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THE ROLE OF NON-FORMAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PRORAMMES IN IMPROVING LIVELHOODS OF MARGINALISED LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY OF THREE FET COLLEGES IN THE DURBAN AREA

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late parents, Dolly and G.N. Moodley. Thank you for all your love and guidance. May your souls be guided by light and love.

ABSTRACT

The study examined the role of non-formal skills programmes at Further Education and Training (FET) colleges in assisting marginalized learners in their livelihoods. The high rate of unemployment and poverty in South Africa, and in Kwazulu-Natal in particular, highlights the need for non-formal programmes to be more responsive to the developmental needs of marginalized learners, and to the economy. There is a need to move away from programmes that are run in isolation, towards programmes that are more responsive, creative and holistic.

A case-study of three different non-formal skills programmes from each of the FET colleges in the Durban area were used in the study. These included Coastal, Sivananda and Thekwini FETI's. The reason for choosing different programmes, was to get a broader picture of skills programmes offered at FET colleges. One of the programmes was a Welding one offered at the Swinton Road Campus of Coastal College. The second programme was the Organic Farming one offered at the Mpumalanga campus of Sivananda College, and the third programme was the Cooperatives one offered at the Asherville campus of Thekwini College. Interviews with learners comprised the primary data, while documents, observation and interviews with personnel comprised secondary data.

The three different programmes provided an interesting contrast. While the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives were fairly new, the Welding programme had been in operation for some time. There were also differences in the design and implementation which impacted on the learners' ability to improve their livelihoods. Learners in the Organic Farming programmes for example, were technically unemployed. Yet they were producing organically grown vegetables to sustain themselves and their families. In contrast, learner in the welding programme were unable to find employment on completion of the programme. Using the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach used by international Aid agencies in developing countries as a bench mark, the programmes

were examined to establish whether they were assisting their learners in developing sustainable livelihoods.

What emerged was that there was a strong correlation between the design and implementation of the programme and the learners' ability to transfer skills to improve their lives. Programmes that provided support to learners aside from the actual training content tended to be more successful than programmes that focused only on training. The more a programmes incorporated the principles of SLA (responsive and participatory; learner-centred; conducted in partnerships; linking micro and macro-level activities, holistic and sustainable), the more they were able to assist learners in developing their livelihoods.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS STUDY

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
DFID	Department for International Development
FET	Further Education and Training
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro enterprise
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational Education and Training

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

In 2003, during the early stages of transition from vocational and technical colleges to Further Education and Training colleges, I worked in the Skills Unit of Thekwini College for about six months. My work in the administration of a Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME) pilot project, facilitation and developing learning guides gave me insight into skills programmes at Further Education and Training colleges. I often wondered what happened to all those people who had applied to be on learnerships but who were unable to make it because they could not pass the literacy and numeracy entrance tests. I was also curious to know whether skills programmes at FET colleges addressed the needs of people who had been excluded from educational opportunities during the apartheid era in South Africa. Most learners on non-formal skills programmes are adults who have very little or no formal education, and most of them are either unemployed or hoping that by joining a skills programme they would be able to improve their lives. With 57% of the population living below the poverty line in this country (Horner, 2004), there is a need for programmes that empower people and communities that are struggling to earn a living. The FET Act of 1998 legislates the transformation of vocational and technical colleges into merged FET colleges in order that they should become more responsive not only to industry, but also to the needs of the communities that they serve.

This study explores the role that non-formal skills programmes at FET colleges play in the lives of marginalized learners. The three colleges used in the research were Coastal, Sivananda and Thekwini colleges, which fall in the Durban area of Kwazulu-Natal. At the Mpumalanga campus of Sivananda College, situated in a semi-rural area, learners attended an organic farming that lasted nine months. At Thekwini College, the co-operative programme caters for people who are unemployed and teaches them how to manage and work in a co-operative. After attending lectures for ten consecutive days

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learners drew up a business plan, which was then assessed. If accepted, learners could access funding from the government and Ithala bank for their co-operative. At Coastal College, learners attended a practical welding programme where they learnt the basics in welding. The course was run over 6 Saturdays. Each of the programmes is explained in greater detail later in the study.

What made the study interesting and challenging was that the programmes were very diverse. While the organic farming project took place in a semi-rural setting, the co-operatives and the welding were situated in urban areas. The courses offered were also quite different, ranging from organic farming to business and welding skills. My reason for selecting these particular programmes was that they represent a cross-section of programmes offered by FET colleges. The study used a qualitative research design that focused on learner's own perceptions of the impact of the programme in their lives. The research method used was a case study that included eighteen learners attending non-formal skills programmes at the three colleges. Primary data was obtained through interviews with learners to establish what they had learned on the programme and whether they had been able to adapt those skills to improve their livelihoods in any way.

One of the challenges I faced in the study was that the learners that I had interviewed at Mpumalanga (Sivananda) and Thekwini colleges had only completed the course about three months prior to the interview. Both these groups were the first cohorts of learners to complete the respective courses but I wanted to include them because of the different approaches used in their programmes.

The remainder of this chapter conceptualizes the study for the reader. A background to skills development and social-economic background is given, followed by information on the skills development strategy and Further Education and Training (FET) colleges. The motivation, statement of problem, research objectives and research questions are also found in this chapter.

1.2 Background of the study

'Skills development' seems to be a new buzzword in developing countries. After decades of oppression under the apartheid regime in South Africa, and after being cut off from the rest of the world as a result of sanctions, the new democratic government has had to find ways to redress the past and find its place in the global arena. The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), which was developed by the Department of Labour in partnership with industry and the unions, is viewed as a way of achieving this. The Department of Labour states that South Africa needs a national skills development strategy for several reasons. First, there is a need to overcome the structural rigidities and inequalities inherited from the apartheid era and to meet the dual changes of social development and the requirements to compete in the global economy. Second, the NSDS aims to transform the labour force from a low skills base to one that is committed to high quality lifelong learning. Third, the NSDS seeks to make labour markets more responsive and better able to cope with the consequences of poverty and disease on the workforce. Finally, by implementing a skills development strategy, the government in partnership with employers, workers and communities, aims to improve the employability of the country's labour force (Department of Labour, 2001, p.6).

The Further Education and Training (FET) Act of 1998 addresses the national skills development strategy. FET colleges have been identified by the government as an important partner in driving skills development in South Africa. Since 2002, skills programmes and learnerships (a partnership between the government, the service provider or FET colleges and industry) have been initiated at most, if not all, FET colleges. Learnerships at FET colleges that last for one year to eighteen months cater mainly for school leavers, or young people who have just exited school with some degree of formal education. Learners on a learnership join an organization for the duration of the training. They gain practical work experience while attending classes for the theoretical part of the learnership. The chances of learners being employed after completing a learnership are therefore quite strong. The Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 also makes provision for skills programmes that are shorter and occupationally

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based. Although they may not be able to make up a single unit standard they are considered useful because of their social impact (Lolwana, 2001). A unit standard is one component of a qualification based on the National Qualifications Framework. Shorter skills programmes offered by the FET colleges are open to all people, regardless of age or educational background and are attended by adults wishing to improve their circumstances. However, as these learners are not contracted to any organization, they have to rely on their own resources to ensure that they are either employed in the formal sector or involved in some form of sustainable livelihood.

1.3 Socio-economic background

For decades, the legacy of apartheid excluded the majority of South Africans, mostly African people, from political, economic and social power. Despite achieving democracy in 1994, South Africa still experiences poverty and a high unemployment rate. A study by the Human Sciences Research Council (1999) indicates that unemployment is 39% in Kwazulu-Natal. This is the third highest rate in the country with Eastern Cape the highest at 46% and Western Cape the lowest at 18%. The study estimates that 41% of all unemployed people are 20 years of age and older. 55% of the respondents in the HSRC study were eager to take any job, citing a lack of education, low skills and inadequate work experience as a reason for being unemployed. Altman (2004) reports in the *Sunday Times, Business Report* that over the past seven years, annual employment has grown by 1% to 3% on average or by about 100 000 to 300 000 jobs. Over the same period the labour force grew by about 500 000 to 600 000 each year. So although there is job creation, it is only sufficient to absorb one-third to one-fifth of new entrants into the labour market. In another study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council it was found that 57% of South Africans are still living below the poverty line (Horner, 2004). Statistics on employment for the period 1970 –1995 reveal that the shift in labour demand has benefited skilled workers at the upper end of the occupational ladder, while those in unskilled positions at the bottom end have either benefited very little, or not at all. Mining and Agriculture shed jobs and a significant number of people have been retrenched as a result of improved technology (Dept. of Labour, 2001, p.20). What

these statistics reveal is that unemployment and poverty is linked to a lack of education and skills. For those at the higher end of the work continuum, jobs are available for those who are qualified, but with industry shedding jobs at the lower end of the continuum, people with no education or skills face unemployment and poverty. However, it is not only a lack of skills that negatively affect an individual's ability to find employment, since even skilled people are out of work. What it boils down to, is that there is a lack of jobs available. This is creating an increasing gap between the rich and poor. This highlights the need for adult education and training programmes to be responsive, holistic and creative in meeting the challenges of poverty and unemployment.

1.4 The National Skills Development Strategy

The key element underpinning the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS is the transformation of the county from the injustices of the past towards a society characterized by democracy and equality. The objectives of the National Skills Development strategy are:

1. To develop a culture of high quality life-long learning
2. To foster skills development in the formal economy for productivity and employment growth
3. To stimulate and support skills development in small businesses
4. To promote skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods, and
5. To assist new entrants into employment
   (Dept. of Labour, 2001, p. 7)

The Department of Labour, together with the Department of Education and partnerships with industry, are the driving force of skills development. Two pieces of legislation, the Skills Development Act of 1998 and the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999 underpin the NSDS. The Skills Development Act of 1998 makes provision for the formation of the National Skills Authority to monitor the progress of the NSDS, while the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999 provides incentives for industry to invest in

training their workforce. Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) are responsible for implementing skills development and identifying priorities for skills development within a particular field, for example, the wholesale and retail sector or the transport field. (Dept of Labour, 2001, p.7) The SETA's also work closely with service providers such as FET colleges or private training providers in implementing learnerships or skills programmes and administering the levy to employers (Dept of Labour, 2001, p. 5).

1.5 Further Education and Training Institutions

The Further Education and Training Act (FET Act of 1998) provides the broad framework within which the FET system can be developed and implemented. It regulates FET by providing for the establishment, governance and funding of public Further Education and Training institutions and the registration of private FET institutions. In line with global business practices, quality assurance is an integral part of FET colleges.

The preamble of the FET Act of 1998 highlights the following areas for development within Further Education and Training:

> restructuring and transforming the programmes; redressing past
> discriminations; ensuring access to the disabled and disadvantaged;
> providing optimal training and learning opportunities; promoting values;
> advancing national strategic priorities; respect and promoting a culture
> of learning; pursuing excellence and responding to labour and
> community needs.

From the above focal areas for development, the intention is clear that programmes should be inclusive, allowing those who are marginalized in any way to access skills training that will improve their lives.

The national FET college sector consists of fifty new FET colleges with one hundred and eighty-five college campus sites distributed throughout the nine provinces in South Africa.

Once the FET Act of 1998 was promulgated, the process of merging the colleges began, with weaker colleges being linked with stronger institutions. The rationale behind the restructuring process was to develop economies of scale and create the institutional capacity for expanded provision and diversification of college programmes to meet a wider range of social and economic demands (Dept. of Education, 2004, p.31)

The year 2003 was declared the "Year of the FET' in order to promote the colleges as sites of skills delivery. In a published speech, the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, saw FET colleges as 'new kind of college that will be able to focus on job creation and skills agenda that are key to South Africa's future success' (ibid, p.7).

The Department of Education and Culture in KwaZulu-Natal maintains that:

> programme development must be relevant to communities that they
> serve. They must respond to labour market demands. They must
> cater to the personal and developmental needs of individuals, and
> they must support an entrepreneurial culture among the youth and
> unemployed'.
> (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture, 2003).

A map indicating the FET colleges used in the study is presented in Figure 1

Figure 1. Map indicating FET colleges in the Durban area.

Within the new FET landscape, programmes would be responsive to the needs of industry and to social needs, making use of a network of partnerships and linkages with industry, the government and other civic organizations. FET colleges are now seen as the interface between education and work.

The new FET system differs from the technical and vocational colleges of the past. One of the criticisms of the former technical and vocational colleges was that programmes were outdated and irrelevant (Department of Education, 2004). Angelis (2001) adds that there was a lack of coordination between education and industry; very little or no career guidance and counseling was offered to place students in the appropriate programme; and racial discrimination excluded black people from adequate training opportunities so that the majority of black people remained in lower-skilled and lower-paid jobs.

1.6 Statement of Problem

With the high rate of unemployment and poverty in KwaZulu-Natal, many adult learners join non-formal skills programmes at FET colleges to improve their lives. There is a need for non-formal skills programmes that are responsive to the developmental needs of these marginalized learners, which include an awareness of their potential and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. FET colleges have the potential to address these needs since they already offer skills programmes. However, there is no uniformity in the designs and implementation of these programmes across the different colleges, with the result that some programmes are more responsive to learners' needs than others. This calls for an evaluation of programmes in terms of their responsiveness to learner. This study is intended to begin the process.

1.7 Motivation and purpose of the study

My interest in skills programmes developed during my period of work in the Skills Unit of Thekwini College. From discussions with learners on learnership programmes, most, if not all, felt that they had benefited. All the learners who participated in learnerships were employed by the respective companies once the learnership had been concluded. In this respect, learnerships were successful. To enter the learnership, all learners on a learnership programme had to pass the entrance test in literacy and numeracy for the relevant National Qualification Framework (NQF) level. The National Qualifications Framework comprises two components: the setting of standards and quality assuring of

standards. It is therefore a common set of outcomes or standards that will improve outputs irrespective of where and how the provision of education and training takes place.

Very often, up to a hundred or more applicants would write the test, but only a relatively small number up to a maximum of twenty unemployed people were selected. I was concerned that the Learnerships catered for only a small section of the unemployed population, that is, people up to the age of thirty years and with formal education. I wanted to explore non-formal skills programmes to establish whether these programmes were addressing the needs of learners that were marginalized. McGrath (2004) points out that the role that colleges can play in community development remains undeveloped. Most technical and vocational colleges offer National Education (NATED) courses to young people who were not interested in pursuing an academic career. NATED courses are programmes that are examined nationally by the Department of Education. Although they are practically orientated, there is a substantial theoretical component and students require primary school education at least.

Some colleges offered short skills programme, but not all of these were responsive to the developmental needs of the learner or the economy. It is only recently, since the inception of the National Skills Development Strategy, that there has been a focus on programmes that are community orientated. I believe that FET colleges do have the potential to become dynamic skills centres that address the developmental needs of marginalized learners, hence my reason for wanting to study this area. It is hoped that my study will add to our understanding of non-formal skills programmes and the impact they have on marginalized learners.

1.8 Research Objectives

The main research objective of the study was to gain insight into learners' perspectives of non-formal skills programmes offered at FET colleges in the Durban area. The second objective was to establish whether learners were able to utilize information in the programme to enhance their lives. This was not restricted to employment alone, but also

included some form of sustainable livelihood. The third objective was to establish the effectiveness of short skills programmes at FET Colleges in the Durban area.

1.10 Research Questions

The research questions provide the foundation upon which the research was built.

The key questions are:

- In what way are non-formal skills programmes at FET colleges improving the livelihoods of marginalized learners?
- What are learners' perceptions of skills programmes
- How are learners able to apply skills learnt on the programme to enhance opportunities for employment or income-generating activities?

The secondary questions are:

- What strategies are implemented in the programme to assist learners in finding employment either in the formal sector or in creating self-employment?
- How are skills programmes designed and implemented, and how do they fit into the National Skills Development Strategy?

1.11 Structure of the report

The study is presented in six chapters arranged as follows:

Chapter 1: Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the focus of the study: skills development programmes at Further Education and Training colleges that target unemployed and marginalized adult learners. This chapter provides the background of skills development and the context within which it is implemented. The motivation for the study, the goals and research questions are dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 2: In this chapter, the political and social background to skills development is explored. The chapter examines theories of Adult learning and how they relate to skills programmes. This is followed by a discussion on the Sustainable Livelihoods approach

that is used both as a framework for skills development as well as a model. The Sustainable Livelihoods approach has been used extensively in developing countries to alleviate unemployment and poverty. Since it finds application in both rural and urban areas and since its approach is holistic and integrated in nature, it was considered to be appropriate as a model for skills programmes at FET colleges.

Chapter 3: This chapter deals with research design and methodological approach used in the study. This includes sampling procedures, data collection and data analysis techniques used in this study. Reliability, validity, ethical issues and challenges encountered in the study are discussed.

Chapter 4: In this chapter, the findings of the research are presented. Data that has been categorized into themes are analyzed and discussed.

Chapter 5: In Chapter five, the findings of the research are analyzed and discussed to determine learners' perceptions of their respective skills programmes, and whether the programmes at each of the colleges did improve the lives of marginalized learners.

Chapter 6: The conclusions and suggestions are presented here.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Having discussed the background to the study in the previous chapter, this chapter provides the framework upon which the study was built. The literature review and theoretical framework are combined and the chapter is divided into three parts. First, the political and social background to skills development is examined since they affect and direct how education and training occurs in our country. Then, the different theories that describe adult learning are discussed in terms of their appropriateness within the context of adult learning. This is followed by a discussion of skills development and training, linking it to the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach as it will form the theoretical framework determining the effectiveness of non-formal skills programmes at FET colleges.

