

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Growth at the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work
in Africa: Power Partnerships and Policies.**

By

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Declaration

I, Mr **Mfazo Clifford Madondo**, declare that this dissertation of **51,145 words** (Chapters 1 – 6 only, excluding reference list and appendices), unless indicated and specified contrary to the text, is my original work as follows:

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Date

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Palesa Leuta-Madondo, and to my parents. My wife, this dissertation is symbolic of the first 3 years of our marriage. Do you realise that when I started this Master of Commerce we had just gotten married? This research sets out a new page and a new direction in my life. Of course, I need not mention the many challenges that this project brought on us, including not going shopping for many months. I hope we live to tell this story and see the fruits of this work together for the many years ahead of us. Leadership development can never be better than being together for life!

My parents; father, Mr A T Madondo, my step-mother, Ms A. Moyo (aka MaMadondo), my mother, Mrs O Kabaya back at home in Gokwe, Zimbabwe, and my mother-in-law - my South African mother, Mrs V R Leuta. All things concerning and regarding you dear parents came to a standstill because of this project. Yes, it was this dissertation that took me in a different direction altogether.

My wife and my parents, I am because all of you have made me what I am, and I am going to be because you all believe and hope me to be!

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Abstract

Employees' perceptions regarding the role of powerful partners in developing the managerial leadership of small and recipient organisations are vital, given the research developments regarding partnerships. This research has focused on the power that governs the relationships between large and self-governing funding organisations and dependent recipient organisations. The emergence of developing managerial leadership, linked to powerful partnership systems, appears to be a vital field for research in the developed world. For instance, this is evident in the United States of America but not in Africa, especially in the sub-Saharan region. Partnership is simply conceived of as a relationship between one or more NGOs, and in such a relationship, power is understood as being one partner having the ability to influence another partner, or other partners, to do what they would otherwise not do. Intentional and observable power between organisations often results in a diverse and complex managerial leadership and organisational life for small and recipient organisations. In this regard, the recipient partner organisations striving for leadership, management- and organisational growth, and change, commonly struggle with internal and external power influences embedded in powerful partnerships. Sub-Saharan Africa's, especially South Africa's, development NGOs and funding partnerships are not an exception to this challenge.

This dissertation is an embryonic qualitative but objective enquiry into managers' and employees' perceptions regarding the influences of donors and the University of KwaZulu-Natal on growth at the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa. The research adopted the narrative and interpretive paradigm, combined with the qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. Three data collection methods were used: 1) archival; 2) face-to-face interviews; and 3) participant observation.

The Sinomlando Centre is an organisation originally conceived as a research and community development entity, based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. While existing within, and depending on the University, the Centre predominantly relies on international funding partnerships. This environment is solely driven by the founding

director, who steers the organisation towards its full cognisance. It is this very environment that inspired the question of employees' perceptions regarding the influence of these powerful partnerships, in augmenting leadership and management at the Sinomlando Centre.

This research project draws on library-, internet-, and archival searches to explore concepts pertaining to: systems and systems thinking; behaviour and learning in organisations; leadership and management development, and power and partnerships. This research harnesses the findings generated from the interviews and participant observation studies, with the academic studies linked to these concepts. This is done in order to discuss and highlight the fact that the employees at the Sinomlando Centre think and confirm that the donors, the Director, and the University, are all systems that influence their organisation.

The research found that the University, the donors, and the leadership, are all system structures that limit the Sinomlando Centre's organisational and leadership growth. Thus, in consideration of the existence of the Sinomlando Centre within the University, the dependence on foreign funding partnerships, and the reliance on the Director, this dissertation concludes that developing managerial leadership can be possible only if the organisation considers: 1) re-positioning itself and self-organisation within its environment of existence; 2) openness to change-management; and 3) widening internal opportunities for managing powerful partnerships.

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome
ARV	Antiretroviral
CBP	Capacity Building Programme
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCFD	Comité Catholique la Faim et pour le Développement
CERES	Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social
CERI	Children Emergence Relief International
CHART	Collaborative for HIV and AIDS, Religion and Theology
CHE	Centre for Higher Education
CLOOCA	Close Out Organisational Capacity Assessment
COP	Country Operational Plan
DSD	Department of Social Development
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
FY	Fiscal Year
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HR	Human Resources
KZNCC	KwaZulu-Natal Council of Churches
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NMCF	Nelson Mandela Children's Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental organisation
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NRF	National Research Foundation
NuPITA	New Partners Initiative Technical Assistance
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief
PMB	Pietermaritzburg
SANPAD	South Africa Netherlands research Programme on Alternatives in Development
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority

UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Growth at the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa is influenced by donor-NGO partnerships and the policy systems of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This research aims at gaining an understanding of the perceptions of Sinomlando Centre staff members, insofar as how power in funding partnerships and policies influences organisational and leadership development. As such, the objectives for this Chapter are to introduce the scope of the research by outlining the motivation for the study, the background to the Sinomlando Centre, the objective of the research, the research questions, the study's limitations, and an overview of the study.

1.2 Motivation for the study

This study seeks to contribute to the organisational life, the leadership, and management development at the Sinomlando Centre. Since this organisation is an entity under both the NGO- and the academic sectors, the issues that are of research relevance are organisational leadership and management growth. The organisation thrives in an environment dominated by funding partnerships on the one hand, while on the other hand, it exists under an academic-institutional policy system. It is therefore important to research the effects of power on Sinomlando's organisational and managerial leadership, within the broader discourse of NGO partnerships in the South African context.

This research will benefit six role players. The first and foremost beneficiary is the Sinomlando Centre. This organisation will be able to think and reflect strategically on the specific drivers of its organisational life in the following areas: its organisational systems and systems-thinking development for staff members; the gaps in, and nature of

its organisational governance and administrative structure and style; its inclusive organisational policy formulation, and how it links with the broader organisational design; and its need for funding partnerships.

The University and the funders are also envisaged to benefit. As the second beneficiary, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will be able to understand the organisational design and functioning of some of the small entities that operate from, and under its wings, and which have one foot in community development work and another in the academy - like the Sinomlando Centre. The funders and the funding organisations are the third beneficiaries. These stakeholders will be able to ascertain whether growth, continuity, and organisation at the Sinomlando Centre are worthy of their financial support.

The founders and leadership at the Sinomlando Centre, and this researcher, are the fourth and fifth beneficiaries respectively. The founders and leadership at the Sinomlando Centre will be able to revisit and reflect on the current organisational life, environment, and strategic management processes. Specifically, the leadership has to re-examine key organisational growth points, such as: organisational structures that include ownership by staff members; succession planning; management coordination and change management; organisational technologies; and human resource systems. All these key areas should give the Sinomlando Centre the advantage of academic identity and funding credibility.

The researcher, as the fifth role player, is able to better-understand the organisational culture of the Sinomlando Centre and the associated project concepts, such as: power; partnerships; systems and systems thinking; and organisational leadership and management. That is to say that the researcher will broadly understand the interplay between systems elements, and the way that they influence each other to produce both desirable or undesirable organisational learning and behaviour at the Sinomlando Centre.

Finally, research and studies focusing on issues of organisational growth and systems-thinking development among senior staff members seems to be lacking in South African studies, particularly in the development NGO sector. Thus this study may be one of the

few South African studies in the discipline of leadership, to have shown an interest in organisational and managerial leadership capacity in the development NGO sector.

1.3 Background: the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa

The Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa is a brainchild of Prof. Philippe Denis, existing under the wing of the University of KwaZulu-Natal for over 15 years. It was founded in 1996 as an oral history project, the Sinomlando Project, based at the-then School of Theology, University of Natal, to conduct research on the histories of Christian leaders in Natal Province (Denis 2001, p.6; and Denis and Makiwane 2003, p.66). In the year 2000, another sister project to this oral history project, called Memory Box, was established to focus on HIV and AIDS in the communities of KwaZulu-Natal (Denis and Makiwane 2003, p.66). Around 2003/2004, the project was reconceived and developed into a Research Centre/Unit of the School of Religion and Theology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, and it was then named the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa.

