abroad, 2012)

7.3.1 Education resources and infrastructure in Joza

The provision of education services and resources in South Africa is the responsibility of the state. This responsibility is divided between the three spheres of government (national, provincial and local government) with policy and fiscal functions occurring at different points between the national and provincial government, while the more structural and operational functions take place at local government level. The base of this provision matrix is located within schools particularly at the point where teachers and learners interact. The provision of education thus takes on a largely bureaucratic, centralised and vertical flow of resources from the national government to learners. Despite this, however, efforts are made to democratise the provision and process of education, largely at the base level through School Governing Bodies. Moreover and more laterally, families, communities, members and organs of civil society also extend the reach of the provision of education resources predominantly as support structures to the mainstream "provider" i.e. the state.

While this design may appear ideal, the lived experiences of its implementation take on a far more nuanced and jagged form in Grahamstown and the broader Eastern Cape Province. This is often characterised by infrastructure backlogs, resource mismanagement, gaping inequalities in the allocation of Learner, Teacher Support Materials, the shortage and inefficiency of human resources as well as tattered public servant accountability mechanisms. A story quite familiar with the Grahamstown public, for example, is one of teacher and material resource shortages which have often rippled into scholar, community and public servant demonstrations most recently observed between 2010 and 2016. The 21 day long strike in October 2010 was much like the 4 week go-slow of February 2012 initiated by the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) in response to teacher shortages and the dismissal of temporary teachers. Both these had adverse effects on the provision of resources necessary for learning to take place, with their most damaging impact being experienced by learners in Grahamstown east schools (Hoho, 2010; Grocotts Mail, 2012). Similarly, more than 3000 learners from state schools, parents, community members and teachers took to the streets in February 2013 to hand over a memorandum of demands relating to security concerns at schools as well as teacher and textbook shortages (Grocotts Mail, 2013).

Many such grievances have garnered the support of civil society organisations with the Legal Resource Centre for example, initiating opt-in legal proceedings which gave schools in the province the opportunity to collectively bring a case to compel government to fill vacant posts in the province and reimburse 32 schools which had to pay teachers out of school pocket to the tune of R25 million. Again, the LRC initiated legal action against the provincial department in October 2016 for the non-delivery of textbooks to Nombulelo High School in Joza.

Poor schooling infrastructure is almost native to the story of education in the more rural provinces in South Africa, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape. This is characterised by mud or dilapidated school structures, poorly maintained or limited furniture, limited or no classrooms resulting in classroom overcrowding and/or outdoor teaching. Furthermore, poor or non-existent water and sanitation facilities in schools have twice within four years been issues of immense national public scrutiny as two learners, one in Limpopo in 2014 and one more recently in the Eastern Cape in March 2018, were found dead in pit toilets at their schools. Together these incidences shine a light on the prevailing inefficiencies in ensuring that basic infrastructural needs are met and the required standards are adhered to.

Likewise, water shortages appear to be a stubborn thorn in the side of the Grahamstown community. In November 2012, learners from Samuel Ntsiko Primary School, with the support of GADRA Education, planned to take to the streets in protest of the fact that the school had been without water for over a year which meant that learners were left without toilet and sanitation facilities in as much time (Grocotts Mail, 2012). Similar grievances resulted in the January 2015 Congress of South African Students (COSAS) strike led by learners at TEM Mrwetyana High School. With no toilet facilities, learners were forced to leave the premises during schooling hours or between break times to go home or seek the use of toilet facilities from residents in neighbouring houses. Learners from other high schools in Grahamstown east, namely Mary Waters, Khutliso Daniels, Nathaniel Nyaluza, Nombulelo and Ntsika High School, also joined the bid by bringing forward complaints about poorly secured and unfenced schooling grounds. In response to this, the principal of TEM Mrwetyana Secondary School replied that "they cannot blame the toilets for their results; they were able to go to neighbouring houses" (Grocotts Mail, 2015). Setting aside its rampant flippancy, this statement demonstrates, at least in part, the negligence which continues to inform the provision of services and the upkeep of infrastructure in many schools.

Within the sphere of the provision of education resources and services, the state continues to be the main player with NGOs maintaining a "watchdog" stance either in proxy or in the forefront (Stuart, 2013). Previous chapters have detailed the work of NGOs such as Section27 and Equal Education both of which continue to shine a light on the negligence which characterises education service delivery in many parts of the country through independent research as well as legal action and representation (Lepodise, 2017; Makana, 2017). With the exception of Equal Education, which has worked mainly at a provincial and national level in policy and implementation monitoring, and LRC, which has used its legal expertise to operate in the realm of advocacy and activism in holding government accountable for the non-delivery of resources, the actual provision of education material resources and infrastructure appears to be a terrain which remains dominated by the state.

7.3.2 Teaching resources and experiences in Joza

Much like the provision of education material resources and infrastructure, the provision of teachers in the field lies predominantly within the state's mandate and control. First, the Post Provisioning Model (PPM), a process of aligning school learner numbers with the human

resource needs and deployment as well as the curriculum policies to be implemented by teachers are both instituted by the government with minimal NGO input. Small exceptions in this regard include the involvement of NGOs in teacher training programs. On a national and provincial scale, NGOs such as READ, Instill Education and the Masibumbane Development Organisation offer teacher capacity building platforms and resources (Instill Education, 2018; Masibumbane Development Organisation, 2018; READ Education Trust, 2018). Furthermore, the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) has recently forged ties with an NGO called the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) with the hopes of reaching 30,000 teaching professionals in the province with support structures, material and training by the end of 2019 (Linden, 2017). Locally, VSA is again an exception having recently piloted a teacher computer literacy program at a local school which, according to two research participants has been well received by teachers and government officials alike

Furthermore, the Grahamstown schooling community has, for many years now, included strong inter-school relations. Often these relationships are characterised mainly by resource and facility sharing. Central to this is the role played mainly by Rhodes University and private schools in providing human and material resources and access to facilities such as sports fields, computer labs and arts facilities. Writing on this, Diers (1994) notes that:

> *"The independent schools of Grahamstown have committed themselves to sharing facilities and aiding community-oriented educational programmes to different extents. Certain programmes such as the Gold Shield, Pupil's Enrichment Programme (PEP), outreach and less formal activities form means of aiding underprivileged pupils in the benefits of extra curriculum teaching, classrooms and facilities"*

Similarly, Rhodes University has long been an active player in the Grahamstown schooling network firstly through the work of single university departments such as the university's Chemistry, Mathematics and Education Departments as well as the Rhodes University Business School (RUBS). Through partnerships with an NGO called the Agency of Community Organisation for Reconstruction and Development (ACORD), for example, the RU Education Department (RUED) has worked extensively, first, in identifying the challenges which impede educational progress in the community and also in finding the best ways to address these issues (Matshingana, 1994).

More recently, the Vice Chancellor's (VC) Education Initiative has garnered the work and support of several local stakeholders in addressing the community's education needs. This initiative is a partnership between Rhodes University's Community Engagement Office (RUCE), Centre for Social Development (CSD), Business School and Psychology Department, local NGOs including Ikamva Youth, GADRA Education and the Assumption Development Centre (ADC) as well as the local Department of Education. The model employed by this initiative (Figure 8) involves placing stakeholders at different learning phases, namely from Early Childhood Development through to the post-school phase and collectively implementing various programs aimed at addressing the needs of learners, parents and teaching professionals at each phase.

Figure 9- Vice Chancellor's Education Initiative

Source: Adapted from (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2017)

The diagram above illustrates not only the operational details and structures of the VC's education initiative but also illustrates the level of integration which exists between the different stakeholders in the Grahamstown schooling and non-governmental community. Three support initiatives, in particular, which have almost become permanent imprints of the city's schooling network are GADRA Education, the Dakawa Arts and Crafts Project and The President's Award (TPA). The Gadra Matric School has, since its opening in 1994, earned itself an image of excellence and consistency in this and other communities across the province (Westaway, 2017). Being the single largest feeder school to Rhodes University, the GMS offers a second chance to many learners who wish to improve their matric pass marks in the hopes of obtaining admission to further education institutions. This to the extent that the GMS has been found to be a commendable custodian of the right to education in this community (Msindo, 2014) and key player in democratising the city's education sector (Nqaba, 2017).

The Dakawa Arts Centre, formerly known as the Dakawa Development Centre, was formed by exiled members of the African National Congress (ANC) and initially based at the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) in Dakawa, Tanzania. The centre was funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) (Baillie, 1999) and later moved to South Africa with Grahamstown being the location of choice given the needs of the community in comparison to Johannesburg and Cape Town which were the other contending cities (Klews, 1994; Baillie, 1999; Hoho, 2010). From its early years of operation, Dakawa has not only presented community members with the opportunity to acquire arts and craft-related skills rather, it has also maintained a strong legacy of being a centre for personal and community development, despite persistent funding constraints (Morrow, et al., 2004).

Similarly, The President's Award has, for many years, run programs for learners and youth between the ages of 14 and 25 in four regions nationally with Grahamstown being one of these. Aimed at empowerment as well as capacity and skills development (The President's Award for Youth Empowerment, 2017), this programme is, according to Klews (1994) a good illustration of how different stakeholders can maximise their impact through resource and capacity sharing. More recently, a prominent player in this schooling network has been the Joza Youth Hub which is also an integrated manifestation of the work of four NGOs in Grahamstown with the support of RUCE and Makana Municipality. This is, in addition to the winter schools offered by local schools and Rhodes University, after school extra classes

run by schools and local NGOs, the High Impact Supplementary School (HISS) led by GADRA and many other support resources and platforms available to learners.

What is abundantly evident is that the Grahamstown schooling community is one which is densely populated with support and supplementary initiatives instituted by various stakeholders including the state, as the main player, Rhodes University, independent and former model C schools and NGOs. For the most part, these initiatives are aimed at extending both the right and benefits of quality education to learners in disadvantaged schools most of which are located in Grahamstown East. Given the high concentration of support resources and initiatives in Grahamstown's education sector, several questions emerge, and justifiably so. One of the more immediate lines of inquiry in this regard is related to the efficacy of these initiatives especially in light of the prevailing disparities not only in education resources but also in learner outcomes and, by extension, socio-economic opportunities linked thereto. Though not intended to measure the quantitative effectiveness of these initiatives, this thesis concerns itself with describing the nuances of the work that NGOs do and presenting the details of their contributions, intended and actual, to learner outcomes and the city's education sector. The next section seeks to give a detailed description of learner outcomes in Grahamstown broadly, and Joza more specifically, in order to contextualise the NGO initiatives which will be discussed in the next chapter.

7.3.3 Learner outcomes in Joza

Learner outcomes in Grahamstown can be thought of as an additional overlay to the rampant inequality in the city's education sector and broader development opportunities. With a high concentration of resources and quality service provision in private and desegregated schools located in town, alongside the scanty and poor provision of resources in Grahamstown east schools, it is little wonder that learner outcomes have predominantly followed these same trends. Annual matric pass rates in former model C schools often peak between 90-100%, with Victoria Girls High School (VGHS) maintaining a well-deserved reputation by consistently achieving 100% annually. In addition, the quality of the passes in these schools, particularly in light of the larger grade 12 class numbers, are commendable given that on many occasions, more than 50% of the grade 12 learners achieve bachelor passes which, on the face of it, qualify them for university admission.

On the other hand, NSC results in Grahamstown east schools, have oftentimes fallen far below desirable thresholds. In the year 2009 for example, pass rates in the four high schools located in Joza were particularly poor with Nombulelo obtaining 37,2%, Ntsika achieving 36,1%, TEM Mrwetyana obtaining 31,4%, and Khultiso Daniels obtaining an alarming 10,8% (Zimkitha, 2010). Pass rates have since fluctuated with extreme lows being once again recorded in 2012 when Ntsika obtained 28,8%, in 2013 when Nombulelo achieved 39,1% and in 2016 when Mrwetyana obtained 25,5% (Province of the Eastern Cape Education, 2014; Grocotts Mail, 2015; Department of Basic Education, 2018). Notable improvements, particularly at Ntsika which is the only no-fee paying high school where matric class numbers are increasing along with the pass rate, have sparked some hope. However, it is worth noting that in the case of these high schools, matric classes are often smaller with fewer learners obtaining bachelor or even diploma passes. This paints a grim picture of the number of learners who reach matric, write their final exams, pass matric and do so at standards required for further studies.

Figure 10- Grahamstown Public High Schools by bachelor passes (2012-2014)

School	2012	2013	2014
Graeme College	39	35	45
Khutliso Daniels	0	4	3
Mary Waters	12	20	11
Nathaniel Nyaluza	1	6	4
Nombulelo	19	19	24
Ntsika	1	7	7
PJ Olivier	12	17	16
TEM Mrwetyana	4	4	2
Victoria Girls	66	75	81
City total	**154**	**187**	**193**

Source: adapted from (Grocotts Mail, 2015)

The table above illustrates the extent of the skewed contribution of Grahamstown public schools to overall bachelor passes recorded in the city. Between 2012 and 2014, the three fee-paying public schools have, together, contributed 80%, 68% and 74% respectively to the total bachelor passes with the remaining six no-fee high schools making varied contributions to the total number. Again, VG is commendable in this regard for being the single largest contributing public school to the city's overall bachelor passes, accounting for 42% in 2014.

Over the years there have been some noted improvements in matric passes in the no-fee high schools however, as discussed in chapter five, these numbers should always be read and assessed with caution. First, the number of learners who make it to matric in the "required" number of years, if at all, is alarming nationally and more specifically in the Eastern Cape, with Grahamstown being no exception. The increased pass rate in Grahamstown between 2013 (60,5%) and 2014 (72,8%) though celebrated, for example, cannot be considered an absolute indication of an overall improvement in learner outcomes as the number of learners who actually wrote their matric exams decreased between the two years (Grocotts Mail, 2015).

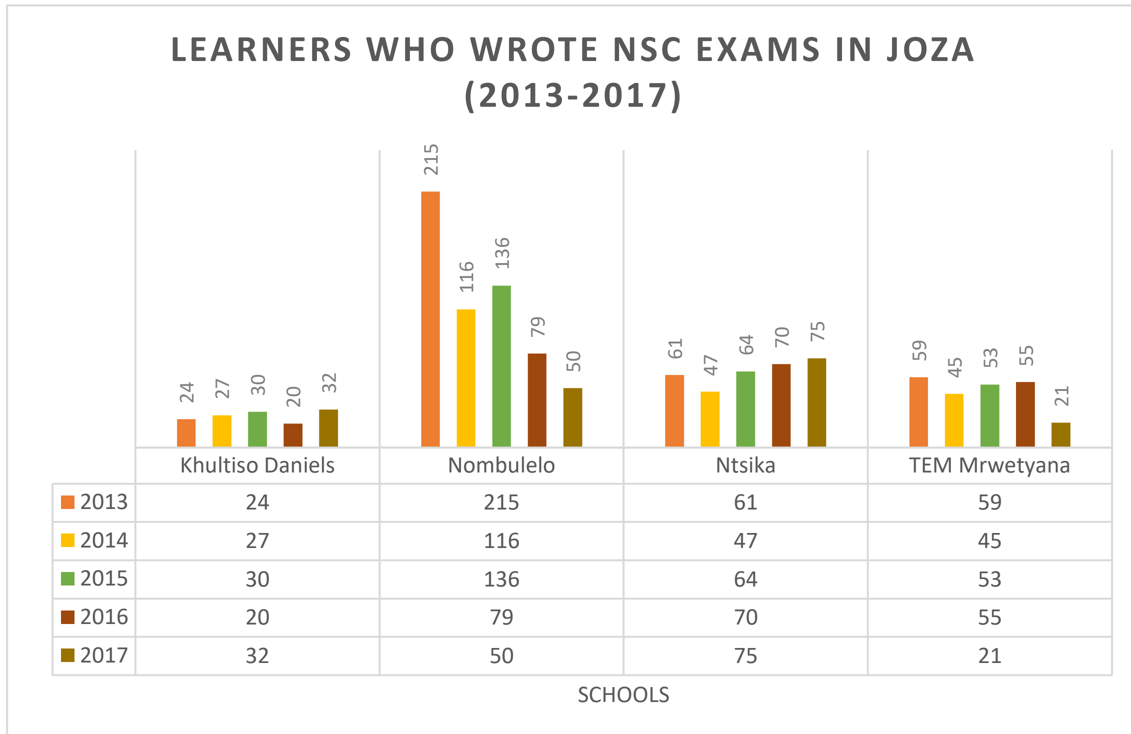
At a school level, it is equally important, and perhaps more telling, to consider how many learners actually end up sitting for their final matric exams as opposed to those who enrolled for earlier grades and matric of the same year. Over the years, two schools in Joza, namely Nombulelo and Ntsika, have often been celebrated with one research participant describing them as "pockets of excellence". These schools are thought to represent exceptional cases where commendable and actual improvements have been made, particularly with learner outcomes.

Although this does appear to be the case, based solely on matric results, it is again important to look at these schools individually in that they differ in one main aspect, namely learner numbers. Whereas the number of learners who write their final exams has been on a steady decline from 215 in 2014 to 50 in 2017 at Nombulelo, learner numbers have gradually increased along with the pass rate at Ntsika, particularly from 2014. As such, Nombulelo's much celebrated 2017 matric results are to be considered alongside the fact that only 50 learners sat for their final exams out of a class of more than 150[1]. As noted above, therefore, Ntsika can be thought of as the only school which garners justifiable hope as it is the only no-fee paying high school in Grahamstown where the number of learners who are sitting to

[1] Z. Khalipha. School official. Grahamstown. 24 February 2018

write their final matric exams is increasing along with their final matric results as can be seen in the tables below.

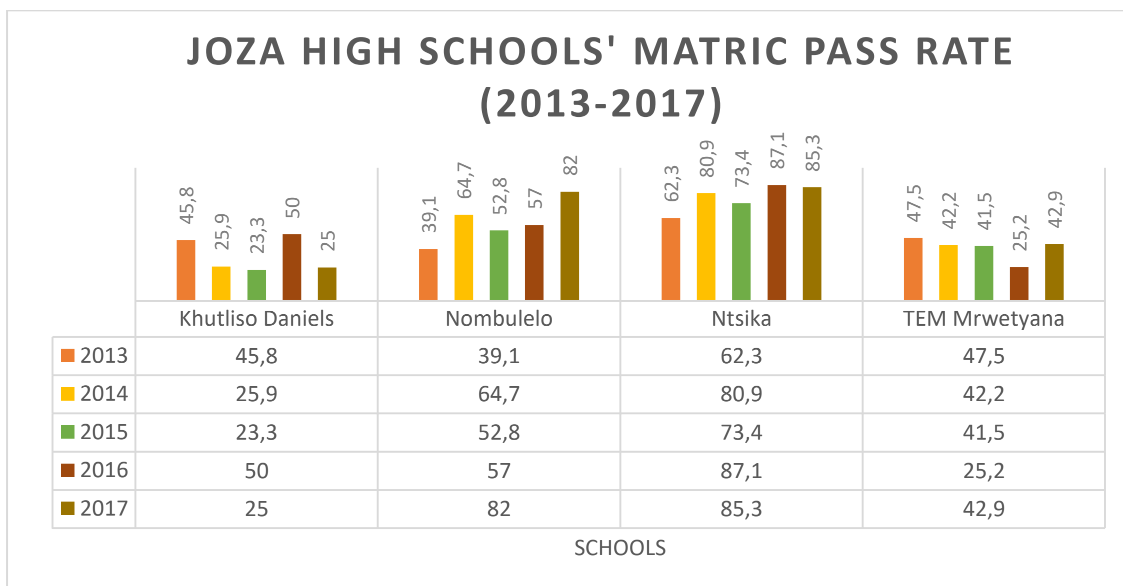
Figure 11- Joza final NCS examination candidates (2013-2017)



	Khultiso Daniels	Nombulelo	Ntsika	TEM Mrwetyana
2013	24	215	61	59
2014	27	116	47	45
2015	30	136	64	53
2016	20	79	70	55
2017	32	50	75	21

Source: (Province of the Eastern Cape Education, 2014; Department of Basic Education, 2018)

Figure 12- Joza High Schools' matric results (2013-2017)



	Khutliso Daniels	Nombulelo	Ntsika	TEM Mrwetyana
2013	45,8	39,1	62,3	47,5
2014	25,9	64,7	80,9	42,2
2015	23,3	52,8	73,4	41,5
2016	50	57	87,1	25,2
2017	25	82	85,3	42,9

Source: (Province of the Eastern Cape Education, 2014; Department of Basic Education, 2018)

Furthermore, policies implemented by government, namely Progression and Multiple Examination Opportunities (MEO) –commonly referred to as modularisation– have further discredited final matric pass results as a reliable reflection of the performance and retention of learners. In addition to learners who drop out before reaching matric, modularisation has reduced the number of learners who sit for the final exams each year, thereby bringing the pass rates up by significant margins annually as was the case at Nombulelo Secondary School.

First, Progression is a policy aimed at ensuring a constant flow of learners through the schooling system by stipulating that learners are not allowed to fail twice in one phase (Foundation phase-Grades R-3; GET phase-Grade 7-9; FET phase-Grades 10-12) and if they fail to meet the pass requirements a second time in a single phase, schools are then required to progress the learner to the next grade (Tywakadi, 2016). This includes progressing Grade 11 learners to Grade 12 if they failed to meet pass requirements once before either in Grade 10 or Grade 11. Once they are progressed to Grade 12, these learners are then given the option of writing their matric exams over two years; writing three subject exams (excluding Life Orientation) in December of their matric year and writing the remainder of their subject exams in June of the following year (Jones, 2015). Despite receiving sharp criticism from parents, educators and some provincial and local government officials, these policies have been carried out for several years (Fredricks, 2015), apparently in order to address the blockade of learners in single schooling phases which often reduces the number of learners with grade-appropriate ages. Furthermore, splitting matric exams over two years is apparently aimed at giving learners who failed to meet the requirements for being in matric, the opportunity to prepare, over a longer period of time, for their final exams (ibid).

As with many government policies however, these twin policies have brought on a number of unintended, though largely foreseeable, outcomes. First, and perhaps at the fore, is the fact that "progressed learners are required to master ever more complex and advanced material without having the foundational knowledge and skills necessary in this regard" (Westaway, 2017). This not only collapses the strength of these very requirements but it also provides a disincentive for learners to work hard to meet them (Jones, 2015). As such, the quality of education is further called into question when learners are carried passed the very requirements which were set in place to established benchmarks and checkpoints for learner aptitude and competence.