2.2 Political and Economic Background to Skills Development and training

In South Africa, decades of apartheid created a situation where anyone who was not white was disenfranchised, put into separate group areas, and restricted in terms of education and work. After the democratic elections in 1994, people expected that there would be significant changes. The following statistics collected by Terreblanche (2003) reveals how people (mostly black African) at the lower end of the economy still experience poor income and quality of life after South Africa achieved democracy and after the introduction of the macro-economic policy in South Africa:

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The first table shows the income of black South Africans per capita as a percentage of white income levels for the years 1917, 1970 and 2000.

Table 1: Income of black South Africans pr capita as a percentage of white income levels for the years 1917, 1970 and 2000

	1917	1970	2000
Africans	9%	6.8%	15%
Coloureds	22%	17%	22%
Asians	22%	20%	54%

In 2000, the income of Africans as a share of white income went up from 6.8% in 1970 to 15%. However, the rise was not uniformly distributed – while the income of the top 25% of Africans went up, the income of the bottom 60% went down.

There has also been a decline in the household income of the poorest 40% of Africans from the years 1975 to 2003. This is illustrated in the next table:

Table 2: Statistics showing the decline in the household income of the poorest 40% of black South Africans from the years 1975 to 2003

1975-1991	-42%
1991-1996	-21%
1996-2003	-10-15%
Entire period (1975-2003)	-60%

The household income of the poorest 40% of African households is only 40% of what it was in 1975 and the annual mean income of the poorest 40% of African households declined from approximately R5 200 in 1975 to approximately R2 240 in 2003 (1996 prices) (Terreblanche, 2003). These statistics give an impression of the difficulties faced by a substantial proportion of the population in South Africa.

In his "State of the Nation" address on 21 May 2004, President Thabo Mbeki informed Parliament that the government would speed up the process of developing the skills of

South Africans. Technical colleges would be funded and proper alignment of courses would be offered. President Mbeki said that since the previous year's Growth and Development Summit, the government had reached the figure of 64 000 learnerships (Ntuli, 2004).

In South Africa, managers and employees in the service industry consider skills development and training as 'vital in addressing the skills gap and developing the capacity to meet competitive demands (Browning, Hofmeyer et al, 2002). At a Skills Development Conference in October 2002 in Bloemfontein, Mr. Richmond Ntuli, Provincial Executive Manager of the Department of Labour in the Free State cited the skills deficit as one of the major handicaps to the growth of the economy and referred to it as a discouraging factor to potential foreign investors. Referring to the aims of the Skills Development Strategy, he added that skills development is about enabling and empowering individuals through the acquisition of competencies that are in demand and in fostering active citizenship (Ntuli, 2002).

While the government and the economic sector view skills development and training as crucial in both uplifting South Africa and in meeting the demands of a global market, this has created debate among academics involved in education, and especially adult education, a number of whom are skeptical of skills development and training for several reasons: its links to neo-liberalism with its free-market principles; the appropriation of 'lifelong learning' from education and human development to economic imperatives and the growing gap between the rich and poor (Coffield, 1999; Cruikshank, 2002; Baatjes, 2003; Baatjes and Mathe, 2004).

Skills Development has generated much debate not only in South Africa but in developed countries as well. Coffield (1999) points out that overconcentration on individual human capital leads to a corresponding neglect of social capital, by which is meant the social relationships and arrangements, such as strong networks, shared values and high trust needed to support learning. Reid (cited in Cruikshank, 2002) argued that it does not matter how well trained workers are if technology is creating a world without enough

jobs to go around. This holds true for South Africa as well. In 1.3, I mentioned that jobs had been shed in Agriculture and Mining. More recently, daily newspapers in KwaZulu-Natal have reported that jobs have also been shed in the textile and garment industry. Most, if not all of the jobs here were at the lower end of the work continuum.

2.3 Macro-economic Policy

The macro-economic policy in South Africa, with its leaning towards Neoliberalism, favours free market principles. Neoliberalism as defined by Guy (2004) and Graaf (2004) advocates that states and state organizations should not intervene in the economy. They should remove barriers that impede the free flow of goods in and out of the country as well as barriers that impede foreign investment. They should cut down on public expenditure and privatize state assets (Graaf, 2004). While the removal of barriers to global trade is not in itself a bad thing, powerful nations of the North maintain control, and very often, developing countries of the South are not in a position of strength when negotiating trade agreements.

Soon after the democratic elections in 1994, the new government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was viewed as 'an empowering policy that was inherently progressive and emancipatory, concerned with people-centred development, ecological safeguarding, gender equality, self-reliant economics, inclusivity and empowerment' (Baatjes, 2003). The RDP did not last long and the government cited difficulties with regard to resources to manage delivery of the RDP. The Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy replaced the Reconstruction and Development Programme and was adopted by the government in the nineties (Graaf, 2004; Guy, 2004).

Guy (2004) states that GEAR advocated a conventional economic strategy whereby fiscal austerity, wage restraint, financial discipline, the reduction of corporate taxes, and the opening of the economy to capital flows would attract the foreign investment needed to stimulate growth and employment. State assets were privatized, there was a further

relaxation of exchange controls, tax incentives were provided to stimulate new investment in competitive and labour intensive projects and public service spending was reduced ("Growth, Employment and Redistribution, A Macroeconomic Strategy", 1996). The government envisaged that these changes would lead to an increase in investment, jobs would be created and there would be 'trickle down' effect in the economy. However, the investment needed for growth did not occur and while there has been an increase in employment, it is insufficient to absorb the growing labour force (McCord, 2003). This supports the argument that 'upskilling' and training does not necessarily lead to employment.

One of the main arguments against the GEAR policy is that poverty has increased. Terreblanche (2003) maintains that while South Africa has achieved great political transformation, socio-economic transformation in the country has been slow. Since 1994, the top thirty percent of the population got richer, while the poorest fifty percent, poorer. This is supported by McCord (2003), who points out that South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world. Finance Minister Trevor Manuel (2005) alludes to the manipulation by developed nations in creating inequality and poverty in developing nations. The need for skills programmes that address the issue of unemployment and poverty in South Africa is therefore crucial. In this respect, FET colleges in South Africa can play a significant role by developing programmes that address the developmental needs of marginalized learners. Since most of these skills programmes address adult learners it is important to understand how adults learn. The next section deals with the different ways in which adults learn.

2.4 Adult Learning

Even though adults in non-formal skills programmes may have very limited or no formal education, they bring rich experience, knowledge and insight into the learning situation. Learners in the study, for example, had worked in different places, had learned much informally, and were able to make decisions affecting their lives. Programmes involving adults should therefore be responsive to the abilities and developmental needs of learners.

Following is a discussion on behaviourism.

Behaviourism

Skills development, if focused on outcomes-based learning activities, falls within the behaviourist tradition in adult learning (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). Behaviourists like Watson and Skinner experimented with animals, focusing on reflexive behaviour of an organism exposed to certain stimuli. Behaviourists maintain that behaviour can be changed and directed by external stimuli and focus on observable behaviour rather than thought processes of individuals. Behaviourism is still used extensively in education where the desired behaviour is encouraged through reward and punishment. In skills development and training, behaviourism follows behaviour modification procedures and addresses specific objectives and learning outcomes. Lesson plans are developed and success and failure is evaluated after training. Learners are assessed by means of measurement of knowledge and skills and learning is viewed as an event rather that a process. Mastery of learning material is gained by breaking learning material into smaller segments or tasks (Wozniak, 1997; Merrriam and Caffarella, 1999). Most, if not all, skills programmes at FET colleges use behaviourism in their training. Of course, in terms of achieving results, behaviourism has been found to be very successful since it allows for quantifying data and obtaining observable results. The SETAs have established deadlines and targets for skills programmes, and FET colleges as service providers have to comply with those deadlines and targets. However, there has been criticism that in behaviourism, human behaviour is oversimplified, that 'knowledge is unchanging and transitive' and that it has contributed towards a 'factory model of learning' (Hansman, 2002). A discussion follows which explains how Freire's radical education, constructivist theories such as experiential learning and transformative learning, and social learning theories such as communities of practice, are more in keeping with adult learning as they take cognizance of the different ways in which adults learn and grow.

Freire's radical education

Paulo Freire's approach to education is a response to the unequal relationships that existed between the rich and poor in South America. Drawing heavily from both Christian theology and Marxism, Freire maintained that people are capable of changing their circumstances through dialogue and praxis (reflective action), and because they are capable of doing that, they are subjects rather than objects (Elias and Merriam, 1980). In this respect, Freire's view is similar to transformative learning although it is more politicized and radical with its focus on oppression. Although Freire has been criticized for being an idealist and for his abstract ideas, his philosophy and methodology in adult education has had international recognition. Even though he wrote predominantly about oppression in South America, his concepts can be applied to situations of oppression and exclusion in both first world and third world countries around the world (Elias and Merriam, 1980; Elias, 1994). During the apartheid era in South Africa, for example, the University Christian Movement circulated mimeographed summaries of Freire's work from the United States of America to Adult Basic Education and Training programmes (ABET). This resulted in the banning of Freire's book, *The pedagogy of the oppressed,* by the government (Aitchison, 2002).

Central to Freire's philosophy is the concept of 'conscientization'. Freire posits that conscientization, which is the true knowledge of reality, is ultimately linked to praxis (Elias and Merriam, 1980). This basically means that knowledge must lead to reflection and action for transformation to take place. Conscientization is also a social activity involving dialogue with others to determine how they experience reality. This emphasis on communal learning and transformation is also congruent with social learning and the sustainable livelihoods approach. The sustainable livelihoods approach, like Freire's radical education is concerned with poverty alleviation and empowerment. It is a 'bottom-up' approach building on social, human and other strengths available in a marginalized community in order to transform their lives. In this way it could be radical as well. The learner-centred or 'bottom-up' approach in the learning situation is another similarity between Freire's principles of education and sustainable livelihoods.

Freire is critical of traditional education, which he refers to as 'banking education' where learners passively accept knowledge from the teacher. He states that 'banking education' domesticates learners by imposing curricula, ideas and values belonging to those in power. In radical adult education, people determine the learning content and participate fully in the learning process. This is something that is advocated by the sustainable livelihoods approach, constructivism and communities of practice. A more detailed discussion of constructivism follows.

Constructivism: Experiential and Transformative Learning

Constructivism offers an alternative to behaviourism in adult education and training. It focuses on 'meaning construction' and how people make sense of their experience. Candy (cited in Merriam and Caffarella, 1999) points out that a constructivist perspective is congruent with adult learning and that it is compatible with the notion of self-direction, since it emphasizes the combined characteristics of active inquiry, independence and individuality in a learning task. Adults in non-formal skills programmes bring with them experiences and knowledge that they have obtained in their lives. Even though this knowledge and experience may not have been obtained in formal education, it is nevertheless relevant, and serves as a base for integrating new knowledge and experience to transform their lives.

Constructivism is based on an understanding that learners gain knowledge through reflection on their own experiences. It encompasses experiential learning and transformative learning and a central premise of constructivism is that 'a learner is believed to construct, through reflection, a personal understanding of relevant structures of meaning derived from his or her action in the world' (Fenwick, 2001). In both transformative and experiential learning, reflection plays a significant role. Kolb (1993), and other theorists maintain that experience alone does not cause learning to take place. It only happens when there is reflective thought and internal processing of that experience by the learner, in a way that actively makes sense of the experience, links the

experience to previous learning, and transforms the learner's previous understandings (Fenwick, 2001). Kolb describes his model of experiential learning as a 'tension and conflict-filled process that occurs in a cycle'. In a typical learning situation, the learner is exposed to some form of 'concrete experience' in the form of a role- play or case study. Then the learner takes time for reflective observation to find out what he or she learned from that experience. This leads to abstract conceptualizations of the situation and creates a new understanding and knowledge that is then applied through active experimentation (Fenwick, 2001). Mezirow (1997) states that when taken–for-granted assumptions are challenged through reflection and analysis, the learners' view of the world is transformed. Mezirow also views adults as autonomous and responsible and capable of free thought and action. Even when confronted by 'institutional or environmental forces that limit options of rational control over lives, the goal of transformational learning is to gain a crucial sense of agency over ourselves and our lives' (Merriam, 1993). This is particularly relevant for adult learners wishing to escape poverty and unemployment. Even though they may receive some form of job-related training, there may not be sufficient job opportunities for them. This means that they would need to change their assumptions about the job-market and find alternative solutions.

Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice, an aspect of social learning, would also find relevance in non-formal, adult skills programmes. One of the assumptions of communities of practice, is that learning fundamentally a social phenomenon (Wenger, 1998). People learn through engaging with others in their environment. Members of a community are informally bound by what they do together – from engaging in lunch-time discussions to solving problems, and by what they have learned through mutual engagement in these activities (Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice emphasize the participatory and social nature of learning, and it is defined along three dimensions: its *joint enterprise* as understood and continually renegotiated by its members; it functions as a mutual engagement that binds members together into a social entity, and the *shared repertoire* of communal

resources (routines, sensibilities, artifacts, vocabulary and styles). Fenwick and Tennant (2004) add that learning occurs as a cycle of questioning something in an activity system, analyzing its cause, modeling a new explanation or solution, implementing this model in the system, reflecting on it and consolidating it. However, unlike reflection-on-experience models, learning is a collective practice.

Although communities of practice are found in all walks of life, they are appropriate for non-formal skills programmes. Through their interaction with one another in class learners would learn through discussion and an exchange of information. It is therefore a 'collective process of learning' and a sharing of best practices (Wenger, 1998). The four components of a social theory of learning includes meaning, practice, community and identity. In each of these components, ways of talking involve making meaning of the world collectively and individually, of shared historical and social resources and frameworks, of acknowledgement by society of our skills, and about our identity with our community. Learning is therefore an all-encompassing concept that involves sharing and creating knowledge with others.

Linked to communities of practice is informal learning. Informal learning occurs all the time in people's lives.

2.5 Informal learning

Linked to community of practice is informal learning. Informal learning is different from formal and non-formal learning since it takes place outside of any formal structure. It takes place all the time in a person's life through all the different experiences he or she goes through. The UNESCO Confintea document (1997) describes informal learning as:

> a lifelong process whereby all individuals acquire attitudes, values,
> skills and knowledge from daily experience and from educative resources
> in their environment, whether in the family, the community or the street.
> This form of learning often overlaps with socializing processes. Learning
> is characterized by a lack of structure, absence of an underlying curriculum
> and a particular timetable, and takes place primarily by doing and

through experience rather than by receptive learning.

Although many adult learners have not had the opportunity to attend formal school, they have often demonstrated the ability to perform tasks that they have learnt through their interaction with others. In some cases, certain skills have been handed down from generation to generation, and in others, people have learnt from observing others and asking questions and practice. Informal learning is thus linked to the socialization process.

Marsick and Watkins (2001) support UNESCO's description of informal learning and add to it. They maintain that informal and incidental learning is at the heart of adult education because of its learner-centred focus and the lessons that can be learnt from life. Slotnik in Stephenson (2001), states that in informal learning situations, goals are achieved by a combination of self-directed learning, and by exploiting learning opportunities as and when they appear. Most respondents in the study were similarly motivated to join the different skills programmes in an effort to improve their lives. In comparing informal learning to incidental learning, Marsick and Watkins (2001) state that incidental learning is a component of informal learning, and that while informal learning is intentional, incidental learning tends to be taken for granted or an unconscious way of learning.

Informal learning plays a significant role in adult education and development. Learners in the skills programmes at each of the FET colleges, for example, interacted with the different people in their groups and were able to gain information pertinent to their livelihoods. This learning was not connected to the programme itself, but came about through discussions with others and through observation and reflection. What this means then, is that people learn through out their lives.

2.6 Lifelong Learning

The concept of 'lifelong learning' was initiated by UNESCO as a master concept for education. Cropley (in Tight, 1996) points out that lifelong education, having been conceptualized as a means for facilitating lifelong, learning would last the whole life of the individual. It would lead to a systematic acquisition, renewal, upgrading and completion of knowledge, skills and attitudes, as became necessary in response to the constantly changing conditions of modern life, with the ultimate goal of promoting the self-fulfillment of each individual. It would be dependent for its successful implementation on people's increasing ability and motivation to engage in self-directed learning activities. Finally, it would acknowledge the contributions of all available educational influences including formal, non-formal and informal.

Within this context it is clear that lifelong learning is linked to self-development, but it has been sometimes applied by governments to mean training for economic interests (Anderson et. al., 2004; Field, 2000). Field (2000) maintains that lifelong learning is now a 'mechanism for exclusion and control. As well as empowering people, it also creates new and powerful inequalities.' Anderson et al (2004) state that there are two streams of thought in vocational education. There are those who contend that Vocational Education and Training (VET) should be about holistic and integrated development of underpinning knowledge and broad-based, transferable work and life skills and there are others who believe that VET should address itself exclusively to the acquisition of a relatively narrow band of employment-related or job-specific skills and competencies. Although he is referring to vocational education in developed countries, his argument is appropriate in the FET context in South Africa. This creates tension for non-formal skills programmes offered at FET colleges. Should they bow to the pressure of economic imperatives or should they be in the interest of the learner.

2.7 Non-formal Skills Programmes

Most learners attending non-formal skills programmes at FET colleges are African and come from marginalized communities. Since they have been excluded from educational opportunities in the past, non-formal programmes are viewed as a means of improving their lives. This is true for learners who were interviewed in my study. All of them were African, and except for two women who furthered their studies at the Technikon, all had very little or no formal education. UNESCO defines non-formal education as any organized educational activity outside the established formal system, and it is often linked to community and marginalized groups. Non-formal educational programmes are varied and can include literacy and basic education for adults, political and trade union education as well as state and private vocational training programmes (Smith, 2001).