Since then the Centre adopted a two-fold identity: 1) a research centre/unit of the University, whereby the University considered Prof Denis as the main investigator/researcher, and others were considered research collaborators or research assistants (Denis 2005, p.3); and 2) a community development NGO in which Prof Denis is the founder and Director driving community engagement with other NGOs, as well as funding- and donor partnership activities. Organisational governance and structure capacities rely on the directorship role of Prof Denis, together with the leadership of the School of Religion and Theology (Denis 2009). The Sinomlando Board is appointed at the School-level, with the directorship role of Prof Denis as key to all processes of governance. Human resources and financial information systems of the Centre are managed by the University's Financial and Human Resources departments (Denis 2005, p.1 and Garner 2009, p.14). Finally, the annual budget in rand value, ranges between 1 million and 2.5 million, and is externally sourced and internally controlled by Prof Denis.

The Sinomlando Centre does not exactly define the phrase ‘in Africa’ in its name. Only the word ‘*sinomlando*’ is defined, which is an isiZulu word that translates to English as ‘we have a history’. The missing definition of the phrase ‘in Africa’ is further clarified on the Sinomlando webpage:

Centre has since become one of the leading research and training institutions for Memory Work in South Africa (www.sinomlando.ukzn.ac.za accessed 18 November 2010).

The Institutional Audit portfolio report refers to the UKZN Strategic Plan 2007 - 2016 (2007) and states:

Faculties and schools were asked to consider and provide evidence... how the concept of African Scholarship and African-led are being institutionalised... (Institutional Audit portfolio report 2008, p.45).

It seems that the Sinomlando Centre, as a research unit of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, applies the phrase ‘in Africa’ as a strategy to be relevant to the vision of the University and the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics (where it is housed), namely ‘African scholarship’. Therefore, this research considers this relevance to the Centre and its application of ‘in Africa’ - as per the University’s vision - throughout the dissertation.

1.4 The focus of the study and problem statement

This research focuses on the trends of perceptions about organisational capacity at the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa - from here on referred to as ‘the Sinomlando Centre’, ‘the Sinomlando’, or ‘the Centre’. The organisation relies on external funding by partnering with donor NGOs, and it also operates under the wings of the University of KwaZulu-Natal - from here on referred to as ‘the University’. Funders decide on the funding periods as well as on the beneficiaries of the fund, and also possess mechanisms such as time frames and monitoring and reporting expectations for the Sinomlando Centre. The partnerships and donor organisations’ decisions drive the way that this organisation up-scales or down-scales its work, and the way in which it employs and deploys its staff members. The decisions made at University-level influence

the way that the Sinomlando Centre governs and manages its resources. In addition to the organisation's reliance on funders and the University, since 2008 there have been discussions in the organisation about the succession planning process. These discussions were prompted by the fact that Sinomlando's internal decision-making strategies were seen to be made and driven solely by the founding Director. Staff members were observed not to be involved in funding matters, nor in matters generated by the University's systems, and it was therefore realised that increasing the organisation's leadership and management capacity was necessary.

In this regard, this research explores managers' and employees' perceptions of Sinomlando's organisational, leadership and management capabilities as being matters influenced by the University, by the donors/funders, and by the founding leadership. That is, the research explores the perceptions about Sinomlando organisational design, operations, financial management, governance, and partnerships.

1.5 The objectives of the study

The chief objective of this research is to identify the perceptions of the Sinomlando Centre staff members regarding the way in which funding from partnerships and University policies influences the development of the organisation. This can be broken into three further minor objectives:

- To explore each staff member's descriptions of the attributes of the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa, in relation to the funders and the University;
- To investigate each staff member's perceptions of the Sinomlando Centre's leadership, management structure, and -style, in relation to the influences of funding partnerships and the University's policies;
- To evaluate the influences of funding partnerships and the University's policies on the Sinomlando Centre's organisational growth.

1.6 Research questions

The main research question is: how is leadership and management capacity at the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa influenced by the powers of both the funding partnership and the University of KwaZulu-Natal's policy systems?

The above question generated the following further three research questions:

1. How do employees perceive the design and functioning of the Sinomlando Centre when working with donor partnerships, and at the same time, existing under the University's policies?
2. How do the Sinomlando Centre staff members perceive the power of the funding partnership system, and the power of the University policy system, over the Centre's Leadership and Management?
3. To what extent do power influences stemming from funding partnerships and the University's policies, contribute to organisational development of the Sinomlando Centre?

1.7 Limitations of the study

Like all other studies, this research is a work in progress. There have been time constraints, whereby studying and working slowed down the research pace. As a result, this research was completed over three years. Though the sampling technique and the sample size are correct, combining part-time workers (fieldworkers), middle management, and senior management in the sampling posed challenges to the free-flow of information during the interviews.

The ‘insider’ researcher role may have caused some suspicion on behalf of the Sinomlando management and the employees in general. For example, during the individual interviews, some of the respondents in senior management were quite careful to differentiate between divulging what might be considered too much and too little information. Some of the respondents in the middle to lower ranks regarded the interview process suspiciously. This was understandable considering that this researcher is one of the senior staff members at the Centre. Some interviewees during the interviews, however, clearly articulated their misgivings regarding the Centre, while the misgivings of others were evident in the evasiveness of their verbatim.

These limitations were eased by proper and clear communication with the Sinomlando Centre’s leadership and management, in addition to the researcher’s tact, where he would approach individual participants well in advance for appointments. Where possible, the participants would receive the Informed Consent and Release form to read through before the day of the interviews. On the day of the interviews, the Informed Consent and Release form would be read and explained to the participants. The participants would be allowed time to understand the contents before signing the form, and then would be introduced to the interview process again and asked whether they wished to continue or not.

1.8 Dissertation overview

An exploration of organisational growth, partnerships and policies related to the Sinomlando Centre leadership and management options - vis-à-vis the impact of funding and the University’s policies - needed to be conducted. Therefore, an assessment of the scholarship in organisational systems and systems thinking, learning and behaviour in organisations, powerful partnerships in development, and leadership development, was made. Library searches and the internet assisted this researcher in obtaining a substantial amount of literature around these concepts, and the conventions of the Harvard in-text referencing system and references used, were considered in this dissertation.

The study adopted a qualitative research methodology and design which uses interview and participatory data collection methods. The sample size was purposeful, with the research participants being identified and approached from within the organisation. The individual interview and observation notes were reviewed thematically, and compiled and presented as data, in an effort to provide a qualitative but objective aggregate measure of the perceptions of Sinomlando's staff. Out of this data, specific trends were identified, presented as findings, and thereafter analysed as a narrative of the Sinomlando Centre.

The findings are discussed in an effort to make conclusions and in order to identify factual evidence about the influence of the funding partnership system - and of the University's policy system - on the organisational growth of the Sinomlando Centre. There are various specific trends of perceptions that are indicated and discussed, as well as suggestions and conclusions that have been made in this regard.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter aimed at introducing the scope of the research. It achieved that purpose by spelling out the research objectives, the problem statement, and the research questions. The chapter has shown that this study, about growth at the Sinomlando Centre, needed to be conducted. The next chapter, Chapter 2, focuses on a literature study.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature study: Power, partnerships, and organisational and leadership development.

2.1 Introduction

Leon (2011), the Director of Bolivian organisation, Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social (CERES), reflects upon the experience of power in partnerships, writes about how power is elicited by donor agencies. The author's reflection illustrates that in development, the donors' managerial mechanisms and technologies are factors that drive partnerships, not the recipient partner. In a similar way, growth options at the Sinomlando Centre, particularly in leadership and in management, are assumed to be a result of the influence of donors' managerial mechanisms and technologies, and of the institutional policy of the University. There is quite a novel scholarship around power and partnerships for development. This chapter therefore explores the concepts of power, partnerships, systems thinking and organisational and leadership development, while drawing on a wide range of available literature.