These policies, particularly modularisation, have also brought to the fore, questions around whether learners are dropping out of school or are being systematically pushed out (Westaway, 2017). First, perhaps one of the unintended outcomes of these policies is the stigma attached to progressed learners in addition to the long-standing stigma attached to learners who fail grades. These two realities not only create a debilitating schooling environment but may also lead to learners leaving the schooling system prematurely or not participating to their fullest potential.

Learner attrition trends in Grahamstown are again, no exception to the national trends. Westaway's (2017) analysis indicates that: "In Grahamstown, around 1200 children enter the public schooling system every year however, the annual average number of matriculants is 630. Therefore, the attrition rate (drop-out and push-out added together) is shockingly high at 47, 5%". In 2006, for example, 1000 children enrolled for Grade 1 in Grahamstown's no-fee schools with only 342 enrolling for matric 12 years later. That is to say that 65,8% (two thirds) of the 2006 Grade 1 cohort have either dropped out or been pushed out of the schooling system (Westaway, 2017). In the case of Nombulelo's highly celebrated 2017 results for example, modularisation is to be equally taken into consideration as, according to one school official, 90 learners were modularised at the school in addition to learners who dropped out before reaching matric. Westaway (2018) thus proposes that: "when you read that Grahamstown obtained a 75% pass rate in the matric examination in January, please remember that this represents a real pass rate of about 32%"; this in light of the drop-out and push-out factors currently manifested at different phases of schooling in the city.

7.4 Conclusion

Learner performance trends in Grahamstown east schools have drawn in, much like in the provision of education services and resources, the involvement of multiple stakeholders. Though located on the not-so-far east end of the city, Joza in particular, is recipient to much support and contribution from all players within this network namely, Rhodes University, private and former model C schools, and NGOs with the main contributor being state agencies. In this way, Joza can, to a very limited extent though, be viewed as a centre given the amount of attention it receives within this network. However, it remains marginal still, in several ways, particularly with learner outcomes and by extension, youth prospects and opportunities. Westaway (2014) proposes that the resolution to this crisis lies not in the hands

of government but rather within members and organs of civil society and certainly, NGOs have taken up the mantle and have had no trouble in positioning themselves as esteemed role-players particularly in Joza. Commenting on the annual release of matric results, principals in Joza have often hailed Rhodes University, NGOs and other stakeholders for their contributions in advancing education ideals in this community. In response to the 2014 matric results, principal of Ntsika High School, for example, noted that "the results reflect the teamwork of the Grahamstown community – from the learners who taught one another, to the teachers who went the extra mile, District Officials who gave extra lessons, Rhodes University departments and individuals, the business sector, other schools and NGOs" (Grocotts Mail, 2015).

What this chapter has thus demonstrated is that, first, within the input and process stages of schooling in Grahamstown, NGOs are predominantly operational in the latter sphere through the provision of support and supplementary teaching platforms, facilities and services. On a provincial and national scale, NGOs such as Equal Education, Section27 and the LRC have sought to strengthen the input stage of education by monitoring the provision of resources and infrastructure necessary for education processes to take place. In this way, these NGOs seek to disturb the prevailing systems which allow educational inequalities to thrive. Conversely, local NGOs are more active within the "process" stage of education, a stage which, in addition to other players in the network, is congested with what appear to be stronger and more immediate forces and tensions from families, schools, the community and the state.

With the exception of the LRC and, to a limited extent, GADRA, education NGOs in the city are rarely involved in what are traditionally considered "advocacy" initiatives. Particularly in the case of GADRA, Westaway attributes this sparse involvement in advocacy to limited funds and capacity as well as the organisation's devotion to its largest program, the GMS, a predominantly service-driven initiative (Westaway, 2017). The role of NGOs in Joza is thus highly concentrated within the service delivery terrain with their contributions, along with those of other stakeholders, being aimed at providing extra tutoring, mentoring, facility and resource provision as well as supplementary teaching and skills development.

Next, this chapter has sought to illustrate the unique concentration of different stakeholders within the Grahamstown schooling network, all of whom appear to also be devoted, as do NGOs, to the extension and provision of education services. Unlike in many towns in the Eastern Cape where schools and learners are left to their own devices with little or no such

support services and platforms, Grahamstown east schools are the centre of several interventions driven by Rhodes University's community engagement arms, university departments, former model C and private schools as well as NGOs and the state.

Notwithstanding the high concentration of support agents and structures within this schooling community, the stark difference in education experiences and inequality in learner outcomes between the two ends of the city– east and west– persist. Westaway (2014) draws attention to this irony by questioning the impact and efficacy of the Grahamstown schooling network initiatives of which NGOs are active and prominent players. Having located NGOs within this schooling network, this chapter has described the overall approach taken by NGOs in Joza, namely service delivery and demonstrated the myriad support structures along which they operate. The next chapter seeks to isolate and detail the work of four NGOs in particular and also describe their contributions, actual and intended, to the performance and retention of learners and to the city's dominant education profile.

Chapter 8

Case Study: The Joza Youth Hub

8.1 Introduction

Using the previous chapters as a springboard, this chapter represents a more context-based attempt at analysing, in fine detail, the world of education NGOs by unpacking the work of four education NGOs working in Joza. What this thesis has, up till now, sought to do is demonstrate, hopefully in sufficient detail, the tensions which characterise the world of NGOs on a global and national scale, thereby setting the stage for an understanding of how local non-state initiatives play out their mandates in light of prevailing questions around their efficacy and impact on development and education outcomes in particular.

Chapter two and chapter four have collectively presented the often ambiguous relationships which NGOs maintain with donors and state agencies and how these shape their orientation and contributions towards development. Chapter two, in particular, highlighted the dominant position of donors not only in the ideological leanings which inform NGO work but also in the operational models they use in carrying out their mandates. In contrast, NGO-state relationships appear to be more peripheral in NGO identity and internal workings and this is partly demonstrated by the fact that organisations are often able to successfully maintain contentious relations with states but certainly not with donors. Despite this, however, state agencies provide a legislative and policy grounding which NGOs cannot escape. On a more local level, as illustrated in the previous chapter, NGOs maintain what appear to be largely collegial relationships with multiple actors within the Grahamstown schooling network one of which is the state.

The collective contributions of the players in this network have, unfortunately, made little headway in addressing the inequalities which have become characteristic of the Grahamstown education sector particularly in the provision of learning resources and infrastructure as well as in the resultant learner outcomes. Though they are active players in a network filled with other contributors, NGOs operate as individual institutions with their own models, sources of funding, donor and state relations, aims and objectives and certainly, experiences. Having undertaken to describe their role in the persistently poor learner

outcomes in Joza, it is therefore equally important to understand the individual work and contributions of these organisations from the perspective of those who carry out their programs and especially, from those who are said to "benefit" from them. What this chapter thus seeks to do is detail the work of organisations which form part of the Joza Youth Hub based predominantly on data collected from NGO officials and documents analysed. This sets the tone for the next chapter which outlines the contributions of these organisations to learner outcomes – whether as intended results of organisational designs or incidental by-products of their presence and operations in this community.

8.2 The Joza Youth Hub: An extended arm of the city's education network

The Joza Youth Hub, also referred to as 'The Hub', came about as the culmination of extensive deliberations between Rhodes University, Makana Municipality and local NGOs. The terms of this partnership included local NGOs as the providers of education services to local youth with the administrative, material, and human resource support of Rhodes University. Makana Municipality offered to these NGOs its old and unused administration building centrally located across the street from the Joza Post Office and Nompumelelo pre-primary (Halse, 2015). This building is flanked by the local library (Duna Library) from behind and shares a common point of ingress to its premises with Department of Housing offices on the right. Part of the deliberations leading up to the opening of the hub included rent waivers from the municipality which stipulated that NGOs were given access to these premises free of charge but would be responsible for the payment of utilities and upkeep (Hall, 2013).

The resultant partnership which includes the work of four NGOs, Upstart Youth Development Initiative, Village Scribe Association, Ikamva Youth and Access Music Project was solidified and the hub was officially opened on the 15 November 2013 (Grocotts, 2013). The hub's location is ideal, first because it is partway between two of the four high schools in Joza –Nombulelo and Mrwetyana– which constitute a portion of the target population for which many programs at the hub are offered. Secondly, it stands at the corner of one of the busiest entry points to the township when coming from town via Tantyi Township or Dr Jacob Zuma Drive (former Raglan Road).

Since its launch in 2013, the Joza Youth Hub's physical centrality has grown to be quite reminiscent of its role as a hub of education services and resources for the youth of Joza. It

has been noted that the main objective for it was to combine the efforts and contributions of several actors as well as share resources, expertise and experiences with the aim of maximising impact in extending education services to underprivileged youth (Wertlen, 2013). Another, perhaps equally important purpose which the hub – its location and activities– has served over the years is extending access to services to the broader Joza community and acting as a common link between the community, schools, learners, resources and providers.

First, this has been partly achieved through the annual Open Days hosted at the hub which showcase to the community, services and programs offered by different organisations. Through the support of local businesses, Rhodes University's School of Journalism and Media Studies (JMS) and affiliated NGOs, community members are invited to see and hear from NGOs, the work being done by and with learners as well as the services which are also available to the community (Huneke, 2017).

Secondly, annual Open Days also provide a platform for local youth to showcase their talent, small business owners to sell different food items to attendees and children to be taught about road safety by members of the local Traffic Department. Secondly, the combined efforts of Awarenet, (also known as Village Scribe or VSA), Rhodes University and eKhaya ICT have led to the installation of a 12 metre lattice mast which has extended internet access not only to the NGOs working from the hub but also community members, students from RU and other universities – Nelson Mandela University (NMU), University of South Africa (UNISA) and University of Cape Town (UCT) – who live in Joza at different times of the year, local schools and library users just behind the hub (Halse, 2015).

Over the years, the hub has undergone numerous developments and the NGOs within have also experienced their own organisational turbulence and change. For example, in 2015, the Makana Municipality's Mayoral Committee resolved that the Joza Youth Hub pay a monthly rent which is subject to a 10% annual increase. In addition, the hub would continue making utility payments as well as pay service charges to the municipality for continued occupation of the premises (Makana Municipality, 2015). Since then – though perhaps not directly related to the Mayoral Committee's stipulations – two of the four NGOs initially working from the hub – Ikamva and Upstart – have relocated with Ikamva now being based at Nombulelo High School and Upstart located at the African Media Matrix (AMM) building at Rhodes University. These changes in location have, according to participants, come as the result of organisational needs and adjustments which were necessary to maintain optimum

productivity in the work of both organisations. Reflecting on this, Thamsanqa, a longstanding volunteer, states:

> *"I think there are benefits with working from a school…it helps a lot to be based at the school because then the kids will just walk in here from class and there's more space for tutoring. Also, we were able to have a computer lab because at the hub that lab was for the Joza Youth Hub and that's why we moved from the hub to here".* [2]

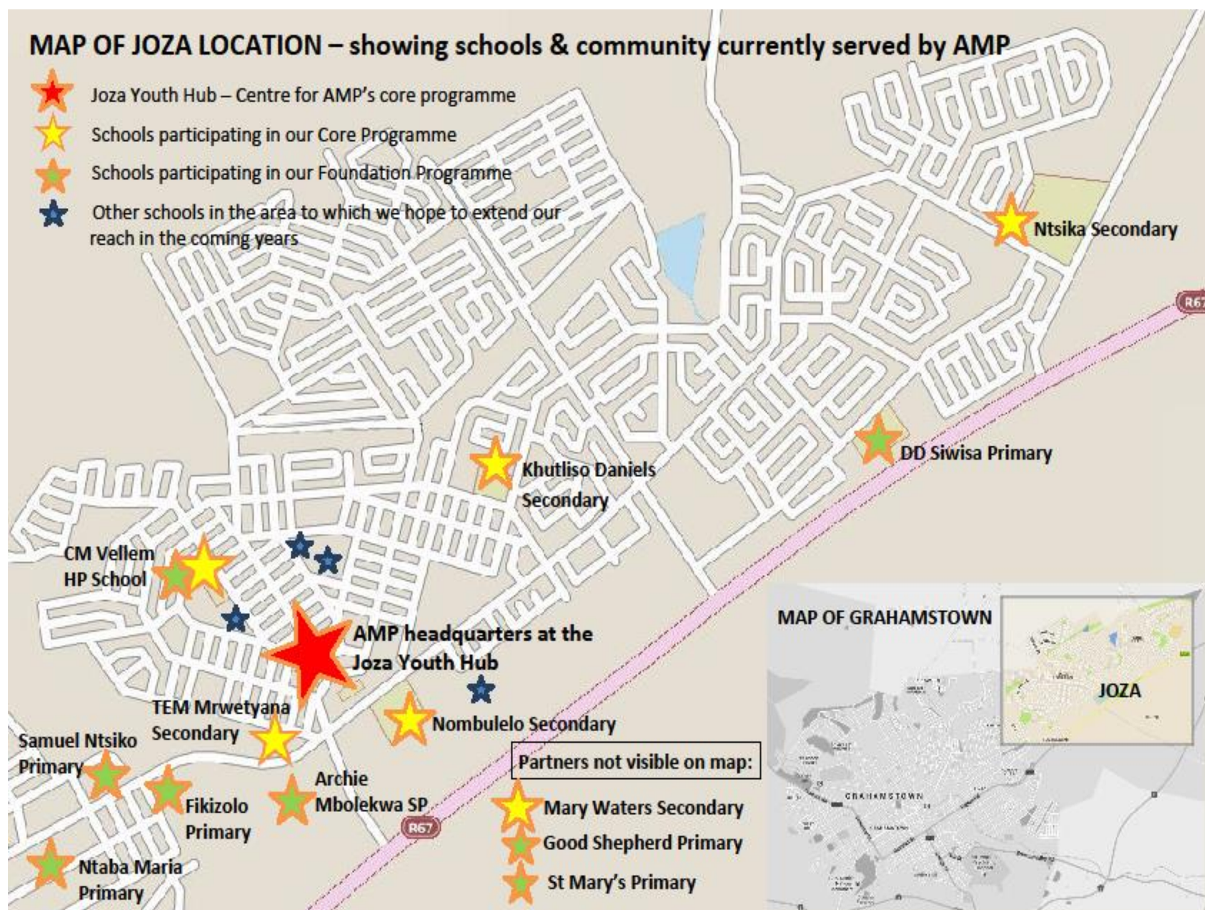
Awarenet, still based at the hub, is thus in the process of extending its computer lab and expanding its services into the spaces previously occupied by Upstart. Despite these changes, however, the hub continues to be a buzz, particularly in the afternoons, with some seeking computer access or learners coming to AMP for music lessons or rehearsals. Needless to say, therefore, the hub continues to be just that – a hub of predominantly youth-centred education services.

8.3 Access Music Project: "AMP"

Founded in January 2011 by Gareth Walwyn and Shiloh Marsh, AMP is a non-profit organisation aimed at extending music education and art-related skills to township learners, most of whom attend schools which do not offer such (Feiter, 2013). What started off as a partnership between AMP, three schools and a few learners has since grown to become a highly regarded part of the Grahamstown arts community, contributing to the city's legacy of being a centre for arts and culture. Every year, the organisation works with approximately 20 learners from primary and high schools around Grahamstown (figure 1) offering an array of learning programs and platforms aimed at attaining its vision of ensuring that; "South Africa's youth have equal access to music education, the creative industry, cultural heritage and artistic possibilities" (Access Music Project, 2018).

[2] T. Gila. NGO official. Grahamstown. 14 April 2018

Figure 13- Schools serviced by AMP



Source: (Access Music Project, 2018)

AMP's interest of "connecting young people with their creative identities and opportunities in the creative economy" is communicated through four objectives which underlie its operations and programs:

- Opening access for underprivileged school learners to a high-quality centre of music (national development goals: development of technical skills and knowledge; redressing inequalities)
- Training learners for formal qualification in music and access to tertiary study and career paths (accreditations and access; redressing inequalities; reducing youth unemployment)
- Developing a music curriculum that is in line with current standards but includes neglected relevant areas of study; emphasis on African music, industry music and sound technology (development of technical skills and knowledge; promotion of heritage; reducing youth unemployment)

- Creating a dynamic ensemble program to bridge divisions among young people (social cohesion and transformation) (Access Music Project, 2018).

The objectives set by AMP are pursued through the implementation of four main programmes namely, the Foundation Programme, the Core Programme, the Doorways Programme, the Internship Programme and the Curriculum Project. Participation in the organisation begins with the Foundation Program offered to primary school learners – from Grade 4-7 – who are introduced to basic music terminology, concepts and skills. A seminal part of this learning phase involves in-service teachers who are trained and equipped to facilitate ensembles at the schools attended by learners. From Grade 8, learners then move on to participate in the organisation's Core Programme which is divided into 5 year-long music courses (from Grade 8-12) that address different phases of learning from musical self-discovery to professional musical training as well as preparation for apprenticeship and post-school studies.

In preparation for university entrance or employment, AMP also offers the Doorways and Internship Programmes. Together these are aimed at equipping learners with the information, skills and resources necessary to ensure that their transition from school to employment or higher education institutions is one which prepares them to maximise all available opportunities. Also, a core element in what makes AMP unique and contextually relevant is the Curriculum Project which is aimed at ensuring that the organisation's content and approach to musical pedagogy is one which is relevant to the "South African cultural capital, music industry demands and the technological age" (Access Music Project, 2018). Lastly, central also to AMP's operations are other activities such as the Annual Music Camp, tours, performances and frontline participation in the National Arts Festival's (NAF) Annual Street Parade. These, along with the main programs, are the centre of AMP's said contributions to extending access to music education and training to underprivileged youth in Joza.

Since inception, AMP has enjoyed a considerable amount of growth and success alongside the challenges native to NGOs working with disadvantaged populations. In addition to the immediate success of extending access to musical education and skills to learners who would otherwise not have such access, AMP has gone a long way towards exposing learners to career paths and opportunities which they may not have been exposed to otherwise. These include collaborating with the Braka and the Elephant Quartet from France in 2012, working with individuals from Denstone College in the UK in 2014, being visited by artists from Brazil in 2015, attending the annual Marimba Festival hosted by the Marimba Education Foundation and also visiting the South African Broadcasting Cooperation (SABC) offices,

the Constitutional Court and Gold Reef City in Gauteng in 2017 (Access Music Project, 2018). Other associations include working with volunteers from all over the world including the USA, Ghana, Germany and Sweden and also being visited by local music icons, Zwai Bala and Zahara.

Access and exposure to such platforms, in addition to the skills acquired from lessons, have according to NGO officials, been an important source of motivation for learners to not only remain committed to the organisation but also to take advantage of all opportunities presented to them in and beyond AMP. As noted by one of the co-founders of the organisation, "even though the project is called Access Music Project, it's not the access to music we're talking about, but it's rather access in the general sense". The organisation, he says, endeavours to take "people who are not empowered and give them access to empower themselves" (Feiter, 2013). It can thus be said that, on its own terms, AMP appears to be making consistent progress towards attaining its own objectives.

However, as can be reasonably expected, the organisation is said to have faced its fair share of challenges and constraints, related mainly to limited human and financial resources. The expanded demand for the organisation's services over the years – particularly in 2017 where over 200 learners signed up to join the organisation – has unfortunately not been met by commensurate increases in human and material resources. For example, Bongiwe, who has spent the greater part of her 20s in the non-profit sector, reflects on the strenuous and, as she puts it, destructive effect which NGO work has on her own personal well-being. Expanding on this she says:

> *"It's very tough and it's also been destructive in my personal life because…I guess, the amount of myself that I have to put in sometimes you know. There's no limit and there's also no limit to the need…it ends up being very destructive in terms of your own personal life…it's very tough because we're always understaffed. We're always having to reimagine what we're doing based on the amount of funding we can get. So from one year to the next it's never like…we're gonna follow the same routine…it's changing all the time because we're so dependent on funds and if we don't have funds, it changes everything, we have to reimagine".*[3]

[3] B. Leleki. NGO official. Grahamstown. 22 February 2018

Similarly, Craig considers the dual challenge of limited human and financial resources faced by NGOs and how, together, these challenges often centralise organisational operations on the efforts of individual actors, their expertise and also passion-driven ingenuity.

> *"I think there's this common problem among NGOs and our NGO also suffers from that; that its very much dependant on specific people, on their personalities and their skills set so the way the organisation functions has been designed around that; not intentionally by the way. When we have few resources then we make everything work with those resources we have…so if those people were not here, I think things might fall apart".*[4]

Attempts to mitigate the strain on existing personnel and respond to the limited financial resources have included limiting organisational intake by maintaining an annual cohort of 20 learners and supporting them by harnessing resources, human and material, from the Grahamstown community and beyond in the form of volunteers and funds (Access Music Project, 2018). This has resulted in an incredible amount of pressure resting on the available human capacity and has also restricted the organisation's reach to a limited population. Despite these constraints, however, participants speak fondly of the impact which the organisation has had on learners who have been able to access skills and platforms to which they would otherwise not have such access.

8.4 Ikamva Youth: "IY"

Much like AMP, but perhaps to more extended proportions, Ikamva Youth has enjoyed its fair share of successes over the years. The organisation was founded in 2003 through the collective efforts of former Human Science Research Council (HSRC) researchers, Joy Owen and Makhosi Gogwana. Burdened by the stark differences in their own learning experiences and the prevailing inequalities in the national education system, Owen and Gogwana set off to harness the support of friends and associates in an attempt to tackle these disparities in whatever way they could (Ikamva Youth, 2018). In an attempt to actualise this vision, tutoring sessions were first offered to learners from Sinako High School in the township of Khayelitsha, Cape Town, where Gogwana himself attended school (Ikamva Youth, 2007). What was then a small group of 50 learners participating in Saturday tutoring sessions has

[4] C. Newman. NGO Official. Grahamstown. 22 February 2018

grown into an organisation reaching just under 2,000 learners in 2016 alone across 14 branches in five provinces (figure 2) (Ikamva Youth, 2017).

Figure 14- Ikamva Youth branches

Source: (Ikamva Youth, 2017)

Ikamva Youth's unique model has been identified as a key ingredient to the organisation's success and continued growth. This model is centred on the following values:

- A culture of responsibility for self and others
- Collaboration and peer-to-peer support
- Commitment to impact through democratic processes
- Paying-it-forward (Ikamva Youth, 2018).