Fordham (2001) maintains that non-formal education should be in the interest of the learner and that they should be involved in decisions regarding the curriculum and organization. He adds that programmes should follow a 'bottom up' approach and that learners should be empowered to understand and if necessary, change the social structures around them. This is a very important point since it is a way of making adult learners active participants in their own development. Adult education theories such as transformative learning and experiential learning as well as communities of practice advocate skills training programmes that are in the interest of the learner as mentioned by Fordham (2001) above. There is a need to distinguish between programmes that are interested in the holistic development of the learner and those that are interested in training people to meet the specific needs of industry. This aspect of skills training is discussed next.

2.8 Development and Training

There is tension between the concepts of development and training within the area of skills development. At the national level, development may be viewed wholly from an economic perspective, defined and measured in terms of output, and expressed

quantitatively in terms of monetary units. It then has to do with how much is being produced by the individuals and organizations within the country, with how efficient that production is, and how this is improving (Tight, 1996). Education and training are seen as contributing to national development by increasing the knowledge and skills of workers, and hence their output and activity. Very often, the word development is used when referring to training. Training has to do with mastering a particular performance through repetition. It involves instruction and practice at reaching a particular level of competence or operative efficiency. It tends to be narrow and geared towards employability and job market success (Tight, 1996; Lankard, 1997).

From the perspective of social science and education, development is said to have occurred:

> when there has been an improvement in basic needs when economic
> progress has contributed to a greater sense of self-esteem for the country
> and the individuals within it, and when material advancement has expanded
> the range of choice for individuals (Thirwal, 1996).

Tenant and Pogson (1995) mention that development occurs in a social and historical context, when we observe growth of those qualities which we as a society value, such as the capacity to think of alternative solutions to a problem, to group unlike objects in creative new ways or to be more autonomous. Development, therefore, is a much broader concept than training for jobs. Development, from the perspective of social science and education, tends to be more holistic in nature and includes attitudes and values. While training seeks to achieve a particular skill that is needed in the world of work, development includes the development of positive attitudes and values. The individual's ability to overcome the challenges of poverty and unemployment, to be independent, and to be fully participating citizens, are thus enhanced.

A Holistic Approach to Learning

In his paper on a 'Holistic approach to work-based learning', Stephenson (2001) discusses 'individual capability' and 'corporate capability'. Although his discussion focuses on work-place learning, it is relevant to institutions involved in training people. A capable individual is one who takes effective action in unfamiliar and changing circumstances and who is reliant on his or her initiatives in order to take effective action. Stephenson argues that these individuals are confident; able to manage their own learning; learn from experience; perform under stress; communicate and collaborate effectively and have the capacity to deal with value issues. In their study on capability in Australia, (Hase et. al cited in Stephenson, 2001) describe capable individuals as 'having a mindful openness to change, self-management of learning potential and a problem-solving approach'. What his means then, is that individuals who are capable are confident and take responsibility for themselves. Capable organizations are also concerned with values. They take responsibility for the learning of the organization and they are flexible and open.

The competency-based training that is generally associated with skills training focuses on identifiable and measurable outcomes. Stephenson (2001) differentiates between capability and competency. Competence is about delivering the present based on past performance; capability is about imagining the future and bringing it about. Competence is about control of standards; capability is about learning and development. Competence is about fitness for (usually other people's) purpose; capability is about judging the fitness of the purpose itself. A capable person also has culture, in the sense of being able to 'decide between good and wickedness or between beauty and ugliness' (ibid, p.21)

The aim of a programme and the way in which it is developed and delivered therefore plays a significant role in transforming individuals and communities to become self-reliant and independent. Programmes need to build on the abilities which adult learners already have, such their own knowledge, attitudes and values. They should help learners

to become aware of their own potential, and gain a more positive attitude to their own potential (Confintea, 1997. UNESCO paper on Adult Education).

In the next section, I discuss the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) that forms both the theoretical framework and model for my study. I am using this model since it is a good example of how programmes can be developed using whatever resources are available to assist learners in creating sustainable ways of earning a living. It is also congruent with the theories of adult education discussed above.

2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Sustainable Livelihoods

This study is not just concerned about the ability of skills programmes to enhance employment opportunities, but it is also concerned with finding out whether learners were able to adapt what they learnt to improve their lives and livelihoods. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework focuses on sustainable ways of empowering individuals and communities through its principles of being people- centred, responsive and participatory, with activities at the micro and macro-levels, conducted in partnerships, sustainable, dynamic, building on the strengths of communities and holistic (Hussein, 2002; UNDP, 1999). The South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary defines 'livelihood' as 'means of living'. The Department for International Development (DFID) defines livelihood as 'comprising the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living' (Hussein, 2002). Livelihoods, therefore, is a broader concept than employment, which suggests a particular trade or profession, and can mean any form of sustainable income-generating activity that enhances the lives of individuals and communities. The concept of 'livelihoods' encompasses varied ways of living that meet individual, household, and community needs. Needs, in this context, are understood holistically, and would include the social, economic, cultural and spiritual needs of people. For a livelihood to be sustainable, it must be adaptive and able to withstand

stress. It should also safeguard, rather than damage the natural environment. Sustainable livelihoods, then, is not just about creating employment, it is creating new ways of living that enable people to meet their varied and interwoven needs without compromising the ecosystems that support them and their community (UNDP, 1999).

A diagram illustrating the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework appears below.

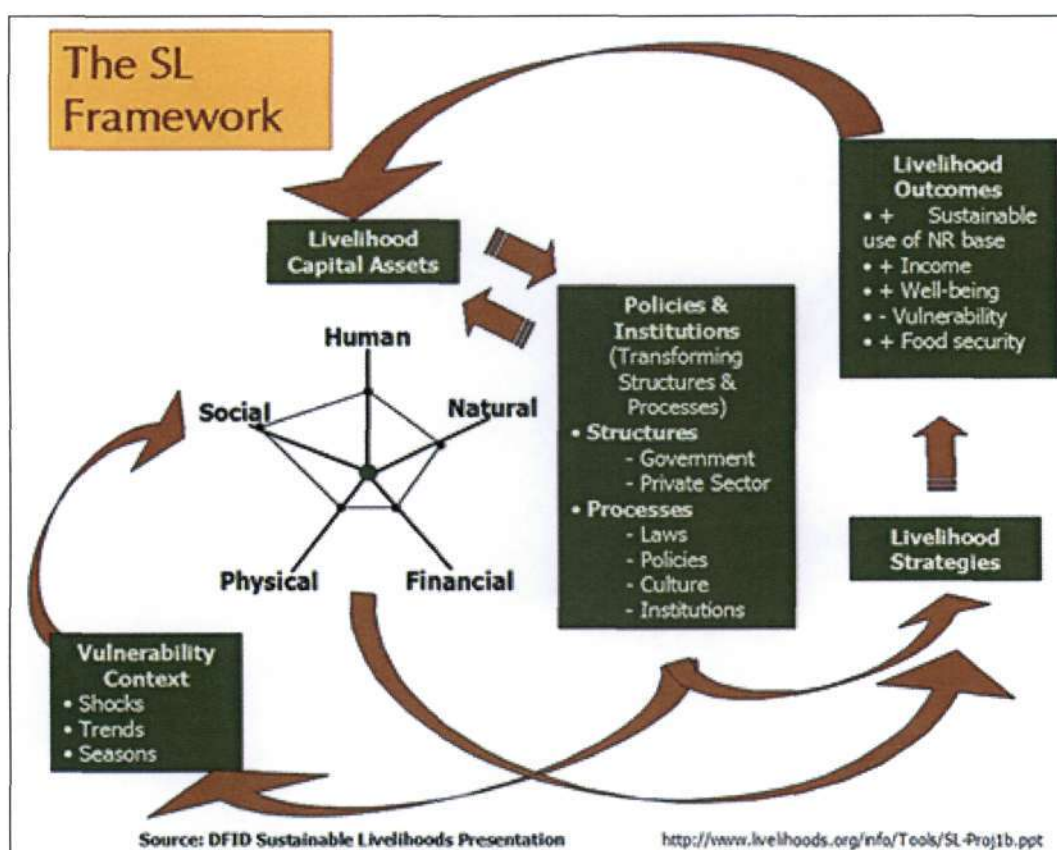**The sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA)**

Figure 2 Showing the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

The diagram above illustrates how SLA operates. When a community (or a group of people) are affected by negative events such as unemployment and poverty **(vulnerability Context)**, the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLA) focuses on building human, social, physical, natural and financial assets or strengths **(livelihood capital assets)** that are available within the community. Human capital refers to the

skills, knowledge ability to labour and good health important to pursue different livelihood strategies. Physical capital refers to the basic infrastructure available, for example, transport, shelter and production equipment that enable people to pursue livelihoods. The social capital refers to the social resources such as networks membership of a group, relationships of trust and access to wider institutions of society. The financial capital refers to the financial resources available to people, for example, savings, credit available or pension that provide people with different livelihood options. Natural capital refers to the natural resources such as land, water, wildlife and biodiversity (de Satge, 2002). At the same time, processes such as laws, policies and culture, as well as government and private sector structures **(policies and institutions)** are examined to establish how they contribute towards the vulnerability context – and how they can be changed or adapted to create livelihood strategies that will ultimately lead to **livelihood outcomes** which include increased well-being, income and food-security and reduction in vulnerability.

Various government and aid agencies involved in poverty reduction programmes in developing nations around the world have used the principles of SLA to improve livelihoods, and empower individuals and communities through sustainable income-generating programmes. The U.K. Department for International Development (DFID), Oxfam, an independent British development and relief organization, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are some of the international aid agencies that have adapted the principles of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach to suit their own programmes. While SLA was intended to eliminate rural poverty in Third World nations, the principles have been adapted to address poverty and unemployment in urban communities equally well. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Oxfam have initiated livelihoods programmes focusing on improving livelihoods in the informal sector in urban areas. One of the key elements of SLA approach is building on the strengths of individuals and communities. People in the informal sector often have an abundance of their own knowledge, values, skills, attitudes and resources (Confintea, 1997). The approach used by UNDP is to establish what communities can bring to the process of development. In this way, the programme becomes participatory, involving

individuals in decision making that empowers them and makes them responsible for their own lives (United Nations Development Programme, 1991).

In my study, I believe that the principles of SLA would serve as a benchmark for skills programmes at the different FET colleges. When adopting the principles of SLA, skills programmes would be people-centred. They would also be responsive to learners' needs and they would be participatory. Activities at the site of learning (micro-level) and activities at provincial and national level (macro-level) would be linked. Programmes would include partnerships and would be sustainable. They would also be dynamic, built on the strengths of the people and they would be holistic.

Principles of Sustainable Livelihoods Framework applied to Skills Programmes

While the principles of SLA below are the ideal in terms of programme design and implementation, they are nevertheless important when addressing issues of unemployment and poverty. Each of the principles complements the other with a view to enhancing learning opportunities for marginalized individuals and communities.

i) People-centred

SLA promotes the idea that any intervention must involve the priorities identified by the community. At the beginning of any programme it is important to understand peoples' priorities and livelihood strategies. Non-formal skills programmes offered at FET colleges could therefore consider whether these programmes do meet the needs of individuals and communities that they serve. Are the programmes relevant and do they provide the learner with opportunities for improving their lives?

ii) Responsive and participatory

Programmes would be responsive to priorities expressed by the people and would include active participation of the individuals and community. Learners would be consulted with regard to learning material and activities so that they become actively engaged in their

learning. By participating in the learning situation, the learner is empowered to take charge of his or her life.

iii) Micro and Macro-level activities

Micro-level activities would be linked with macro-level processes and institutions. For programmes to be effective there must be a synergy between activities conducted at the level of delivery and policy levels of an organization or government. FET programmes should be therefore be linked to government initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty and unemployment.

iv) Conducted in Partnerships

Programmes would work with public, private and civil society sectors. By drawing on the expertise of the different sectors, there is a greater chance of sustainability. Partnership with the private sector, and with civic organizations in the community provides programmes at FET institutions an opportunity to tap into relevant knowledge and funding to ensure the sustainability of projects.

v) Sustainable

Projects would be sustainable economically, environmentally, institutionally and socially. Skills programmes aimed at empowering people need to ensure that learners are able to use those skills to improve their lives and their futures.

vi) Dynamic

Programmes would be flexible and process-oriented. There is a need to be conscious of changes and to be able to adapt. FET programmes can do this by constantly evaluating their programmes to ensure that they are achieving success in addressing the needs of the learners.

vii) Building on Strengths

Central to SLA is the idea that existing strengths or assets need to be built while addressing vulnerabilities. Strengths refers to the human, physical, social, financial and

natural resources available to people. Instead of focusing on problems, programmes would focus on strengths that have been identified among learners and the community and create strategies to develop these strengths.

viii) Holistic

The underlying philosophy of SLA is that programmes that are designed to assist the poor should be holistic. This means that programmes would create opportunities for learners to have self-knowledge and knowledge about the world of work and the world around them. Programmes that are holistic allow people to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

2.10 The link between the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and theories of Adult Education

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach is about empowering individuals and communities and providing the tools for them to become self-sufficient. It therefore incorporates practices advocated by theories of adult education that promote the development of adult learners. SLA seeks to transform the lives of people who have been marginalized by building on their strengths. Strengths would include the experiences of people as well as their social networks in bringing about transformation. SLA is people-centred and participatory, something that is found in communities of practice, transformative learning, experiential learning and informal learning. It is also linked to lifelong learning since people attending non-formal skills programmes are adults hoping to improve their lives through learning. In experiential learning and transformative learning, reflection is an important aspect of change (Fenwick, 2001) and while this is not specifically stated in the principles of SLA, it is inherent in the design of programmes. In order for change to take place people have to consciously work towards it for it to be sustainable. Communities of practice is a socially orientated theory that proposes that there are communities of practice everywhere and people work together in 'communities', to share knowledge and solve problems (Wenger, 1998). This suggests the participatory way of working and learning that SLA advocates. What this reveals

then, is that practices used in theories of adult education are congruent with the principles of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach.

2.11 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the literature review and theoretical framework were combined. The first section dealt with the political and social background of skills development in South Africa and how it impacts on education and training programmes. The second part examined theories used in Adult Education and Training programmes. Under adult learning, behaviourist, constructivist and social theories of learning were explored with a view to establishing which would be appropriate for non-formal skills programmes that addressed the developmental needs of adults. The third part dealt with skills development and training and the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. These two aspects were linked to each other and to theories of learning. The theoretical framework and model used in this study was the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. SLA has been used successfully in various developing countries. The principles of SLA can be adapted to suit different situations, from rural and environmental development to informal, urban development projects. This approach would therefore be appropriate as a model for FET institutions in the Durban area. The principles underpinning SLA are that programmes should be people-centred; responsive and participatory; they should operate at the micro and macro-level; invest in partnerships; be sustainable and dynamic; build on strengths and be holistic.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the research design and methodological paradigm approach used in the study of learners who attended non-formal skills programmes at the three FET colleges in the Durban area. This includes sampling procedures, data collection and data analysis techniques. Reliability, validity, ethical issues and challenges encountered in the study are discussed.

3.2 The Research design

In any credible research, the research design is the foundation on which the study is built. Research is often defined as a 'systematic inquiry' (Verma and Mallick, 1999; Leedy and Ormrod, 2001; Neuman, 2000) in order to produce knowledge and increase our understanding of the world we live in. The key element of a research design is therefore *planning*. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) state that a research design is 'the complete strategy of attack on the central research problem'. They compare the research design to a construction of a building where plans have to be meticulously developed in order to ensure the success of the design. In much the same way that an architect has to take into account the specifications, criteria and design of a building, a researcher has to plan in detail for the study to withstand the rigor scientific probing. Delport (2002) defines a research design as a 'plan, recipe or blueprint for the investigation'. The importance of planning the research design therefore cannot be underestimated.

The two broad paradigms in social science within which most research is located are the Quantitative paradigm and the Qualitative paradigm. The quantitative or positivist approach is associated with the work of A.J. Ayer in the early twentieth century, and a post Second War account developed by Carl Hempel, emphasizing the importance of value-free evidence, hard facts and prediction in policy by government and other

organizations (Robson, 2002). Verma and Mallick (1999) point out that while rigorous controls of systematic observation and analysis are effective in the natural sciences, such control is not possible with human subjects. In my study with learners attending non-formal courses, I was more interested in understanding how they viewed the impact that programmes had on their livelihoods than in quantitative data so I chose to use the qualitative interpretive paradigm. The quantitative and qualitative approaches differ in the following ways:

- qualitative research is conducted in the natural setting of the actors while quantitative research occurs in the artificial setting of experiments and surveys so context plays an important role in Qualitative research

- qualitative research focuses on process rather than outcome, so the qualitative researcher studies events as they occur instead of reconstructing event in retrospect

- The insider (emic) perspective of the actor is considered important in qualitative research. By attempting to view events from the participant's perspective, the researcher becomes subjective and an instrument in the research. Quantitative research focuses on objectivity and the neutrality of the researcher

- quantitative research quantifies data whereas qualitative data describes events and actions as they occur.

- quantitative research is deductive, that is, it begins with a theory or hypothesis while qualitative is inductive. The qualitative researcher begins by immersing himself or herself in the natural setting and describes events as accurately as possible as they occur.
(Babbie and Mouton, 2004).

Having considered the differences between the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms it was clear that this study would follow the qualitative paradigm. The research questions follow.