Therefore, this literature study explores three clusters of questions that relate to organisational systems and systems thinking, to learning and behaviour in organisations, to partnerships, and to leadership development. Firstly: what kind of power is attributed to non-governmental development partnerships and practice; what are the descriptions of power in general; what are the descriptions of partnerships; and how does power come into existence in organisational relationships or partnerships? Secondly: how are systems and systems thinking put into use in NGO partnerships; and which systems approaches can be coherent and workable in the context of power and organisational growth or development? Thirdly: how are organisational and management theories enlightening managerial leadership capabilities; and among the various management structures and leadership methods available, which ones can be helpful in understanding the role of power in the context of existing relationships between donors and recipient

organisations? All these questions trigger diverse findings and arguments from various researchers. In return, these arguments are harnessed and engaged with the findings in order to establish discourse fluency to the broader research question about the perceived growth at the Sinomlando Centre, a South African organisation.

In the order of questions above, this chapter begins by exploring the concepts of power and partnership, focusing largely on global NGO development situations. The chapter then evaluates the descriptions of these concepts in line with NGO development practices, particularly aid frameworks, as contexts for organisational partnerships. In the second and third questions, the chapter further examines exploring research work around what constitutes a system and systems thinking, as well as the systems approaches available; complexity theory, and system dynamics. The chapter then looks into organisational and management theory, paying attention to research in learning, behaviour in organisations, and leadership development.

2.2 Power and partnerships

Development partnerships are argued:

as a form of advanced liberal rule that increasingly governs through the explicit commitment to the self-government and agency of recipient states (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1453).

This argument is made by Bergamaschi (2009, p.4). It suggests that in development practice, partnerships are human-made systems with diverse complexities. However, development partnership systems are open-minded imperatives constructed between the autonomy and action of the parties. The literature exhibits quite a range of views on the role that power plays in partnerships. Power is thought of as bringing diversity and complexity to a concessional relationship between one or more development organisations. In this regard, partnership is viewed as a space for liberal power, diversity and complexity. In order to understand the diversity and complexity attached to power in partnerships, this section first critically explores the descriptions of power and of partnerships in NGO development and in corporate contexts.

2.2.1 Defining power

Maloni and Benton (1999, p.9), drawing from Emerson (1962), identify power in the supply chain as a business resource that has an effect on the plans and actions of another business. It is argued that in the corporate environment, leaders describe power as a resource, an all-pervading and insurmountable element of business. This is summed up as “an omnipresent, unimaginable part of everyday business” (Maloni and Benton, 1999, p.5). That is, power and business cohere. Lister (2000), from a development perspective, adopts Dahl’s (1957) conceptual framework of power. The author describes power as a condition where “A has power over B to the extent to which he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (Lister 2000, p.229). That is, in development partnerships, one partner has influence over another partner. Further considerations on power show that it is:

the ability to provide or withhold valued resources or administer punishment... It is defined as the ability to change others’ behaviour, thoughts, and feelings (Anderson and Berdahl 2002, p.1362-1363).

Abrahamsen (2004), also drawing on Dahl’s (1957) work, explains that “power, in this definition, is coercive and intentional, leading to observable behavioural change in its target population” (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1458). In the case of organisational partnerships, the donor/funder is ‘the source’ and the recipient organisation is ‘the target’. As such:

power in partnerships is conceived primarily as domination, a capacity clearly visible in the ability of A (source) to get B (target) to do what B would not otherwise do (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1458).

From the organisational behaviour perspective, “influence refers to attempts to affect another in a desired fashion whether or not these are successful” (Greenberg 2011, p.445). Therefore, from this viewpoint, ‘power’ is also defined “as the capacity to exert influence over others” (Greenberg 2011, p.448). It is therefore evident that scholars from various backgrounds and research areas indicate that power in any form of partnership is synonymous with ‘ability’, ‘capacity’, and/or ‘influence’ exerted and exercised over another partner.

Furthermore, Greenberg (2011) presents indicators to describe the nature of power in an organisation, using ten ‘influence techniques’:

rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, collaboration, consultation, ingratiation, exchange, personal appeal, coalition-building, legitimating and pressuring (Greenberg 2011, p.445).

These indicators are prevalent in contexts where within teams or individuals “power is based on one’s position in an organization” (Greenberg 2000, p.445). The indicators are also prevalent in organisational relationships where power is about “resource dependence” and “strategic contingencies” (Greenberg 2000, p.457). Thus resource dependence is about controlling valuable resources of the organisation, and contingencies is about controlling decisions and actions that greatly affect the activities of another unit, department, or partner in the organisation.

The literature provides different characterisations of power. It is clear that various forms of power fit different environments, whether it is in a business- or in a social organisation. Moreover, what seems consistent in the descriptions cited above is that with power, there is a constant attempt to “change others’ behaviour in a manner consistent with organizational objective” (Greenberg 2011, p.445). That is, power-dynamics and power-play between the interrelating parties are simply about controlling valuable resources, valuable decision-making, and action in the relationship. Therefore this research considers power as a framework whereby ‘the source’ has the ability to influence ‘the target’ to change their planning and course of action, thereby creating dependency of ‘the targets’, whether positive or negative. Thus, power is considered as co-existing with partnerships of any form and in any environment.

2.2.2 Defining partnership

According to Lister (2000, p.228), the terms ‘NGO partnership and partners’ are synonymous with “a working relationship that is characterized by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate”. Lasker, Weiss, and Miller (2001, p.180) characterise ‘partnership’ with US local organisations’ relational advancement in bringing about intended results with very little resources in the

interdependence between US health service and health systems. These authors' consideration is basically about involving the community and grassroots people as partners in the responsibility to address health issues, since they are "closest to problems in the design and implementation solutions" (Lasker *et al.*, 2001, p.180).

Maloni and Benton (1999, p.5-9) examine U.S. automotive industry partnerships in terms of "supplier-manufacturer relationships". The various strata in these relationships, including supplier-manufacturer, manufacturer-dealer, and buyer-supplier, are considered to elicit a business sense which is shared through 'relational integration' and competitive advantages. Even though not clearly defined, partnerships are considered as "inter-firm" relationships (Maloni and Benton, 1999, p.9). 'Strategic alliance' is another motif for 'collaboration', or 'partnership'. It seeks to increase the strategic significance-based business relationships between organisations. It is described as the:

effective ways to diffuse new technologies rapidly, to enter a new market, to bypass governmental restrictions expeditiously, and to learn quickly from the leading firms in a given field (Elmuti and Kathawala, 2001, p.205).

The literature shows that in various environments, different motifs are used to represent and/or mean 'partnerships'. In social development environments – the NGO sector, to be exact - partnerships are about working together with a shared vision and mission to develop poor communities. The core to partnerships in this environment is mutual sharing of scarce resources, sustainability, and improved participation between funding NGOs and implementing NGOs. This sharing includes designing and implementing solutions to socio-economic problems at grassroots. In corporate settings, partnerships are a strategic relationship between firms and business organisations. Thus, the relationships are centred on business integration and competitive advantages.

This study however, considers partnerships from the perspective of social development environments (NGO sector), although contributions from corporate research settings are not utterly denied. In actual fact, ideas that drive partnerships between NGO funding agencies and recipient organisations are similar to those that drive partnerships in the

corporate environment. This may be the reason why there is a need to explore the positives and challenges in partnerships, as well as their functions and effectiveness.

2.2.2.1 Positives in partnerships

There are various helpful elements within partnership functioning and effectiveness that are identified by various studies. For example, in the NGO sector:

participation ...relationships, staff support, sufficiency and flows of resources, leadership, management, communication, governance, partnership structure and external environment (Lasker *et al.*, 2001, p.182).

The same authors argue further:

synergy is the proximal outcome of partnership functioning ... the level of partnership synergy determines how much of an advantage partnerships have over single agent in planning and carrying out interventions to improve health service delivery and health (Lasker *et al.*, 2001, p.187).

Lasker *et al.*, (2001, p.189-196) further identifies the “determinants of partnership synergy” as: resources; relationships; partnership characteristics; and the external environment. Elmuti and Kathawala (2001, p.206-207) identify four reasons regarding the creation of strategic alliances: growth strategies and new markets; acquire new best technology at quality or cheapest cost; financial risk reduction and cost-sharing; achieving competitive advantage.