Presiding over this model and its operationalisation is the emphasis which is placed on learners' responsibility for self and others in the process of accessing learning support and education opportunities. These values are thus embedded in the organisation's operational designs and inform its efforts of enabling "disadvantaged youth to pull themselves and each other out of poverty into tertiary education and/or employment" (Ikamva Youth, 2018). This mission is then implemented through the following five core programs:

- Supplementary tutoring;
- Career guidance, life skills and mentoring;
- Operation Fikelela (e-literacy)
- Media, image and expression;
- HIV/AIDS awareness, counselling and testing

The growth and expanse of Ikamva's work has been extensively recorded both for internal reporting purposes as well as through commissioned independent research. At its core, the organisation's impact is considered on the basis of matric passes, university placements and access to employment. Based on these terms alone, it has thus been said that the organisation has made significant progress in attaining its objectives. Since the first cohort of matrics in 2005, the organisation has maintained a consistent 80-90% matric pass rate, with an average of 89% from 2005-2016. Moreover, this average annual pass rate has been maintained despite a steady increase in the annual national matric cohort which has ranged at just under 300 Grade 12 learners over the past few years.

The Joza branch of Ikamva Youth was launched in 2013 and is the only one of the four NGOs based at the hub – currently or previously – which is a local branch of a national organisation. It has thus been suggested by one participant that, unlike the other NGOs, IY Joza has had the benefit of being the custodian of a working model and having a solid financial and remote human resource support base. Based now at Nombulelo High School, IY Joza follows the national model, although unlike many other branches, works only with FET phase learners (Grade 10-12), has its annual learner numbers capped at 150 and is managed by two permanent staff members and an intern. Despite what is described by participants as obvious capacity shortages, the branch has, much like its mother body, maintained impressive results with an average matric pass rate of 88% from 2013 to 2016. Furthermore, between these years, the branch worked with 54 matric learners, 47 of which (87%) obtained bachelor passes which qualify them for university entrance.

The success of the branch is said to rest, in part, on the devotion of learners and parents to the program and also on the collective efforts of stakeholders in the broader Grahamstown community. Being based at Nombulelo High School, for example, provides not only a base of operations but also immediate access to a significant portion of the target population. Also, an important part of IY's success nationally and locally relies on the availability and commitment of volunteer tutors. Often these are either former IY learners who are "paying-

it-forward" as is encouraged by the organisation's culture or, in the case of IY Joza, students from Rhodes University (Ikamva Youth , 2018).

Commenting on the branch's 2016 matric pass rate of 92%, branch coordinator, Nompumezo Makinana notes that:

> *"The learners' commitment to their studies must be applauded…also the team behind the scenes; we could not have had these results without our tutors and national team that were there to support us and guide us to where we are"* (Ikamva Youth, 2017).

However, the unpredictable nature of volunteer availability and the different commitments which RU volunteers, are often faced with, presents a real challenge to the organisation especially in its pursuit of program consistency. Part of IY's model includes the objective of maintaining a 1:5 tutoring ratio where 1 tutor is paired with a maximum of 5 learners in order to ensure that learners receive as much individualised attention as is possible or available. Implementing this, however, is reported as a problem where at times, learners are left without tutors for certain subjects. Unlike other organisations which have had to contend with both financial and human resource shortages, it appears that the latter has the more immediate challenge for IY Joza. Thamsanqa shares his observations on this by saying:

> *"In this branch, I think human resources are the challenge that we have. There are three people versus 150 kids so we need a lot of volunteers. We rely on volunteers but then…volunteers, because they are also students, we can't completely rely on them…so I think it's a huge challenge for us but in terms of resources like finances, we've been very lucky that this branch has funding".*[5]

According to participants, learners especially, the limited and inconsistent availability of tutors throws the comparative advantage of the NGO, particularly with respect to the availability of tutors, into question. According to some, this has often resulted in learners dropping out of the program or opting to work independently. Bubele, who has been a consistent member of the organisation for just over two years, says:

> "*Being a part of IY is very up and down. Sometimes we are learning, we have the tutors, we get help but sometimes we don't have tutors. This term there were no tutors at all. You just get there and you're on your own…Even when they are there,*

[5] T. Gila. NGO official. Grahamstown. 2 February 2018

you find out that we only have one Physics tutor even though there are so many Maths people. I think there were 12 of us but only one tutor".[6]

Similarly, Zinzi, a Grade 11 learner who is not part of any NGO, reflects on the reasons why she opted for being a part of a study group formed with friends and other learners from her school.

"*From what I hear from my cousin and some friends who stopped attending, Ikamva is the same as if you're going there just to do homework, you can do it for yourself at home because they told us that many times they didn't have tutors to help them so they stopped attending. That's why we decided to form our own study group".*[7]

In addition to contending with these capacity shortages, the work of NGOs is carried out within high pressured environments and staff members are said to contend with an array of issues that fall far beyond their control and capacity. A network of social, family, school and community challenges are carried into NGO spaces by learners and these intersect with the single issue being addressed in these settings; school. A report compiled by Stellenbosch University's Economics Department on the work of Ikamva Youth, highlights the presence of social issues in the experiences of IY learners (affectionately referred to as "Ikamvanites") (Spaull, et al., 2012).

According to participants, these issues have an immediate bearing not only on staff experiences but on learner participation. One participant notes, that 40% of learners who join IY Joza in Grade 10, drop out of the program before reaching matric. Often this relates to learners not meeting the organisation's 75% attendance requirement and being kicked out as a result and in other instances, learners are faced with family problems and responsibilities which require a level of devotion that cannot coexist with commitment to the organisation. Moreover, unfavourable learning environments at school – particularly, uncommitted and discouraging school officials – are said to dishearten learners in their school work and also their participation in education NGOs such as IY.

According to the report on IY's work, these social issues not only affect the experiences of learners but have a direct impact on staff members and their experiences of carrying out organisational mandates. As a result of the heavy presence of broader contextual issues within

[6] B. Voyi. Learner. Grahamstown. 14 April 2018
[7] Z. Khulani. Learner. Grahamstown. 7 April 2018

the NGO space, staff members often find themselves needing to provide psychological and emotional support in addition to all the other roles that they are required to play (Spaull, et al., 2012). It has, therefore, been suggested that in some organisations this breeds a sense of helplessness among staff members that taints their experiences and tenure in NGOs. One participant proposes this to have played a part in the high staff turnover experienced at IY Joza over the years and has led to grim seasons of adjustment and recovery. Kholeka, who worked in the Eastern Cape non-profit network for more than 15 years, recollects the experience of feeling helpless in the presence of such broader issues and notes that:

> *"This is why I stopped…I got very frustrated with the whole thing and I was like, I'm done, I couldn't. I was like, yes, Grahamstown is my town and I would like to work in Grahamstown but I feel like we're doing all this in vain"*.[8]

As noted above, when speaking on the experiences of carrying out NGO work, participants make particular mention of family and school-related issues as being two of the leading external factors which impact their work. A number of NGO officials – current and former – proposed, for example, that discouraging teachers, unfavourable schooling environments and lack of or no support from families bears heavily on their work. Thamsanqa put it this way:

> *"So, like I always say that I even want to quit this kind of work sometimes because it's too much because we are here to come and do school programs with learners but ... you have to look at a learner as a whole child. So, sometimes family dynamics impact them because you can see that there's something wrong with the child and when you probe, you find out that, at home the situation is not okay because they say I live with a stepmother and I'm being abused, and then you have to intervene in those circumstances and when you intervene it causes big issues in the family and the child ends up dropping out anyway. And if you don't intervene that's still a problem. So we constantly have to balance those things…So those are the kinds of challenges that we are faced with in this kind of work"*.[9]

The schooling environment, in particular, is also said to not only impact learners' eagerness to participate and commit but also the general profile of the NGOs in terms of feeder schools which will be discussed in finer detail in the next chapter. There appears to be a common thread among all the NGOs sampled where learners from Ntsika, Nombulelo and Mary

[8] K. Zenani. Community member/Former NGO official. Grahamstown. 8 December 2017
[9] T. Gila. NGO official. Grahamstown. 12 April 2018

Waters make up the bulk of those participating with very few from Khutliso Daniels and especially, TEM Mrwetyana. Though this appears to be in line with the increased attention given to these schools by the VC's Education initiative, participants from the different NGOs also attribute it to the differences in school leadership which have resulted in different relationships being forged by NGOs with these schools. For example, this has resulted in a situation where, despite being the furthest away from IY offices, learners from Ntsika are greater in numbers at IY than learners from TEM Mrwetyana which is less than 200metres away, reminiscent of what are said to be the different schooling environments at the two schools. This, according to NGO officials has an impact on the work of the organisation in that their skewed impact, which favours learners from some schools than others, feeds into the sense of helplessness in making wider and far-reaching contributions to include those who need the interventions the most.

8.5 Upstart Youth Development Project: "Upstart"

Upstart was founded by Shireen Badat in 2008 as a sub-project of Grocott's Mail – the local Grahamstown Newspaper – and in partnership with the Rhodes University School of Journalism and Media Studies (Makinana, 2012; Upstart , 2018). The purpose of the organisation emanated from a disillusionment with the poor levels of literacy among learners in South Africa particularly in disadvantaged communities. For the organisation, addressing this meant providing underprivileged learners in areas such as the eastern townships of Grahamstown, first with the spaces required to empower them and secondly, the tools and skills necessary for them to excel not only in education but as active citizens in a developing society. Similar to Ikamva's mission, therefore, is Upstart's emphasis on providing enabling environments and platforms wherein learners can be empowered and in turn empower those around them. The organisation's mission thus commits to developing "skills which enable and empower Eastern Cape youth to positively implement change in their lives and those of their communities" (Upstart , 2018).

The organisation's major contributions are often thought to be the access given to learners to contribute to the local newspaper and participate in the local radio stations, Radio Grahamstown and Rhodes Music Radio (RMR). Though these were in fact the major programs offered to learners in the early years of the organisation's existence, both founding president of the organisation, Shireen Badat and Rod Amner, a board member and Journalism

lecturer at Rhodes, have proposed that the organisation has reached far beyond just facilitating participation in radio and print media (Gush, 2009). Amner proposed that "the project is counter-hegemonic and gives ordinary voiceless young people the opportunity to speak and write about their circumstances and to challenge the dominant power relations in today's society" (ibid). Therefore, the organisation's work is informed by the belief that its benefits lie "not only in the experience and opportunities it provides for its members, but the intangible benefits they gain, including independence, a sense of accomplishment and freedom" (Upstart , 2018). Forums and programs which have, over the years, facilitated the organisation's progress towards this ideal have included the following:

- Computer literacy programs offered by Awarenet in partnership with RUCE;
- Lessons on Chinese culture provided by volunteers from the Chinese Studies Department;
- Health workshops spearheaded by the RU Pharmacy Department;
- HIV/AIDS education and counselling ran by the RU CSD and the Students HIV/AIDS Resistance Campaign (SHARC)
- The "Thetha Uvakale" (*speak and be heard*) column in Grocott's Mail and the Short Film Project both of which are implemented in partnership with 3rd year Journalism students
- "The Series" radio shows which are two youth-led radio programs that air every Saturday from 9am to 12pm on Radio Grahamstown and RMR (Gush, 2009; Makinana, 2012; Upstart , 2018).

As is the case with AMP, "exposure" is considered one of the catalysts utilised by Upstart in its aims of empowering learners to expand and pursue their ambitions. In addition to accessing platforms of self-expression through radio, film and print media, Upstart is said to have expanded learner's knowledge of opportunities available to them by exposing them to different platforms. These include attending concerts held at the International Library for African Music (ILAM) and lectures at Rhodes, visiting the local Albany Museum and Kwantu Game Reserve as well as meeting and interviewing former Ghanaian President John Kufuor (Gush, 2009; Hobo, 2010).

The organisation's operations over the years have evolved and developed iteratively responding first, to the ever-changing needs of beneficiaries and also to, what Helliker (2006:287) refers to as "intermittent moments of sober realism". In the case of Upstart, unlike

with AMP and IY, funding and human resource constraints appear to have been more pronounced and debilitating. These are said to have had strong and immediate repercussions on the organisation's groundwork especially following the departure of founding president, Shireen Badat, in 2014. Reflecting on the life and times of Upstart, Songezo notes, for example that:

> *"Upstart was very much the brainchild of Shireen Badat and I think, you know, when the Badat's left, there were also big, big operational problems…often the way NGOs work is around a champion and…when the champion leaves, the organisation goes through major problems and this is exactly what happened to Upstart. When Shireen left, Upstart had to essentially reinvent itself and I don't know to what extent they've managed to do that"*.[10]

In the case of many organisations, as with Upstart, limited human capacity intersects with a strong organisational centeredness on the passion and input of a single individual. A change in one of these variables, particularly the departure of the "champion", thus has very strong implications on the organisation's operations, as has been recorded in the case of Upstart. As a seasoned NGO worker and observer himself, Patrick states:

> *"You know there are capacity issues, skills are hard to come by and they're expensive and again it comes down to funding. To be able to get the right people with the right skills set you know…to effect these quite complex programs in organisations that are trying to make a difference at a deep level"*.[11]

Issues related to human capacity and material resource shortages have thus had very immediate ramifications on the organisation's operations over the years. The learners' newspaper, for example, which had been struggling to stay afloat for several years (Gush, 2009), has since been abandoned in favour of focusing solely on radio which continues to maintain a strong funding base[12]. Furthermore, the limited financial and human resources have, at one point or another in the organisation's history, coexisted with equal supremacy

[10] S. Williams. NGO official. Grahamstown. 2 February 2018
[11] P. Ndindwa. NGO official. Grahamstown. 8 March 2018
[12, 13, 14] L. Bambani. NGO official. Grahamstown. 23 February 2018

bringing the organisation's operations to a grinding halt between October 2015 and July 2016[13].

In addition to scaling down operations to just radio and meeting learners only on Saturdays, the organisation has also had to limit its reach. Whereas in its first few years of operation, Upstart worked with 100-150 learners (affectionately called "Upstarters") from 12 schools in Grahamstown, the organisation now works with only 10 learners across two schools; five from Mary Waters HS and five from Nombulelo HS[14].The evolution of development NGOs, their "*beholdeness*" to single NGO champions and the authoritative nature of funding and human resources in their work could not be more evident.

A common thread in the world and work of the three NGOs presented thus far, especially IY and Upstart, is the role played by Rhodes University, particularly in the organisations' relationships with schools. The previous chapter touched a bit on the Vice Chancellor's Education Initiative and the university's involvement in basic education from Early Childhood Development to the preparation of Grade 12 learners for post-school opportunities. Part of this initiative involves partnering with NGOs in carrying out programs aimed at providing learners in disadvantaged schools with support services and resources. According to participants, GADRA has been tasked with spearheading much of this initiative and facilitating Dr Sizwe Mabizela's (Rhodes University sitting Vice Chancellor) passion of creation of sustainable ties between the university and the community and making Rhodes accessible to the local youth.

Housing the largest non-governmental activity in Grahamstown (in terms of resources and activity) through the CSD and being the single largest supporting player in the Grahamstown schooling community, Rhodes University retains overwhelming clout (van Hees, 2000). Alignment to its educational orbit thus provides NGOs with the opportunity to maximise the university's influence. This has meant that NGOs have predominantly subscribed to the university's operational direction. First, the university currently works with some high

schools in Joza and not others and this appears to be the general direction also adopted by NGOs. As noted by Songezo:

> *"…Mary Waters, Nombulelo and Ntsika, also in terms of the Dr Mabizela stuff which GADRA manages on behalf of the university, all of the attention is focused on those three schools. And those are the three schools where the numbers are, where the pass rates are you know*".[15]

Similarly, while recollecting the organisation's operational developments over the years, Lizole, a local volunteer, details the decision to narrow down the organisation's focus to a capped number of learners and limiting its feeder schools by noting that:

> *"So we cut down numbers to say, okay…in fact we started with schools to say okay, now we're gonna cut schools. We're not going to work with all the schools. We're only going to work with Mary Waters and Nombulelo because simply, they are under the umbrella of the Vice Chancellor's programs so let's also be associated with these schools"*.[16]

The university's narrowed focus on three schools is said to be based on the urgency to focus on those which, in and of themselves, carry the institutional form which can be receptive to support initiatives and being receptive, can also benefit. Kholiwe notes, for example, that:

> "*Input is very much based on putting resources where one can expect a return and not putting resources into institutions where one can't reasonably expect a return hence we don't really focus on Nyaluza, Mrwetyana and Khutliso Daniels. The focus is on the big three schools"*[17].

On the part of NGOs, the gravitation towards these three schools, in tandem with the RU alignment, is partly based on the possibility of heightened impact when investing in institutions which are considered receptive and fertile. Whether this is solely for the sake of organisational survival or an urgency to pursue a cause, or a negotiated balance of both, is not clear, as is articulated by Patrick:

> *"If you're a small organisation with very few resources, what you tend to want to do is align yourself to where the forces are, you know…that will enable you to*

[15] S. Williams. NGO official. Grahamstown. 2 February 2018
[16] L. Bambani. NGO official. Grahamstown. 23 February 2018
[17] K. Nzuzo. NGO official. Grahamstown. 2 February 2018

succeed in what you're trying to do so we made a conscious decision to focus on those same schools because that's where all the effort is going"[18].

The operational developments of Upstart provide a detailed snapshot of the dynamics of the world and work of NGOs, particularly those working in Joza. Alongside funding and capacity shortages, the influential position occupied by Rhodes University in the operations of NGOs becomes abundantly clear. Furthermore, the issue of human resources goes beyond just staff shortages, but also involves the absence of individuals who possess very specific skill sets which are deemed necessary to maintain the strength, consistency and expanse of the work of organisations. These realities not only impact the overall direction of the work of organisations but, as is the case with Upstart, shape the experiences of NGO workers and, by extension, prospective and current beneficiaries.

8.6 Village Scribe Association: "VSA"/ "Awarenet"

From the work and realities of the NGOs presented thus far, it is clear that organisational operations involve significant amounts of crisis management and adaptation efforts. Village Scribe Association, popularly known as VSA or Awarenet, is not unlike these organisations in that it, too, is in a constant process of attempting to fend off threats to organisational survival and mandates. Founded in 2008 by Anna and Ron Wertlen, VSA began as a software and technology-focused initiative aimed at expanding employment and developmental opportunities in the Eastern Cape (NGO Pulse, 2016). Over the years, the organisation has largely narrowed its focus to providing computer literacy education and training to learners and teachers within the Grahamstown community. Keeping abreast with the current age of technology, VSA strives to balance the distribution of employment opportunities by ensuring that learners in disadvantaged schools and areas are able to use computers to the benefit of their education and that teachers are themselves equipped to facilitate this process (Awarenet, 2018).

The organisation carries out its computer literacy education predominantly through an e-learning platform called Awarenet that covers lessons on health, music, sport, science, history and social services (Awarenet, 2018). This program is facilitated by a VSA-trained lab assistant with the support of RUCE volunteers, former VSA learners, and two German

[18] P. Ndindwa. NGO official. Grahamstown. 3 March 2018

exchange volunteers from the South African German Network (SAGE Net)[19]. In an attempt to extend the reach of these computer and internet access platform, VSA launched an Open Lab at the Joza Youth Hub in May 2017 which has recently registered its 500th member (Torp, 2018). The lab provides computer access to learners from all schools in the community – primary and high school – and community members with the youngest being 8 years old and the oldest being 70 years old. It can thus be said that, compared to the three NGOs presented thus far, VSA appears to be reaching a wider population.

A large part of VSA's work includes partnering with schools in facilitating the use and maintenance of computers and computer labs located at schools. Implementing these programs has come with a number of operational hurdles over the years which have resulted in the organisation opting for maintaining links with schools but extending computer access to learners only through the Open Lab and no longer at the schools. Nandipha, who has also been a longstanding member of the Grahamstown non-profit network says:

> *"To their credit, Awarenet has actually been incredibly ecumenical in the way that they work, you know. They work with Archie Mbolekwa, CM Vellem, Khutliso Daniels, you know, very unpromising places but they go there…it's an open lab… they don't discriminate on anyone who wants to come"*.[20]

The involvement of learners in the organisation's programs include making use of the lab between 3-5pm on weekdays and 9am-1pm on Saturdays by working independently on the computers which are loaded with more than 200GB of digital learner support materials, educational games, Ubuntu Software, study guides, past exam papers, Blockly games and Mindset Learn videos[21]. Also, learners receive formal training on computer use from volunteers at different times of the week. VSA also carries other activities such as arts and crafts-related competitions, movie nights, culture days where learners exchange ideas and lessons on culture with German volunteers, sports tournaments, health and fitness days, photography workshops and also contributing to a column in Grocott's Mail. Also, in 2015, learners wrote songs about peace which were later compiled into a CD for which a music video was recorded (Willy, 2015; Brendal, 2017; Resch, 2018).

Keeping the above in mind, Awarenet appears to differ slightly from the other three NGOs first with respect to its relationships with more schools and more learners, then with the extent

[19] N. Farmer. NGO official. Grahamstown. 19 March 2018
[20] N. Mbhalo. NGO official. Grahamstown. 8 March 2018
[21] N. Farmer. NGO official. Grahamstown. 19 March 2018

of its reach which includes learners and community members of differing ages, and also the relations forged with teachers. As noted above, an NGO official commends the organisation for maintaining consistent and functional ties with school officials from Khutliso Daniels which does not appear to not be the case with the other NGOs[22]. However, much like the other NGOs, Awarenet does not currently have a working relationship with school officials from TEM Mrwetyana and this is also evidenced in the low number of learners from the school who make use of VSA services including the Open Lab. Furthermore, Awarenet also seems to differ in the depth of its relationships with school officials that goes beyond just enlisting teachers to encourage learners to participate in VSA programs, which is the case with the other NGOs. Having provided now SETA-accredited computer courses to teachers at Archie Mbolekwa in 2017, Awarenet seeks to continue its teacher training in order to expand the sustainability of its own computer literacy for learners when they are at school, include teachers as central players in the process of expanding computer literacy among learners, respond to the obvious demand for computer and internet access and also relieve the pressure currently placed on the organisation. In addition to doing this by providing teachers with computer education and training, Awarenet has also prioritised reviving the many unused and/or poorly maintained computer labs in local schools and libraries.