3.3 Research Questions

The research questions provide the foundation on which the research is built.

The key questions are:

- In what way are skills development programmes at FET colleges improving the livelihoods of marginalized learners?

- Are learners able to apply skills learnt on the programme to enhance opportunites for employment or income-generating activities?

The secondary questions are:

- What strategies are implemented in the programme to assist learners in finding employment either in the formal sector or in creating self-employment?

- How are skills programmes designed and implemented, and how do they fit into the National Skills Development Strategy?

3.4 Case Study

With regard to methodology, I used a case study since I felt it would be the most appropriate way to study the group of learners who had attended a short, non-formal, skills programme at each of the FET colleges. A key element of a case study is that it is an 'intensive investigation into a particular unit of analysis' (Babbie and Mouton, 2004, p.281). As my study intended to describe and explore how the programme impacted on learners' lives, the case study provided a means to achieve this. De Greef (2002) points out, 'in-depth data collection methods such as interviews, documents and observation used in the case study method, illustrate a particular situation and enhances our understanding of a particular phenomenon'.

The origins of the case study approach are unclear. Some authors have traced it to anthropology and French sociology, while others claim that it originated in the Chicago

School in North American Sociology where members were interested in unemployment, delinquency and violence among immigrant groups. Mouton and Babbie (2004, p.281) state that a case study 'examines multiple variables and attempts to understand the influences of multilevel social systems on subject's perspectives and behaviours'. This study is an attempt to discover the perspectives and behaviour of learners in skills programmes at the three FET colleges. A unit of study can range from an individual person to a treatment team, family or community (Babbie and Mouton,2004). The case study can, therefore, be used quite widely, depending on the context within which the research is located.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) point out that one of the limitations of a single case study is that we cannot be sure whether its results are generalizable to other situations. This study has used different skills programmes offered by FET colleges in the Durban area, so it could inform other FET colleges, although there may be some variables.

3.5 Non-formal Skills Programmes

Three different skills training programmes have been used in the study in order to achieve a broad view of short non-formal skills programmes in the Durban area. A welding course was studied at Coastal FET. At Thekwini FET, the co-operative programme was used, and at Sivananda FET, the organic farming project completed the study. Information about the programmes was obtained primarily from interviews with learners and personnel, as well as from relevant documents and observation.

Coastal FET - Welding

The welding programme at Coastal FET (Swinton Road Campus) was a response to enquiries by people from the surrounding areas following advertisements placed in the local newspapers. The college charged R780 per learner for the course that took place over six Saturdays from 8:00 until 16:00. The course offers basic skills in welding and there are no special requirements to join. It is open to anyone regardless of qualifications and the course is practically orientated. Some theory is given at the beginning of the

class and then learners have to complete welding tasks given to them by the lecturer for that particular day. The welding lecturer who was interviewed mentioned that lecturers know what is needed in the workplace and what the learners need to know. However, as the course is a basic one, it is not guaranteed to lead to employment in the formal sector. On completion of the course, learners are given a certificate in Basic Welding that they may present when applying for jobs.

Sivananda FET – Organic Farming

The organic farming project was undertaken by Sivananda FET (Mpumalanga Campus) in partnership with the Rainman Landcare Foundation. The programme is linked to the National Qualification Framework and offers training at NQF level 2. Learners were selected using the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. They participated in the Organic Farming learnership pegged at NQF level 1 and the Facilitator's Course pegged at NQF level 2 concurrently. The college charged learners a fee of R400 to cover the cost of administration. The programme lasted nine weeks and was run on full-time basis. Basic business skills, farm planning, soil fertility, pest control, marketing, organic certification, rainwater harvesting, animal management, permaculture and sustainable management of the environment formed part of the syllabus. The mornings were used for theory and in the afternoons learners were exposed to practical experience in the field. Learners were taken on field trips to other farms to observe organic practices and they met representatives from Ithala Bank and Land Bank in order to learn how to compile a business plan and negotiate loans for farming. On completion, learners obtained a Certificate in Mixed Farming (Organic) SAQA No. 48977 on the NQF level 2.

Thekwini FET – Cooperatives

The cooperatives programme is held at the Asherville, Cato Manor and Springfield campuses of Thekwini college. Another center has recently opened at Amatikulu, on the North Coast to cater for learners who experience difficulty in attending classes in the city.

The programme is conducted as a partnership involving the college, Dora Thamana Co-operative Centre (DTCC), the Department of Finance and Economic Development as well as Ithala bank. Dora Thamana Co-operative recruited approximately 200 learners per week for training. Most people approached were unemployed and the course was free. People who joined the programme chose their own groups to form a co-operative for any type of business they felt would be appropriate for them. The programme lasted ten days and learners attended lectures full-time for that period. The course taught learners the principles of co-operatives, marketing and advertising, business management, meeting procedure, conflict resolution and business plans. At the end of the ten days, learners had to compile a business plan with the assistance of mentors based at the college. In the fourth week, learners had to submit their plans for assessment. If the plan was declared competent, learners received a 'Basic Management of a Cooperative' certificate and the business plans was sent to Ithala Bank. Learners then received a *Loan-grant* from Ithala Bank. Whatever the amount of loan required to start the business, the government provided 40% as a grant, while the remaining 60% had to be a repayable loan from the bank.

3.6 Units of Analysis

Babbie (1983) describes Units of Analysis as the 'what or whom you want to study'. A unit of analysis in social science is usually an individual person, but groups of people such as students, family groups, organizations and social artifacts such as books could be units of analysis. He adds that units of analysis are those units that we initially describe for the ultimate purpose of aggregating their characteristics in order to describe some larger group or explain some abstract phenomenon.

In this study, eighteen learners were selected from each of the three FET colleges in the Durban area and represented the primary units of analysis. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling in order to represent the larger population of learners who attended skills programmes at the colleges. The learners were interviewed to establish

what knowledge and learning they obtained through the programme and whether they were able to apply this knowledge to improve their livelihoods. Documentation pertaining to skills programmes at each of the FET colleges represented secondary units of analysis in terms of how they were implemented and the impact they had on learners.

3.7 Sampling

A sample refers to the subset of the whole population that is being investigated (Bless and Higson-Smith, 2000). The purpose of sampling is to draw conclusions about a whole population or group under study. Using specific sampling methods, a researchable size of the population is targeted so that on the basis of observations about the sample, generalizations are made about the population as a whole. Good sampling will include '(1) a well-defined population; (2) an adequately chosen sample, and (3) an estimate of how representative of the whole population the sample is, that is, how well in terms of probability the sample statistics conform to the unknown population parameters' (Bless and Higson-Smith, 2000).

There are two types of sampling methods used in social science: Probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, the researcher can estimate the accuracy of the generalization from the sample to the population. In non-probability sampling, the probability of including each element of the population in a sample is unknown, and in some cases some elements may be left out completely, so it is difficult to estimate how well the sample represents the population and therefore generalization is not always possible (Bless and Higson-Smith, 2000). Purposive or purposeful sampling falls within the ambit of non-probability sampling and is used to understand the meaning of a phenomenon from the perspective of participants using information-rich cases (Merriam, 2000).

For the purposes of the study, purposive sampling was used as I felt that this was the most effective way of ensuring that the population of learners involved in non-formal skills programmes at FET colleges in the Durban area was represented. In all, eighteen

learners were used. These included seven learners from Sivananda and Thekwini, and five from Coastal FET. The reason for this difference was that Coastal FET had no learners who had dropped out of their programme, so I was unable to interview anyone in that section of my research design. In the study, both male and female respondents were used to ensure that both genders were adequately represented. Learners who were employed whether in the formal sector or through self-employment were included in the study to ascertain whether the programme had contributed towards their employment and also to find out what motivated them. Those learners who completed the programme but who were unable to find employment were interviewed to establish why they could not find any form of employment or livelihood. Emphasis was also placed on older or mature learners, since in my experience, people who are older with little or no formal education experience more difficulties in finding work. Finally learners who dropped out of the programme were included to establish their reasons for dropping out.

3.8 Data Collection

In Qualitatative research designs there are various ways in which data can be collected. The most common sources however, include interviews, observation and documents. In my study, interviews with learners constituted primary data. Prior to interviewing the learners and college personnel, I obtained written permission from the heads of the different FET institutions after explaining the proposed study to them. The nature of the study meant that there was no definite place to interview learners. After obtaining contact details of possible respondents from the colleges where they had completed the programmes, I had to make arrangements to meet them. Depending on the situation, I conducted interviews with respondents at their homes, at a college or at their place of work. At Mpumalanga, for example, conducting the interview entailed visiting people in rural areas and interviewing them in their homes. With learners from Coastal FETI, I depended on the goodwill of the learners to meet me at the college since I could not go into the locations. I also had to interview one of the learners during his lunch hour at the Harbour site where he worked, and this involved obtaining security clearance from

harbour authorities. With learners from Thekwini FET, I visited the informal settlement in Cato Crest with recruiters for the Cooperatives Programme to interview learners who had completed the course, and even interviewed one learner at the taxi rank near the Workshop in Durban. As mentioned earlier, the interviews with learners were my primary sources of data. For triangulation, I studied documents such as the training manuals and policies and I interviewed college personnel. Although I had not intended to use observation as a data collection method, my visits to the different sites of learning led to informal observation of learners in their environment as well as how programmes operated.

3.9 Interviews

Kvale (in de Vos, 2002) defines qualitative interviews as 'attempts to understand the world from the participant's point of view' Interviewing is a predominant mode of data collection in qualitative research (Greef, 2002). Interviews can be highly structured where questions are developed for specific responses, or they can be unstructured, allowing the participant much freedom in expressing his or her view. However, one disadvantage of unstructured interviews is that it can be very time-consuming. The semi-structured interview allowed me to guide the process of the interview and gave me the opportunity to probe further when I felt that this would add to the focus of the study. One of the advantages of interviews as an instrument of research is that both the researcher and the participant, are unavoidably active and involved in meaning –making work' (Holstein and Gubrium in de Vos, 2002). Greef (2002) points out that the researcher needs to differentiate between the content and process during the interview. Content refers to what the participant is actually saying, but the process refers to what he calls the 'elusive though powerful' component of interview. This refers to the body language of the participant and being able to read between the lines of what he or she is saying. Greef (2002) adds that process refers to the exploration of new territory as well as moving from the superficial level to an in-depth one with the participant.

In this study, semi-structured, one-to-one interviews were used. Semi-structured interviews are flexible but have the ability to draw a detailed picture of learners' perceptions and beliefs about a particular topic (Greef, 2002). Questions in the interview schedule were arranged from simple to complex in order to orientate the learners. A pilot study was conducted with three learners to ensure that participants understood the questions. Another reason for the pilot study was to ensure that relevant information for the study was obtained. Although it was not necessary to make any major changes, I had to rephrase questions at times, when the participant's understanding of English was poor. All the interviews were recorded and I took notes to ensure clarity and confirm data obtained. The information on the cassettes was later transcribed, analyzed and coded.

De Vos (2002) mentions that one of the strengths of interviewing is that large amounts of in-depth data are obtained quickly. However, limitations could involve participants not cooperating or unwilling to share information, researchers might misconstrue responses or be given false information and researchers might become emotionally involved to the extent that the research becomes flawed. In order to minimize these limitations, participants were given a brief explanation of the study and assured of confidentiality. In order to ensure that no responses were misconstrued, participants were asked to clarify statements that were not clear. Although it is difficult to become completely objective in a qualitative study, being conscious of these problems helped to prevent the research becoming flawed.

3.10 Data Analysis

In order to obtain findings in my research, the raw data had to be categorized and analysed into a coherent report. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) state that research begins with a large body of information that are then sorted and categorized into a small set of themes using inductive reasoning. I found Cresswell's (in Leedy and Ormrod, 2001) 'data analysis spiral' helpful in categorizing and analyzing data in my study.

Using the 'data analysis spiral, the first step in data analysis is to organize data using index cards, manila folders or on a computer data- base. Key words or phrases can also be organized as smaller units. The next step is getting an overall 'sense' of the data. This can be done using notes either during the interview or during transcribing. The third phase involves organizing data into categories or themes where a general pattern seems to be emerging. Cresswell (in Leedy and Ormrod, 2001) points out that 'at this stage there should be a sense of what the data means'. The final phase involves integrating and summarizing the data for the readers. In this phase, hypotheses or propositions may be offered that describe the relationship among the categories and all information is synthesized.

Using the Cresswell model, I used separate files to organize information obtained from interviews with learners at the different colleges. Responses by participants were analysed on an ongoing basis by making notes during interviews as well as during transcription thus getting an overall sense of the data. Secondary data from interviews with key personnel and documents were also analyzed continuously in the study. By comparing and matching responses from the respondents at the different colleges, certain themes became more evident and a pattern began to emerge.

3.11 Validity and Reliability

For any research to be credible and valid, there has to be evidence of both reliability and validity. Leedy (2001) states that 'validity refers to the accuracy, meaningfulness and credibility of the research project as a whole. Bostwick and Kyte (in Delport, 2002) mention that when we ask how valid an instrument is, we are posing three questions:

- how well does the instrument measure what we want it to measure?
- How well does this instrument compare with one or more external criteria purporting to measure the same thing, and
- What does this instrument mean - what in fact, is it measuring, and how and why does it operate the way that it does?

Reliability has been defined as the 'accuracy or precision' of an instrument (Bostwick and Kyte in Delport, 2002). Generally speaking, reliability refers to the extent to which the results of a study can be repeated under similar conditions.

In the study, the sample of learners from the three different skills programmes at FET colleges takes into account the different age groups, gender and background of the learners. Interviews were supported by informal observation and compared to policy documents and records as a way of triangulation. In triangulation, different methods are used in a study to ensure reliability and validity.

3.12 Ethics

'Ethics is a set of moral principles that are suggested by and individual or group, are subsequently widely accepted, and offer rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students' (de Vos, 2002). From this definition, it is clear that researchers have certain moral obligations to people involved in their study. Some of the considerations include ensuring that no harm comes to the respondent; obtaining informed consent; avoiding deception and respecting a respondent's privacy and confidentiality. In this study, respondents were informed about the nature of the research and their consent to participate was obtained prior to the interviews. Respondents names were not used in the study to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Prior to commencing the research, the CEO's of each college gave written consent to learners, key personnel and documents being used in the study. Even though there may be problems identified at any of the colleges, there are no ethical questions involved. All hard copies of data will be stored in a safe and access to electronic data will require a secret password. Once the report has been finalized, all information will be destroyed by burning them after three years.

3.13 Challenges

Because the study was so broad, accessing learners to interview proved quite difficult. Since the learners had completed the courses, it meant obtaining records from colleges and contacting them, or depending on facilitators or recruiters for assistance. In Mpumalanga, I had to ask the facilitator of the organic farming programme to locate learners and accompany me on my interview. However, he was not present during the interviews. In some cases I could not go alone into an informal settlement or location and I requested that learners meet me at a more central venue. I offered to pay the cost of their travel. Some participants were kind and kept their word, but others failed to arrive, making it difficult for me to interview them.

Being dependent on facilitators and recruiters also provided a challenge for me. I was given contact details of people whom they could find, or whom they felt would be suitable. It was also difficult to locate people who had dropped out of the programme. A lecturer at Coastal FET informed me that they did not have any dropouts on their programme. This was probably because learners paid R780 for the course and felt they would be losing out if they dropped out. I did eventually manage to locate learners who dropped out of the programme at Sivananda and Thekwini colleges.

At Thekwini FETI, one of the learners that I interviewed could not be described as marginalized. She was involved in training others in HIV/Aids programmes and appeared to be quite successful. She participated in the cooperatives programme in order to access funding for a cooperative she was involved in. The bank would only finance a cooperative if all the members have received training and certification. Nevertheless, she provided me with rich information about the programme itself and learners who attended.

Initially, I had planned to have focus groups of learners at the three college sites. However this proved impossible because of the distances of the learners from one another, financial reasons and difficulties with communication. I had made arrangements for a focus group in Mpumalanga, for example, and I had asked a colleague to

accompany me to observe the discussion, but when we got to the library as arranged by a facilitator at the college, none of the learners were present.

Lastly, working full-time meant that I had to juggle time scheduling interviews during college vacations, during weekends and after work. Having to find learners and organizing interviews was quite challenging and time-consuming. These were some of the challenges faced in this study.

3.14 SUMMARY

Three different non-formal skills programmes at the Coastal, Sivananda and Thekwini colleges were selected in order to achieve a broad view of non-formal short programmes in the Durban area. For the purposes of study, I considered that interpretive qualitative paradigm would be more appropriate than the quantitative one as I was more concerned with understanding how the learners perceived the programme with regard to enhancing their livelihoods. The methodology I chose was a case study and tools included interviews with learners and college personnel, examination of documents and policies, as well as observation. The primary units of analysis were learners on the different programmes, while the secondary units of analysis included documents and policies and interviews with college personnel. The sampling was purposive and included eighteen learners altogether. There were six learners each from Sivananda and Thekwini and five from Coastal. The reason for the difference was that I could not find any learners at Coastal who had dropped out of the programme. In the study both genders were represented. Learners who were employed as well as learners who were not employed after the course were interviewed. Older people were included in the study as well as those who had dropped out. Data was collected through interviews, documents and observation, and was later analysed using Cresswells 'data analysis spiral' model. Data was filed and notes were made as each interview took place. Analysis took place on an ongoing basis.