Thus, partnerships are understood as bringing efficiency, effectiveness, and synergy. Such synergies add value to the power play in partnerships. On the whole, the functioning and effectiveness of all parties seeks combined strategies in the system. In the corporate sector, for example, companies collaborate in search of advantages and new markets, and to create new organisational technology, innovativeness in product quality, and competitive advantage with minimal financial risks. In the NGO sector, organisations partner for mutuality. That is, large funding-NGOs search for strategic considerations, while smaller and recipient NGOs seek internal growth in the areas of staff support, leadership and management, organisational structure, organisational

capacity building, and resource allocation and mobilisation. Therefore organisational partnership is about tapping into the power of each partner without underestimating the associated challenges.

2.2.2.2 Challenges in partnerships

Lister (2000, p.228cf) states that the difficulties with NGO partnerships include the lop-sidedness of power between partners. The challenge is about control over monies, and the fact that these partnerships are time consuming, resource intensive, and involve unequal dialogue. Lister (2000, p.236), referring to Farrington and Bebbington (1993), concludes:

if all relationships are simply managed by organizational leaders, the partnership is vulnerable to changes in individuals and patterns of organizational leadership (Lister 2000, p.236).

That is, partnerships can either be effective or ineffective, depending on the strategies that drive relationships between organisations.

Where partnerships are enforced by funders, such dilemmas are exacerbated. For instance, NGOs in health partnerships in the US fail to thrive or survive due to time and resource constraints, and a lack of negotiating space for smaller partners (Lasker *et al.*, 2001, p.180-181). Hence, it is concluded:

funders and partners assume that collaboration will be more effective than efforts planned and carried out by a single organization or sector, yet there is little evidence that collaboration has improved health status or health systems in communities (Lasker *et al.* 2001, p.181).

Elmuti and Kathawala (2001) also note that in the experience of NGO partnerships, the following challenges exist: a clash of cultures; people difficult to work with; fluid trust; opaque goals and objectives; obscured management coordination; different operating procedures and attitudes; and relational and performance risks.

In all forms of partnership, these dilemmas are a hub and manifestation of power asymmetries. Even though these challenges may seem different, there are links and

similarities. For instance, if the NGO sector identifies the problem of ‘unequal power control over resources’ between or among partners, and the corporate sector identifies the ‘lack of trust’ between or among business partners, it may be correct that in the NGO sector, the power irregularities are due to a lack of trust, and that in the corporate sector the lack of trust is due to the inclination to want to control resources. A point that does not come out in the literature is that an NGO manager must be skilled enough to manoeuvre across these challenges. Having explored the positives and challenges in partnerships in general, it is important to look briefly at power in aid partnerships.

2.2.3 Power and aid partnerships

Power and aid frameworks are inseparable. That is, in aid development work, engaging in partnership discourses often identifies with the power co-existing between donor agencies and their aid frameworks. According to Moyo (2009, p.10), aid started as “a framework for a global system of financial and monetary management” fifty years ago. Today, aid is one of the dominant development frameworks. Often, aid agendas are about establishing multilateral trading and geopolitical systems. For instance, in the African context:

for the West, aid became a means by which Britain and France combined their new-found altruism with a hefty dollop of self-interest maintaining geopolitical holds. For the US, aid became the tool of another political contest - the Cold War (Moyo, 2009, p.14).

The aid-providing countries’ selfless-partnership is nothing less than a global political and economic agenda whereby aid agencies and “policy makers have chosen to maintain the status quo and furnish Africa with more aid” (Moyo, 2009, p.28). Whether the aid frameworks succeed or fail, is a topic for another day, but what is of interest for this study is that the state-to-state partnerships often flash the aid card as a pacesetter for their disguised political agendas with the recipient partner. Therefore, aid partnership contexts are driven by powerful agendas. These powerful agendas are understood as disguised domination and are often seen in the form of bilateral and multilateral dynamics.

Linked to this argument of continued but disguised domination, is the question asked by Herman and Dijkzeul (2011):

how independent really are humanitarian organizations if we consider the world's many 'forgotten crises'? The plight of the Acholi in Uganda and the Karen in Myanmar are examples. More generally, what is the impact of the conditions that donor governments impose when funding humanitarian action? (Herman and Dijkzeul 2011, p.5).

The authors identify four humanitarian aid ideological positions used by donor governments to fund humanitarian action: Dunantist; Wilsonian; Solidarist; and Commercial Organisations (Herman and Dijkzeul 2011, p.6). Each humanitarian aid agency or organisation positions itself in each of these four categories and follows a specific ideological view based on either some or all of the traditional humanitarian principles. For example:

Solidarist - these organisations reject impartiality, and their humanitarian aid programmes follow a clear political point of view. The Norwegian People's Aid organisation is an example, just like the International Relief and Development (Herman and Dijkzeul 2011, p.6).

Herman and Dijkzeul (2011) argue that these four positions remain a complex force and facilitate the politicisation of aid, with the donor organisations seeking to adapt strategies about who they are, what they stand for, and who their beneficiaries are (Herman and Dijkzeul 2011, p.6-8). The contention is that in aid partnerships, despite the recipient organisations' own official policies, donor/funding agencies struggle for power to assert themselves over and above the bilateral and multilateral agreements and policies, as driven by their own governments' non-humanitarian actors, such as government and the military agencies (Herman and Dijkzeul 2011, p.6-8).

According to Lister (2000):

the concept of North-South partnership has also been criticized at a more fundamental level, as being a Northern-imposed idea which is tied up with the need for Northern aid agencies and NGOs to establish legitimacy for operations in the South and demonstrate their added value in the development process (Lister 2000, p.229).

The perspective is that aid partnerships are actually instrumental in the North and are dominating the political will of the South. As a matter of fact, the Northern views do not

provide the Southern partners with alternative options for partnerships. Hence, with funding partnerships, as argued by Kanbur (2000):

representatives of the aid agencies in Africa... are the symbol of power of the donor agencies... these symbols of strength hide fundamental weaknesses that arise from the inner logic and dynamic of the aid process and donor agency imperatives (Kanbur 2000, p.5).

The author argues further that in Africa, like elsewhere:

the theory of donor-recipient relationship... is modeled... [on] leader-follower interaction. The donor is the leader, and decides on the level of aid. The recipient is the follower who, taking as given the level of aid, decides on actions ... which affect outcomes for the recipient (Kanbur 2000, p.6)

Hence, Moyo (2009) shoots down the ‘leader-follower’ view as an irregularity, with reference to Marx Weber’s Protestant work ethic about Africa and Africans, that “Africa is fundamentally kept in its perpetual childlike state” (Moyo 2009, p.32). The argument is that aid partnerships perpetuate the thinking, the agenda and the “disguise for the continued domination of the South by the North” (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1456). Thus, the discourse on funder-recipient partnerships is shaped and functions from some position of power, whereby the funding agency or representatives have the power to decide for the recipient partner on the administration of the donor-provided funds.

According to Abrahamsen (2004, p.1454), “North-South relations is both deeply contested and crucially important” in two ways. Firstly, the proponents of partnerships point out that it is difficult to find:

genuine partnerships based on equality and mutual respect in a context where one party is in position of the purse and the other the begging bowl (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1454).

The second point by the critics of partnerships is that the concept is “simply a disguise for continued donor dominance of developing countries” (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1454). Abrahamsen (2004) confirms and argues:

that partnerships invoke specific technologies of global liberal governance ... Partnerships govern through the production and consent of responsible African states. Power is certainly present in these partnerships, but its forms, structures and technologies cannot be encapsulated solely in terms of domination or coercion. Instead, the power of partnerships is voluntary and coercive at

the same time, producing both new forms of agency and new forms of discipline (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1454).

Knack and Rahman (2007) concur with Abrahamsen's (2004) second view and point out:

donor countries ... have their own commercial and security objectives, and their aid agencies additionally have the objective of maximizing aid budgets, requiring them to cater to key domestic constituencies in parliament and among aid contractors and advocacy groups (Knack and Rahman 2007, p.177).