Though different in a number of ways, two common elements between the organisations are the role of funding in operations and the strong partnership with Rhodes University. For example, the organisation experiences financial constraints which have had a discernible impact on operations the first and most telling of which is related to the limited human capacity which results from limited funds. According to Nandile:

> *"The challenge is…funding constraints, it's simple and it means you need to take time. You need to work more on getting funding so that takes time. It's not only getting the applications out but it's also promotions. You need to promote the organisation in general; your website, your profile in general in attracting funding…Funding constraints mean you need to work more on funding which gives you less time… and funding constraints makes it more difficult to get more people involved or to employ people. We'd love to employ more people, especially people from the local community but right now, we cannot".*[23]

[22] N. Mbhalo. NGO official. Grahamstown. 8 March 2018
[23] N. Ngudle. NGO official. Grahamstown. 18 March 2018

Again, as with the other organisations, the limits to funding and personnel place a great deal of pressure on current officials to carry out the mandate with the required level of efficiency which can secure trust in the organisation as well as further funding. Nandile, goes further to reflect on the personal strain which is brought on by the processes necessary to obtain and retain funding, as was also mentioned by Thamsanqa, Bongiwe and Lizole. He notes, for example that:

> *"Last month we had some financial constraints so I've been working a lot from office on the applications and all the admin. I don't have much contact with the learners and I'm trying to be more involved again because it's a little bit demotivating to do all this work especially when applying. You just sit there trying to promote the organisation but you can't be involved so that you feel that this is all worthwhile".*[24]

In addition, participants noted that limited funding has also constrained the organisation's ability to expand its reach to work with other schools, build in more computers and offer more extensive programs. The organisation has, therefore, had to maintain strong ties with Rhodes University as is the case with the other NGOs. In the case of VSA, this partnership has broadly benefited the organisation in three ways. First in the provision of volunteers, secondly with different University departments running workshops and training for learners and lastly with material support. Rhodes University has, for example, provided a significant number of computers and digital equipment necessary to extend the Open Lab into the spaces previously occupied by Upstart at the hub. In addition, a participant notes that while the university is unable to offer financial support, labour from the University's IT Department is given to the organisation to install computers and ensure that the lab is functioning effectively.

8.7 Conclusion

NGOs are in a constant process of defending and negotiating their operations in the face of external and organisational threats. Financial constraints, limited human capacity and a shortage of NGO-specific skills are common institutional challenges with which organisations must constantly contend. Furthermore, relations with Rhodes University and

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[24] N. Ngudle. NGO official. Grahamstown. 18 March 2018

local schools have influenced organisations to, as a collective, focus only on three high schools thereby excluding the others – perhaps by little fault of their own. With limited material and human resources and operating within a schooling network that includes more dominating forces, NGOs appear to be hard-pressed to make contributions that extend beyond just committing to their organisational missions. To their credit, however, education NGOs in Joza have made steady progress in fulfilling these objectives, though within a limited scope of the population. This chapter has laid bare the internal and external interlocking players which shape, influence, enable and constrain the work of education NGOs in Joza. Though organisations are largely committed to their mandates and making steady progress towards them, their contributions appear to be restricted by the dominance of other players in this network and also institutional limitations. The next chapter seeks to expand on and describe the actual contributions made by NGOs within these concentrated spaces and in the larger Joza community namely in learner outcomes and more broadly, to the city's education agenda.

Chapter 9

Education NGOs in Joza: A multi-edged sword

9.1 Introduction

This chapter represents the final step towards presenting an in-depth analysis and description of the work of NGOs within a particular context. Education NGOs working in Joza are used as a reference for the description which will emanate from this chapter and the thesis as a whole. Up until now, the world of NGOs, on a global, national and local scale has been unpacked paying specific attention to their existence being the result of constantly negotiated relations with donors, states and communities. NGOs working in Joza are of particular interest in that, in addition to the domineering nature of donors and state agencies, they maintain close relations with two other leading forces, namely Rhodes University and local high schools. As such, the base operations of NGOs belong to multiple contributors in the Grahamstown schooling network with their overall contribution to the city's education agenda being highly constrained by pre-existing systems of inequality.

The dynamics within this schooling network, along with the iterative operations of NGOs which constantly respond to the chequered funding and capacity bases, have thus relegated their contributions to individualised benefits concentrated within a small portion of the poor population. This chapter seeks to expand on these individualised benefits in finer detail and locate them within the broader context of NGO involvement and the prevailing profile of the city's education sector. Having unpacked the different features which play into the face of learner outcomes, on the one hand and NGO operations on the other – in the previous chapters – this present chapter seeks to reassemble these elements so as to provide a detailed description of the ways in which these two spheres converge as well as the internal and external factors which cause them to diverge.

The chapter then seeks to make propositions of how the convergence of NGOs and learners has failed to steer the city's education profile towards a more desirable end. This begins with a detailed account of the contributions made by education NGOs in Joza as reported by research participants. The said contributions are then individually and collectively tied to the broad and widely accepted measures of educational progress which stand as hallmarks and

supposed channels of socio-economic promise and prospect namely, learner performance and retention. This is then followed by a description of the constraints and forces which frustrate the expansion of NGO contributions and localise them to a set of benefits that are enjoyed by a select and relatively fortunate segment of the learner population. The chapter concludes by illustrating how complexities internal and external to the work of individual organisations renders the local NGO sector secondary to the more boisterous status quo. This lays a frame for the concluding chapter that will tie the foregoing chapters together to compact final retorts to the central research question.

9.2 Learner performance and retention: An implied agenda

This thesis has thus far sought to expose the multi-layered and interwoven systems which exist in and around the base operations of NGOs. Given the largely qualitative nature of their agendas, the creation of direct and independent links between their work and the advancement of development and education is hard to come by. For example, if organisational missions and objectives were a sufficient enough grounding upon which to consider the positive contribution of NGOs in Joza to learner performance, Ikamva Youth – and perhaps VSA but only to a limited extent – would be the only organisation worth considering as it is the only one of the four which explicitly commits itself to improving learner outcomes. Furthermore, if the same measures were sufficient enough to consider organisations' contributions to the retention of learners, none of the four organisations would make the cut, as none are explicitly geared towards retaining learners in school. These are, however not sufficient measures of arriving at an absolute characterization of organisational effectiveness in educational outcomes. Therefore, this necessitates generosity in what is considered "a contribution" to the performance and retention of learners as well as to the broader education agenda. As noted by Helliker (2006:311):

> *"The 'effectiveness' of NGOs cannot necessarily be read from the extent or form of deviation of organisational practices from NGO missions and visions, and NGO practices cannot be judged solely (if at all) in those terms…NGOs are often more involved in sustaining their own organisations than in facilitating sustainable development as enunciated in NGO mission statements. Further, the failure of NGOs to deliver on their development promises does not invariably undermine their continued existence. In fact, if NGO practices were actually assessed in terms*

of NGO values and policies, then it is highly unlikely that the NGO phenomenon would survive considering the wide chasm between NGO values and NGO practices".

Therefore at best, what can be generated is as detailed a description as is possible of their contributions – implied and explicit, incidental and intended, self-reported and professed by beneficiaries – and how these are said to advance, if at all, the performance and retention of learners. This, it can be said, applies even more to organisations whose central aims may not be explicitly or implicitly articulated as improving learner performance and retention trends.

The terms are themselves broad and carry within them measures and prescriptions of acceptable standards of teaching, learning and socialization. They also oversee a set of institutionalised channels of micro, meso and macro level socio-economic development. So by and large, while Chapter Five discussed the problematics surrounding the reduction of sector-level educational performance to a single statistical measure (matric results), the existing order of the education system is configured to recognise contributions made to education upon these very terms.

So while NGO organisational and indeed sector-level effectiveness may be considered on the basis of commitment to organisational aims and objectives, considerations of their role and efficacy, or lack thereof, is partly made on the basis of the measures of performance which have been instrumentalised as standing channels of youth progress and prospect in the education system. Chief among these measures, as articulated in Chapter Five, is the rate at which learners are successfully retained within the schooling system for the required number of years and their learning outcomes during this time. So, the consideration of NGOs and their role in advancing education ideals, which is the prime preoccupation of this project, rests on a detailed description of the ways in which they expand individual learner prospects– within the existing measures– and also their role in advancing the broader education agenda for which these measures are but sole and very particular channels. What follows from here is a description of these individual and sector-level contributions and the ways in which NGO mediation is often restricted from making far-reaching and sustainable disruptions to the status quo.

9.2.1 Empowerment

The concept of empowerment has been a central topic of discussion within NGO discourse and practice. Though views may diverge in some ways, what commentators have largely agreed on is the difficulty in defining and measuring the presence or absence of empowerment in development projects (Weiss, 2011; Rowlands, 2016). Service delivery NGOs, however, which are often plagued with financial and capacity shortages in providing services, have centralised the aim of building capacity among communities and enabling them to be active players in development processes which are designed to benefit them.

The concept of power was discussed in some detail in chapter two, paying specific attention to how it is negotiated between players within the development network on the basis of resources, legitimacy and needs. It was on the basis of this background that the chapter highlighted the power disparities which exist not only between donors, states and NGOs, but also between NGOs and beneficiary communities. Empowerment, at the centre of which lies the concept of power, was again introduced as a central policy and operational framework often adopted by NGOs in their aims of flattening the power asymmetries within and without this development network. This is no different when considering the work of NGOs in Joza, their interactions with beneficiaries and their approaches to educational advancement. To shed some light on the frameworks applied in empowerment schemes globally, several dimensions of power have been identified by scholars. A brief diversion is necessary here in order to identify and clarify these dimensions so as to properly position the contributions reportedly made NGOs in this regard.

In an attempt to uncover the dynamics of women's empowerment towards development in Honduras, Joanna Rowlands drew distinctions between four dimensions and models of power namely, *power to, power within, power with,* and *power over* (Rowlands, 1995). Whereas 'power to' and 'power within' are localised to individuals, 'power over' and 'power with' reach further to include interactions between individuals. According to Rowlands (1996):

- *Power to* speaks to an exercise of power by individuals which culminates in occupying leadership and decision-making platforms to one's own benefit and to the benefit of others;
- *Power within* involves self-acceptance, self-awareness, self-confidence, self-respect and security in oneself which extends to an acknowledgement of the uniqueness and value in others;

- *Power with* illustrates the ability for individuals to combine their personal efforts and contributions with those of others to pursue individual as well as collective ends;
- *Power over* denotes an unequal exercise of power between individuals where one (or more) exerts power over another (or many) through domination as well as threats and infliction of violence which result in internalised subordination and/or resistance.

In the case of Joza NGOs, dimensions of power, in theory and practice, can equally be detected. First, empowerment appears to be central to the organisational missions of VSA and Upstart with Ikamva and AMP placing equal emphasis on working towards instilling a sense of responsibility among learners which will enable them to actively participate in their own education and development. As noted by former Upstart coordinator "together with our partners…we are able to provide learners with ways to develop their skills, enabling and empowering them to positively implement change in their lives and those of their communities (Ntuli, 2014).

The avenues through which these NGOs endeavour to facilitate processes of empowerment are different but often include opportunities for self-expression and self-discovery and also, to a very limited extent, leadership. All these are said to play a seminal role in moulding learners to benefit from education initiatives offered to them in and out of school. This appears to be the case with both NGOs that deal directly with academic schoolwork and also those which do not. NGO and school officials, community members and learners speak of NGOs as spaces of empowerment specifically through facilitating the link between 'power within' and 'power to'. By accessing different NGO programs and activities, learners are said to develop confidence to speak and articulate themselves as well as express their views and experiences. Vuyiswa, whose son has been an NGO member for just under three years, reflects on the changes observed in her child over the years.

> "*At home the way he is handling himself...even as time goes by I see that he's coming out of his shell, he is talking more, he is able to speak in front of people, you know, he wasn't like that before*".[25]

Similarly, Nande recounts his own journey since joining an NGO by stating:

[25] V. Tena. Parent. Grahamstown. 26 January 2018

"*Before, I never used to like orals in school, I got really nervous when I got in front of the class but since I got there, all that changed…we debate different topics and we only debate in English*"[26]

Among other things, these participants tell of the interpersonal and dispositional changes which NGO participation has catalysed. These and other participants have also often NGOs as spaces which enable empowerment not only for empowerment's sake but also as a springboard for improved learning experiences outside of NGO settings. One official puts it this way:

"I also think that NGOs that don't do academic work specifically but offer programs that boost confidence… I think that goes a long way in helping learners stay in school and do well….things like those where learners are encouraged to speak in English or Xhosa and express themselves… then when a learner gets used to that and they become confident, then it's easier to even ask questions at school when they are struggling even to say, is there someone there able to help me".[27]

A dominant belief among participants is that opportunities for self-expression within NGO settings present the possibility of improved learning experiences, namely more active participation in school and, perhaps by extension, improved performance. Furthermore, NGOs present learners with opportunities for self-discovery which are also said to build 'power within' that can culminate in confidence in and out of NGO settings, including school as illustrated in the following responses:

- *"I think they do play a role where you have learners who might be struggling at school but maybe they're very talented with music and maybe an organisation provides a positive place for them and a place where they can actually do well at something whereas at school they might feel they're never doing well…So I think that it contributes to the learner's image of themselves and maybe that belief in themselves, seeing that they actually can do something when they work hard and teaching some of that discipline, I think maybe that could possibly translate into their work at school"*.[28]

[26] N. Maqhubela. Learner. Grahamstown. 5 April 2018
[27] T. Gila. NGO official. Grahamstown. 12 April 2018
[28] B. Leleki. NGO official. Grahamstown. 22 February 2018

- *"The options are massive and varied and every type of human being can be catered for somewhere along the line so yes, you might be bad at academic work but you're fantastic at yoga and you are getting affirmation for that and credit for that is good for your self-worth and then that translates into academic success"* [29]
- *"With those marimba things and even handcrafts…maybe they would end up staying in school since a person will realise that this thing, I like doing it maybe I can even study it. They won't give up because they are able to do this thing…because everyone has their own thing that they've been made for no matter what it is*".[30]
- *"We can give them a level of attention here that often the schools are not able to give them and I believe that will help a bit with their confidence and their ability to see what they actually need to do to improve their results and that feeling that there's something that they can be good at…that more positive self-image can play out in how they feel about themselves at school"*.[31]

What becomes evident from these responses is that service delivery NGOs exist not only as physical places which dispense education resources, but they also operate as spaces of empowerment which can prepare learners to benefit from their schooling experiences. What is also apparent however, are the limits to empowerment within these spaces which result in learners being beneficiaries of final products drawn up and designed remotely. Though viewed as important, there seems to be little evidence of the inclusion of beneficiaries in meaningful decision-making platforms. Niel, a local youth who is particularly passionate about this volunteer work notes, for example that:

> *"I think if you draw learners into the decision-making process like for instance we have done that to some extent…we actually want to have them officially in our organisation…we want to draw them into the decision-making process. I think it's important to give them responsibility"*.[32]

One of the contributions which NGOs are said to be making in the performance and retention of learners is at the very base level where individuals are given spaces of self-discovery and

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[29] Z. Khalipha. School official. Grahamstown. 24 February 2018
[30] L. Diko. Community member. Grahamstown. 1 February 2018
[31] M. Mandisi. NGO official. Grahamstown. 3 March 2018
[32] N. Farmer. NGO official. Grahamstown. 19 March 2018

self-expression. These forms of empowerment are thus deemed as vital to building, not only individual strength but also in encouraging individuals to "associate productively with others and to engage in new activities and problem solve" (Weiss, 2011:14). According to Lekoko (2015:2) projects which facilitate empowerment, particularly through 'power within' and 'power to', which appears to be the case with NGOs in Joza, build "self-confidence, assertiveness and perseverance and also enable individuals to make right and fruitful decisions, be creative and mobilise resources for personal and communal benefits".

9.2.2 NGOs as spaces of socialisation

A common narrative of NGOs is that of organisations being considered and described as safe spaces of refuge such as family and home. In her study on the Grahamstown education-NGO, GADRA, Msindo (2014) highlights the role that the organisation plays as a caring family with its own values, culture and norms as well as internal systems of reciprocity and socialisation. The small size of the organisation along with the relationships forged by teachers with learners creates an environment of refuge and safety for learners, many of whom come from family units which are destabilised by several socio-economic realities. Similarly, a former learner of Ikamva Youth is recorded by the organisation saying:

> *"Ikamva was the safest environment I have ever had in my life. Neither my family nor friends or school gave me that feeling of safety. I am a conservative introvert and I have a lot of stuff to say but most of the time I just keep quiet. At Ikamva, however, I managed to share some of the depths of my heart through my poetry…The way learners interact with each other was just amazing"* (Ikamva Youth, 2009)

One learner says: "Ikamva Youth is one of the places I can call home"[33] while a former volunteer of VSA commends the organisation saying: "the team here in Grahamstown is great and it really feels like a small family" (Niemann, 2015). Furthermore, a Grade 11 who has been a part of another NGO for three years states that "when we go there, it's like we're a family, we go in and laugh but then we start working after having fun"[34]. Likewise, two school officials commenting on the work of AMP, highlighted the caring nature of officials in the organisation. One notes that: "they are amazing…they take so much care for the

[33] N. Maqhubela. Learner. Grahamstown. 7 April 2018
[34] A. Manzini. Learner. Grahamstown. 17 March 2018

learners" while another offers similar sentiments saying "they're very good and very reliable, they offer more than just the music, they are very supportive to the whole child which is phenomenal".

As with any family unit, roles and responsibilities are ascribed to members, and norms and values which are necessary for the continued survival of the organism are enforced and regulated through varied mechanisms. Msindo notes for example, that in the case of GADRA, the principle of *Ubuntu,* which underscores the responsibility for self and others, is at the heart of the organisation's work and interactions between individuals (Msindo, 2014). In the case of the NGOs under investigation, responsibility for self appears to be equally central to operations. Learners are encouraged to be committed and disciplined and to also exercise agency whilst benefiting from the organisation's efforts. According to beneficiaries and officials this has created a culture of commitment which accommodates only those who abide by the required standards. It is stated for example that:

> *"Learners from a number of different schools attend each branch, and due to strict attendance requirements, every Ikamvanite who reaches matric is steeped in the organisation's principles of hard work and commitment. This helps to generate a competitive culture among the Ikamvanites. It is one thing to be top of your schools –indeed at any given branch a number of Ikamvanites may hold that position – but it requires a lot of work to be top of your Ikamva branch, where everyone is keenly trying to achieve their best possible results"* (Ikamva Youth, 2012).

Attendance requirements and standards of commitment are enforced by these organisations and these are set in place to further entrench the required standards of commitment necessary to protect this culture as is noted by officials from three of the NGOs under investigation:

- *"NGOs try to encourage commitment…like, it's very hard to get kicked out of school, I think but with an NGO program you could get kicked out if you're actually not bothering to work or if you're not committed, so I think it encourages a level of commitment. It's actually holding learners accountable for a certain level of commitment"*.[35]
- *"We want committed learners and we have a 75% attendance requirement and if they don't meet it, we kick you out. And 75% is easy to get because they only*

[35] B. Leleki. NGO official. Grahamstown. 22 February 2018

attend three times a week and they have the rest of the week for everything else".[36]

- *"So I believe that that kind of afternoon program that exposes learners to other things…is really important because the other thing is, it teaches them commitment and if you don't go, it gets followed up on"*.[37]
- *"I think NGOs are playing an important role… I think they play an important role in terms of focusing the learners on having some structures, having some interesting activities to do after school hours"*.[38]

Personal initiative and commitment enforced by organisations and displayed by learners in these settings feed into the different institutional cultures and is rewarded through access to varied development platforms and education services. According to participants, learners who abide by this organisational norm are able to reap the benefits of having education services to which other learners do not have access. Much like with *Ubuntu* in the case of GADRA, the values enforced within these NGO settings "matter not only in conventional families but are critical in the learning environment in school" (Msindo, 2014) and can therefore contribute to improved learning outcomes.

9.2.3 Extension of resources and exposure to possibility

Gaping inequalities and inequities in the provision and quality of resources such as books and libraries, study guides, textbooks, computer labs, science and biology labs, sporting facilities and extra curricula infrastructure continue to be a reality in South African schools. The role played by the availability as well as the quality of these resources in enhancing learning environments and improving learner outcomes remains largely undisputed (Manqele, 2013; OECD, 2013; Riet, 2015). By extending some of these resources, NGOs in Joza seek to improve, either directly or indirectly, the odds which learners are faced with in terms of their performance and post-matric opportunities.

[36] T. Mkhubiso. NGO official. Grahamstown. 12 April 2018
[37] S. Williams. NGO official. Grahamstown. 2 February 2018
[38] P. Ndindwa. NGO official. Grahamstown. 8 March 2018

In addition, this is often combined with exposure and access to platforms which are aimed at sharpening the focus of learners in their work and expanding their ambitions. According to Niel:

> *"We had students with a Maths teacher who they said they just don't understand; so someone who's an expert teacher in Maths from an NGO would be better able to support those sorts of things. And the extra exposure the NGOs are providing to the learners to things that they have more resources for than schools, I think that's very helpful. And also like, someone who is a professional musician, maybe that learner doesn't know someone who's a professional musician who's earning well as a musician…so I think that motivating factor of seeing someone coming from an NGO who is an expert is good".*[39]

Commenting on the benefit of these organisations, one parent also notes that:

> *"These kids get exposed to people from abroad, they get mentors and they are given work opportunities. They get outings to the Botanical Gardens to study, they are taken to the Science Festival and they get transport to these places, that's good".*[40]

The extension of resources is a dominant strategy through which NGO officials and beneficiaries believe that organisations are currently contributing to learning outcomes. Despite going about this by implementing different operational models, what is common is a belief that organisations are intimately involved in the performance and retention of learners in Joza, largely by extending access to material resources and infrastructure such as computers, music education and equipment, Learner Support Material as well as information. Sesethu says:

> "*I joined [the organisation] because of the resources, the computer lab, photocopying machine, internet and the tutoring and also they offer career guidance for us to know more about career choices because we were taken to different places like Rhodes and DSG in the first term for example*".[41]

In many schools, learners often do not have textbooks and where there are textbooks, they have to share these among one another. What NGOs appear to be endeavouring towards is

[39] N. Farmer. NGO official. Grahamstown. 22 February 2018
[40] U. Ntombela. Parent. Grahamstown. 16 February 2018
[41] S. Kanzi. Learner. Grahamstown. 17 February 2018

mitigating the disturbances in learning by providing a bridge of resources and spaces for learners where schools are lagging behind. Lindani, for example, proposes how extended access to computers and ICT literacy has a role to play in learners' schooling experiences and, by extension, outcomes:

> "*So our organisation, we are not directly involved. Our focus is not just for kids to get better grades…our work supports that goal but it's not our only goal. We don't sit with them and with their textbook trying to get better exam results but I think our work is a little more related to school performance because they do use ICT a lot for school work and I think that certainly has a direct effect. Their only source of information about different subjects in school would be a teacher standing in front of them and often just writing down things on the blackboard…but we're actually opening another space where they can get resources, particularly offline resources*". [42]

Similarly, Feiter (2013) highlights the way in which the work of AMP can be beneficial to learner performance by noting that "music has long been linked to learning. It has benefits in diverse areas such as concentration, logic and mathematics. As the students are taught in English (including their theory and music exams) their language skills are also indirectly improved". In addition to the provision of material resources and learning platforms, NGOs in Joza also provide access to support human resources in the form of volunteer tutors and teachers. Iviwe, a community member, also notes that:

> *"Because of the individual attention learners often need…in the NGO programs, you'll have more of that, and NGOs are maybe able to deal with those learners more effectively than teachers at a school who are teaching hundreds of kids. So they assist those learners with study skills, with understanding the material better and so on and often the NGOs might have quite expert teachers who might be able to teach some of the material better".*[43]

In the case of one school which did not have a Mathematics teacher for Grade 11s for a full year in 2017, one learner attributes the availability of tutors at an NGO as part of the reason why she was still able to obtain 78% for Mathematics in that year. Similarly, another learner notes that "our tutors come with so many new and interesting ideas for example, I got help

[42] L. Zeleni. NGO official. Grahamstown. 19 March 2018
[43] I. Nkosi. Community member. Grahamstown. 17 March 2018

with my Life Orientation project and I got 67% for it". Bonga, a young teacher, also commends the impact that these initiatives can have on their own teaching experiences:

> *"I think NGOs such as Ikamva and Awarenet and so on, they are making a huge difference for us for example, here at the Youth Hub, I wasn't aware as a teacher that there are study guides in the computer labs where you can go and get information and if you get to class you get there equipped as a teacher, so on the one end, these NGOs they play such a paramount role in terms of teaching us as teachers".*[44]

The availability of learning and support resources, the exposure to varied learning platforms such as the National Science Festival and career guidance events, support human resources and more individualised attention are at the helm of how NGOs in Joza seek to contribute to learning outcomes. With IY, for example, seeking to maintain a 1:5 tutoring ratio between learners and tutors, NGO settings are able to act as supportive learning spaces for learners who come with different ways of understanding content and who also come from schools with different resource bases. As noted above, the impact of the availability of resources – material and human – on learner outcomes remains largely undisputed and as the sole provider of some of these resources, NGOs play a seminal role in the learning experiences of many underprivileged learners in Joza.