Having discussed the research design and methodology in this chapter, the next chapter deals with the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Having discussed the research design and methodology in the previous chapter, this chapter explores and discusses the findings in the study that resulted from the interview with the learners attending non-formal skills programmes at Coastal, Sivananda and Thekwini FETI's. The research questions and questions used in the questionaire for learners, are presented first in order to link them to the findings. This is followed by a discussion on the sample of learners selected for the study at the different colleges. The themes that emerged from the interviews are then discussed.

The research questions being addressed in the study include the following:

The key questions:

- In what way are non-formal skills programmes at FET colleges improving the livelihoods of marginalized learners?
- Are learners able to apply skills learnt on the programme to enhance opportunities for employment or income-generating activities?

The secondary questions:

- What strategies implemented in the programme to assist learners in finding employment either in the formal sector or in creating self-employment?
- How are skills programmes designed and implemented, and how do they fit into the National Skills Development Strategy?

The questionnaire appears on addendum 4.1

4.2 Sample of learners

Altogether eighteen learners were interviewed at each of the colleges. Of the eighteen, seven learners were from Sivananda FET (Organic Farming), six from Thekwini FET (Cooperatives) and five from Coastal FET (welding). The table below illustrates the selection of learners from the different FETI's and their current status in terms of being employed or involved in a livelihood, in terms of being unemployed or having dropped out of the programme.

Table 3: Learners from the Welding programme

Learner Code	Gender	Age	Employed/Livelihood/Unemployed/ Dropped out
B	Female	30	Unemployed
M	Female	30	Employed-assistant – nursing home
S	Male	22	Unemployed
T	Male	36	Employed -tractor driver
N	Male	32	Unemployed

Of the five learners that had completed the welding programme, three were unemployed and the two who were employed were doing the same jobs they had been doing before the training.

Table 4: Learners from the Cooperative programme

Learner code	Gender	Age	Employed/Livelihood/Unemployed/ Dropped Out
N1	Female	26	Employed – Recruiter
L	Female	34	Livelihood
B	Female	37	Livelihood
M1	Male	33	Livelihood
Z	Male	44	Livelihood
P1	Female	42	Dropped out

Of the six learners who had completed the Cooperatives programme, one was employed as a recruiter for the programme. Four of the learners were involved in livelihoods and one had dropped out of the course. The learner who had dropped out did so as a result of differences with one of the recruiters for the programme.

Table 5: Learners from the Organic Farming programme

Learner code	Gender	Age	Employed/Livelihood/Unemployed Dropped Out
P	Female	42	Livelihood
Q	Female	23	Livelihood
Z	Female	29	Livelihood
M	Male	46	Livelihood
E	Male	69	Livelihood
P	Male	63	Livelihood
N	Female	44	Dropped out

Of the seven who had completed the Organic Farming programme, six were involved in some form of livelihood. The one that had dropped out was working for a private company in Pinetown. Her reason for dropping out was financially motivated.

A breakdown of all three colleges with regard to those who are employed or involved in a livelihood, those who are unemployed and those who dropped out is reflected in the following table:

Table 6: A composite breakdown of all the programmes

Employed	Livelihood	Unemployed	Dropped out
3	10	3	2

I have included a brief discussion here regarding the sample of learners that were interviewed. A more in-depth discussion will follow when I discuss the themes later.

What this table reflects is that of the 18 people interviewed at the three colleges only three were employed in the formal sector. Of the three people who were employed, two from the Welding programme were doing the same jobs they had been doing prior to the course and had not been able to improve their circumstances at the time of the interview. The remaining person had been unemployed previously and was able to secure formal employment following the course.

There were ten participants, more that half number of respondents, who were engaged in different forms of livelihood. Most were involved in farming but other livelihoods included a craft involving animal skins, and a cooperative involved in the distribution of disposable nappies to the Department of health. While these people were not employed in the formal sector and may be considered officially unemployed, they were engaged in sustainable forms of livelihood. All participants involved in livelihoods exuded a positive attitude towards their future, even though those involved in farming struggled to access land.

The three that were unemployed had completed the welding course. They had heard by word of mouth that welders were needed in industry and were being paid well, and had therefore enrolled for the course. Even though they were unemployed, they felt that the skills obtained from the course would help if they kept trying in the formal sector of if they were to start their own business.

In my sample, I had included learners who had dropped out of the courses in order to have a balanced view of the skills programmes. I was also curious to know why learners dropped out of programmes. At Coastal FET, I was informed that no learners dropped out of the courses, but at Sivananda and Thekwini FETI's, I interviewed one learner from each college. The person who dropped out of the organic farming course did so because she was experiencing financial difficulties. Attending the course on a full-time basis meant that she had no other income. She therefore accepted a job at a private company in Pinetown. The person who had dropped out of the Cooperatives course had had a disagreement with a recruiter for the course. She was given the impression that she would be paid transport costs for attending the course, but this did not materialize. I later discovered from the recruiter and college personnel that learners had initially been paid their transport costs to attend the course, but this had been withdrawn as the cost had exceeded the budget for training.

4.3 Themes

The themes that emerged as a result of the interviews with learners include the following:

- Motivation for engaging in skills programmes
- Value of the programme for learners
  Sub-themes: self-confidence and self- esteem
- Attitudes of learners
- Transferability of skills to livelihoods and employment
  Informal learning and Communities of Practice
- Challenges
  sub-themes: land issue; language and education background; tracking, placement and counseling

Motivation for engaging in skills programmes

What motivates adults to 'go back to school' and engage in training especially when there are no external factors such as pressure at work to force them to? Most of the learners mentioned unemployment and poverty, but during the interviews I gained greater insight into the different reasons people chose to attend the courses. A pattern also emerged with regard to the different courses. For respondents who had completed the Organic Farming Programme, the love for farming and love of land was evident:

I was always interested in gardening, even at school. Even at home I was doing that thing. And I was lucky when that school was open.
(M 46yr old male)

I joined this programme because I wanted to know more about crops and planting, especially organically.
(Q 23yr old female)

'Since from my childhood or when I was still young, I just like farming. I used to work in the garden even at school. I am a born farmer.
(P 63 yr old male)

For the learners who had completed the Welding and the Cooperatives programmes a need to find employment and a need to improve their lives was the primary motivation:

In my thoughts I was thinking that I can get a good job and earn more money, or maybe I can get a good company that can pay me.
(T 36 yr old male)

I wanted this welding programme because I haven't got a job.'
(N 32 yr old male)

After I finished my diploma at Mangosuthu, I couldn't find a job for almost three years.
(N 26 yr old female)

Learners had also heard that companies were looking for welders and felt that the course would improve their chances of finding work and earning capacity:

I thought I would like to have the experience of welding and I heard how other companies wanted people with welding. So I just wanted to get my experience in welding.
(B 30 yr old female)

Some people who are doing welding, they told me they are earning good money.
(T 36 yr old male)

Similarly, learners who had attended the Cooperatives programme had read advertisements and heard about the programme and decided to attend. One of the learners joined because funding from the government and Ithala bank could only be accessed if a person had completed the training:

There's no way you cannot go for the training. You can form a co-op but if you wanted to access funding from Ithala, you have to go for the training.

The difference in the motivation between the Organic Farming Programme and the other two programmes, the Cooperatives and Welding to attend skills programmes highlights the difference between the rural and urban communities. While learners at Mpumalanga turned to the land and farming as a means of living, urban learners seemed to be more at risk in terms of making a sustainable living. Most of the learners in the urban area live in locations or informal settlements so the quality of life is different for them compared to those in the semi-rural areas where people can at least cultivate their own vegetables and fruit in their gardens. However, for most of the learners, the value they derived from the respective programme seemed positive. This is discussed next.

Value of the programme for learners

Except for two learners who felt that the programme had not been very useful for them because they were not able to use the skills learnt, all the others felt that their respective programmes had been very useful. This was also true of learners who were still unemployed. Even though they had not been able to find work, they felt that the skills they learnt would help them at a later stage:

I have not found a job, but should I get an interview for a job, then I will be able to exercise what I learnt here.
(B.30 yr old female)

The respondent later mentioned that if she didn't get a job, she could start something at home. The only problem was gaining access to capital. What came across with most respondents is a feeling that their self-esteem and confidence had increased after completing the programme.

Confidence and Self-esteem

Learners on all programmes felt that they had developed a greater sense of self-confidence and self esteem. One of the respondents was unemployed until he joined the cooperatives programme. He is now the manager of a farming cooperative. In the following extract, he describes how his confidence improved:

When I finished the whole programme I felt confident about this job and about being business-minded and I feel I can do my job more better.
(M 33 yr old male)

B was still unemployed when I interviewed her, but this was her response:

I don't know whether it's the programme or the teacher we had. Everything we are doing ourselves, so we learn to be independent and we were like confident.
(B 30 yr old female)

One of the respondents in the organic farming programme felt that he had learnt much from the programme:

I've learnt a lot there, really a lot. Understanding people, understanding the soil, understanding the type of plant you want it plant...
(M 46 yr old male)

The following respondent used to keep chickens and grow a few vegetables in her garden. Her dream was to own a farm. After attending the organic farming programme, she felt that she would be able to cope with the challenges involved:

I used to think that farming was for big people, for Whites, but now I have the confidence to do it.
(P 42 yr old female)

Programmes were also seen as valuable in terms giving people hope and creating employment:

It brings hope to people, especially unemployed people and it gets people together and teaches them thy must work together ...and its going to create more jobs.
(L 34 yr old female)

It's good if you know how to weld because you can open your own business. I can do fencing for other people. I can do garden tools.
(Mf, 29 yr old female)

For most of the respondents, then, the value that they attached to the different programmes was significant. This meant that from their perspective, skills learnt had helped in developing their confidence and self-esteem. This, in turn, gave them a positive attitude towards their work and future. The attitudes that learners developed in each programme are discussed next.

Attitudes

Except for two respondents, one from the organic farming programme and one from the welding programme who felt that they had not benefited much from the programmes, all the respondents interviewed expressed positive attitudes towards their future. Surprisingly, this was also the case with respondents who were still unemployed. One of the respondents in the welding programme who was still employed as an assistant at a retirement home had tried unsuccessfully at several companies looking for a job involving welding. Despite her inability to secure a job she felt that she could start her own business:

There's no job. If I open my own business it can help me.
(M 29 yr old female)

Another respondent from the welding programme who was unemployed felt that she could do welding from her home if she could obtain finance:

I can do some burglar bars I think, some gates... you know, those kinds of things.
(B 30 yr old female)

Respondents on both the organic farming programme and the cooperatives programme felt also expressed positive attitudes. In the cooperatives respondents expressed the importance of people working together to achieve goals:

It encourages people to work together because we can't do it alone. They encourage us to work as group. It also helped me because you get to mix with people easily. You meet different people every day and every week, you have to work with them.

(N 26 yr old female)

N also added that it's a good opportunity for people because it's difficult to obtain funding without a business plan:

About the programme, I think it is a very good opportunity for people because you can't approach a bank and ask for a loan if you haven't even started doing a business plan. So the programme helped many people who are unemployed get this opportunity to start their own businesses.

Even though respondents from the organic framing programme had difficulties in accessing land and water, many remained optimistic. Some of the learners had formed a cooperative and had approached the local chief for permission to farm in the area. They had also approached Ithala bank for funding for their project.

One of the respondents felt the need to empower young people:

As far as I am concerned I can say, the programme was very good. I have the experience to teach these young people. If I had a piece of land I can make them work. Some of them have never seen carrots from the field. So when we have the farm, we can bring them to see and I can teach them a lot.

From this it is evident that the attitudes of the respondents towards their futures were positive. The knowledge they gained from the course itself and from informal learning in the group contributed towards this attitude. Informal learning and Communities of Practice is discussed next.

Informal Learning and Communities of Practice

Besides the skills and knowledge gained from the different programmes, learners interacted with one another, and had informal discussions about issues pertinent to their livelihoods. They were thus able to access information and discover new ways of learning that was relevant to their lives:

There were groups of people who are doing what we are doing as cooperatives and they were doing poultry. And they told us where we can find cheaper chicks because where we are buying our chicks they are R3. each. And medication for chicks. Some they are home-made, we didn't know about that – like there is a flower that we can use for chicks if they are sick.
(N 26 yr old female)

This respondent was involved in a poultry farming cooperative, so being able to buy chicks at a cheaper rate and learning how to take care of them using organic or home remedies meant savings for their cooperative. Another respondent discussed what their options were after completing their course:

We discussed about finding work. Most of the people, they like to work in a big company, but I told them we must try to get something like a business. Its better to got one's own business than to go to big company.
(Nm 32 yr old male)

By sharing views with others, this respondent had the opportunity to learn about himself and what he felt he would like to do. For the next respondent, she learnt about respecting others in the group and also gained much by sharing ideas. She also learnt how to communicate with respect.

You learn to respect others even in the group. We learnt how to work in the group and we get more ideas day by day. When you want to do something, you don't say, "Hey, do it like this". You get the knowledge of saying, "What if we do it like this?
(Zf 29 yr old female)

The informal learning that took place through interacting with other people in the group also contributed to the sense of self-confidence of respondents.

Transferability of skills to livelihoods or employment

For a skills programme to be effective and relevant, learners must be able to transfer skills learnt to new situations. In this respect there were differences in the responses from 0the different programmes. There was strong evidence of transferability between the Organic Farming programme and the livelihoods of the respondents:

The skills have helped me because last year in December time, I didn't buy butternut at all. I get my own butternut and a lot of butternut, so the skills helped a lot. You don't have to go to the shop and buy something that you know how to grow.
(Z 29 yr old female)

For some, there was a strong need to share skills with the community:

My aim is to teach people and to make them understand about organic and also to understand about the nature and land care specially. There's some ladies. We were just making land care. I say we were making land care because our aim is to make it effective. To produce fresh vegetables. This is a project that I brought together.
(M 46 yr old male)

One of the learners had formed a cooperative with some of the other learners in his group and they were in the process of negotiating with Ithala bank to obtain land for their venture:

I have formed a co-op with six other people to grow chillies. We have received permission to use land from the chief. We are negotiating with Ithala bank to buy land and begin farming.
(S 69 yr old male)

What this demonstrates is that, not only did the learners learn more about their field of study, but they also learnt other skills. They learnt to solve problems, they developed leadership skills and the ability to negotiate with others. Furthermore, not only did they benefit and improve their own livelihoods, but they were also able to assist others, which they said, had a ripple effect in the community.

The Cooperative programme also demonstrated evidence of learners being able to transfer skills learnt on the programme to the world of work. Z, a 44 yr old respondent started a small business in animal skins after he was retrenched. After attending the programme, he learnt about advertising, bookkeeping and stocktaking, skills he hadn't had before, and this helped him to develop his business.

This business I am doing the Zulu traditions – skins. So I try to bring people back to the culture. So, I'm taking the skin - goatskin, cow skin make the beshu and all the Zulu traditional clothes, everything with the skin. The people like it. So I'm thanks very much for this programme. Because before I was just doing, and now when I get a thousand rand, I know how to use it.'
(Z 44 yr old male)

He now plans on opening a bigger place and employing more people to assist him.

The following respondent on the Cooperatives programme had been unemployed for three years after obtaining a diploma in Administration. After attending the programme she has become a recruiter for the programme. Having attended the programme she was

able to use her skills and knowledge to inform other people about the course and even to serve as role model for the programme:

'I've become a recruiter. Because I was on the programme, I am a recruiter and I get paid for it'
(N 26 yr old female)

Another learner felt that the skills he learnt on the programme had helped him in his job as manager of a cooperative:

As a general manager of the co-op, I learnt about the manner of approach – how to give instructions without offending anyone. I also learnt how to be firm, because sometimes you have to be firm and I can do my job better now because of the information.

With regard to the Welding programmed, the ability to transfer skills to the world of work was not as strong, because there is a lack of employment opportunities in the formal sector. Of the five who were interviewed, three were still unemployed. The two that were employed were doing the same jobs they had been doing before they joined the programme.

No, at the present moment. It never helped me because I'm still doing the job I was doing. I never used my skills from this programme.
(T 36 yr old male)

One of the respondents on the welding programme said that she was still working at the Old Age Home as an assistant. She had tried to get something in welding but she was unsuccessful. She said that although she hadn't been able to get a job, she would keep trying. Then she added that if one had the capital or opportunities, she could start her own business doing burglar guards or gates. This indicated a degree of uncertainty and a lack of direction in terms of her future.

T, a learner in welding programme felt that if the college contacted different companies on behalf of the learners to enquire about the prospect of jobs for welders it would have helped them:

I think it might be good, might help us if they phone to the companies and check whether they need some welders.
(T 36 yr old male)

The differences in the responses to question of transferability appeared to be linked to strategies implemented in the different programmes that facilitated transfer. The strategies used by the different programmers are discussed next.

Programme design and strategies

As a skills programme model, I found the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach to be an ideal one to measure the FET programmes against because of principles it espoused. The principles on which programmes are built are that they should be people-centred, responsive and participatory, they should link micro and macro-level activities, they should be conducted in partnership, they should be sustainable and dynamic, they should be built on the strengths and they should be holistic (Hussein, 2002; de Satge, 2002). It may not be possible to include all the principles in a programme, but the more principles that were included, the greater the chance of the programme's success in meeting the developmental needs of the learners. Programmes using the principles of the Sustasinable Livelihoods Approach also incorporate a Constructivist and Social learning approach as well as informal learning. I will now discuss designs and strategies used in each of the programmes to establish how they contributed towards the improvement of learners livelihoods.