The considered literature shows that in aid partnerships, the Northern donors' and agencies' efforts to redress socio-economic issues of the Southern partners, such as HIV and AIDS, poverty, and environment, use Northern countries' trade and security bilateral and multilateral agreements to legitimise their operations (Lister, 2000, p.229). Agreements and policies guide and dictate budgetary terms and conditions for the Southern partners. That is, the control radars of aid partnerships are bilateral and multilateral agreements. Power is manifested in bilateral and multilateral institutions, structures, and technologies. As a result, various authors refute that there can be genuine partnership and/or bad partnership. It cannot be stated that there is equality and mutuality in partnership. This argument is relevant for this research project. NGOs' relationships are contended as lopsided because relationships remain non-negotiable and donors always hold significant amounts of power over the recipient partner (Abrahamsen (2004, p.1457).

If "aid flows only as long as the recipient country agrees to a set of economic and political policies" (Moyo, 2009, p.39), then aid partnership is purely a neo-liberal political rationality (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1456). A fundamental example is that of the United States Government (USG) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with its President Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) funded activities in South Africa. It is categorically stated that "all USG agencies working to fight HIV/AIDS in each partner country come together as one team under the leadership of the U.S. Ambassador" (FY10 COP Guidance, 2009, p.10). That is, all US agencies receiving US government money for relief and development through USAID and PEPFAR should comply with the policies and conditions set by the United States

government. The same policies and conditions will bind the recipient organisations in South Africa. This is the way in which power is practiced and remains present in aid partnerships.

Abrahamsen (2004, p.1458) states that “power in partnerships is conceived primarily as domination, a capacity clearly visible in the ability of A (donor) to get B (recipient) to do what B would otherwise not do”. This signposts the way that power is attributed to aid partnerships, as explored above. Herman and Dijkzeul’s (2011) contention is consistent with Maloni and Benton’s (1999, p.23), Lister’s (2000), and Abrahamsen’s (2004, p.1458) depiction of power in terms of ‘the source of power’ and ‘the target of power’. Moreover, Lister’s (2000) and Abrahamsen’s (2004, p.1458) explanations of power, drawing on Dahl’s work, are a reliable application of the dimensions of power in NGO aid partnerships. That being the case, it is concluded:

that important aspects of the power of partnerships in global governance are captured in the concept of governmentality ... [that is]¹, the contact point between technologies of dominating others and those of constituting the self (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1459).

The concept of governmentality is linked to the term ‘new managerialism’ (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1459), which means that power decentralisation should involve:

a vast array of new mechanisms and techniques of auditing, accounting, monitoring and evaluation which link these various and disparate entities to political strategies at the state level (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1459).

This is the focus of this research about the Sinomlando Centre. At a local scale, the United States of America (USA) is the ‘source of power’ and the in-country US donor agency, Children’s Emergency Relief International (CERI), is ‘the target of power’. At an international scale, the donor or aid country, the USA, is ‘the source of power’ and the recipient country, South Africa, is ‘the target of power’. At the partnership-level of donor-NGO to recipient-NGO, the donor organisations in the US, the USAID and the CERI, are ‘the source of power’, and the recipient agency in South Africa, the Sinomlando Centre, is the ‘target of power’.

¹ My own addition.

Thus the way in which power appears to work in development partnerships, is presented as induced organisational management mechanisms and techniques; comprising domination and responsibility. At a macro level, partnerships are influenced by what Abrahamsen (2004, p.1460) calls “technologies of agency”; bilateral and multilateral techniques and mechanisms. These techniques are filtered down to the micro-partnerships between donor agencies and recipient agencies, and are constructed in a manner that:

to be audited an organisation must actively transform itself into an auditable commodity; one structured to conform to the need to be monitored ex-post (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1459).

The question that Herman and Dijkzeul (2011, p.5) ask, “how independent really are humanitarian organizations if we consider the world’s many ‘forgotten crises’?”, and the experience of donor partnerships as reflected by Leon (2011), shows the working of power in NGO aid partnerships. The academy thus provides an assumption that NGO partnerships in development are a real-life systems problem, operating in deep-seated power complexities.

2.2.4 Power in corporate partnerships

Maloni and Benton (1999) describe inter-firm power imbalances as:

an oligopolistic environment [that]² has allowed the manufacturers to authoritatively transfer responsibilities for cost reduction, product development, and inventory management back to suppliers, forcing them to comply with strict performance guidelines or face replacement (Maloni and Benton 1999, p.4).

The authors try to show that power source and power target are rooted in the following power bases: reward and coercion; expert and referent; and legal legitimate (Maloni and Benton 1999, p.9-10). Moreover, the dichotomy between mediated power and non-mediated power is illustrated as follows: mediated power represents and influences efforts as dictated by the power source to guide the power target’s response, and its building blocks of influences include coercive, reward, and legal legitimate bases

² My own addition.

(Maloni and Benton 1999, p.10). With non-mediated power, efforts of the power source are not specifically exercised or threatened in order to manipulate the power target (Maloni and Benton 1999, p.10). The bases of power are expert, referent, and legitimate, hence the conclusion that:

the different sources of power have contrasting effects upon inter-firm relationships in the chain. Thus, both the power source and the power target must be able to recognize the presence of power, and then reconcile supply chain strategy for power influences (Maloni and Benton 1999, p.23).

There are thus different implications of power in supply chain partnerships; however a key factor is to acknowledge that power is ever present, and to then find a balancing strategy.

Lister (2000, p.228- 230) promotes Dahl's five elements of power: I) 'the base of power', meaning the 'resources A can use to influence B's behaviour'; ii) 'the means of power', meaning 'the specific actions by which A can make actual use of these resources' (Kutschker 1985); iii) 'the scope of power', meaning 'the specific actions that A, by using its means of power, can get B to perform'; iv) 'the amount of power', meaning 'the net increase in the probability of B actually performing some specific action due to A using its means of power'; and v) 'the framework of power', meaning that 'B acquire desires and actively pursue ends that are in A's interests'. The author therefore concludes:

that one of the instrumental effects of the discourse of partnership is the adaptation of the power framework and the creation of a slightly changed reality, which serves to hide the fundamental power asymmetries within development activities and essentially maintain the status quo (Lister 2000, p.235).

Abrahamsen (2004, p.1454) argues:

that too narrow a focus on the transfer of power between partners prevents contemporary analyses from capturing the full significance of these transformations, as the power of partnerships does not lie primarily in relations of domination, but in techniques of cooperation and inclusion.

The authors note that partners' adjustment to the power framework, and leverage on the situation impacted by this power, as being beneficial. Power should not be limited to

domination only but must be seen in the articles of agreements and involvements between parties. This occurs even between persons.

Anderson and Berdahl (2002) explain 'power' as being different:

from leadership, status, and authority, which are social roles that can endow individuals with power [and] social influence can be seen as a primary consequence of power (Anderson and Berdahl 2002, p.1362).

A person that has power often has the potential to influence others to do what they would not do under normal circumstances. Power creates social platforms and roles that allow individuals to exert directives and prescribe over others. In fact:

first, the environments of powerful and powerless people differ in terms of the rewards and threats present, and, second, powerful people feel higher in power than do powerless people, leading them to approach more and inhibit less (Anderson and Berdahl 2002, p.1362).

People with high power express their true attitudes and opinions, and people with low power inhibit themselves from expressing their attitudes and opinions. As a result, power subjects people to an attitude position.

In buyer-supplier relationships, power is conceived as a significant cause of the way that 'the source' and 'the target' would consciously and strategically position themselves in a partnership. The positioning is about controlling the cost and having competitive advantage. The literature informs us about the re-working of the constructs of power and the re-invention of power realities in partnerships. This as a variance legitimises the unequal size, shape, and functioning of power upholding the state of affairs between organisations. Unlike in organisations, in inter-personal partnerships it can be understood that a person with the ability to position her/his opinion and attitude among peers and colleagues has power, and a person with low power withdraws from positioning their opinion and attitude. In all forms of partnerships, whether between persons or organisations, power is often associated with a top-down construction of relationships and creates asymmetric environments.