9.2.4 Role modelling

The contributions made by NGOs discussed thus far are more directly related to the individualised impact felt and/or experienced by beneficiaries in response to NGO programs and services. As can be expected, however, there are also indirect results of NGO work which transcend just the individual impact. One such residual impact reported by participants, mainly school and NGO officials, is the presence and "creation" of 'role models'. This is said to hold the potential of expanding learners' knowledge of possible opportunities and prospects and also improve their effort and commitment to school.

The context within which these NGOs operate is largely unfavourable to learners excelling in school in such a way that will enable them to benefit from and contribute to development processes. Limited resources, mismanaged schools, poor accountability among officials and

[44] B. Mavuso. School official. Grahamstown. 24 February 2018

broader contextual factors all constrain the ability for young people to gain equal access, if at all, to employment and development opportunities. NGOs seek to mitigate this crisis but they too, are unable to function outside the hold of these same constraints. In some cases, however their efforts have contributed to enabling learners to defy the prevailing odds. This, according to participants, is an important way of disturbing the status quo for the young people benefiting from NGO programs and also for their observing peers. Bongiwe, for example says:

> *"I think exposure through NGOs to the volunteers we work with, students who are at Rhodes who might come from similar backgrounds to them, other adults of other professions, more contact with other people who are different to the people that they see every day who might not be working; that kind of contact and sort of broadening their horizons to all these possibilities I think it is very important"*.[45]

Similarly, Songezo, who has been and working and volunteering in this community for a number of years, notes that it is important to highlight these unique cases when considering the contributions made by NGOs in Joza as they go a long way not only in the lives of immediate beneficiaries but can also encourage others in their pursuit of education and opportunities. She illustrated this by saying:

> *"I think that organisation…if you judge it, then you find these extraordinary young Joza people who grew up under the organisation and benefited enormously from the process…and the organisation played a big role in their lives and now they're post-grad students, very confident, very articulate, and ambitious young people"*.[46]

Similarly, one senior school official proposes that young people benefiting from such initiatives – along with well-managed schools and resources – are important to highlight so as to demystify the supreme and deterministic role often ascribed to 'context'. He notes that: "these are not your Oppenheimer kids or kids coming from middle-class families, they are coming from your poorest backgrounds who cannot afford your VG [Victoria Girls High School] or PJ [PJ Olivier High School] but they make it"[47]. He advances on this by offering up an isiXhosa adage – "*izala, liyalizala ithanga"* – which, loosely translated, means "something beautiful can come from chaos". According to participants, young role models who have benefited from NGO programs are not only a testament to the positive contributions

[45] B. Leleki. NGO official. Grahamstown. 22 February 2018
[46] S. Williams. NGO official. Grahamstown. 2 February 2018
[47] M. Lubhelwana. School official. Grahamstown. 12 December 2017

already made by these organisations but are also an indication of the role which they continue to make in the lives of their members and, hopefully, their observing peers.

9.4 NGO learner and school profiles: Enabling inequality?

The central question of this thesis is two-tiered. The first part seeks to position NGOs within the broad education agenda with the second attempting to offer up a description of the role they play specifically in the performance and retention of learners towards the advancement of this agenda. The previous sections sought to respond to the latter part of the question by outlining the different ways in which NGOs appear to be making a contribution to learner outcomes in Joza. Having presented these contributions, the next sections seek to respond to the overarching question of whether NGOs can be described as aiding the education agenda especially in light of the prevailing poor learner outcomes in Joza.

The previous chapters have outlined the level of integration which exists in the Grahamstown schooling community. While key players in this network include schools, state institutions, Rhodes University and NGOs, two spheres of society which also play an integral part in schooling and learner outcomes are the community and families. The role of NGOs in advancing the education agenda in Grahamstown is therefore immediately impacted by this interlocking system of multiple contributors. First, the participation of learners in NGOs is impacted by the varied interactions between learners, teachers, schools, families, Rhodes University and the broader Grahamstown community.

As stated above, the concept of empowerment is a central aim of NGOs working in Joza. Central to this is 'participation', a concept which has received much attention from NGO scholars and practitioners alike (Mweene, 2006; Kavitha, 2017; Mazibuko, 2017). Much of the work done on participation within NGO discourse, however, has focused on the importance of beneficiary participation in NGO management and leadership and how this can advance the possibility of empowerment and the sustainability of NGO interventions (Mercer, 2002; Makuwira, 2004; Khan, et al., 2012; Julius, 2014; Tota, 2014). What is evident in this study is the importance of first looking at the routes and dynamics of individuals who are able to access NGO programs and are thus more likely to benefit from such interventions.

Learner participation in NGOs is voluntary and as such, the act of choosing to participate is said to be indicative of learners exercising active agency and devotion which NGOs seek to

reward by providing spaces and resources of empowerment and educational advancement. There are, however, a number of mitigating factors which are said to influence the participation of learners in these organisations, shape organisational profiles and contribute to the overall role of NGOs in the city's education sector. First, there is a dominant belief that there are learners who are more likely to participate in NGOs than others. This likelihood is predominantly influenced by learners' personal devotion and experiences of education, schools and school leadership, family, community factors and also, as was mentioned earlier, the influence which Rhodes University has had – knowingly or otherwise – on NGO-school relations.

When speaking of learner participation in NGOs, participants often make a distinction between two groups of learners. Those who are said to be more likely to participate in NGOs are described as being '*serious*' while those who do not participate are described as being '*lazy*'. This division is said to play itself out not only in NGO participation and commitment but also in school. Participants thus propose that the learners who are performing well in school are often the same learners who participate in one or more NGO interventions. This divide is not only advanced by school and NGO officials but also community members, out-of-school youth, and learners, those who participate in NGOs and those who do not.

- *I have never been a part of an NGO because I was lazy to walk all the way to Joza from my school and where I live*.[48]
- *The problem with learners from that school is that they are not serious, that is why you won't find them in those organisations and even the principal won't encourage them to participate so when these things come, they are not expecting them and you'll find that they aren't keen and they aren't serious about them"*.[49]
- *"I am not part of an NGO because I am lazy. After school, I want to go home and rest first before I start working again"*.[50]

Moreover, participants have also advanced the argument that the learners who are more likely to participate in NGOs are perhaps those who could be thought of as needing such support the least while those who don't participate, may be those who need the extra support the most. The distinction between learners who are serious and those who are not followed the

[48] K. Mentele. Out-of-school-youth/Community member. Grahamstown. 24 January 2018
[49] L. Diko. Community member. Grahamstown. 1 February 2018
[50] Z. Khulani. Learner. Grahamstown. 7 April 2018

same divide between learners who are thought to need additional support and those who do not. This was highlighted, for example, during focus group discussions with learners. Three respondents from the same household participated in two separate discussions with two sisters being in one and their older cousin being in another. In the first discussion, Lilitha, the older cousin, spoke of the two younger cousins and commended their hard work and dedication to learning. She noted how her younger cousins have landed in the top three positions of their grade in academic excellence from Grade 8 to Grade 10 and have maintained an impressive academic record even before joining the NGOs of which they are currently members. She supports this by saying:

> *"Those two are very clever, even besides the NGO, they get home and study, they sleep late and wake up early to study. That's what they've been doing even before they started attending the organisation. They wake up at 4am to study even when exams are far away. I will hear them moving around in the morning, making tea at 3am even though they slept at midnight".*[51]

In a separate discussion, one of the younger siblings is asked how she thinks participating in the NGO has impacted her performance at school and she ponders on this by saying:

> *"Has it? I'm actually not sure if it hasn't been because we work very hard…we are only supposed to go there twice a week but we decided to go there every day with our other friend. She is the top learner in our grade, I am second and my sister is third. We got 78% for Maths last year even though we didn't have a Maths teacher and our friend, she got 93%. We all go there together. We can't study at home, there are too many people so we get a place to study there".*[52]

A school and an NGO official advance on this argument by stating that:

- *"I find that the kids who are more involved in those things, will also sign up for the skills development program and they'll also be in the choir so the people who are keen are keen and get involved in everything and then there's a big group of people who just don't participate…with the NGO story in these different schools, the kids who are keen and who commit and who sign up for*

[51] L. Maphaphu. Learner. Grahamstown. 7 April 2018
[52] A. Fonte. Learner. Grahamstown. 24 March 2018

things, do and probably the kids who really need it are not necessarily the ones who are getting involved".[53]

- *"You have the people that are committed to the program and these are the learners who are serious at school and are those who are passing. And the ones who struggle, are the ones who cause trouble for two hours in the afternoon".*[54]

What also comes out in these responses is that, in addition to the divide between learners who are more likely to participate in NGOs as opposed to those who are less likely to participate, the schools which learners attend acts as an additional layer of divide in NGO participation with learners from certain schools being more likely to participate than learners from others. Officials from all NGOs sampled agree that there is an obvious skew in their Joza feeder schools with most learners coming from Ntsika and Nombulelo than Khutliso Daniels and TEM Mrwetyana. During discussions for example, learners who are part of NGOs were rarely ever able to easily recollect the number of learners from TEM Mrwetyana, in particular, who participate in NGOs. What is said to set these schools apart and their learner representation in NGOs is school leadership.

The experiences which learners have at school appear to play an integral part in their willingness and likelihood to participate in NGOs. This is partly evidenced by the fact that learners from Ntsika HS – currently considered the best managed no-fee high school in Grahamstown and is the furthest away from the NGOs sampled – constitutes a significant portion of learners in all the NGOs whereas, learners from TEM Mrwetyana – which is considered the worst managed school in Joza and is less than 100m away from the NGOs sampled – has the lowest representation of learners in the NGOs. As depicted in the response above from a community member, learners from one particular school show little interest in participating in NGOs because they are not encouraged, directly or otherwise, by their school principal. In these same schools there often appears to be a standoff between NGOs and school officials who, according to one participant, consider NGOs to be an indictment of their role and impact as teachers. Not so ironically these are the same schools with few learners in NGOs.

[53] Z. Khalipha. Grahamstown. 24 February 2018
[54] T. Gila. NGO official. Grahamstown. 12 April 2018

On the other hand, however, teachers in other schools are said to find value in learners even participating in extra-curricular activities which may not be directly linked to their school syllabus and as such will encourage their learners to participate. According to one NGO official a teacher at one school who considers extra-curricular activities to be valuable to learner performance even if it's sport or arts programs so she will sometimes tell the learners "We want you to join the organisation" thereby bridging the gap between the school and the NGO. The following responses highlight this two-tiered divide in learner and school representation in NGOs.

- "*The learners from this school want to know more and they are determined whereas the ones from that side are smokers and they don't care. I commend learners from Ntsika, they are serious"*.[55]
- "*What I was saying earlier that those kids who are serious and committed are those who are passing anyway, it's the same with the schools. Our relationship with the principal of that school is not the same as the other principals that we are working with. No-one is interested in dealing with that school because of the management so you find that even a learner who comes from that, they are very few of them and they are demotivated because they can come here but when they go back to school there's no support that side"*. [56]
- "*Those learners who go into these NGOs are learners who are already doing well…if you look at learners who pass from this organisation, for example, they are usually the top ones in their schools already because I remember my sister matriculated two years ago and she was part of it. Every learner who passed they were the cream of the crop"*.[57]

From this, a general profile of NGO participants emerges where, as noted by Carron & Carr-Hill (1991 cited in Rose, 2007) "these alternative/complementary programmes are more easily accessed by those who have already had some successful experience of education. Learners from Khutliso Daniels and TEM Mrwetyana are, for example, poorly represented in NGOs and for several reasons – many of which are school-based – remain excluded from NGO interventions and, possibly, the benefits reaped therefrom. What is more, as previously stated by one participant, a conscious decision has been made by NGOs to focus on three

[55] N. Jeke. Community Member. Grahamstown. 18 January 2018
[56] T. Gila. NGO official. Grahamstown. 12 April 2018
[57] K. Zenani. Former NGO official/Community member. 8 December 2018

schools because that's where all the effort is going. Similarly, Zethu, who has lived in this community all her life, notes that many of the NGOs working in Joza:

> "*work with three schools specifically and none of the other schools and even within these schools, they work with the top learners and not all of them because I know they do the mentoring with matrics but they only take the top students to have mentors…what about the others?*"[58]

The focus on these schools and the top learners within them, as noted above, has created a dominant profile of NGO participants with – very few outlying cases. This can thus be viewed as an additional overlay to the pre-existing routes of unequal schooling experiences and development prospects.

9.5 Schools crises are NGO crises

Though largely associated with substance abuse, pregnancy and unemployment, participants also associate dropout to school-based issues. Grade repetition, for example, is widely accepted as a reliable predictor of eventual dropout. Though in some ways, grade repetition itself can also be associated with wider family and community factors, at its core the majority of participants indicate that school policies of progressing learners from one grade to the next have resulted in learners not being able to handle more complex content and schoolwork. This leads to constant failure in higher grades which is considered a precursor to dropout as has been vastly reported by scholars (Spaull, 2012; Taylor, 2012; Spaull, 2015). If you go to Midlands College or any other technical school, a participant says, "you'll find young people who haven't dropped out of High School because they want to do technical things, they dropped out because of being overwhelmed by failing repeatedly".[59]

- "*Also, there are many who are pushed to the next grade and when they get to Grade 11 or 12, they know nothing because they've been pushed from one grade to the next. Teachers are even fed up with being with this person who doesn't grasp things as quickly as others, so they will leave school*".[60]

[58] Z. Stemele. Community member. Grahamstown. 12 April 2018
[59] K. Mpilweni. Community member. Grahamstown. 14 December 2017
[60] I. Nande. Community member. Grahamstown. 24 January 2018

- *"A person gets to Grade 10 and they were being pushed up to each Grade and maybe they were struggling even in primary so when they get to High School, they aren't cared for, they are just being moved from one grade to the next and teachers are now also fed up and they decide to just push this person past to be someone else's problem".*[61]
- "*The vast majority of kids that we're talking about who've come into high school aren't equipped to deal with the requirements of high school but they've made it that far because of progression and they will make it to matric because of progression even though legitimately they battle to even pass Grade 6, they will make it to matric".*[62]

In addition to the personal strain of grade repetition, the social elements and stigma associated with learners who have failed is, according the following responses, a confounding factor which is a disincentive for staying in school.

- *"Another thing is, if I fail…maybe I had expected to be in Grade 12 and now I'm going to be in the same class with this small boy? No. So, people drop out because of failing, that's how it starts and not wanting to be in the same grade with these ones that came after you. You will be mocked".*[63]
- "*Another thing is that if you fail that thing will stay with you for good and you'll be looked at as the person failed last year and is repeating. So that whole stigma around failing at school".*[64]
- "*There's become a massive stigma attached to progressed learners which is also problematic and I think that does contribute to the disillusionment and part of the drop out problem".*[65]

School experiences, more than community and family factors, appear to have more of a sway on learner participation in school and, by extension NGOs. Mbeko, a local school official, illustrates this by stating for example:

"What makes learners to traffic drugs at townships school and not at fee-paying schools in the west? Don't jump to say it's because these schools are deep in the

[61] L. Diko. Community member. Grahamstown. 24 January 2018
[62] S. Williams. NGO official. Grahamstown. 2 February 2019
[63] K. Belani. Community member. Grahamstown. 24 January 2018
[64] B. Leleki. NGO official. Grahamstown. 22 February 2018
[65] M. Maku. School official. Grahamstown. 19 February 2018

township because I will ask you why learners at Ntsika are not trafficking. The recruiting zone for Ntsika and Mrwetyana – and some VG and Graeme College– for example is the same… I think that contextual factors are there but if you manage your school and if you are able to work well, your kids are going to be satisfied here with what you are doing. I think schools that are vulnerable the most are not functioning well as a result their kids are more vulnerable to the context…If you are more influential as a school with what you are doing, you can change your learners and they will be able to function”.[66]

Related specifically to dropout for example, an NGO official notes: “those same things that cause learners not to last in school also contribute to the fact that learners don’t last in these programs that we offer as well” while another says: “for us, learners who’ve dropped out of our program it was because they were having to repeat Grade 10 a third time…the problems that I notice are academic problems with those who dropped out because they were just not passing”. As it appears, therefore, NGOs are helpless specifically when it comes to influencing dropout trends. As noted by Rose (2007:26) therefore, although these programmes “offer educational opportunities that some children would otherwise not have, the differential experiences and possibilities offered by these could perpetuate disadvantages – with the danger that they could exacerbate social exclusion”.

9.6 Family and community crises are NGO crises

It has been long agreed upon that family and community factors play right into the face of learner outcomes. At the family level, Case & Deaton (1999) proposed that learner performance is influenced by parents first in how they monitor and commit to their child’s education, then in the choice of residence which impacts the choice of schooling and, lastly, in how parents demand accountability from school officials. Furthermore, several studies have proposed that household socio-economic status, as well as level of education and status of employment among parents also play an intimate role in learner performance and retention (Taylor & Yu, 2009; Shepherd, 2011; Grace, 2013; Ncanywa, 2014). Moreover, communities, particularly their socio-economic profile, substance abuse, violence, HIV/AIDS, and teenage pregnancy are also closely associated with the performance of learners in school (Gustafsson, 2011; van der Berg, et al., 2011; Modisaotsile, 2012; Johnstone, 2015; Spaull, 2015). As with

[66] M. Lubhelwana. School official. Grahamstown. 12 December 2017

school-related factors, therefore, NGOs are unable to escape the sway of family and community factors in the performance and retention of learners in their work.

Family structure, adult support and encouragement appear to be important factors which not only impact learner outcomes but also NGO participation in Joza. In the family sphere, participants propose that learner participation in NGOs is often shaped around the general involvement of parents in education. One learner says, for example: "*I think some learners will join NGOs because they are being pushed by their family. When they are not doing well at school, they will join an NGO because they are encouraged to at home*"[67]. An NGO official and community member both expand on the relationship between family structure, parental involvement and NGO participation.

- "*Some parents are realising that learners need more help so they are sending them to these after-school programs…but we notice that parent who come to parent's meetings, their kids are those who do well because their parents will ask questions, put us on the spot and ask us to account*".[68]
- "*In a family, if there is someone, an adult who will guide the child, they will keep an eye on the child and make sure that they look at their homework. They will ask, did you do your homework? And so on but if there isn't anyone who cares, the learner will struggle that's when they'll need these NGOs*".[69]
- "*It all starts with that thing at home where a learner needs stationery for example and the mother will say they don't have money but when they say that their phone is damaged and the mother says, no it's fine, I will get you a new phone on credit…obviously a learner won't even bother at school or in anything else that's school-related*".[70]

Given the non-nuclear family structures which are prevalent in these communities, learners who receive this kind of parental encouragement and support are at times few and far between. One school official, reflecting on the profile of learners in school highlights how migrant labour, for example, has disturbed nuclear family structures and brought about numerous scenarios of children being taken care of by older siblings or extended family members. Furthermore, orphaned children and child-headed households are inescapable

[67] M. Dakwe. Leaner. Grahamstown. 7 April 2018
[68] T. Gila. NGO official. Grahamstown. 12 April 2018
[69] G. Mbambo. Community member. 23 January 2018
[70] U. Mona. Community member. 24 February 2018

realities that play into schooling communities and learner experiences. Nombeko, a local teacher, for example that,

"*I personally don't think that there's enough control from the home environment of our teenagers in Grahamstown. It has become easier for learners to simply drop out of school and do other things. They disappear and stay out at night with boyfriends or girlfriends because that family structure that is supposed to manage behaviour is not there"*.[71]

In relation to NGO participation, officials and beneficiaries note that, at times, learners are unable to fully participate in activities or meet the required attendance standards due to family responsibilities. According to Kholeka, for example:

"You find that even in these initiatives that we have, in most cases they run up until 5 o'clock and then the parent will come at you and say, when will this child clean and cook? Because they leave school and go straight to the NGO. Let's say they get out at 2 and from 2 until 5 they are there, the one thing the parents is asking is, no but who's gonna clean and cook at home".[72]

From the above responses there appears to be a dominant thought among participants however, others presented an alternative narrative which relegates family as the ultimate determinant of learners' outcomes and NGO participation by drawing on some outlying cases. The first is a case of two learners who come from the same household with the older brother having recently dropped out of Grade 9 at the age of 22 while the younger brother who is 18 is currently in Grade 12 at a different school. Also, one NGO official reports the case of a learner who came from what appeared to be a good family with a conventional home structure but still ended up dropping out of school. The learner, however, remained a seminal part of the NGO and went on to take up an internship in the organisation. Lastly, three learners who come from the same household, two of whom are top learners in their class and are part of two NGOs and other school support initiatives while the other sibling recently got suspended from school for misbehaving. Nande states, therefore proposes that:

"Each person knows what family they come from. Another person will be able to tell themselves, okay, I know how things are at home, my parents depend on

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[71] Z. Khalipha. School official. Grahamstown. 24 February 2018

[72] K. Zenani. Former NGO official/Community member. Grahamstown. 8 December 2018

alcohol and I would like to change them so let me be serious about my studies. So a learner is able to tell themselves that they won't pay attention to anything else even if the parents drink and do whatever else, he wants to change his home".[73]

Community factors which are considered important in the participation of learners in school and NGOs in Joza are substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and high unemployment rates. Scarce employment opportunities, in particular, are said to act as a leading disincentive for learners to stay in school especially for those who remain in school after they turn 18. Research conducted by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) has highlighted these same factors, particularly teenage pregnancy, crime, and unemployment as the leading concerns related to the youth of Grahamstown (Moller, et al., 2000; van Hees, 2000). While these studies attributed learner dropouts to lack of family support, teenage pregnancy and financial constraints, in the present study, alcohol and drug abuse are highlighted as a leading issue among the youth and also a common community-level reason why many learners drop out of school.