The Organic Farming Programme

Dr Raymond Auerbach, the head of the Rainman Landcare Foundation, mentioned that this programme used a Participatory Research Action (PRA) approach in teaching adults in the area about organic farming. While the learners were involved in the organic farming programme, they were also involved in a Facilitator's programme concurrently. This meant that while learners were developing their own skills in organic farming, through the Facilitator's programme they had to assist others in the area to develop projects in growing food organically. In this way knowledge and skills were shared. The participartory approach meant that learners were actively involved in the learning process. Besides the theory and practical experience in the field, learners were exposed to farms in the area where they were able to observe and comment on practices there. This demonstrates the SLA principle of being people-centred. It is also reflective of Communities of Practice where people learn socially and collectively.

Learners were given the opportunity to interact with the world of business. Representatives of the Land bank and Ithala Bank met with learners and informed them about developing business plans and finance. In this way, learners were exposed to the business world and learnt leadership and negotiating skills. From this point of view, the programme was holistic and responsive to the needs of the learners. The programme itself was a partnership between the college and the Rainman Landcare Foundation that espouses the ideals of holistic learning sustainable development. The partnership proved to be good for the college as the expert knowledge of the Rainman Landcare Foundation was used for the benefit of the learners and the community it serves. In terms of micro and macro-level links, the programme was linked to the Skills Development Strategy's fourth objective of promoting skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods.

The Cooperatives

This is a government initiative to assist people who are unemployed to form cooperatives and start small businesses. This is in line with the Skills Development Strategy's objective of creating employment for marginalized communities. In this programme, unemployed people were recruited from townships and informal settlements to participate and have access to government funding. There were no criteria for joining the programme so it was open to anyone. Learners attended the course for ten consecutive Days. In that time they learnt the principles of cooperatives, elements of a business plan, advertising, stock-taking book-keeping. Besides these aspects of the course, learners were taught leadership skills, negotiating skills and conflict-management. Learners worked in groups, they participated in role-play and shared knowledge and ideas with other groups.

Methods used here were congruent with Mezirov's transformational learning, Kolb's Experiential learning and Communities of Practice. They are also congruent to a large extent with SLA principles of being people-centred, responsive and participatory. One of the problems mentioned by learners was that learning material was in English, making it difficult for non-English speaking learners. This is a very valid point since the aim of the programme is to assist unemployed and marginalized communities, most of whom speak isiZulu.

The principle of partnerships in SLA is evident in this programme. The programme operates as a partnership involving the college, the Dora Thamana Cooperative Centre, the Department of Finance and Economic Development and Ithala Bank. The partnership is a positive one for the colleges. While the college is responsible for the training, Dora Thamana recruits learners, the Department of Finance and Economic Development provides finance for the programme and Ithala bank assists learners by offering them loans to start their businesses. In terms of micro-and macro-levels links, the programme is linked to government initiatives focusing on marginalized communities, and it is linked to the objectives of the Skills Development Strategy.

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The Welding Programme

The welding programme was run in response to a demand from the community it served in Mobeni. The area surrounding the Swinton Road Campus is mostly industrial so the programme was seen a good thing for the community. A lecturer at the college mentioned that the course was a very basic one. Although they, as lecturers were aware of the needs of industry, they could not guarantee that the programme would, in fact, lead to employment. Whether this information was conveyed to learners is uncertain. The college was responsible for the training and learners were responsible for finding their own jobs.

The programme was very practically oriented, with learners completing tasks given by the lecturer. The women in the programme mentioned that they found the heat and heavy equipment difficult initially, but that they adjusted to it later in the programme. Learners spoke highly of their lecturer who guided them very effectively in their learning tasks. This is in contrast to a comment made by a learner on the Organic Farming programme that one of the lecturers used to leave them during their theoretical lessons while she went shopping.

Respondents expressed the wish that the college would contact industry and establish where welders are needed. They also expressed the wish that they could access funding and information on how to start their own businesses. The college did not offer these services to learners on non-formal skills programmes

Challenges

Respondents identified the following shortcomings in their respective programmes:

a) *The land issue:* most of the respondents in the Organic Farming programme mentioned that the lack of access to land for farming has prevented them from using the

skills they had learnt. At present they make use of land around the college, near the library in Mpumalanga and around their homes to grow vegetables that they use for their own consumption and perhaps to sell to others if they have more than they need. However, they require large tracts of land to turn their skills into a farming business. If they wish to buy land, they have to obtain the permission of the chief of the area first. Then they have to negotiate with the bank to assist them with their expenses. Respondents expressed the wish that they could have information on how to access land:

To try to get information about how to obtain land – and to practice what was learnt on this programme.'(E 69 yr old male)

One of the respondents, a forty one year old male showed me the garden near his home where he was cultivating vegetables. He was also helping a group of local women to grow their own crops nearby. He informed me that he did not have any land, but if he did, he could do wonderful things. He has been trying to get land and had spoken to a Mr Hadebe from the Department of Agriculture. Mr Hadebe told him to get a piece of land, and he would put up a fence and supply him with water. However, the respondent sounded a little uncertain because he said that Mr Hadebe told him that he must speak to him in October. He didn't seem convinced that Mr Hadebe would help him access the land and water necessary for farming:

He said that, I told him, really at the moment I'm confused. Because I'm fresh from school – I got nothing. He said I must see him in October.

For another learner, the lack of land prevented him from helping his community:

The only problem we have is lack of land. We wish to do something further, something more so we can help alleviate poverty in our community. (P 63 yrs old male)

It was not only the learners in Mpumalanga that experienced difficulties with accessing land; a learner attending the Cooperatives programme had this to say:

The land we are using now is not ours – we didn't buy the land. We leased the land from the municipality. And the lease is supposed to be renewed every year. So, the person who is responsible for issuing the lease agreement every year didn't issue our lease agreement this year. And we called him several times, and he told us he had posted the lease, but nothing until now. This has caused us so much trouble because we can't do anything without electricity. They can't install electricity to a place that doesn't belong to you. And we are losing customers that we had.' (N 29 yr old female)

The discussion above highlights the challenges that face learners involved in farming once they have completed skills programmes. Another challenge involved the counseling, placing and tracking of learners.

b) *Counseling, placement and tracking:* another challenge involved the counseling, placing and tracking of learners. None of the programmes offered counseling or tracked their learners to establish whether they were employed or engaged in some form of livelihood. In the welding programme, learners were expected to find employment for themselves once the course had ended.

One learner had visited several companies with her CV but she was unsuccessful:

I go to Pinetown, New Germany. They said no job. I sent my CV to Toyota. I was going to Toyota. They don't take the CV anymore. I was going to Defy. They don't take the CV. (M 29 female)

Learners also felt that they would have benefited more if they had been placed after the training:

I think it might be good, might help us if they phone to the companies and check whether they need welders (Tm 36 yr old male)

The comments above from respondent who had completed the welding programme reveal the concern the respondents had regarding access to employment.

c)   *Language and educational background*: respondents who had attended the Cooperatives programme highlighted the issues of language and educational background for learners attending the programme. Because there were no criteria for participating and because the course was free, no screening took place and the learners came from mixed backgrounds. Unemployed people were actively recruited for the programme, regardless of their language or educational ability. One of the learners mentioned that sometimes, people just attended the programme because they were told they would receive money from the government. Once they were there, they realized that they needed to do a lot before they could get the money and they just dropped out. Others had great difficulty in understanding the different concepts:

Other people are illiterate, so as much as they (facilitators) try to explain to them, they could not understand the concepts – not even if it was done in Zulu.
(L 34 yr old female)

This created tension amongst the learners because the facilitator had to try to accommodate everyone in class. While he or she spent time going over concepts for the weaker learners, others got bored and irritated.

The difficulty I experienced myself was the facilitator was trying to accommodate everyone in class, so it was a bit boring for me. Some of the things I knew but he had to explain for others, so ...I really got bored but I had to go through with it.'
(L 34 yr old female)

Another problem faced by learners was that lectures were conducted in English and the learners had to present their business plans in English. For those people who could not speak English, this posed a major problem. Some of the learnrs in the Organic Farming programme and the Welding programme felt that time needed for certain skills was insufficient.

d) *Time allocated to programmes*

Three of the respondents, all women, mentioned that time allocated for a particular programme was insufficient. Learners who had attended the welding programme felt that they needed more practical experience. Each of the six weeks a new skill was taught and the learners practiced for the day, but once they left, they had nowhere to practice until the following week. They also felt that if they received notes, they would be able to take them home and read through them. Like the learner at the Cooperatives, it was felt that if the notes were in isiZulu they would benefit. Some learners attending the Organic Farming programme felt that running the Organic Farming learnership concurrently with the Facilitator Learnership created some difficulties in terms of learning the theory and the practical work involved. Even though they had managed to complete the two learnerships, they felt it would have been easier if they had done each learnership separately.

4.4 SUMMARY

In order to link the findings to the research questions, the research questions and the questionnaire were presented at the beginning of the chapter. This was followed by a discussion on the sample of learners who had been interviewed. Altogether eighteen respondents were interviewed. There were five learners from Coastal FET, seven from Sivananda FET and six from Thekwini FET. The sample comprised of ten females and eight males and their ages ranged between 23 and 69 years. Of the eighteen respondents, three were employed in the formal sector, ten were involved in livelihoods, three were unemployed and two had dropped out of their respective programmers. The responses obtained from the interviews were arranged in themes. These included:

- Motivation for engaging in skills programmes
- Values of the programme for learners

Sub-themes: self confidence and self esteem

- Attitudes of learners
- Informal learning and Communities of Practice
- Transferability of skills to livelihoods and employment
- Challenges

  sub-themes: land issue; language and education background; tracking, placement and counseling

Most learners interviewed were motivated to join the respective skills programmes because of unemployment and poverty. However, with the learners on the Organic Farming programme, there was a strong indication of a love for farming and for the land. Learners who had attended the Welding programme mentioned that they had heard by word of mouth that there was a need for welders and that welders earn well. The value that the learners attached to the programmed was significant. Learners on all the programmes mentioned that the programme had been valuable from their perspective, even those who were unemployed. Learners' self-confidence and self-esteem had increased and they felt that they had learned much. The different ways in which learners gained skills and knowledge was also discussed, especially with respect to informal ways of learning. This was followed by the question of transferability of skills to employment and livelihoods.

For most learners, skills learnt on the programme had been transferable. Here, much depended on what strategies the programmes used to assist learners in their livelihoods or in finding employment. None of the programmes offered counseling and none of them tracked their learners. However, the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives programme included a component on leadership skills, conflict management and negotiating skills. The Cooperatives also provided access to funds at Ithala Bank for learners who had successful completed their business plans while the Organic Farming project organized visits from the Land bank and Ithala bank to assist learners draw up a business plan to access funding for their cooperatives. There were a few challenges mentioned. These included, the land issue, the language and background issue, the lack

of counseling, placement and tracking and finally time allocated for practical work. This concludes the chapter on the findings. The next chapter will consist of an analysis of the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In terms of the research questions, the findings in the study contributed towards a greater understanding of skills programmes at FET colleges in the Durban area. By focusing on the respondents' perceptions, it was possible to analyze the effect of these programmes in improving the lives of learners. It was also possible to establish whether learners were able to apply skills learnt in the programme to their livelihoods and whether the programmes were linked to the National Skills Development Strategy. What became apparent was the correlation between the design and strategies implemented by a programme and the ability of learners to improve their lives. This will be discussed in detail in my analysis of the different programmes.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the themes that emerged from interviews with learners who had completed the skills programmes at the different FET colleges. Of the eighteen respondents, ten were involved in a livelihood, three were unemployed, three were employed in the formal sector and two had dropped out of their respective programmes. The ten respondents who were involved in livelihoods came from the organic farming programme and the cooperatives programme, while the programme that had the least number of employed learners on completion was the welding programme. However, the findings cannot be simplified to statistics alone. Learners on all three programmes, for example, expressed the view that they had benefited from their respective programmes in terms of an improved confidence and self-esteem.

A significant aspect of the findings was that the greatest success was achieved where programmes focused on developing new livelihoods for learners. This was apparent in the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives programme. I will also argue that

there was a correlation between the design and strategies used in a programme and the extent to which learners were able to improve their livelihoods. In this chapter, I present the analysis and discussion of the findings. I will examine what motivated these adults to enroll in the skills programmes, what value the different programme had for them and whether they were able to utilize skills learned in the programme to improve their livelihoods. The first part of the chapter will focus on the relationship between adult learning theories and the different programmes. The second part will deal with the design and strategies implemented by the different programmes. The successes and challenges will be discussed in detail.

5.2 Motivation for joining skills programmes

Motivation and self-directed learning are important aspects of adult learning (Fenwick, 2001; Stephenson, 2001). They are also important to the study, since FET colleges need to know what motivates adults to join non-formal skills programme in order to be responsive to the needs of learners and the economy. From responses received by respondents, it was evident that they hoped that the skills they learnt on the programme would improve their lives and incomes. Most of them had experienced apartheid and except for two people who had received tertiary education, they had very little or no formal education. This had created barriers for them, and they remained either unemployed, or worked in poor conditions prior to enrolling for the programme.

While the motivation to join the programme was intrinsic for respondents in the Organic Farming programme and the Welding programme since they found different and creative ways of paying their fees, not all the respondents in the Cooperatives were self-motivated. Many of them were actively recruited and were attracted to the programme because of the promise of funding from the government. All the respondents however, felt that joining their respective skills programme would lead to better opportunities. In this way, all of them were also involved in lifelong learning.

Non-formal skills programmes are inextricably linked to the notion of lifelong learning since learners joining these programmes are mostly adults looking for ways to learn new skills. Lifelong learning is the systematic acquisition, renewal, upgrading and completion of knowledge, skills and attitudes, as became necessary in response to the constantly changing conditions of modern life with the ultimate goal of promoting self-fulfillment of each individual (Tight, 1996). This view promotes self-development of the individual and leads to self-directed learning. There are other views about lifelong learning. For some, lifelong learning is linked to the acquisition of a narrow band of employment-related or job specific skills and competencies (Anderson et al, 2004).

The way in which programmes are designed and implemented have an impact of whether lifelong learning is about development of the individual or about achieving job-specific skills and competencies. This was evident in the three different programmes in the study. While the Welding programme focused on a specific skill, namely welding, the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives tended to be more holistic and responsive to the needs of the learners. I will discuss the different programme designs and the way they impacted on the learners in greater detail later in the chapter.

Respondents' motivation to join the different programmes is also linked to transformative learning. By taking the step to enroll in the programme, learners revealed that they were capable of independent thought and action. They had gone through the process of reflection and analyzing their situation and were ready to engage in the different programmes. If the goal of transformational learning is to gain a crucial sense of agency over ourselves and our lives (Merriam, 1993), then respondents in each of the programmes had made a conscious decision to improve their lives.

In Mpumalanga, the learners who had attended the organic farming programme expressed their desire to work with the land and to grow organic vegetables as a healthy way of living. HIV/Aids and poverty are prevalent in this area, so the motivation to farm and look for healthy ways of living was strong. Respondents in the Organic Farming programme also mentioned that they were motivated to help the community and to teach

children a healthy way of life. Having reflected on the high rate of HIV/Aids and poverty in their community, six of the respondents felt that they could make changes that would be meaningful both to themselves and to their community. Fenwick (2001) states that in constructivism, a learner is believed to construct through reflection, a personal understanding of relevant structures of meaning derived from his or her action in the world. For learners, joining the programme presented a way of finding meaning for themselves and uplifting their community.

Learners that attended the skills programmes at the two colleges in the urban area were more interested in finding jobs because they were unemployed. Unlike the learners in Mpumalanga who were able to plant vegetables around their homes, learners in the urban areas tended to live in cramped, harsh conditions in informal settlements with very limited resources. The United Nations Development Programme for sustainable livelihoods states that those living in urban poverty lack assets such as land and are therefore dependent on their labour for generating income. They also lack access to income-generating opportunities and decision-making processes (United Nations Development Programme, 1991).

Learners at Coastal FET joined because they had heard that there was a shortage of welders and that welding paid well. They anticipated that they would increase their opportunities after the training. Ironically, this did not occur. Skeptics of skills training, (Coffield, 1999; Cruikshank, 2002) have often highlighted this point. While skills training is inherently good, it cannot be done in a vacuum. It must be benefit learners by creating opportunities for their development. The National Skills Development Strategy highlights this point in its fourth objective which is 'to promote skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods'.

The Cooperatives programme is an initiative of the government to assist unemployed and marginalized people as part of its skills development strategy. Most learners were actively recruited by the Dora Thamena Cooperative Centre. Others read advertisements regarding the training and were attracted by the offer by government for training and

access to funding. Most respondents saw the programme as an opportunity to make money. People attending and successfully completing the business plan could access funding from the government as well a loan from Ithala bank. This was an opportunity for learners to improve their lives, but the system was also open to abuse. Many people who were already employed, formed cooperatives to benefit from the allowance given by the government, so what was essentially meant for marginalized communities was abused by those who have means. Some people joined at the promise of money, but dropped out when they could not cope with the work involved in the programme.

Programmes that offer non-formal skills programmes need to be mindful of people's motivation to join in order for them to be responsive to the needs of learners. Clearly, a lack of employment and a lack of education motivated respondents to join. Of the three programmes, the Organic Farming programme related more to the motivation of the respondents than the other two programmes because the design and strategies it used were more congruent with the SLA principle of being people-centred and participatory. The learner-centred approach is also characteristic of Paulo Freire's radical education where the learners engage in dialogue to analyse and reflect on their situation. This is followed by 'praxis' where learners become active participants in their education and transformation.

Using a bottom-up approach, the Organic Farming programme made use of the PRA 'time line' technique by engaging the community in discussions about the developmental needs of the area. They identified the available strengths or assets in the area and analyzed the resources available prior to commencing the programme. In this way, they were able to develop a programme that was responsive to the needs of learners. In this way too, the motivation of the learners was linked to the outcomes of the programme.