This study strives to explore the South African NGO context with regards to staff members' perceptions of power related to funding partnerships, and as a resource in organisational development. To this end, the literature purports power as being a complex experience in the partnership system; one that includes constantly finding new balances between unequal and contesting thinking patterns and actions. Partnership is about constantly trying to acquire new planning strategies and learning, and also about trying to manage the unpredictability of funding/aid partnership technologies. Partnership is also about the tension that these technologies create between the learning and the accountability of recipient organisations. Are South African NGOs experiencing such power struggles, and if so, how does such experience of partnerships impact on organisational growth?

It is however not clear, in these studies, what the perceptions of employees regarding 'partnerships' and the way that these partnerships contribute towards leadership capacity and organisational growth are. It is important therefore to have a broader understanding of the impact of power on organisational growth in the South African NGO context. Thus, how can NGO leaders and managers, faced with project technical knowledge, design, coordination and financial resource mobilisation, be vivid catalysts in partnership environments? That is, the Sinomlando Centre as an organisation based and operating "in the South African NGO context" (Reddy 2010) remains relevant to the issues of powerful partnerships raised by the authors. Moreover, what can constitute a relevant, over-arching systems-thinking development framework for NGO leadership and management development, faced as it is with multiple influential partnerships? The next section explores systems thinking approaches which can be coherent with multiple power dimensions, processes, and environments, as exhibited by development partnership projects like the case of the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa.

2.3 Systems thinking in social development

Von Bertalanffy (1968) defines a system as a set of elements standing in interrelation among them and with the environment. The previous section explored power and the way it influences partnerships in various environments. The various literature studied showed that power is conceived as an all-pervading resource in business and in NGO aid partnerships. However, partnerships in the NGO development sector are a complex phenomenon relying on both human and social environments for existence. For that reason, this research assumes that partnership is a system. It is therefore relevant to explore both the systems approaches and systems-thinking development needed to analyse the influences of power in NGO partnership systems. These approaches may assist in finding out whether these influences are coherent with organisational-, leadership-, and management development. This section therefore examines what both a system and systems thinking is, and explores systems approaches - in particular the method of system dynamics - drawing on the works of Braun (2002), Jackson (2003), and Senge (2006).

2.3.1 Systems thinking

Jackson (2003, p.3) defines a system as “a complex whole of the functioning of which depends on its parts and the interactions between those parts”. A body, for example a human body, has different parts that work together to achieve the functionality of the entire body. These parts interact and are interdependent. Verkoren (2008, p.5) notes that “systems thinking sees seemingly unconnected issues as part of an overall system in such a way that a change in one element affects the whole system”. Development organisations - whether aid NGOs and agencies or recipient NGOs and agencies - are multi-disciplinary human-made systems with a unique complex life. Therefore, a thinking development aligning itself with Jackson (2003), Von Bertalanffy (1968), and Verkoren (2008), generates ‘systems thinking’.

Davidz and Nightingale (2008) argue that “there are a variety of definitions for the phrase ‘systems thinking’” (Davidz and Nightingale 2008, p.3). Both argue further “that the definition of systems thinking is quite” (Davidz 2006) difficult to pin down because “the term ‘systems thinking’ is somewhat a paradox, since this phrase combines words that imply individual and multi-actor concepts into one... construct” (Davidz and Nightingale 2008, p.3). Therefore, Davidz and Nightingale (2008), in their study on systems engineering, conclude that the “key issues in systems thinking development [are]³ at the individual, group, organisational and institutional levels of analysis” (Davidz and Nightingale 2008, p.3).

Williams (2008) outlines that in international development, systems thinking methods try to resolve a set of world constructs “power, control, unanticipated consequences, unacknowledged interests, differing motivations and rapidly changing circumstances” (Williams 2008, p.16). Therefore the author concludes:

systems thinking can be useful in resolving big issues relating to development. It can, for example, help determine on what level - local, national, transnational - interventions should occur, and what the consequences of such choices might be (Williams 2008, p.16).

As an example, Williams (2008, p.17-19) proves the usefulness of systems thinking in development practice by critiquing the HIV and AIDS project in Ghana. Davidz and Nightingale (2008, p.1) view systems as becoming complex and requiring “the roles involved in developing and managing such systems also [to]⁴ become more complex”. Davidz and Nightingale’s (2008, p.13) findings arrive at the conclusion that “a systems approach is needed to develop systems skills, where individual characteristics and experiential learning are aligned with a supportive environment”. According to researchers, systems thinking methods can be applicable in any complex practice - whether they are development interventions, or natural sciences interventions.

With reference to Von Bertalanffy’s (1968) general systems theory, Jackson (2003) states:

³ My own word.

⁴ My own addition.

[an]⁵ open system, such as an organization, has to interact with its environment to maintain itself in existence. Open systems take inputs from their environments, transform them and then return them as some sort of product back to the environment (Jackson 2003, p.6).

Thus, organisations as open systems exist by adapting to change in the environment. Experts in the field of organisational behaviour, in particular Greenberg (2011, p.37), take this argument further by attaching two specific assumptions: 1) “organizations are dynamic and always changing”; and 2) “there is no one best way to behave in organizations, and that different approaches are called for in different situations”. Greenberg (2011, p.37-38) therefore concludes that organisations are “dynamic and ever-changing entities”, which should be considered as “open systems – that is, self-sustaining connections between entities that use energy to transform resources from the environment ... into some form of output ...”

That is, an organisation constantly transforms inputs into outputs within the environments in which it exists and operates. This may point to the view that the thinking around organisational-, leadership-, and management development should embrace and value the link between organisations and the environments in which they exist. However, fundamental to the explanations about organisations as open systems, are the dynamics and ever changing behavioural patterns in organisations. In the case of this research project, partnerships are one form of environment in which organisations exist. Jackson (2003) explores the applied systems approaches and shows how each is important for the creative managers’ development of their “ability to handle complexity, change and diversity” (Jackson 2003, p.43). Williams (2008, 16-17) states that these systems approaches are a set of constructs from which systems thinking draws metaphors, models, and methods. Systems approaches are key to the question embedded in this research project’s concepts of organisational development, power and partnerships. Moreover, complex theory and system-dynamics approaches are explored because there have been efforts to apply some of the approaches in social development contexts and interventions. The system dynamics approach may be favourable for evaluating ways by which local

⁵ My own addition.

NGO leadership and managements' developments are influenced by the dynamics and ever changing organisational behavioural patterns in the funding partnership system.

2.3.1.1 Complexity Theory

According to Jackson (2003, p.113), the complexity theory often considers those aspects of organisational life that worry many managers, such as disorder, irregularity, and randomness, and offers managers appropriate action. Jackson (2003, p.116) argues that there are six key theoretical notions in complexity theory: 'sensitive dependence on initial conditions'; 'strange attractors'; 'self-similarity'; 'self-organisation'; the 'edge of chaos'; and the 'fitness landscape'. Eoyang (1996) makes an argument, and it is directed towards a science of "chaos" (Jackson 2003, p.116), with its outcome being "system revolution" (Jackson 2003, p.116). The application of the complexity theory may be effective in a situation where organisational life is shaped by some kind of abnormality, unpredictability, messiness, and mayhem. However in the case of the Sinomlando Centre, 'unpredictable' organisational life may be apparent but not 'abnormality, messiness, and mayhem'.

Complexity theory methodology in development practice

Jackson (2003, p.119-120) makes reference to Morgan's (1997) suggestion for a three-stage methodology for "attractor patterns and organisational change". The first stage is basically about answering the question "what are the forces locking an organization into its existing 'attractor pattern'?" (Jackson 2003, p.120). The second stage caters for the query "how is the transition from one attractor to another to be achieved? How can small changes be used to create large effects?" (Jackson 2003, p.120). The final stage seeks to answer:

what are the ground rules of the new attractor going to be? How can we manage through the 'edge of chaos' of Stage 2 while remaining open to self-organization? (Jackson 2003, p.120).