- "*In this community, I would say that drinking alcohol is why some don't finish and drugs. Some learners continue to learn but alcohol here in the community can cause a learner to eventually stop schooling".*[74]
- "*There are groups called Major League in this community. A lot of learners failed because of them. They aren't a violent gang or anything but they smoke and take drugs. They don't, they all fail and many of them stop school".*[75]
- "*Drugs and alcohol, that's the reason why these kids do not finish school".*[76]
- "*We do have those situations where they drop out of our organisation and also drop out of school. Many of them it's because of the situations with drug abuse".*[77]

[73] N. Maqhubela. Learner. Grahamstown. 7 April 2017
[74] T. Stamper. Community member. Grahamstown. 1 February 2018
[75] I. Kota. Community member. Grahamstown. 10 March 2018
[76] O. Ndakisa. Parent. Grahamstown. 9 March 2018
[77] B. Leleki. NGO official. Grahamstown. 22 February 2018

– "*Some learners drop out because they are very old in class…so because they are older they are exposed to other things like drugs so they eventually drop out*".[78]

– "*Another problem that causes them not to pass well is that during the year some of them fall pregnant so eventually they drop out of school*".[79]

The family, school and community factors which impact learner outcomes in school also play into NGO operations. These create a convoluted context within which NGOs carry out their mandates and seek to impact individual learner outcomes as well as the education sector. This is, in addition to the internal operational complexities brought on by resource constraints and the resultant dependence on other actors within the schooling network and beyond. As noted by one participant, the same issues that influence learners and contribute to their outcomes in school, influence their experiences with non-state interventions. As such, NGOs operate within fully formed societies which have their own systems, realities, institutions and institutional cultures. Committing solely to service delivery – either by choice or by financial circumstance – this means that NGOs manoeuver around these systems with very little transformative power or possibility. As noted by some observers, rather than making meaningful disturbances to systems which produce inequalities, at best what NGOs – particularly service delivery NGOs– are able to do, is mitigate a crisis by "saving the lucky few" as is articulated by Westaway (2017:107). By reaching sub-sets of the poor population, — referred to as "pockets of excellence" by one participant – NGOs, though contributing meaningfully to performance and retention of those they do reach, are unable to sway the current direction of the city's education sector.

9.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the multi-levelled contributions made by NGOs to the schooling experiences of FET phase learners in Joza. The first level of contributions made by NGOs includes the reported impact of NGO programs on individuals' learning experiences, while the second includes the more incidental impacts which NGO programs and services may have

[78] B. Voyi. Learner. Grahamstown. 14 April 2018
[79] N. Maluti. Parent. Grahamstown. 9 March 2018

on individuals not directly affiliated with organisations. Empowerment, socialisation, exposure to opportunities, the extension of education-services, platforms, and resources as well as role-modelling are some of the ways in which NGOs contribute to the performance and retention of learners, directly and otherwise. The data presented in this chapter suggest that together these contributions impact learner outcomes in different ways but because they also intersect with a flock of other external forces, have reached a limited, and often overlapping, cohort of learners. This chapter has detailed these forces and, in conjunction with Chapter Eight, has described how they tie into the work of NGOs and the extent of their reach and efficacy in Grahamstown east education trends. Family, community, and school-based factors as well as NGO relations with other members of the Grahamstown schooling network fall squarely into the realm of which learners have access to NGO support and which learners do not. As a result, the chapter suggests that while NGOs may have a real impact on those learners which they are able to reach because of several external concessions, their contribution to the city's overall education agenda and direction is highly constrained. On the basis of the data presented here and the background provided by previous chapters, the next chapter offers this case study up as a reference for considering the work of NGOs in education outcomes in this community and also in carrying the mantle of nationally and internationally-set education ideals despite the complications which characterise NGOs, their work and the contexts within which they apply their efforts.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

This thesis has carefully disentangled the world of education NGOs and described their role in learner outcomes making specific reference to organisations working in the Grahamstown east township of Joza. The contradictions, tensions, and inconsistencies which characterise NGOs along with the complicated and distinctive educational profile within which these organisations carry out their mandates, provide a unique lens through which NGO work can be looked at and deliberated on amid persistent inequality and poor education outcomes. This analysis provides a unique perspective on the longstanding questions of NGO comparative advantage and efficacy in the face of persistent disenfranchisement by outlining the double-edged and intricate nature of their work and how a network of these intricacies and external features means that while organisations may reach those who would otherwise not have access to certain services, resources and spaces, they may also operate as an additional and overlaying channel for unequal access to education-related prospects and opportunities. Moreover, this analysis presents an additional avenue of considering and placing NGOs within this context of prevailing poor learner outcomes and describing how they navigate the terrain of educational inequality alongside their own organisational and sector-level strains. This chapter ties together the previous chapters in order to advance on this point and, by so doing, offers up an extension to the existing scholarly engagements in the field.

10.2 NGOs in multiple contexts

In order to describe the work of local education NGOs with as much detail as is necessary, it was important to first contextualise them within the milieu of global development discourse and practice which has within it, universal access to education as a non-negotiable imperative. This was preceded by a brief look at the tension-filled North-South development-related terrain on the back of which international educational imperatives (carried by LNGOs) unfold. This background has not only served to place education NGOs within the global ideological and

operational field within which they operate, but it serves also to disrupt common and taken-for-granted truths about their existence and operations in a developing African community. It also serves to further complicate the narratives of NGO independence and ahistorical intent upon which dominant conceptions of NGOs are based. To understand their work in local settings and identify the manifold forces which make up their structure and operation therefore, this thesis began by outlining the developmental universe within which NGOs operate, identifying the global powers beside whom they stand, the ideologies and sector-level cultures which they practice and also, the neoliberal ethics which have bolstered their ascendance in international education policy, planning and practice.

So as to guard against prescriptions of universality in NGO work and the mechanisms of their existence and survival however, this discussion was accompanied by a taking-apart of the global non-state sector and an identification of the many forms which NGOs can take on in different disciplines and contexts nationally and internationally. Chapter Two and Three, in particular, emphasised the heterogeneity and inconsistencies which characterise this sector and its constituents. What this has intended to do, at least in part, is to offer up a foundation for a critical, contextualised and functional perspective of considering the links and/or divergence of NGO work and educational outcomes in cases where the two coexist.

This began with an identification of the relations and actors which encompass organisational structures and operations on a sector level. Scholars have long proposed that civil society and their non-governmental development constituents form part of "an autonomous area of liberty" (Mcilwaine, 2007). This captures a longstanding perspective of NGOs and their work, however, I have proposed that on many occasions, NGOs are in fact located within mainstream sectors of society and survive by straddling and constantly negotiating their embeddedness in the more dominant spheres namely, market and state institutions. Furthermore, hosted by fully formed societies with pre-existing socio-economic realities and community profiles, NGOs relinquish a significant portion of their independence to their host communities. So, while age-old conceptions of NGOs put forward by scholars rest on the distinctiveness of these social actors, the reality of their work and form alludes to them being externally constructed and defined.

Education NGOs working in Joza are no exception to this. These organisations are constantly involved in processes aimed at retaining resources, addressing the markers of inequality embedded in Grahamstown's education system and maintaining the relations which enable both. Additionally, internal organisational challenges, the most prominent of which include

material and human resource shortages, are met with family, community and school-based factors which inform the reach and impact of NGOs. In particular, this study finds that NGOs working in Joza are caught in organisational and external complexes which collectively maintain unequal access to opportunities and prospects among the youth within NGO settings and certainly beyond these structures. As such, the deeply rooted channels of inequality in Grahamstown manifest themselves also in the NGO sphere with disparities here being stitched up in service delivery interventions that reach the same populations while excluding others.

10.3 Education-NGOs in Joza: A double-edged sword

NGOs have long been embraced as necessary features of the global education landscape. Internationally-established education imperatives along with the global retreat of states from social welfare schemes over the past three decades have promoted private and non-governmental actors as drivers of fundamental education-related ethics. Meeting up with constrained resources and limited state resolve, strengthening local civil society associations and enabling civic involvement in international and domestic education processes have been the dominant roles earmarked for NGOs in the field. The multiple contexts within which NGOs are located, however, along with internal forces which organisations must constantly control for, make their work and role in education a lot more erratic and complicated. Due also to the qualitative and nuanced nature of NGO work, on the one hand, and education on the other, the link between the two spheres can certainly not be represented through straight and independent lines of association. Separately, these two social fields are intertwined and complicated. As such, they become even more jagged in how and where they meet and diverge especially when considering their links within a context which bears a unique set of socio-economic features as is the case with the chosen research context.

For example, the highly regarded notion of Grahamstown being the education hub of the Eastern Cape captures one end of an extremely unequal educational canvas. This context has offered to NGOs a particularly unique set of community features with which to contend. The most striking and discernible of these features include the presence of three of the 20 most expensive schools in the country and a highly regarded institution of research and higher education both of which are a stone throw away from a poor and extremely underserved

community which yields poor learner outcomes and, by extension youth unemployment and disillusionment.

The education sector within this community is characterised largely by extreme levels of inequality in the allocation of material and human resources, poor infrastructure provision and upkeep, disparities in the quality of teaching and also in learner outcomes. State institutions and schools, particularly the differences in how they are managed, allow these inequalities in learner outcomes and prospects to thrive. The intervention of NGOs and other support initiatives carried out by members of the broader Grahamstown schooling network, though aimed at addressing the disadvantages which emanate from these disparities, are bound also to the fundamental and institutionalised asymmetries in education performance and opportunity. The NGOs sampled press on, however by moderating – at the very least – these inequalities in different ways which include extending access to music education and learning platforms, providing supplementary tutoring, mentoring and learner support material, computer access and literacy programs, providing learners with opportunities for self-expression and exposure to career and employment opportunities.

Through the implementation of these initiatives, NGOs in Joza are considered to be making a contribution towards the performance and retention of FET phase learners in four ways. First, participating in NGO programs, those directly involved in schoolwork and those which are not, is said to present learners with opportunities for self-discovery, confidence-building and empowerment which may translate into improved learning experiences in and beyond formal schooling structures. Secondly, by extending access to resources (computers, music education and equipment, study guides and learner support material as well as information) NGOs alleviate the disturbances in learning among those who would otherwise not have access to such resources and teaching support.

Finally, exposure to certain platforms such as career guidance and contact with individuals in different professions are identified as an effective way of encouraging learners to stay in school and aspire to more than what may appear to be the common and inevitable prospects for the youth of Joza. Lastly and more broadly, NGOs are said to contribute to the commitment and devotion of learners to school by building role models who come from Joza but have been able to, partly with the assistance of NGOs, defy the odds to either pursue advanced university studies and/or attain promising employment opportunities.

Notwithstanding these individualised contributions made by NGOs to the learners they reach, there remains a gap between these felt contributions and the role of NGOs in the general direction of the city's education sector. Learner performance in Joza remains poor with very few learners making it to matric, fewer writing their final exams and even fewer obtaining their National Senior Certificate. The gap between the role of non-state actors in learner outcomes and the city's educational profile appears to be predominantly enabled by organisational constraints and the complexities presented by external features in the broader schooling community within which they function.

Funding and capacity shortages restrict non-state education interventions with a small minority of learners being reached by and participating in NGOs consistently. In particular, funding constraints are a common feature in the Joza education-NGO sector as they not only consume a great deal of effort – with officials spending inordinate amounts of time trying to obtain and secure funding – but also requires that they be tactical in adapting organisational tasks to the available financial reserves without betraying the fundamental mandate. Capping and cutting down learner numbers, maintaining relations with schools which offer the potential for sustainable relations and heightened impact, focusing on depoliticised, single-issue projects and aligning to Rhodes University's operational direction are some of the dominant adaptive mechanisms employed by these financially constrained NGOs.

The erratic nature of the complexities which require these adaptive tactics bring to bear a great amount of strain on NGO personnel. With organisations depending heavily on the available and limited human resources as well as their specific skills set and passion-centred impulses, NGO officials are often overextended with little room to carry out succession plans that will sustain organisational impact beyond individuals and their isolated efforts. With the case of NGOs working in Joza, therefore, it seems that financial and human resource constraints often coexist with equal and compounded operational strain on organisations. Moreover and due to their small size and these fickle funding reserves, changes in one or both of these elements pose discernible threats to NGOs and their potential for survival and impact.

These external forces which impact NGO operations and the adaptive mechanisms implemented in response, enable a typical profile of NGO membership to be externally created and internally sustained by officials through various attendance-monitoring processes and operational decisions. This is also met with different forms of school management which determine the perceived fruitfulness of possible support initiatives from Rhodes University

and, by extension it seems, NGOs. As a result, the school which a learner attends, functions as a predictor of their likelihood of being reached by support initiatives offered by Rhodes University, private and formally desegregated public schools, as well as local businesses. Duplicated support efforts are, therefore, compacted within small pockets of the learner population with multitudes of learners falling victim to the many forces which continue to banish them to the margins of educational opportunity, one of which are local NGOs.

Additionally, family and community factors, namely parent or adult involvement in learning, substance abuse, unemployment and teenage pregnancy continue to constrain the role of NGOs in aiding the education agenda and also in making wider and more sustainable contributions to learner outcomes. Interestingly, however, these family and community factors, in as far as they affect learners outcomes, are considered to follow the same divisions between schools and how they are managed. For example, learners from certain schools are consistently considered more likely to be associated with substance abuse than learners from other schools. This acts as an additional layer of the trends in NGO participation in Joza which, in itself, is said to benefit learners who have already had some successful experience in schooling through their personal initiative and also as a result of the schools they attend.

Being at the mercy of these multiple internal and external forces, the role of NGOs in education in Joza is localised to individual learner experiences with little dent on the prevailing crisis in the city's education sector. Therefore, NGOs in Joza can be thought of as somewhat of a double-edged sword with organisations being actively involved in dual and simultaneous processes which both advance their mandates and further necessitate their very intervention –cutting on both sides. On the one hand, organisations extend the service arm of the state, empower youth and enable their involvement in local education processes while on the other hand, they act as an additional and institutional layer of inequality within a context already characterised by disparities in educational performance and, by extension, youth prospects and opportunities.

10.4 NGOs in global development: For further reflection

Being non-independent spheres which derive much of their ideological and operational modalities from external actors, NGOs can actively participate in the reproduction of the dominant character of their local, national and global contexts. The unequal power relations between NGOs, donors and states in the global development network are manifested in local

settings. As such, unequal resource and, by extension, power reserves between communities and organisations have immediate impacts on the work of NGOs, the trends of which populations they reach as well as their overall role within a given sector of development – education in this case. This thesis seeks to challenge conventional views on non-state interventions in education and socio-economic advancement by using Grahamstown's unique educational landscape as a case study to consider the finer details of the space which NGOs occupy in education particularly when considering the substandard performance trends with which they coexist.

This is certainly not to shy away from the poverty and disadvantage which continues to grip the 'developing' world and has been used to legitimise NGO intervention. However, this thesis proposes that the often decontextualized and depoliticised promotion of NGOs to the centre of third world development and education may, in fact, diminish the potential for structures and cultures of mobilisation and association to undo the prevailing channels of poverty, even if it is with the backing of non-governmental agents. Such critical reflections have, according to Rose (2009), been surpassed by, among other things, discomfort among observers to capture the nuances of NGOs and their position in global development initiatives, for fear of destabilising the funding bases upon which this global embrace has rested for so long. Here, I propose that such critical engagements form a necessary part of advancing the potential for non-state actors to address and, it is hoped, offset the deeply entrenched forms of disadvantage and inequality. The high concentration of non-state education support in Grahamstown and the extreme form of education inequality which prevails, provides an optimum reference case for further and more in-depth reflections of the nature of non-state education provision and non-state development stewardship broadly.

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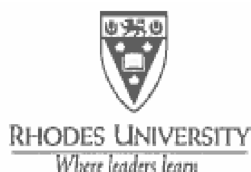
Appendices

Appendix A- DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH SUPPORT LETTER



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27 November 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to confirm that Ms Sinazo Onela Nomsenge, student number: 609N3826 is a student in our Department. As part of her PhD degree, Ms Nomsenge is required to conduct interviews for her research. The research process is a vital component of our teaching programme and we would appreciate any assistance that you could give to enable her to meet her commitments in this regard. Please note that the data collected will be used for research purposes only.

Many thanks.

Yours sincerely

Prof Gilton Klerck
Head of Department

g.klerck@ru.ac.za

Appendix B- ENGLISH ASSENT FORM

Aiding the education agenda? The role of NGOs in learner performance and retention in Joza, Grahamstown, South Africa

ASSENT FORM

Researcher: Sinazo Onela Nomsenge (Student Number- g09n3826)

Institution: Rhodes University

Department: Sociology

What is research?

- Research is a way to get information about people and their lives.

What is this research about?

- In this research we want to find out what the role of organisations called NGOs in how learners perform in school and if they stay in school or drop out.

Why have we asked you to take part in this research?

- You are a learner between Grades 10-12
- You attend school at one of the four high schools in Joza

What activities will I be asked to participant in for this research?

- We will have one-on-one discussions called interviews
- We will also have group discussions with other learners

How long will activities take?

- Interviews may take about 30-45 minutes
- Group discussions may take 30-60 minutes

Voluntary participation

- It is your choice to be a part of this research and if you want to stop participating after we have started, that is okay too. Your parent/guardian is aware of this study

Confidentiality and anonymity

- The information you give us will be included in a report but your name will not be included in the report and no-one will know that you gave us this information

If you decide to participate, please write your name and sign

________________________________ (Name)

________________________________ (Sign)

________________________________ (Date)

____

Signature (Researcher)

Contact Information

- Name of researcher: Sinazo Onela Nomsenge

  Student Number: G09n3826

  Tel: 078 410 4343

  Email: g09n3826@ru.ac.za

- Name of Supervisor: Associate Professor Monty Roodt

  Tel: 046 603 8361/046 603 7544

  Email: m.roodt@ru.ac.za

- Head of Sociology Department: Associate Professor Gilton Klerck
  Tel: 046 603 8361/046 603 7544
  Email: G.Klerck@ru.ac.za

Appendix C- IsiXHOSA ASSENT FORM

Aiding the education agenda? The role of NGOs in learner performance and retention in Joza, Grahamstown, South Africa

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Iphepha-mvume

Umphandi: Sinazo Onela Nomsenge (Student Number- g09n3826)

Iziko lemfundo: Rhodes University

Isebe kwiziko lemfundo: Sociology

Umphathi womphandi: Associate Professor Monty Roodt

Hintoni uphando?

- Uphando hindlela esifumana ngayo inkcukacha nolwazi ngabantu neempilo zabo

Lumayela nantoni olu uphando?

- Kolu uphando sifuna ukwazi ukuba hintoni indima edlwala ngala maziko kuthiwa ziiNGOs kwinkqubo yabafundi esikolweni nasekubeni baqhubekeke esikolweni bade bayofika kwibanga le-12

Kutheni sicele wena ukuba uthathe inxaxheba kulo phando?

- Ungumfundi ophakathi kwebanga le-10 nele-12
- Ufunda kwesinye sezikolo ezilapha eJoza

Zeziphi inkqubo zokuqokelela ulwazi ezizakusetyenziswa kolu phando?

- Udliwano-ndlela olunzulu phakathi komphandi nomthathi-nxaxheba omnye okanye ababini
- Udlinwano ndlebe-phakathi komphandi neqela labathathi-nxaxheba (Focus Group Discussion)

Ukhuseleko lwencukaca ngomthathi-nxaxheba (Confidentiality)

- Iinkcukacha osinika zona zizakuqulathwa kwingxelo yoluphando kodwa igama lakho nezinye inkcukhaca ngawe nobomi bakho azizokusetyenziswa kulo ngxelo. Akukho bani uzakuyazi ukuba nguwe osinike inkcukacha kolu phando

Ukuba uyavuma ukuthatha inxaxheba kolu phando, nceda ubhale igama lakho, uze utyikitye ngezantsi

_______________________________ Igama lakho (Umthathi-nxaxheba)

_______________________________ Tyikitya

_______________________________ Umhla

_______________________________ _______________________________

Tyikitya (Umphandi) Umhla

Iinkcukhaca zokunxulumana nomphandi

- Name of researcher: Sinazo Onela Nomsenge

  Student Number: G09n3826

  Tel: 078 410 4343

  Email: g09n3826@ru.ac.za

- Name of Supervisor: Associate Professor Monty Roodt

  Tel: 046 603 8361/046 603 7544

  Email: m.roodt@ru.ac.za

Appendix D- ENGLISH CONSENT FORM

Aiding the education agenda? The role of NGOs in learner performance and retention in Joza, Grahamstown, South Africa

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INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Researcher: Sinazo Onela Nomsenge (Student Number- g09n3826)

Institution: Rhodes University

Department: Sociology

Supervisor: Associate Professor Monty Roodt

Purpose of study:

- The purpose of this study is to describe the role played by NGOs in the performance and retention of learners between Grades 10-12 in Joza, Grahamstown, South Africa.

The benefits of this study:

- To provide a better understanding of the work which NGOs do in this community;
- To highlight the factors which intersect with the work of NGOs and influence the performance and retention of learners in this community.