The Cooperatives programme was learner-centred and participatory to a lesser extent. Although they were learner-centred and participatory in that they involved learners working in groups to discuss their livelihoods, learners had no say in the development of the programme. This was more 'top-down', and this is evident in the learning material

being printed in English, even though learners were African whose first language is isiZulu. The lack of consultation is also evident in the content of the programme. Many learners on the programme had difficulty understanding concepts such as advertising. While it is a positive sign that the government is trying to encourage unemployed and marginalized people to start their own cooperatives, and to meet the targets of the National Skills Development Strategy, there is a possibility that these programmes may be abused by those who are already employed, thus defeating the purpose of the programme. Nevertheless, for the respondents who participated in the programme, the outcomes were linked to their motivation.

Of the three programmes, the Welding programme showed the least sign of being people-centred. The 'top-down' approach used in the programme 'alienates' learners from the learning process and is congruent with 'banking education' of which Freirean radical education is critical. The lecturer provided information and learners in the programme passively accepted what they learned reflecting the dominant relations that still exist in traditional education and training despite the country's move towards freedom. Although learners paid for the programme they did not benefit in terms of improving their livelihoods. However, learners still felt that the programme was valuable for them. This aspect of the study is discussed next.

5.3 Value of the Programme for Learners

For practically all the respondents, the programmes benefited them by building their confidence, self-esteem and a positive attitude. UNESCO has highlighted the need of adult education programmes to help learners to become aware of their own potential and to gain a more positive attitude towards their own abilities (UNESCO Confintea document, 1997). In the study, positive attitudinal changes occurred in learners in both the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives programme, and although learners in the Welding programme felt that the programme had been valuable for them, there was not much evidence of change in their attitudes. In the following section I examine the

attitudinal changes that occurred in learners through increased confidence and self-esteem; through overcoming fears and through transformative and informal learning.

Attitudinal Changes of Learners

Learners' attitudes towards their learning and their life circumstances contribute significantly to success in their lives. UNESCO maintains that learning should lead to the acquisition of attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from their daily experience, from educative resources and from the environment (UNESCO, Confintea document, 1997). Equal value is attached to attitudes and values as to skills and knowledge. The role of non-formal programmes in shaping learners' attitudes is therefore important.

Besides the learning content of the course, the support that a learner received in a skills programme, contributed towards other positive attitudes. This was evident in the Organic Farming programme where learners were proactive in forming a cooperative and approaching the chief of the area and the bank for access to land. By exposing learners to the Land Bank and Ithala Bank, learners were able to draw up business plans, and through informal learning that occurred within the programme, learners were able to make a decision to work collectively to achieve their goals. The value of the programme for learners was therefore linked to strategies implemented by the different programmes. It increased their confidence and self-esteem because they were able to do things they had not thought possible before.

Confidence and Self-esteem

Most of the respondents mentioned that they had felt a greater sense of confidence and self-esteem. Even learners who were unemployed felt that they had grown in confidence as a result of the skills programme. For me this was quite ironic, but what it demonstrates is that people who have been marginalized attach value to any kind of education and training that occurs in a formal setting. Attending classes at the college carried with it an emotional aspect and a status of 'being educated'. For people who have

been excluded, this symbolized a rise in their status even though they were unable to use their welding skills. Value, therefore, came in the form of an increased confidence and self-esteem in learning new skills, even though they were unable to transfer those skills to the world of work.

Another factor that contributed to the increased confidence and self-esteem of respondents from the Welding programme was the teaching style of the lecturer. He was patient and encouraged the learners even when they were experiencing difficulties. This prompted learners to keep trying until they mastered a particular skill. While the style of teaching and lecturer's attitude cannot be underestimated, the question of the programme's responsiveness both to the developmental needs of the learners and to the needs of the economy is highlighted.

This also brings into question whether the feeling of confidence and self-esteem expressed by respondents would endure in the face of continued unemployment. If people keep trying to find employment and are unsuccessful, it could lead to depression and a loss of self-esteem. This in return, could result in negative perceptions about learning. Even though learners in the Welding programmme mentioned that the programme had value for them, it had more to do with their limited knowledge of skills programmes than strategies implemented by the programme. Where programmes develop people's confidence and self-esteem they are more likely to engage in lifelong learning.

Respondents on the Organic farming programme and the Cooperatives also shared the view that the programme had been a positive experience for them, but when these two programmes are compared to the Welding programme they demonstrated how much more successful they were as a result of their programme design and implementation. Both these programmes included principles of SLA, for example, both were participatory and responsive. In the Organic Farming programme, the learners' confidence was developed through engaging them in the facilitation of organic farming in the community. Part of their programme involved helping others in the community to grow

food organically. This reinforced their learning and was responsive to the community in which they lived. In the Cooperatives, learners worked in groups, participated in role-play and made decisions concerning their livelihoods. In this way their confidence and self-esteem grew.

Most of the respondents from the Organic Farming programme felt there was value not only in the actual skills learnt, but in the impact it would have on the group and the community. In the Cooperatives programme, respondents mentioned the importance of working together with others towards a common goal. In many ways, this is reflective of Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998), where people make decisions and solve problems collectively. By working collectively with others to reach their goals, learners' confidence grew as they overcame the different challenges facing them. One of these challenges involved overcoming their fears in the learning situation so that they could participate and learn more effectively.

Overcoming Fears

For adult learners, the prospect of being in a classroom so late in life can create fears of being inadequate. Added to that, cultural norms and gender stereotypes can prevent learners from participating actively. In this respect, working in groups in the Cooperatives programme and the Organic programme helped learners overcome their fears. In the Cooperatives programme, people worked in groups and participated in role-play. The fear of being singled out in a class was eliminated as everyone in the groups was responsible for decisions made. In this way they discussed issues pertaining to their livelihoods and were able to learn in an atmosphere of trust.

Similarly, learners from the Organic Farming programme also felt that the programme had helped overcome their fears about farming. As noted in the findings, one of the women in the programme mentioned that she thought that farming was only for big people and Whites, but having experienced the programme, she now felt that she could do it herself. Most of them had been involved in growing vegetables, but were unaware

of how to grow food organically, or how to use the natural resources available to them. By building on their past experience of farming, the programme helped learners create a frame of reference for themselves. It also helped them to transform their previously held views not only about farming but about themselves as well. As a result of the programme, learners felt confident enough to approach the chief of the area to acquire land for farming, and Ithala Bank to negotiate funding for their farms. For people unfamiliar with the world of business, this was a milestone for their self-esteem. The programme also developed in learners a positive attitude towards their future.

The Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives programme were successful because they included livelihoods. The shortage of jobs for unskilled people has made it difficult for them to find employment in the formal sector (Mc Cord, 2003; Terreblanche, 2003). By creating opportunities for learners to engage in different forms of livelihoods, they demonstrated their responsiveness both to the developmental needs of learners as well as to the economy. Instead of focusing on a narrow training for specific job-related skills like the Welding programme, learners on both these programmes were involved either in employment or in some meaningful form of livelihood. Both the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives programme helped transform the lives of learners through their practices.

Transformative Learning

Both the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives programme helped transform the lives of learners through their practices. The Organic Farming programme used the knowledge of gardening that the learners had as a base for teaching them methods in organic farming. The learners were familiar with growing vegetables but had no experience of growing food organically. Mezirow says that when taken-for-granted assumptions are challenged through reflection and analysis, the learner's view of the world is transformed (in Fenwick, 2001). Learners expressed surprise about organic farming methods. They had been used to doing things the old way, but the idea of growing food without chemicals was exciting for them. Thinking about it opened up a

whole new avenue for them. The idea of growing food that was chemical-free meant that their families and community would benefit from what they had learned.

Learners from the Cooperatives were equally able to transform their lives. Two of the learners who were unemployed prior to the programme, were able to make meaningful changes to their lives. One learner was a manager of a cooperative and the skills he learnt gave him confidence to utilize his skills effectively. The other learner had managed to become employed as a recruiter for the skills programme and she felt a sense of achievement at being able to earn a living. A third learner was able to expand his small business and employ others. All of them went through a process of reflecting on and analyzing their situation, and then making informed decisions after engaging in discussions and negotiations during the programme.

This kind of transformative learning did not occur in the Welding programme. The learning was narrowly focused on the acquisition of specific welding skills. The skills training was top-down with learners being instructed on how to complete a particular task for the day. There were no strategies in place to assist learners once they had completed the programme, and learners were very much on their own. Although learners mentioned that they found the programme had value for them, it did not really help them to find jobs or engage in sustainable livelihoods. Those who were unemployed remained so, and those who were working, remained in the same job with scant prospects of improving themselves. The learners who were unemployed seemed unable to decide what to do with themselves and their uncertainty was evident in their body language. This was different from the learners in the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives who exuded confidence.

Informal Learning

Part of the confidence noted above arose from the learning that occurred informally in the different programmes. Informal learning is an integral part of adult education. It is unstructured but it is intentional (Marsick and Watkins, 2001). People from different

backgrounds come together in the adult learning situation bringing with them a rich source of knowledge and experience. Learners on all the programmes engaged in informal learning highlighting the social nature of adult education. In the Cooperatives programme, people chose their own groups and brainstormed ideas for their cooperative. They also interacted with other groups and chatted during their breaks, sharing ideas and information. In this way they were reflective of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), where people learn collectively. Learners who formed a cooperative to supply disposable nappies to the Department of Health in Kwazulu-Natal, for example, discovered that there was a group who were interested in manufacturing disposable nappies. They were able to interact with one another, share ideas and negotiate strategies that were mutually beneficial. People learnt both as a group and individually. One of the groups involved in a farming cooperative discovered where to buy chicks cheaper and how to take care of them when they became ill, using indigenous knowledge about using plants.

For some, the learning was very personal. One of the learners who had completed the Organic Farming programme discovered what is was like to work with older members in their class. She was 29 years old and some of the members were in their sixties. By interacting with them she discovered the importance of communicating with respect towards others. She also learnt how to address other people respectfully, and in her role as a facilitator, she learnt how to speak respectfully to people when teaching them new ways of farming. Some learners who completed the organic farming programme discovered that they could form a cooperative together. They learned to negotiate with Ithala Bank for finance and with the Spice Growers Association to grow chillies for the local market. It is unlikely that they would have discovered these skills had they not participated in the programme.

Learners who had completed the Welding programme also learned informally through chatting during their lunch breaks. They mostly spoke about job opportunities and about starting their own businesses. For one of the learners these informal discussions helped him decide that he preferred working for himself rather than being employed in a company. In this way, learners enriched their knowledge and expanded their network to

improve their lives. Although the value of a programme for learners is important, the ability to transfer skills learnt in the programme to livelihoods is critical in determining the success of a particular programme.

5.4 Transferability of Skills to Livelihoods

The crucial point of any skills programmes is whether the skills learnt can, in fact, be transferable to the world of work. This raised questions about the relevance of the programme as well as its responsiveness to the needs of learners and the economy. The National Skills Development Strategy as well as the FET Act of 1998 highlight the need for programmes to be responsive and relevant to the communities they serve. In this respect, the design and implementation of a programme impacted on the extent to which they were responsive. Two principles of SLA: partnerships and the linking of micro and macro-level activities, which were used by the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives programme contributed towards the success of transferring skills from the programme to livelihoods.

Partnerships

Besides being participatory and responsive, programmes used other strategies to create opportunities for learners to transfer skills to their livelihoods included partnerships. The formation of partnerships was one such strategy. Two types of partnerships were identified in the study. The first was the partnership created among learners in each of the programmes. The second type of partnership existed between the FET programmes, government and other organizations. Both these types of partnerships operated at different levels to promote learning and growth.

The partnerships that emerged within the group attending a particular programme tended to be informal, and in many instances, could be compared to the communities of practice advocated by Wenger (1998), because there was a collective process of learning taking place. Respondents who attended the Cooperatives programme mentioned that they used

to chat during their breaks and exchange information informally. Informal partnerships were created between the different groups of cooperatives in which learners discussed issues pertaining to their livelihoods and they learned negotiating skills. Three of the respondents who had completed the Organic Farming programme had formed a cooperative themselves with a view to buying land and growing chillies to supply the Spice Growers Association. This contrasted with partnerships that existed between the FET programmes and other stakeholders in Education and Labour. These partnerships involved a binding agreement between the two parties involved in it.

The most significant partnership was the relationship between the Department of Labour and the Department of Education. Previously, each department had operated separately, and even though they are working together problems still arise resulting in a breakdown of communication between the two departments. Nevertheless, the introduction of the National Skills Development Strategy means that the two departments need to collaborate on the issue of skills training in order to make skills programmes more responsive to the economy. Most, if not all FET colleges have formed partnerships with industry and other organizations to promote a sharing of ideas and skills. Where FET colleges have partnerships with industry, learners have access to their expertise as well. This was not evident in the case of the Welding programme. Although the lecturer mentioned that they knew what was needed in industry, learners were not exposed to it.

The partnership between Sivananda College and the Rainman Landcare Foundation to train learners in organic farming methods at the Mpumalanga campus proved to be very effective. While the college was responsible for the registration of the learners and administration, the Rainman Landcare Foundation was responsible for the development of material and the implementation of the programme. In this way the expert knowledge of the Rainman Landcare Foundation in organic farming methods was imparted to the learners. The Cooperatives programme at Thekwini College also engaged in partnerships. This programme had formed a partnership with the Dora Thamena Cooperative Centre, which recruited learners for the skills programme. A second partnership existed between the programme and the Department of Finance and

Economic Development, and the third partnership involved Ithala Bank. Once learners had completed their business plans successfully, they were referred to Ithala Bank where they were able to secure financial assistance for their cooperatives. In this way, the different partnerships contributed towards learners' ability to transfer skills to their livelihoods.

Linking of Micro and Macro-level Activities

Poverty reduction programmes initiated by international aid agencies such as the Department for International Development and the United Nations Development Programme have shown that where micro and macro-level activities are coordinated, programmes tend to have a successful livelihood outcome (Hussein, 2002; UNDP, 1991). The Organic Farming programme and the Cooperative programme were both linked to the National Skills Development Strategy. Two of the objectives of the strategy that define skills programmes are:

- to stimulate and support skills development in small businesses, and

- to promote skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods, and to assist new entrants into employment
  (Dept. of Labour, 2001,p.7)

The preamble to the FET Act of 1998 also points out that programmes, in pursuit of excellence, need to respond to labour and community needs. The Organic Farming Programme that was run concurrently with the Facilitator Learnership was pegged at NQF level 2. It aimed at assisting individuals to create sustainable livelihoods for themselves. In this way it reflected the objectives of the National Skills Development Strategy and the FET Act of 1998.

This was also true of Cooperatives programme that aimed at providing learners with tools needed to create their own livelihoods. The Welding programme, while linked to the National Skills Development Strategy in terms of providing training for scarce skills, did

not appear to fully support the learners. This was a sharp contrast to the other two programmes. The Welding programme fell short in the transference of skills to the world of work. While learners had expectations of finding employment on completion of the course, this did not materialize. One of the reasons for their lack of employment could be attributed to the economic situation in the country. There were not enough jobs for those who entered the job market (Altman, 2004). While labour demands had benefited skills workers at the upper end of the occupational ladder, those who were unskilled remained jobless (Horner, 2004).

Most learners on skills programmes such as the Welding programme, do not have access to information and statistics regarding labour and employment opportunities. Very often, they are guided by word of mouth and what they hear from friends and family. It is therefore the responsibility of the college to ensure that their programmes are responsive to industry and that they give direction to their learners.

What distinguished one programme from another in terms of improving learners' chances of enhancing their livelihoods, was the programme design and strategies implemented by the respective programmes. A key element in the success of the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives was the focus on livelihoods. Skills learnt on these programmes could be applied directly to the learners' lives and provided them with an option outside the formal sector that is quite saturated at the moment. By teaching people how to use available resources, the Organic Farming programme basically put food on the table for them instead of them having to go out and look for work. Similarly, the Cooperatives programme taught people the skill of working collaboratively with others to achieve their goals. They backed up people's skills with access to funding, thus providing the support needed to start a business. The designs and strategies used by the different programmes are discussed next.

Programme Design and Strategies Implemented by the Different Skills Programmes

The result of the study has revealed that there is a strong correlation between programme design and learners ability to transfer skills to livelihoods. This was a key element in differentiating the Welding programme from the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives programme. Even though the programme had been in existence for some time, no evaluations were conducted in terms of its responsiveness and relevance. The programme appeared to be a continuation of the skills programmes offered by technical and vocational colleges prior to the merger in 2002. While training was being given, it was not responsive to the needs of the learner, nor was it responsive to the economy. One of criticisms of the old technical colleges was that their skills programmes were not relevant to the world of work, and that training was done in isolation (Dept. of Education, 2004; Angelis 2001). It is this kind of programme that FET colleges need to phase out and move towards one that is holistic and responsive to the developmental needs of learners.

Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

Programmes that are modeled on SLA principles tend to be holistic and sustainable in the long run. Part of the reason for its success lies in the fact that it is built on the strengths available rather than focusing on what is lacking. The four strengths are the human, social, physical, natural and financial (Hussein, 2002; de Satge, 2002). By building on their strengths, programmes can become more dynamic and sustainable. To what extent did programmes include principles of SLA?

The Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives did have elements of SLA. To begin with, both were responding to the issues of unemployment and poverty highlighted by the National Skills Development Strategy. Both were also concerned with developing the livelihoods of learners rather than simply training them. Although the Welding programme appeared to be responsive to the community it served by offering the course

on demand, in reality, they did learners a disservice by accepting their fees and not providing them with relevant information and guidance in terms of their livelihoods.