What is core to the methodology, "is to try to grasp 'pattern' at the deeper level, to unearth the order underlying chaos" (Jackson 2003, p.120).

It is argued that the methodology focuses on implementing small changes and aims at identifying points of maximum leverage for maximum impact (Jackson 2003, p.121). As a result, creative managers need to promote learning and self-organisation at the organisational 'edge of chaos', even though they cannot predict or control the organisation (Jackson 2003, p.122).

The complexity theory and method was tested at Humberside Training and Enterprise Councils for promoting local economic development (Jackson 2003, p.125cf). It was observed favourably that for:

one self-managed team of around 30 consultants, within the 'investors in people' directorate ...initial uncertainty developed into increasing confidence. People began to enjoy working in this way, collective decisions were taken, commitment was gained and creativity was enhanced. The team began to learn how to learn and to think more strategically about their role in the organisation (Jackson 2003, p.128).

Jackson (2003, 129) argues:

social systems, however, are influenced by innumerable variables and probabilistic elements around ... because of the self-consciousness and free will exhibited by humans, the behaviour of social systems cannot be explained same way [as in physical systems]⁶. Humans think and learn, act according to their own purposes and are capable of reacting against and disproving any law that is said to apply to their behaviour (Jackson 2003, p.129).

Verkoren (2008) states that social development practice experts, in their debate on the complexity theory as an alternative approach:

agreed on what is wrong with current methods: planning models that assume linear cause-and-effect relationships and predictable outcomes, such as the logical frameworks, are ineffective when applied to a reality that is messy, unpredictable and impacted by multiple agencies and processes beyond the development intervention that is being carried out (Verkoren 2008, p.4).

However, Verkoren (2008) argues sympathetically:

although complexity theory is at the current time unlikely to cause a complete overhaul in the field, some of its elements may contribute to a gradual shift in thinking and practice towards more modest planning, a learning-based approach and more emphasis on bottom-up, self-organizing processes. For this shift to occur, a thorough contextual analysis is key, both for determining the extent of the complexity of a given problem and for finding the best leverage points for intervention in support of existing social process (Verkoren 2008, p.4).

⁶ My own addition.

Verkoren (2008, p.4) concurs and adds that existing approaches aid to avoid the “conflict and politics” that shape the entire landscape of aid development partnership and practice. The (complexity theory?) approach can be used to change the thinking and practice of the learning-based approach, and to improve the bottom-up and self-organising approaches.

The complexity theory is critiqued and doubted first and foremost as a tool for analysis, and secondly as a social application to management (Jackson 2003, p.129). Jackson (2003), drawing on Rosenhead (1998), critiques:

complexity theory still has much to do, as a science, to establish its scope and validity in the domain of natural systems... In the social domain there is a complete lack of solid evidence that complexity theory holds and that adopting its prescriptions will produce the benefits claimed (Jackson 2003, p.129).

This criticism of complexity theory in the social domain can be applied to NGO development practice related to aid. Experts do not quite agree that the theory can offer an alternative framework of analysis (Verkoren 2008, p.4). The approach is argued as weak if applied in non-linear contexts that are influenced by human, multiple agencies and processes, as much as it is in funding and aid partnership systems. Rather, some of the elements of complexity theory assist in critiquing existing authorities and their practices.

In the funding and aid development field, the complexity theory approach is further criticised for not challenging the powers-that-be, and for not being able to suggest “a coherent and workable framework” (Verkoren 2008, p.5-6). This is a strong contestation on the applicability of the complexity theory to aid development partnerships and practices.

Human thinking, learning, and acting generate power influences in situations where aid and funding organisations would have entered into a relationship with recipient organisations, as discussed in earlier sections. Research experts argue against complexity theory by illustrating its weaknesses as regards human thinking, learning, and acting activities in social and development systems. This study may not be able to adopt the

complexity theory approach in its analysis of organisational development and leadership capacity because the Sinomlando Centre exists in a social development domain, in addition to it being influenced by human thinking and purposes. Sinomlando organisational life is impacted by non-linear and multiple agencies and processes. However, some of its elements may be useful, and from time to time these elements may have to be referred to in the study. It is therefore important to look at how research experts argue for the system dynamics approach as the 'fifth discipline'.

2.3.1.2 Theory of system dynamics - the fifth discipline

According to Jackson (2003):

system dynamics, by contrast, would employ the science of feedback, harnessed to the power of the modern digital computer, to unlock the secrets of complex, multiple-loop non-linear systems(Jackson 2003, p.65).

The system dynamics approach provides methods for information creation, organisational story, feedback processes between interacting elements, power dynamics (gaps) in the feedback, and interaction. Suffice that:

social systems are seen ... as causing no particular problems of their own for system dynamics because the impacts of the decisions of human actors can be modelled according to the same rules (Jackson 2003, p.65).

This means that any given organisation is a social system where decisions and actions by humans generate multiple feedbacks and interaction processes. Jackson seems convinced that system dynamics can withstand the power in a partnerships system, which may be a product of such feedbacks and interacting processes - social systems.

Jackson (2003) states:

according to the theory of system dynamics, the multitude of variables existing in complex systems become causally related in feedback loops that themselves interact. The systemic interrelationships between feedback loops constitute the structure of the system, and it is this structure that is the prime determinant of system behaviour (Jackson 2003, p.66).

Accordingly, the ‘theory of system dynamics’ (Aramo-Immonen and Vanharanta 2009) emphasises the examination of the working together of a large number of interrelated elements, that in return form part of the feedback loops and determine the way that the system will behave and perform. Hence, the system dynamics method aims at giving an organisation’s managers some understanding of the behaviour and interaction of multiple patterns in order to decide and act with an intervention that is relevant to organisational goals (Jackson 2003, p.67).

In addition to that, meaningful organisational management interventions require system dynamics. It is for this very reason that four systems aids, namely: “the boundary of the system; the network of feedback loops; the ‘rate’ or ‘flow’ and ‘level’ or ‘stock’ variables; [and]⁷ the ‘leverage’ points” (Jackson 2003, p.67), are aligned with the understanding of the structure of complex systems. Williams (2008, p.16cf) refers to these aids as “core systems concepts” and reduces them to three: inter-relationships; perspectives; and boundaries. Jackson (2003, p.68), drawing on Senge (1990), concludes that “system dynamics... can provide the necessary insight and enable us to learn more appropriate responses”.

Again, Jackson (2003, p.74), drawing on Senge (1990), argues that system dynamics as ‘the fifth discipline’ is an “important tool that organizations must master on the route to becoming ‘learning organizations’”. System dynamics is instrumental in disclosing the systemic structures governing organisational behaviour. System dynamics needs to be aligned with the other four disciplines: “‘personal mastery’; ‘managing mental models’; ‘building shared vision’; and ‘team learning’” (Jackson 2003, p.74). Williams (2008, p.17) demonstrates, using the HIV and AIDS project in Ghana, that the method of system dynamics is one of the reliable theories and methods for aid development partnerships.

⁷ My own word.

2.3.1.3 System archetypes

According to Jackson (2003), the methodology of system dynamics has five phases:

problem structuring; causal loop modelling; dynamic modelling; scenario planning and modelling; and implementation and organizational learning (Jackson 2003, p.68).

These phases are clustered to: 1) “identify common patterns (system archetypes) and key leverage points” (Jackson 2003, p.69); and 2) “encourage learning” (Jackson 2003, p.69), to engage the managers and the stakeholders. This learning is designed for group managers to engage with “a micro world” (Jackson 2003, p.69) of the organisation. To that effect, four tools are presented as aids to the system dynamics methodology, and they include the system archetypes. System archetypes tools are “effective in describing common patterns of behavior in organizations” (Braun 2002, p.1). System archetypes are known for providing “insight into the underlying structures” (Braun 2002, p.1) generating behaviour patterns that “alert managers to future unintended consequences” (Braun 2002, p.1).