The methods to be used to fulfil the purpose of this study

- In-depth semi-structured interviews (IDIs)
- Focus group discussions (FDGs)

Participation

- Interviews will last for approximately 30-60 minutes and will be recorded with the use of an electronic voice recording device. These interviews will then be later transcribed by the researcher.

Voluntary participation

- Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any point without the need to provide reasons.

Confidentiality and anonymity

- Information collected for this study will be reported anonymously. Personal information will not be disclosed and any details which will be published will be anonymised in a way that information will reveal not your identity or be, in any way, linked back to you.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Ethical requirements set out by Rhodes University's Higher Degrees Committee stipulate that prospective research participants must provide explicit agreement to participate in a study and that they do so after having been given all the necessary information to make an informed decision to participate. This process requires that you understand, in full, the implications of your participation and the requirements of your involvement. This document is, therefore, accompanied by an Information Sheet which details the purpose of this study. This also accompanies the information conveyed to you verbally by the researcher. By signing this documents you agree to the following statements:

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this study and understand that I can withdraw at any time;
- I agree that I have not been unduly influenced or given any incentive for my participation;
- I agree for interviews to be recorded with the use of an electronic recording device;
- I understand that interviews will later be transcribed and that these transcriptions will not be made available to anyone other than the researcher (Sinazo Onela Nomsenge);
- I understand that the information collected here will be used solely for research purposes;
- I understand that my personal details will be kept confidential and reported anonymously;
- I received, read and understood the Information Sheet provided;
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and my participation;

Participant declaration:

I hereby confirm that I have read and understood both this form and the accompanying Information Sheet; I understand the terms set out by this form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

______________________________	______________________________
Print Name (Participant)	Date
______________________________	______________________________
Signature (Participant	Date
______________________________	
Signature (Researcher)	

Contact Information

- Name of researcher: Sinazo Onela Nomsenge

  Student Number: G09n3826

  Tel: 078 410 4343

  Email: g09n3826@ru.ac.za

- Name of Supervisor: Associate Professor Monty Roodt

  Tel: 046 603 8361/046 603 7544

  Email: m.roodt@ru.ac.za

- Head of Sociology Department: Associate Professor Gilton Klerck
  Tel: 046 603 8361/046 603 7544
  Email: G.Klerck@ru.ac.za

Appendix E- IsiXHOSA CONSENT FORM

Aiding the education agenda? The role of NGOs in learner performance and retention in Joza, Grahamstown, South Africa

----

Iphepha-mvume

Umphandi: Sinazo Onela Nomsenge (Student Number- g09n3826)

Iziko lemfundo: Rhodes University

Isebe kwiziko lemfundo: Sociology

Umphathi womphandi: Associate Professor Monty Roodt

Ingxaki ephandwayo:

Injongo yolu phando

- Ukuchaza ngokubanzi, indima edlalwa ngamaziko enkqubela-phambili azimeleyo (NGOs) kwinkqubo yabafundi abaphakathi kwebanga le-10 nele-12 kunye nokuqhubekeka kwabo esikolweni kwizikoli zaseJoza, eRhini, eMzantsi Afrika

Uqokelelo lweenkcazelo nezimvo

- Ukwandisa ulwazi ngemisebenzi eyenziwa ziiNGOs kule ndawo
- U

Injongo yolu phando

- Ukuchaza ngokubanzi, indima edlalwa ngamaziko enkqubela-phambili azimeleyo (NGOs) kwinkqubo yabafundi abaphakathi kwebanga le-10 nele-12 kunye nokuqhubekeka kwabo esikolweni kwizikoli zaseJoza, eRhini, eMzantsi Afrika

Uqokelelo lweenkcazelo nezimvo

- Ukwandisa ulwazi ngemisebenzi eyenziwa ziiNGOs kule ndawo
- Ukwazisa ngeminye imiba yasemakhaya, ekuhlaleni nasezikolweni enokuthi nayo ibe negalelo kwimisebenzi yezi NGOs kunye nenkqubo yabafundi nokuqhubekeka kwabo esikolweni

Iinkqubo zokuqokelela iinkcazelo nezimvo

- Udliwano-ndlela olunzulu phakathi komphandi nomthathi-nxaxheba omnye okanye ababini
- Udlinwano ndlebe-phakathi komphandi neqela labathathi-nxaxheba (Focus Group Discussion)

Ukuthatha inxaxheba

- Udliwano-ndlebe ngalunye luyakuthatha imizuzu engama-30-60 kwaye umphandi uzakusebenzisa isixhobo sokugcina udliwano-ndlebe (recorder). Udliwano-ndlebe ngalunye luyakuthi lubhalwe ngumphandi njengoko lwenzeka ngalo.

Ukunganyanzelisi ngokuthatha inxaxheba

- Ukuthatha kwakho inxaxheba kolu phando akusosinyanzelo. Ukuba uziva ungasafuni ukuthatha inxaxheba unakho ukwenjenjalo ngaphandle kokunika isizathu.

Ukhuseleko lwencukaca ngomthathi-nxaxheba (Confidentiality)

- Iinkcazelo neezimvo ezithe zaqokelelwa kubathathi-nxaxheba kolu phando ziza kufakwa kwingxelo engachazi nckukacha nangamphi na umthathi-nxaxheba. Iinkcukacha kunye nezinye izichazi ngabanthathi-nxaxheba azikusetyenziwa kule ngxelo. Naziphi na ingxelo ezizakuthi zenziwe ngolu phando, ziza kuqhinisekisa ukuba akukho nkcukacha ezinokuthi zidinityaniswe namphi na umthathi-nxaxheba

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Uyabulelwa kwakhona ngokubonakalisa iinjongo zokuthatha inxaxheba kolu phando. Imimiselo yokhuseleko lwabathathi-nxaxheba (ethical requirements) emiselwe hiRhodes University's Higher Degrees Committee umisela ukuba bonke abo banenjongo zokuthatha inxaxheba kuphando, mabenjenjalo xa bethe bakholiseka ukuba bafumene zonke inkcukacha ngophando olo naxa yonke imibuzo yabo iphenduleke ngokukholisa bona. Oku kuchaza ukuba wazi uqondisise ngokupheleleyo, konke okuqulethwe kolu phando nokuthatha kwakho inxaaxheba. Eli phepha-mvubo, ke ngoko, likhatshwa liphepha lenkcukhaca ngolu phando

nenkcukhacha othe wazinikwa ngumphandi ngomlomo. Ngokutyikitya eli phepha uvuma ukuba:

– Ukuthatha kwam inxaxheba kolu phando ndizikhethele/sisigqibo sam. Ndinga gqiba ekubeni ndinga thathi nxaxheba okanye ndi rhoxe kolu phando nanini na ngaphandle kokunika isizathu
– Andinikwanga nayiphi na intshukumisa okanye isikhuthazi ekubeni ndithathe inxaxheba
– Udliwano-ndlebe luyakugcinwa ngumphandi ngesixhobo sokugcina udliwano-ndlebe, irecorder ukutsho
– Udliwano-ndlebe luza kubhalwa njengoko belwenzeke ngalo ngumphandi, uSinazo Onela Nomsenge
– Inkcukacha zam zakubhalwa ngokufihlisayo kwingxelo zonke zolu phando
– Ndilifumene, ndalifunda ndaliqondisisa iphepha lenkcukacha ngolu phando
– Ndilinikiwe ithuba lokubuza imibuzo ngolu phando nokuthatha kwam inxaxheba

<u>Isivumelwano somthathi-nxaxheba</u>

Ngokwenjenje ndiyavuma ukuba ndilifundile ndaliqondisisa eli phepha kunye nephepha leenkcukacha ngophando; ndiyayoqonda yonke imiqathango emiselwa sesi siniki-mvume kwaye ndiyavuma ukuthatha inxaxheba kolu phando ngokunganyeliswa

______________________________	______________________________
Igama lakho (Umthathi-nxaxheba)	Umhla
______________________________	______________________________
Tyikitya (Umthathi-nxaxheba)	Umhla
______________________________	
Tyikitya (Umphandi)	

Ukuqokelelwa kwenkcazelo kuyinxenye yophando olwenziwa nguSinazo Onela Nomsenge kwisebe leSociology kwiziko lemfundo ephakamileyo, iRhodes University. Ezi nkcazelo nezimvo ziza kuqokelelwa kubafundi abaphakathi kwebanga le-10 nele-12, abantu abanxulumene okanye abakhe banxulumana neeNGOs okanye amaziko emfundo esezantsi eRhini kunye nabahlali. Kananjalo, iimphepha neengexelo ezigunyazisiweyo nezo zifumaneka jikelele ziza kusetyiswa ekuchazeni ngokubanzi ubume beeNGOs nemfundo eRhini.

Phambi kokuthatha inxaxheba, abantu baza kunikwa inkcukacha ezibhaliweyo ngolu phando kwaye baza kucaciselwa ngumphandi. Emveni oko, abantu baza kunikwa ithuba lokuvuma ukuba ngabanthathi-nxaxheba kolu phando ngokutyikitya iphepha-mvume elifumaneka emva kweli phepha lenkcukacha. Emveni koko, abantu baza kuthabatha inxaxheba kudliwano-ndlebe nomphandi ngexesha elilungele umthathi-nxaxheba ngakumbi. Xa iinkcazelo nezimvo zabathathi-nxaxheba zithe zaqokelelwa zaphengululwa ngumphandi, abantu baza kunikwa ithuba lokufumana ingxelo yazo zonke iinkcazelo nezimvo ezithe zaqokelelwa kolu phando kudliwano-ndlebe oluyakuthi lulandele. Kulapho abathathi-nxaxheba bayakuthi bafumane nethuba lokuchasa okanye bangqinelane nezigqibo noko kuyakuthi kuqukunjelwa ngumphandi ngeeNGOs neziphumo zeemfundo eJoza.

Ubungozi neenzuzo

Asiboni bungozi buqulathwe kolu phando nasekuthatheni kwakho inxaxheba kulo, kodwa angabakhona amathuba apho ungaziva ungakhululekanga ekuvakaliseni izimvo namava akho malunge nemfundo, imiceli-mingeni malunga nemfundo kunye neembono zakho. Olu phando luzakuqhutywa ngendlela eza kuzama kangangoko ukuwanciphisa lo mathuba okungakhululeki.

Nangona kungazobakho nzuzo eza kuwe nqo ngenxa yokuthatha kwakho inxaxheba kolu phando, uza kube unikwe ithuba lokuvakalisa iimbono zakho, zona ezi zakhuthi zandise ulwazi olungegalelo nendima yeeNGOs kwiziphumo zemfundo eJoza.

Ukhuseleko lwencukaca ngomthathi-nxaxheba (Confidentiality)

Iinkcazelo neezimvo ezithe zaqokelelwa kubathathi-nxaxheba kolu phando ziza kufakwa kwingxelo engachazi nckukacha nangamphi na umthathi-nxaxheba. Iinkcukacha kunye nezinye izichazi ngabanthathi-nxaxheba azikusetyenziwa kule ngxelo. Naziphi na ingxelo ezizakuthi zenziwe ngolu phando, ziza kuqhinisekisa ukuba akukho nkcukacha ezinokuthi zidinityaniswe namphi na umthathi-nxaxheba

Ukunganyanzelisi ngokuthatha inxaxheba

Ukuthatha kwakho inxaxheba kolu phando akusosinyanzelo. Ukuba uziva ungasafuni ukuthatha inxaxheba unakho ukwenjenjalo ngaphandle kokunika isizathu.

Iphepha-mvume (consent form)

Emveni kweli iphepha lenkcukacha ngophando, kukho iphepha-mvume. Uyakhuthazwa ukuba ufunde omabini la maphepha ngengqwalaselo phambi kokuba utyikitye. Apho uthe wanemibuzo khona, nceda ubuze umphandi ngomlomo okanye usebenzise ezo nkcukacha zonxibelelwano zikbhalwe ngenzantsi kwiphepha-mvume.

Uyabulelwa kwakhona ngokubonakalisa iinjongo zokuthatha inxaheba kolu phando

Iinkcukacha zokunxulumana nomphandi

- Name of researcher: Sinazo Onela Nomsenge

  Student Number: G09n3826

  Tel: 078 410 4343

  Email: g09n3826@ru.ac.za

- Name of Supervisor: Associate Professor Monty Roodt

  Tel: 046 603 8361/046 603 7544

  Email: m.roodt@ru.ac.za

Appendix F- ENGLISH INFORMATION SHEET

Aiding the education agenda? The role of NGOs in learner performance and retention in Joza, Grahamstown, South Africa

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Information Sheet

Researcher: Sinazo Onela Nomsenge (Student Number- g09n3826)

Institution: Rhodes University

Department: Sociology

Supervisor: Associate Professor Monty Roodt

Problem statement:

The performance of and retention of learners in school, particularly those between Grade 10 to 12, continues to be a central issue of South Africa. Performance and drop-out rates in the Eastern Cape have been particularly alarming as the province has consistently reported the poorest performance and retention rates nationally. The state, with the support of and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), has implemented a number of programs and changes in educational policy with the view of ensuring that learners stay within the schooling system for the required number of years and are able to achieve the performance standards necessary to secure access to institutions of higher education or further education and training. These programs have, however, done little to improve the actual performance of learners or ensure that learners who enrol for grade one are kept within the schooling system for the required number of years in order to acquire their matric qualification.

Purpose of the study:

The purpose of this study is to describe the role which NGOs play in the performance and retention of learners between Grade 10-12 learners in Joza. In particular this study seeks to identify and describe the context-based elements at the family, community and school-level which may intersect with and influence the work of NGOs as well as the performance and retention of learners in Joza.

About the data collection:

Data collected from participants forms part of doctoral study being carried out by the researcher (Sinazo Onela Nomsenge) at Rhodes University's Sociology Department. Field data will be collected from learners, former and current NGO and school-affiliated individuals as well as community members. Official and unofficial documents will also be used to provide a background on NGOs and education in Grahamstown.

Prior to participating in this study, participants will be given verbal and written information on the study as well as the implications of their participation. They will then be given an opportunity to consent to participating by signing an informed consent form (attached). Initial interviews will then be conducted with participants at a time and place most convenient for the participants. Once data have been collected and analysed, follow up interviews will then be scheduled with participants in order to present the findings and preliminary conclusions and allow participants to provide their views on both.

Risks and benefits:

We do not foresee any risks involved directly with your participation in this study, however, you may, at times, feel uncomfortable expressing your views and experiences related to education, challenges faced related to education, your observations and views. The research will be conducted in such a way as to try and minimise any discomfort as much as possible.

While, there may not be any immediate benefits involved in participating in this study however, you will be given the opportunity to express your views which may contribute to an understanding of the unique elements involved in the work of NGOs in education outcomes in Joza.

Confidentiality:

Information obtained from this study will be reported anonymously. Personal details and any identifying information will not be used or revealed in this report. Reports generated from the information you provide, will make extra caution not to provide details which may, in way, be linked back to you.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw from the study at any time, you can do so without a reason.

Consent form:

Attached to this information sheet, is a consent form. You are encouraged to read both these documents carefully before signing. Should you have any questions, please feel free to ask the researcher, verbally or by making use of the contact details provided at the bottom of the consent form, any questions you may have.

Thank you, again, for your willingness to participate.

Appendix G- IsiXHOSA INFORMATION SHEET

Aiding the education agenda? The role of NGOs in learner performance and retention in Joza, Grahamstown, South Africa

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Inkcukacha ngophando

Umphandi: Sinazo Onela Nomsenge (Student Number- g09n3826)

Iziko lemfundo: Rhodes University

Isebe kwiziko lemfundo: Sociology

Umphathi womphandi: Associate Professor Monty Roodt

Ingxaki ephandwayo:

Inkqubo yabafundi abaphakhathi kwebanga le-10 nele-12 kunye nokuqhubekeka kwabo esikolweni yimiba esoloko itsala ingqwalaselo eMzantsi Afrika nangakumbi kwiPhondo leMpuma Koloni. Kwiminyaka eliqela edlulileyo umgangatho wenkqubo yabafundi beli phondo nezinga lokuqhubekeka kwabo esikolweni zihleli zizezoni zisezantsi kumaphondo alithoba eli loMzantsi Afrika. URhulumente, encediswa ngamaziko enkqubela-phambili azimeleyo (iinon-governmental organisations okanye iiNGOs ukutsho), uqale iinkqubo waza wenza neenguqu eziliqela kwimigaqo-nkqubo yezemfundo ngenzame zokuqinisekisa ukuba abafundi bahlala kumaziko emfundo asezantsi khon'ukuza babenako ukukwamkelwa kumazikho emfundo aphezulu okanye kumaziko emfundo egqithisayo nobuchule (iiFET Colleges ukutsho). Ezi nkqubo azibananga nefuthe elibhekisele phi ekuphuculeni inkqubo yabafundi nasekuqinisekiseni ukuba abafundi abangena esikolweni kwibanga lokuqala bayaqhubekeka de bayokufikelela kwibanga le-12 apho bayakuthi bafumane iziqinisekiso zabo zokugqiba imfundo esezantsi khona (National Senior Certificate).

Injongo yolu phando

Injongo yolu phando kukuchaza ngokubanzi, indima edlalwa ngamaziko enkqubela-phambili azimeleyo (NGOs) kwinkqubo yabafundi abaphakathi kwebanga le-10 nele-12 kunye nokuqhubekeka kwabo esikolweni kwizikoli zaseJoza. Kananjalo olu phando lujolisele

ekwaziseni ngemiba enxulumene, neentsapho, nokuhlala nezikolo ezithi nazo zibe negalelo kwimisebenzi yezi NGOs kunye nenkqubo yabafundi nokuqhubekeka kwabo esikolweni

Uqokelelo lweenkcazelo nezimvo

Ukuqokelelwa kwenkcazelo kuyinxenye yophando olwenziwa nguSinazo Onela Nomsenge kwisebe leSociology kwiziko lemfundo ephakamileyo, iRhodes University. Ezi nkcazelo nezimvo ziza kuqokelelwa kubafundi abaphakathi kwebanga le-10 nele-12, abantu abanxulumene okanye abakhe banxulumana neeNGOs okanye amaziko emfundo esezantsi eRhini kunye nabahlali. Kananjalo, iimphepha neengexelo ezigunyazisiweyo nezo zifumaneka jikelele ziza kusetyiswa ekuchazeni ngokubanzi ubume beeNGOs nemfundo eRhini.

Phambi kokuthatha inxaxheba, abantu baza kunikwa inkcukacha ezibhaliweyo ngolu phando kwaye baza kucaciselwa ngumphandi. Emveni oko, abantu baza kunikwa ithuba lokuvuma ukuba ngabanthathi-nxaxheba kolu phando ngokutyikitya iphepha-mvume elifumaneka emva kweli phepha lenkcukacha. Emveni koko, abantu baza kuthabatha inxaxheba kudliwano-ndlebe nomphandi ngexesha elilungele umthathi-nxaxheba ngakumbi. Xa iinkcazelo nezimvo zabathathi-nxaxheba zithe zaqokelelwa zaphengululwa ngumphandi, abantu baza kunikwa ithuba lokufumana ingxelo yazo zonke iinkcazelo nezimvo ezithe zaqokelelwa kolu phando kudliwano-ndlebe oluyakuthi lulandele. Kulapho abathathi-nxaxheba bayakuthi bafumane nethuba lokuchasa okanye bangqinelane nezigqibo noko kuyakuthi kuqukunjelwa ngumphandi ngeeNGOs neziphumo zeemfundo eJoza.

Ubungozi neenzuzo

Asiboni bungozi buqulathwe kolu phando nasekuthatheni kwakho inxaxheba kulo, kodwa angabakhona amathuba apho ungaziva ungakhululekanga ekuvakaliseni izimvo namava akho malunge nemfundo, imiceli-mingeni malunga nemfundo kunye neembono zakho. Olu phando luzakuqhutywa ngendlela eza kuzama kangangoko ukuwanciphisa lo mathuba okungakhululeki.

Nangona kungazobakho nzuzo eza kuwe nqo ngenxa yokuthatha kwakho inxaxheba kolu phando, uza kube unikwe ithuba lokuvakalisa iimbono zakho, zona ezi zakhuthi zandise ulwazi olungegalelo nendima yeeNGOs kwiziphumo zemfundo eJoza.

Ukhuseleko lwencukaca ngomthathi-nxaxheba (Confidentiality)

Iinkcazelo neezimvo ezithe zaqokelelwa kubathathi-nxaxheba kolu phando ziza kufakwa kwingxelo engachazi nckukacha nangamphi na umthathi-nxaxheba. Iinkcukacha kunye nezinye izichazi ngabanthathi-nxaxheba azikusetyenziwa kule ngxelo. Naziphi na ingxelo ezizakuthi zenziwe ngolu phando, ziza kuqhinisekisa ukuba akukho nkcukacha ezinokuthi zidinityaniswe namphi na umthathi-nxaxheba

Ukunganyanzelisi ngokuthatha inxaxheba

Ukuthatha kwakho inxaxheba kolu phando akusosinyanzelo. Ukuba uziva ungasafuni ukuthatha inxaxheba unakho ukwenjenjalo ngaphandle kokunika isizathu.

Iphepha-mvume (consent form)

Emveni kweli iphepha lenkcukacha ngophando, kukho iphepha-mvume. Uyakhuthazwa ukuba ufunde omabini la maphepha ngengqwalaselo phambi kokuba utyikitye. Apho uthe wanemibuzo khona, nceda ubuze umphandi ngomlomo okanye usebenzise ezo nkcukacha zonxibelelwano zikbhalwe ngenzantsi kwiphepha-mvume.

Uyabulelwa kwakhona ngokubonakalisa iinjongo zokuthatha inxaheba kolu phando

Appendix H- NGO AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS' INTERVIEW GUIDE

Aiding the education agenda? The role of NGOs in learner performance and retention in Joza, Grahamstown, South Africa

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Interview Guide- Community member/parent/official of NGO

Participants: *5x people currently or formerly in the teaching profession or NGO affiliated*

10x community members

10x learners

5x parents of learners between Grades 10-12

Researcher: *Sinazo Onela Nomsenge (Student Number- g09n3826)*

Purpose: This document is designed to guide discussions with research participants before, during and after formal interviews. The document is to be used flexibly as a tool to facilitate semi-structured discussions with participants in line with the aims and objectives of the study. The purpose of these engagements is to explore the perceptions, experiences and views held by participants of the work being done by Joza Youth Hub NGOs in Joza and how the performance and retention of learners is impacted by these interventions. Questions relate to the knowledge of the work of NGOs in the community and they serve the purpose of exploring the perceptions held by respondents on the extent to which learner outcomes are impacted either by the work of NGOs and/or other external factors.