In this respect the strategies used by the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives differed significantly from the Welding programme. Both were dynamic. Although it is too early to assess how sustainable the programmes were, it was clear that respondents had benefited in terms of improving their livelihoods. The Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives were involved in partnerships with other organizations and had links to structures in government, so there was a greater cohesion with regard to the programme design. The output of these programmes therefore tended to be much stronger than the Welding one.

5.5 Challenges faced by the programmes in terms of assisting learners improve their livelihoods

a) *The Land Issue*

One of the major challenges that was identified by learners on the Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives programme was the land issue. It is expected that once learners had completed the organic farming programme, or the farming cooperative, they would want to use their skills in farming enterprises. However, in the case of the organic Farming programme, they had to seek permission of the chief of the area before they could obtain land. Then only could they access funding from Ithala Bank. This made things difficult for the learners who were eager to start farming. Most of them felt strongly about this issue, and felt that local government could do more in assisting them instead of making them wait.

This sentiment was also expressed by respondents from the Cooperatives programme who were involved in a farming cooperative. They had leased land from the municipality and were prevented from continuing with their work by an employee at the municipality

who had delayed processing the renewal of the lease. This resulted in them being unable to connect electricity and water to their premises and losing business. Thus, lack of information from the respective programmes and bureaucratic structures were hampering the progress of these learners.

b) *Learner Support*

Another important challenge identified by learners, was a lack of learner support. None of the colleges offered adult learners support in the form of counseling, placement and tracking. Learners who had completed the Organic Farming programme had been placed in the course after they had been through a process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) by the Rainman Landcare Foundation and were introduced to the Land Bank and Ithala Bank to compile business plans, but they were not given information on how to access land for farming and running their own businesses. Neither were they given any information on combating HIV/AIDS, a disease prevalent in the Mpumalanga area. Although this was not discussed with learners during the interviews, HIV/AIDS has affected people's work and livelihoods in a negative way so this element needed to be considered as part of learner support. None of the other programmes incorporated HIV/Aids as part of their strategy or design either.

In the Welding programme, there were no strategies to place learners once they had completed the programme. Neither was any counseling or information provided to help learners develop their own businesses. None of the programmes tracked their learners. Most Higher Education institutions track their learners to establish their progress and find out where they are employed. The FET colleges that I studied did not have a tracking system in place, making it difficult to find out if their learners were employed or engaged in some form of livelihood.

Student support strategies like counseling and placement happen on an ad–hoc basis at the different colleges for full-time students. There are no policies in place yet defining the role of student support in assisting students. Nevertheless, in most cases full-time

students do still have access to counseling. Learners on adult education and training programmes do not have any support in this respect. What the lack of a learner support for adult learners at the three FET colleges suggests is that programmes for adult learners still operate on the periphery at FET colleges. They are not yet considered an integral part of their structure. The National Skills Development Strategy and the FET Act of 1998 call for programmes to be responsive to the needs of marginalized. It is an important point considering the high rate of unemployment and poverty in Kwazulu-Natal.

c) *Language and Educational Background*

Although this was not a major problem with the Organic Farming programme and the Welding Programme, it was an issue with the Cooperatives programme. The Organic Farming programme selected learners who fulfilled the RPL process. Learners were thus able to understand theory in English at NQF level 2, which is the equivalent of grades ten and eleven. With the learners on the Welding programme, there was very little theory and this was done on the board, followed by practical exercises. In the case of the Cooperatives however, language and the educational background of learners created barriers for learners. Most of the learners on this programme were unemployed and many were non-literate in English. They could follow simple instructions but they had difficulty with abstract concepts in English. However, the lessons were conducted in English and the manuals from which the learners worked were also written in English.

Another difficulty identified was that some learners could not understand the concepts involved in the business plan because they had nothing to relate these concepts to. They were completely unfamiliar to them. One learner for example, could not understand the concept of advertising a business. Despite him being exposed to advertising in the informal settlement where he lived, he was only familiar with word-of-mouth advertising among people in his area. He therefore experienced difficulties in drawing up an advertisement for his business as was required by the business plan. What this points to is that people who are educated have a better advantage than those who are non-literate.

It also created tension among learners in the group between learners who were familiar with English and the different concepts and those who were not. In some cases those who were literate became impatient with others and this lead to personality clashes with some learners dropping out of the programme.

d) *Time allocated to programmes*

Most non-formal skills programmes have a time frame in which the programme has to be completed. This caused difficulties for learners in the Organic Farming programme and the Welding programme. Learners who had completed the Welding programme felt that not enough time was allocated to practice. On each of the six Saturdays, a new skill was taught and learners practiced for that day, but there were no opportunities to practice during the week. The hours of experience needed to be employable was not achieved and this in turn created barriers for learners in terms of employment in the formal sector.

For some of the learners in the Organic Farming programme, running the Organic Farming programme concurrently with the Facilitator's programme created difficulties for learners. Although they managed to complete both courses, they struggled through them. Having to work out in the fields after lunch also proved difficult for the female respondents. They found the afternoons extremely tiring especially as the classes were during summer. There is also the danger of sunburn associated with working under the midday sun and this calls for protective measures such as rearranging time schedules in the field.

The challenges mentioned above highlight those areas of the respective skills programmes that impact negatively on learners' ability to improve their circumstances.

5.6 SUMMARY

The findings that were analyzed in Chapter 5 related to the Research questions. What emerged was that the design and strategies used in a programme contributed towards the success or failure of the programme to improve the livelihoods of the learners. The greatest success was achieved in those programmes that included principles of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and that focused on developing new livelihoods for their learner. The Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives programme tended to be more responsive to the developmental needs of the learners and in line with the National Skills Development Strategy. Their programme design and the strategies they implemented were linked to SLA, and they incorporated theories of adult learning. In contrast, the Welding programme was reminiscent of the skills programmes offered prior to the merger of the FET colleges in 2002. These programmes were criticized for being unresponsive and conducted in isolation. What this reveals is that there is a need for FET colleges to develop programmes that link learning to livelihoods. Programmes that include the principles of SLA also tend to be more holistic and responsive to the needs of marginalized communities.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the conclusion to the study as well as recommendations. The chapter is divided into two sections. The conclusion is presented first, followed by suggestions.

6.2 Conclusion

In 2002, technical colleges and vocational colleges in South Africa were merged in Further Education and Training Institutions. There are fifty clusters in South Africa, with nine in Kwazulu-Natal. Most, if not all the FET colleges offer non-formal skills programmes. At the three FET colleges in the Durban area, non-formal skills programmes target learners who have very little or no formal education. Most of the adult learners attending skills programmes are marginalized because they were excluded from educational opportunities in the past. Many of them are unemployed and in some case, living in poverty. The National Skills Development Strategy, a document and strategy that promotes skills development, as well as the FET Act of 1998, state that skills training programmes should support individuals and communities that have been marginalized in the past to find employment in the formal sector or to develop some form of livelihood.

The objective of this study is to establish whether learners were able to utilize skills learnt in the programmes to improve their lives. I also wanted to establish the effectiveness of the different programmes and gain insight into learners' perspectives of the programmes that they attended. I hope that my study will add to the growing knowledge and understanding of non-formal skills programmes at FET colleges.

I selected three different programmes for my study: a welding programme held at the Swinton Road campus of Coastal college. At Sivananda College, I chose the organic farming programme at the Mpumalanga campus, and at Thekwini College, I chose the cooperatives programme. All three programmes were very different, and I thought it would be interesting to know learners perceptions about whether the different programmes had contributed towards securing a sustainable livelihood or employment for themselves. The theoretical framework and model for the study, was informed by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. This model has been used successfully by international aid agencies such as DFID and UNDP in developing countries, and is based on principles of being people-centred, responsive and participatory, with activities at the micro-and macro-levels being linked, conducted in partnerships, sustainable and dynamic, built on strengths and holistic. I therefore felt that this model would be appropriate for skills programmes at FET colleges.

I chose the qualitative research paradigm as I was more interested in understanding learners perceptions about the different programmes, rather that obtaining quantitative details. My methodology included a case study and the sample selected included males and females; older learners and young adults; people who were employed and people who were unemployed, and as those who had dropped out of the programmes. Primary data consisted of interviews with learners who had completed the programme. I also examined documentation linked to the skills programmes, interviewed college personnel and made observations about the different sites of delivery as well as the learners themselves. One of the challenges I faced was trying to find respondents for the study, but I had the assistance of personnel working at the different campuses, and I managed to track down learners for the study. Despite the many challenges, the study proved to be exciting because of the different people that I interviewed.

A total of eighteen respondents were interviewed. Of that number, four were employed in the formal sector, nine were involved in some form of livelihood, three remained unemployed, and two had dropped out. It was quite interesting to note that of the four who were employed in the formal sector, two were still doing the same job they were

prior to joining the programme. They had expected to improve their status once they had completed the programme, but this did not occur. All those involved in livelihoods expressed satisfaction with what they were doing. Respondents in the Organic Farming programme, as well as respondents involved in the cooperatives at Thekwini College expressed satisfaction at being able to engage in a livelihood of their choice. Being able to work for themselves and take care of their families and community gave them a sense of power in their lives.

The findings related to the research questions, which were answered adequately. What emerged was that there was a correlation between the way in a programme operated and the satisfaction rate expressed by the learners in terms of their ability to transfer skills to employment in the formal sector or to some form of livelihood. In this respect, respondents from the organic farming project and from the cooperatives expressed most satisfaction. Although 96 percent of the learners felt that they had benefited from the different programmes in terms of improved confidence and self-esteem, respondents from the welding programme felt that not enough support was given to assist them to find work in the formal sector, or to develop a livelihood. Once they had completed the course, they were responsible for finding their own work.

This contrasts with the organic farming and cooperatives programmes, where learners were given tools needed for employment and for creating a livelihood. On both programmes learners learnt about leadership, negotiating and conflict-management. This component was in addition to their theoretical and practical training. Both these programmes also supported learners in accessing funding for their livelihoods. The cooperatives sent successful business plans to Ithala Bank for learners while the organic farming programme included visits by the Land and Ithala Banks to address learners and guide them with their business plans. Respondents felt that the support provided by these two programmes helped them in their livelihoods. This highlights the need for this kind of intervention when dealing with people that have been marginalized.

Major challenges which respondents identified as hindering their progress were the land issue, language issue and counseling, placement and tracking of learners. To a lesser extent, time allocated for practical training was also identified. Most of the respondents in the organic farming programme and one respondent in the cooperatives programme mentioned the difficulties they faced in trying to obtain land to develop their livelihoods. Insufficient knowledge about how to access land, as well as bureaucratic structures had created barriers for the respondents in accessing land. This is an area that requires attention.

Language and educational background were challenges mentioned by respondents from the cooperatives programme. A large proportion of learners who attended this programme have difficulty in communicating in English. For most of them, Zulu is their first language and this presented a problem when it came to understanding concepts in the financial world. For those who are non-lliterate in English, this posed a more serious problem, and probably contributed to the dropout rate. The programme would need to take this into account for future learners.

Respondents from the welding programme felt that they would have benefited if there had been a counseling service to assist them in deciding future prospects available to them. Some of them talked about starting their own business, but had no idea how to begin. Respondents also mentioned that if they were placed in industry, it would have made it easier for them. Most of them pay the fees required but struggle for things like transport and phone calls. All of them mentioned that they had not been contacted by the college once they had completed the course to enquire if they were working or not. This tied in with the lecturer's statement that the college only trained learners. The Skills Development Strategy promotes the idea that skills programmes be responsive to the needs of marginalized learners and to the economy. It is therefore necessary for the programme to address this issue.

Respondents from the organic farming programme and the welding programme felt that the time allocated for practical training was too short. For the female respondents in

Mpumlanga, having to do practicals after lunch when the sun was hottest, made it difficult and tiring for them. Although they managed to complete tasks allocated to them, they would have preferred it when it was cooler. This concludes the section on the conclusion of the study. The suggestions are presented next.

6.3 Suggestions

Developing Livelihoods

In my discussion about FET colleges in Chapter 1, I mentioned the Minister of Education's speech regarding the role of FET colleges. Naledi Pandor's vision for the new FET is that it should be a 'new kind of college that will be able to focus on job creation and skills agenda that are key to South Africa's future success' (Department of Education, 2004,p.7). In this respect I would like to suggest that FET colleges focus more on developing programmes that involve the creation of livelihoods. The Organic Farming programme and the Cooperatives programme demonstrated the potential that exists is the creation of livelihoods for marginalized people, and FET colleges are well-placed do this. Colleges already offer non-formal programmes in the urban areas and some like Sivananda and Thekwini colleges, have expanded to the rural areas. Furthermore, FET colleges have the resources, infrastructure and support from the Department of Education to offer programmes that are responsive to the needs of the learners and community.

Incorporating the Principles of Sustainable Livelihoods Approach into Non-formal Skills Programmes

Whether it was intentional or not, the organic farming programme and the cooperatives have incorporated elements of the SLA into the design of their programmes. While SLA may be an ideal FET colleges may not be able to achieve completely, if colleges adopted the principles as a bench-mark for future programmes, it could pave the way for

programmes that are responsive, creative and holistic. It would also link up with the objectives of the National Skills Development Strategy in terms of poverty reduction and a reduction in unemployment in South Africa.

Evaluation of Programmes

If programmes are evaluated on a regular basis, it would be easier for FET colleges to establish whether they are responsive to the needs of learners. If programmes are found to be working in isolation, they can then be improved or discontinued.

Learner Support and Tracking

If FET colleges provided learners with support in the form of counseling and if they tracked learners who completed a programme, they would become more responsive to learners' needs and to the economy. Most learners in non-formal programmes do not have access to newspapers and information regarding the economy and most of them are struggling to make ends meet. The need for counseling is therefore very strong. FET colleges can help make people aware of different options open to them, so that they make informed decisions. If learners were given information regarding expectations of the workplace, they would present themselves better at job interviews.

Tracking is used by institutions of Higher Education to find out whether their learners are employed, and if they are, where. In this way, they are able to establish where the needs are in the economy and adjust their programmes accordingly. FET colleges could do the same. This would provide colleges with information regarding the success of their programmes.

Land

For learners interested in developing farming cooperatives there is a need to provide access to information. Programmes could possibly include this aspect during the training,

but government structures such as the Department of Agriculture could also provide information and demarcate land. Respondents had to seek permission from chiefs in the area. If the Department of Agriculture obtain permission for certain tracts of land to be set aside for people interested in farming, then, when learners complete the programme, they have access to land and they do not have to struggle.

Language and Educational Background

Learners attending non-formal skills programmes are usually people with very little or no formal education. Programmes need to be sensitive to this issue. One way in which to alleviate this problem is to print learner guides into isiZulu. If both English and isiZulu were incorporated into work material, learners would be able to develop their language skills as well. Screening learners to establish their level of understanding could be undertaken, so programmes could address needs at the different levels and possibly prevent learners from dropping out. Programmes could then introduce different levels so that there is continuity in learning. This would ensure that programmes provide skills that are sustainable and responsive.

This brings to conclusion the study on non-formal skills programmes at FET colleges in the Durban area. It is hoped that this study will add to an understanding of skills programmes in Durban and Kwazulu-Natal.

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Addendum 1

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Background:

1. Name
2. Age
3. Sex
4. Address
5. Tel.No.
6. Employment/Livelihood
7. Educational background

Skills Programme:

Why did you join the programme?

Please tell me some of the things you learnt in the programme.

Please tell me some of the activities you were involved in, in the programme.

Besides the technical/physical skills, what other skills did you learn in the programme?

What were some of the positive aspects of the programme?

Name some of the difficulties that you experienced.

In what way did the skills you learnt in the programme help you find employment in the formal sector, or aassist you in your livelihood?

Is there anything else you would like to share about the programme?

Addendum 2

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ agree to participate in the dissertation of Gnanam Pillay, a Masters student in the Department of Adult Education and Community Development at the University of Kwazulu Natal(Student Number 200299622). The research is entitled *The Role of Skills Development Programmes at FET colleges in improving the livelihoods of marginalized learners: a case study of three colleges in the Durban area.*

The aim of the research is to establish whether learners involved in short skills programmes at the Further Education and Training colleges in the Durban area are able to utilize knowledge gained to either find employment in the formal sector or improve their own lives through sustainable income-generating activities. Primary data will be obtained through interviews with the learners and through focus group discussions. Secondary data will be obtained through interviews with key personnel on programmes and an analysis of documents. All information received from respondents will be treated as confidential. The privacy of respondents will be respected, and names will be changed to assure anonymity. Any respondent who feels uncomfortable with the research will be allowed to withdraw.

I acknowledge that:

1. The nature and purpose of the research was explained fully to me
2. I was assured that any information that I give will be treated confidentially
3. I was informed that I would be free to withdraw from the research if I wish to

I therefore declare that my participation in the above research is voluntary.

_____   _____
SIGNATURE   DATE

CHAPTER THREE

CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER FIVE

CHAPTER SIX

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DECLARATION

I, Gnanam Pillay, hereby declare that this dissertation, which was conducted under the supervision of Dr Sylvia Kaye, is my original work that is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Adult and Higher Education.

Signature of the student

Signed in ....Durban...........on this day ...13.......of ...April 2006.........

Signature of the supervisor

Signed in ....Durban...........on this day ...13.......of ...April 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late parents, Dolly and G.N. Moodley. Thank you for all your love and guidance. May your souls be guided by light and love.