Objectives:

- *To describe the NGO programs and/projects implemented in Joza aimed at improving learner performance and retention*
- *To explore the views, perceptions and opinions of community members, parents of learners, learners and individuals either currently or formally affiliated with schools or NGOs included in the study*
- *To document the perceived impact of NGO programs on the retention of learners between Grades 10-12*

- *To describe participant views and perceptions on factors which influence participation in NGOs, NGO work and their influence on the performance and retention of learners.*

Form of data recording: *(1) Audio-recording of all talk from "Preamble" to "Closing". (2) Notes of key points handwritten by the facilitator. (3) Any handwritten notes by participants during the course of the discussion.*

Expected interview duration: *30-50 minutes*

Preamble**:**

Today the date is the ... of .... two thousand and seventeen and the time is.... This is a discussion with a ... in Joza.

Thank you for your time and for agreeing to participate in this discussion. The aim of this discussion is to hear your opinions and perceptions on the role that NGOs play in the performance retention of learners between Grade 10 and Grade 12 in Joza. Please feel free to be as open and honest as you would like. I would like to remind you that I will be audio recording this discussion and taking some notes but please remember that all information collected here will be recorded and documented anonymously. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Activity 1

Topic area 1: *Participant details and background information*

1. **Please tell me a little bit more about yourself?** Do you live in this community? How long have you lived here? Did you attend school in this community? Can you tell me a little about the schools in this community? Where are they located? How many are there? How many of them are just primary schools? How many of them are also high schools? Do you know how long these school have been operational?
2. **Can you tell me a little bit about your role in this community?** How long have you been in this position? Have you played a similar role in this or another community?

Topic area 2: *NGO interventions in Joza (programs, activities and projects)*

3. **Are you aware of any NGOs operating in Joza?** Which NGOs are you aware of? How do you know of these NGOs? How long have they been working here? What types

of programs or services do these NGOs provide? How many NGOs do you know of that work in Joza? Can you tell me if you're aware of the Joza Youth Hub?

Topic area 3: *Education NGOs in Joza*

4. **Are you aware of any programs offered by NGOs which with learners between Grade 10-12?** Can you tell me a little bit about these programs? Which NGOs do you know of which work with learners? Do you know some of the programs offered to learners by NGOs? Can you please tell me about which programs are aimed at improving learner performance? Are you aware of any programs which are aimed at making sure that learners stay in school?

Topic area 4: *NGO participation*

5. **Can you tell me a little bit about how learners come to participate in programs offered by NGOs?** Do you know of any entrance requirements which learners must meet in order to participate in NGOs? Do you think there are learners in a specific grade who are more likely to participate in NGO programs? Do you think there are learners in a specific grade who are less likely to participant in NGO programs? What factors do you think influence the decision for learners to participate in NGOs? What factors do you think influence learners' decisions not to participate in NGO work? What factors do you think influence learners to stop participating in NGOs?

Topic area 5: *Learner performance*

6. **Next, I would like for us to talk a bit about the performance of learners between Grades 10-12 at the four high schools here in Joza?** Can you tell what your thoughts are on how learners between these grades perform? What do you think influences the performance of learners in these grades? What challenges do you think learners at these grade here at Joza face which impacts their performance in school? What influence do you think NGO participation has on the performance of learners?

Topic area 6: *Learner retention*

7. **Can you tell me a little more about learners who drop out of school between Grades 10-12?** What do you think influences learners to drop out of school between these grades? What challenges do you think these learners face which influence whether or not they stay in school? What influence do you think NGOs have on the retention of

learners in this community? Do you think learner participation in NGO work influences whether or not they stay in school?

Topic area 7: *Family*

8. **It has often been said that a learner's family background has a lot of do with the performance and retention of learner. Can you tell me a little bit about what influence you think family has on the performance and retention of learners?** How do you think parents/guardians can influence the performance of learners? Are there any family-related challenges which you think can influence whether learners stay in school? Do you think there are any family-related things which can influence learners to drop out of school or perform poorly at school? Can you tell me a little bit more about these? Do you think family matters have less of an impact on learners who are involved in NGO work?

Topic area 8: *Community*

9. **I would like for us to talk a bit more about the community and how certain aspects of the community may influence how learners performance in school and whether or not they stay in school?** What do you think are some of the community factors which influence the performance and retention of learners? In particular, do you think there are any things in this community which influence whether or not learners stay in school? Do you think this learners who are involved in NGOs are less influenced by community factors in the performance and whether they stay in school?

Topic area 9: *School*

10. **What school related factors do you think influence the performance and retention of learners?** What school related challenges are faced by school in Joza which influence the performance of learners? Are there any factors in school which you think impact the retention of learners in school? What impact do you think school-related challenges have on the performance of learners? Do you think learners in NGOs are less affected by school-related matters in their performance and retention prospects?

Activity 2

Introduction:

We understand that there a number of factors which influence the performance and retention of learners in this community. The purpose of the following exercise is to get your views on what you think these factors are. I would also like to know to what extent you think these factors influence or constrain NGO efforts.

I have some cards here with me. On each of these cards, there words which are written on them. These words represent factors which have been previously identified has having an impact on the performance and retention of learners. I also have 3 sheets of A3 paper. On the first paper, in order of their influence on the performance learners. On the second sheet of paper, I would like for you to please place these cards in the order of their influence on the retention of learners. On the third sheet of paper I would like for you to please place a separate set of cards in order of their influence on the work of NGOs in addressing learner performance and retention

[Once participant has placed concepts on the sheet of paper, proceed to ask the following questions]

Now I would like for us to discuss learner performance

- Can you tell me a little bit about why you chose to put this as the first concept which influences the performance of learners?
- Can you please tell me a little bit more about why you chose to place NGOs here?
- Are there any other factors which you think are very important to how learners perform in this community?
- Where would you place these factors on this ‘ladder’ and why?

Now I would like for us to talk a bit more about learner retention

- Can you tell me a little bit about why you chose to put this as the first concept which influences the retention of learners?
- Can you please tell me a little bit more about why you chose to place NGOs here?
- Are there any other factors which you think are very important to whether or not learners in this community stay in school?
- Where would you place these factors on this ‘ladder’ and why?

Lastly, I would like to discuss NGOs and their work in this community?

- Can you tell me a little bit about why you chose to put this as the first concept which influences the work of Joza Youth Hub in this community?
- Can you please tell me a little bit more about why you chose to place this factor as the last one which influences the work of NGOs in this community?
- Are there any other factors which you think are very important to the work of NGOs in learner performance and retention?
- Where would you place these factors on this 'ladder' and why?
- Lastly, what kind of impact do you think these NGOs have on learners in this community?

Question 4: *Any other information or questions*

11. Is there anything else you would like to add related to this topic?
12. Can you confirm that you participated in this interview voluntarily?

Closing: (**said by facilitator):**

Thank you again for you time and for sharing your views with me today. Are you comfortable with me contacting you again should I require clarification on today's conversation or if I would like to ask you some more questions?

As mentioned previously, this study is part of a PhD project and as such, I hope that you will be able to avail yourself again in the future, should I need your insights again. Thank you again for you time.

Appendix I- PARENTS'/COMMUNITY MEMBERS' INTERVIEW GUIDE

Aiding the education agenda? The role of NGOs in learner performance and retention in Joza, Grahamstown, South Africa

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Interview Guide- Parents

Participants: 5x people currently or formerly in the teaching profession or NGO affiliated

10x community members

10x learners

5x parents of learners between Grades 10-12

Researcher: Sinazo Onela Nomsenge (Student Number- g09n3826)

Purpose: This document is designed to guide discussions with research participants before, during and after formal interviews. The document is to be used flexibly as a tool to facilitate semi-structured discussions with participants in line with the aims and objectives of the study. The purpose of these engagements is to explore the perceptions, experiences and views held by participants of the work being done by Joza Youth Hub NGOs in Joza and how the performance and retention of learners is impacted by these interventions. Questions relate to the knowledge of the work of NGOs in the community and they serve the purpose of exploring the perceptions held by respondents on the extent to which learner outcomes are impacted either by the work of NGOs and/or other external factors.

Objectives:

- *To describe the NGO programs and/projects implemented in Joza aimed at improving learner performance and retention*
- *To explore the views, perceptions and opinions of community members, parents of learners, learners and individuals either currently or formally affiliated with schools or NGOs included in the study*
- *To document the perceived impact of NGO programs on the retention of learners between Grades 10-12*

- *To describe participant views and perceptions on factors which influence participation in NGOs, NGO work and their influence on the performance and retention of learners.*

Form of data recording: *(1) Audio-recording of all talk from "Preamble" to "Closing". (2) Notes of key points handwritten by the facilitator. (3) Any handwritten notes by participants during the course of the discussion.*

Expected interview duration: *30-50 minutes*

Preamble**:**

Today the date is the ... of .... two thousand and seventeen and the time is.... This is a discussion with a ... in Joza.

Thank you for your time and for agreeing to participate in this discussion. The aim of this discussion is to hear your opinions and perceptions on the role that NGOs play in the performance retention of learners between Grade 10 and Grade 12 in Joza. Please feel free to be as open and honest as you would like. I would like to remind you that I will be audio recording this discussion and taking some notes but please remember that all information collected here will be recorded and documented anonymously. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Activity 1

Topic area 1: *Participant details and background information*

13. **Please tell me a little bit more about yourself?** Do you live in this community? How long have you lived here? Did you attend school in this community? Can you tell me a little about the schools in this community? Where are they located? How many are there? How many of them are just primary schools? How many of them are also high schools? Do you know how long these school have been operational?
14. **Can you tell me a little bit about your role in this community?** How long have you been in this position? Have you played a similar role in this or another community?
15. **Can you tell me a little bit about your family?** Who do you live with at home? How many adults? How many children? What ages are the children? Are they all in school? Which grade?

Topic area 2: *NGO interventions in Joza (programs, activities and projects)*

16. **Are you aware of any NGOs operating in Joza?** Which NGOs are you aware of? How do you know of these NGOs? How long have they been working here? What types of programs or services do these NGOs provide? How many NGOs do you know of that work in Joza?

Topic area 3: *Education NGOs in Joza*

17. **Are you aware of any programs offered by NGOs which with learners between Grade 10-12?** Can you tell me a little bit about these programs? Which NGOs do you know of which work with learners? Do you know some of the programs offered to learners by NGOs? Can you please tell me about which programs are aimed at improving learner performance? Are you aware of any programs which are aimed at making sure that learners stay in school?

Topic area 4: *NGO participation*

18. **Can you tell me a little bit about how learners come to participate in programs offered by NGOs?** Do you know of any entrance requirements which learners must meet in order to participate in NGOs? Do you think there are learners in a specific grade who are more likely to participate in NGO programs? Do you think there are learners in a specific grade who are less likely to participant in NGO programs? What factors do you think influence the decision for learners to participate in NGOs? What factors do you think influence learners' decisions not to participate in NGO work? What factors do you think influence learners to stop participating in NGOs?
19. **Are there any learners you know of who are involved in NGO programs?** Why do you think learners participate in NGO programs?

Topic area 5: *Learner performance*

20. **Next, I would like for us to talk a bit about the performance of your child/children?** What do you think influences the performance of learners in these grades? Would you say that your child's performance in school is at all influenced by their participation in NGOs? What other factors do you think influence the performance of these learners? Do you think participating in NGOs has more or less of an impact on how learners perform in school?

Topic area 6: *Learner retention*

21. **Next, I would like for us to talk a bit about the issue of whether learners stay in school or not?** What factors do you think influence whether or not learners stay in school? Would you say that your child being in school influenced by NGOs? What other factors do you think influence whether learners stay in school? Do you think participating in NGOs has more or less of an impact on keeping children in school than other factors?

Topic area 7: *Family*

22. **It has often been said that a learner's family background has a lot of do with the performance and retention of learner. Can you tell me a little bit about what influence you think family has on the performance and retention of learners?** How do you think parents/guardians influence the performance of learners? Do you think there are any family-related things which can influence learners to drop out of school or perform poorly at school? Can you tell me a little bit more about these? Do you think family matters have less of an impact on learners who are involved in NGO work?

Topic area 8: *Community*

23. **I would like for us to talk a bit more about the community and how certain aspects of the community may influence how learners performance in school and whether or not they stay in school.** What do you think are some of the community factors which influence the performance and retention of learners? In particular, do you think there are any things in this community which influence whether or not learners stay in school? Do you think this learners who are involved in NGOs are less influenced by community factors in the performance and whether they stay in school?

Topic area 9: *School*

24. **What school related factors do you think influence the performance and retention of learners?** What school related challenges are faced by school in Joza which influence the performance of learners? Are there any factors in school which you think impact the retention of learners in school? What impact do you think school-related

challenges have on the performance of learners? Do you think learners in NGOs are less affected by school-related matters in their performance and retention prospects?

Activity 2

Introduction:

We understand that there a number of factors which influence the performance and retention of learners in this community. The purpose of the following exercise is to get your views on what you think these factors are. I would also like to know to what extent you think these factors influence or constrain NGO efforts.

I have some cards here with me. On each of these cards, there words which are written on them. These words represent factors which have been previously identified has having an impact on the performance and retention of learners. I also have 3 sheets of A3 paper. On the first paper, in order of their influence on the performance learners. On the second sheet of paper, I would like for you to please place these cards in the order of their influence on the retention of learners. On the third sheet of paper I would like for you to please place a separate set of cards in order of their influence on the work of NGOs in addressing learner performance and retention

[Once participant has placed concepts on the sheet of paper, proceed to ask the following questions]

Now I would like for us to discuss learner performance

- Can you tell me a little bit about why you chose to put this as the first concept which influences the performance of learners?
- Can you please tell me a little bit more about why you chose to place NGOs here?
- Are there any other factors which you think are very important to how learners perform in this community?
- Where would you place these factors on this 'ladder' and why?

Now I would like for us to talk a bit more about learner retention

- Can you tell me a little bit about why you chose to put this as the first concept which influences the retention of learners?
- Can you please tell me a little bit more about why you chose to place NGOs here?

- Are there any other factors which you think are very important to whether or not learners in this community stay in school?
- Where would you place these factors on this 'ladder' and why?

Lastly, I would like to discuss NGOs and their work in this community?

- Can you tell me a little bit about why you chose to put this as the first concept which influences the work of Joza Youth Hub in this community?
- Can you please tell me a little bit more about why you chose to place this factor as the last one which influences the work of NGOs in this community?
- Are there any other factors which you think are very important to the work of NGOs in learner performance and retention?
- Where would you place these factors on this 'ladder' and why?
- Lastly, what kind of impact do you think these NGOs have on learners in this community?

Question 4: *Any other information or questions*

25. Is there anything else you would like to add related to this topic?
26. Can you confirm that you participated in this interview voluntarily?

Closing: (**said by facilitator):**

Thank you again for you time and for sharing your views with me today. Are you comfortable with me contacting you again should I require clarification on today's conversation or if I would like to ask you some more questions?

As mentioned previously, this study is part of a PhD project and as such, I hope that you will be able to avail yourself again in the future, should I need your insights again. Thank you again for you time.

Appendix J- LEARNERS' INTERVIEW GUIDE

Aiding the education agenda? The role of NGOs in learner performance and retention in Joza, Grahamstown, South Africa

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Interview Guide- Learners

<u>*Participants:*</u> *5x people currently or formerly in the teaching profession or NGO affiliated*

10x community members

10x learners

5x parents of learners between Grades 10-12

Researcher: Sinazo Onela Nomsenge (Student Number- g09n3826)

<u>*Purpose:*</u> *This document is designed to guide discussions with research participants before, during and after formal interviews. The document is to be used flexibly as a tool to facilitate semi-structured discussions with participants in line with the aims and objectives of the study. The purpose of these engagements is to explore the perceptions, experiences and views held by participants of the work being done by Joza Youth Hub NGOs in Joza and how the performance and retention of learners is impacted by these interventions. Questions relate to the knowledge of the work of NGOs in the community and they serve the purpose of exploring the perceptions held by respondents on the extent to which learner outcomes are impacted either by the work of NGOs and/or other external factors.*

<u>*Objectives:*</u>

- *To describe the NGO programs and/projects implemented in Joza aimed at improving learner performance and retention*
- *To explore the views, perceptions and opinions of community members, parents of learners, learners and individuals either currently or formally affiliated with schools or NGOs included in the study*
- *To document the perceived impact of NGO programs on the retention of learners between Grades 10-12*

- *To describe participant views and perceptions on factors which influence participation in NGOs, NGO work and their influence on the performance and retention of learners.*

Form of data recording: *(1) Audio-recording of all talk from "Preamble" to "Closing". (2) Notes of key points handwritten by the facilitator. (3) Any handwritten notes by participants during the course of the discussion.*

Expected interview duration: *30-50 minutes*

Preamble**:**

Today the date is the ... of .... two thousand and seventeen and the time is.... This is a discussion with a ... in Joza.

Thank you for your time and for agreeing to participate in this discussion. The aim of this discussion is to hear your opinions and perceptions on the role that NGOs play in the performance retention of learners between Grade 10 and Grade 12 in Joza. Please feel free to be as open and honest as you would like. I would like to remind you that I will be audio recording this discussion and taking some notes but please remember that all information collected here will be recorded and documented anonymously. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Activity 1

Topic area 1: *Participant details and background information*

27. **Please tell me a little bit more about yourself?** How old are you? What grade are you in? What school do you go to? Have you always been at this school?
28. **Can you tell me a little bit about your family?** Who do you live with at home? How many adults? How many children? What ages are the children? Are they all in school? Which grade?

Topic area 2: *NGOs*

29. **What is your understanding of the term "NGO"?** Where did you first hear about NGOs? What do you think NGOs do? Have you ever participated in NGO work/programs? Why? Do you know of any other learners who are involved in NGOs? Why do you think they are involved? What programs do you think NGOs offer to

learners? What do you think is the purpose of NGOs in this community? What do you think NGOs do for and with learners in this community?

Topic area 4: *NGO participation*

30. **Can you tell me a little bit about how learners come to participate in programs offered by NGOs?** Do you think there are learners in a specific grade who are more likely to participate in NGO programs? Do you think there are learners in a specific grade who are less likely to participant in NGO programs? What factors do you think influence the decision for learners to participate in NGOs? What factors do you think influence learners' decisions not to participate in NGO work? What factors do you think influence learners to stop participating in NGOs?

Topic area 5: *Learner performance*

31. **Next, I would like for us to talk a bit about performance at school and NGOs?** What do you think influences the performance of learners in these grades? Would you say that your child's performance in school is at all influenced by their participation in NGOs? Do you think participating in NGOs has more or less of an impact on how learners perform in school?

Topic area 6: *Learner retention*

32. **Next, I would like for us to talk a bit about the issue of whether learners stay in school or not?** What factors do you think influence whether or not learners stay in school? Would you say that your child being in school influenced by NGOs? What other factors do you think influence whether learners stay in school? Do you think participating in NGOs has more or less of an impact on keeping children in school than other factors?

Topic area 7: *Family*

33. **It has often been said that a learner's family background has a lot of do with the performance and retention of learner. Can you tell me a little bit about what influence you think family has on the performance and retention of learners?** How do you think parents/guardians influence the performance of learners? Do you think there are any family-related things which can influence learners to drop out of school? Do you think there are any family-related things which can influence learners to

perform poorly at school? Can you tell me a little bit more about these? Do you think family matters have less of an impact on learners who are involved in NGO work?

Topic area 8: *Community*

34. **I would like for us to talk a bit more about the community and how certain aspects of the community may influence how learners performance in school and whether or not they stay in school.** What do you think are some of the community factors which influence the performance and retention of learners? In particular, do you think there are any things in this community which influence whether or not learners stay in school? Do you think this learners who are involved in NGOs are less affected by community factors in the performance and whether they stay in school? What community-based challenges do you think learners face which could influence them to drop out of school? Do you think these challenges have more of an influence that NGO work?

Topic area 9: *School*

35. **What school related factors do you think influence the performance of learners?** What school related-challenges or things are faced by school at your school which influence the performance of learners? Are there any factors at your school which you think impact the retention of learners in school? What impact do you think school-related challenges have on the performance of learners? Do you think learners in NGOs are less affected by school-related matters in their performance and retention prospects?

Activity 2

Introduction:

We understand that there a number of factors which influence the performance and retention of learners in this community. The purpose of the following exercise is to get your views on what you think these factors are. I would also like to know to what extent you think these factors influence or constrain NGO efforts.

I have some cards here with me. On each of these cards, there words which are written on them. These words represent factors which have been previously identified has having an impact on the performance and retention of learners. I also have 3 sheets of A3 paper. On the first paper, in order of their influence on the performance learners. On the second sheet

of paper, I would like for you to please place these cards in the order of their influence on the retention of learners. On the third sheet of paper I would like for you to please place a separate set of cards in order of their influence on the work of NGOs in addressing learner performance and retention

[Once participant has placed concepts on the sheet of paper, proceed to ask the following questions]

Now I would like for us to discuss learner performance

- Can you tell me a little bit about why you chose to put this as the first concept which influences the performance of learners?
- Can you please tell me a little bit more about why you chose to place NGOs here?
- Are there any other factors which you think are very important to how learners perform in this community?
- Where would you place these factors on this 'ladder' and why?

Now I would like for us to talk a bit more about learner retention

- Can you tell me a little bit about why you chose to put this as the first concept which influences the retention of learners?
- Can you please tell me a little bit more about why you chose to place NGOs here?
- Are there any other factors which you think are very important to whether or not learners in this community stay in school?
- Where would you place these factors on this 'ladder' and why?

Lastly, I would like to discuss NGOs and their work in this community?

- Can you tell me a little bit about why you chose to put this as the first concept which influences the work of Joza Youth Hub in this community?
- Can you please tell me a little bit more about why you chose to place this factor as the last one which influences the work of NGOs in this community?
- Are there any other factors which you think are very important to the work of NGOs in learner performance and retention?
- Where would you place these factors on this 'ladder' and why?
- Lastly, what kind of impact do you think these NGOs have on learners in this community?

Question 4: *Any other information or questions*

36. Is there anything else you would like to add related to this topic?

37. Can you confirm that you participated in this interview voluntarily?

Closing: (said by facilitator):

Thank you again for you time and for sharing your views with me today. Are you comfortable with me contacting you again should I require clarification on today's conversation or if I would like to ask you some more questions?

As mentioned previously, this study is part of a PhD project and as such, I hope that you will be able to avail yourself again in the future, should I need your insights again. Thank you again for you time.

Appendix K- CONTACT INFORMATION SHEET

CONTACT INFO

Contact Information

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