Jackson (2003), drawing on Senge’s (1990) conclusion, notes:

it is possible to identify certain system archetypes that show regular patterns of behaviour, due to particular structural characteristics, that continually give rise to management problems. Once mastered by managers, according to Senge, archetypes open the door to systems thinking (Jackson 2003, 71).

According to Senge (2006, p.68-92), this method of ‘the fifth discipline’ has two stages: “a shift of mind” (Senge 2006, p.68); and “seeing circles of causality” (Senge 2006, p.73), that is, “identifying the patterns that control events” (Senge 2006, p.92). The latter relates to system archetypes, and regards:

learning to see the structures within which we operate [and to]⁸ begin a process of freeing ourselves from previously unseen forces and ultimately mastering the ability to work within them and change them (Senge 2006, p.93).

This seems to mean that system archetypes aim at putting back into working order the perceptions of managers so that they can see the structural techniques and mechanisms at play and then be able to influence desired change in their organisations.

⁸ My own insertion.

Braun (2002) refers to ten archetypes. These system archetypes are: the limits to growth; shifting the burden; balancing process with delay; accidental adversaries; eroding goals; escalation; success to the successful; tragedy of the commons; fixes that fail; and growth and underinvestment (Braun 2002, p.2). Some of these archetypes apply to the development field (Braun 2002, p.2cf; and Jackson 2003, p.71-72). For instance, the relevance of system archetypes in aid development practices is that “the ‘shifting the burden’ can be illustrated if we consider a developing country wishing to increase the standard of living for its people...” (Jackson 2003, p.72).

Furthermore, Senge (2006) argues that the basic system archetypes are: the “limits to growth” (Senge 2006, p.94-125); “shifting the burden” (Senge 2006, p.94-125); and “growth and underinvestment” (Senge 2006, p.94-125). The authors seem to agree that the two archetypes tools - ‘limits to growth’, and ‘shifting the burden’ - can assist managers to identify intricate structures in the organisation, and to find leverage, particularly when “the pressures and crosscurrents of real-life business situations” (Senge 2006, p.113) arise. The system archetypes can be useful when applied “for successful managerial interventions” (Braun 2002, p.2). This study explores further the ‘limits to growth’ and the ‘shifting the burden’, for the purpose of applying them when evaluating the structural feedback and network loops at the Sinomlando Centre.

Jackson’s (2003) and Senge’s (2006) studies on system dynamics as ‘the fifth discipline’, may be looked at as a crosscut method into a multi-disciplinary organisational life. Unlike the complexity theory, the theory of system dynamics is considered as a coherent and workable framework for purposeful systems and learning organisations, and the method can be applied in analysing power in organisational and leadership development related to funding and aid partnerships. Through the system archetypes tools, system dynamics has the potential to identify and challenge high and low leverage spheres of the organisation’s information creation, -flow, and -processing. System dynamics has the ability to unpack the external and internal conditions that influence the organisation, after its engagement with the other four disciplines. In the case of this research project, the method will assume the unpacking of NGO partnerships’ social attitude, basis of

decision-making processes, and team learning. Over and above that, however, system archetypes can be tools for understanding the organisation's internal elements that drive it towards full cognisance by other external stakeholders. To this end, a general observation can be made that it seems that there are a minimum of studies on systems and systems thinking development, that focus on the South African NGO partnership context and organisational development.

2.4 Organisational and leadership development

In the second section of this chapter, research experts agree that partnerships exhibit unequal power for the partners. This power reality is also detected in funding and aid partnerships and recipient partners experience and describe the presence of power in the form of “managerialism” (Abrahamsen 2004, p.1459). In the third section, systems thinking development and the theory of system dynamics as the ‘fifth discipline’ are established as a framework - coherent and consistent with finding discourse fluency about the internal and external influences in the development NGO partnership system. This section explores various studies on alternative and transformative organisational leadership and management approaches relevant to the development NGO partnership system.

2.4.1 Funding partnerships: managerial scenario

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, Leon (2011), the director of a Bolivian organisation, points out the following about aid partnerships and management:

this is a story of how my colleagues and I tried to satisfy our donors' need to see measurable results, while simultaneously using the aid machine's fund to support the social changes that were occurring... We increasingly found ourselves caught between the everyday realities of working in the local communities, and the incongruous bureaucracy of annual operating plans along with the dictates of remote donor organizations (Leon 2011).

This reflection on the experience of funding partnerships underscores that leaderships of recipient NGOs largely feel trapped between the social change obligations as expected by the local communities for which aid is provided, and the incompatible measurable

obligations that are expected and required by the donor agencies. This experience, as expressed by Leon (2011), is a reminder of the Biblical analogy about the ‘serving of the two masters’. The aid master is concerned with measurable results, and the local master (communities and employees of the recipient organisations) is concerned about social responsibility and change. This speaks volumes about the different spheres of influences experienced in funding- and aid partnerships.

Thus the donor organisations ply results-based management systems, as witnessed by Leon’s (2011) reflection:

the results-based framework within which we operated existed in the context of complex power relationships ... At other times, we had to accomplish what we had promised without fully understanding the planning jargon used by the different donor organizations (Leon 2011).

From this reflection it is apparent that administrative frameworks and styles pursued by donors and funding agencies, are exhibiting partnerships as environments marred by complex influences. Abrahamsen (2004) calls this experience of “results-based framework” (Leon 2011), the “new managerialism” (Abrahamsen 2004, 1459), meaning that the context is fluid, top-down, political, and very complex for the recipient organisations. This managerialism is disguised in a jargon about the annual operating plans, audits, language, technical reports, expenditure reports, and products that recipient partners cannot fathom; hence the description of aid and funding partnerships as a complex and social system:

the development machine has many levers but only one engine - aid... I applied the machine’s instruments and tools to manage and control the people to ensure a sustained production of measurable results (Leon 2011).

These results-based management frameworks and styles are identified as levers for partnerships. In order to ensure the success of projects, the leadership and management of recipient NGOs find no option but to comply with these technologies, regardless of whether or not they understand the jargon. Such a management style filters down the ranks, impacting on the recipient organisations’ management frameworks and styles. For example, Leon (2011) expresses that “the tension between our bureaucratic strait-jacket and the needs of those we were helping became a challenge” (Leon 2011).

However, this strait-jacket managerialism does not make aid/donor agencies' management impossible *per se*; it is just that an induced array of mechanisms and technologies implicitly perpetuates unequal power in funding partnerships. Donated funds remain the driving force and a hub of power asymmetries between donor- and recipient NGO partners. The implication is that the leadership and management of recipient partners are forced to adopt the funding agencies' managerial technologies and obligations, at the expense of the obligations they have in their local communities. It is such experiences that ensure that the question about organisational growth, leadership, and management capacity in the South African NGO partnership context, becomes critical to this study.

2.4.2 Organisational change and development

Greenberg (2011, p.583) argues “for organizations change is not the exception, but the rule”. Thus any talk about organisational growth points the management towards “change”. Change is a necessary condition which every organisation has to undergo. Greenberg (2011, p.584) defines organisational change as a process of “planned or unplanned transformation in an organization’s structure, technology, and/or people”. From this definition it can be deduced that change is inevitable in any given organisation. The leadership and management decide and plan for change that shapes the spheres, systems, and human capital of the organisation. Greenberg’s (2011) arguments, described above, link with the study on aid and funding partnerships, in that organisational change tends to result from varied forces that impact on organisational-, structural-, technical-, and human-capital systems. Furthermore, planned or unplanned organisational changes helps leadership to understand what it means to be a ‘learning organisation’ (Jackson 2003, p.69-70; and 74-84), and also how that relates to ‘system dynamics’ (Jackson 2003, 65-84). Greenberg (2011, p.583 and 584) explains that in order to achieve and to enable organisational learning and growth, the change process needs to work well, such as when it uses the key elements of the system, namely; structure, technology, and people. This shows that leaders and managers will be able to learn about systems during the process of change.

From a systems thinking perspective, organisational and management theory facilitates knowledge and understanding of organisational growth as a purposeful system and a social system (Jackson, 2003, p.10). Such social systems are mental models made possible by the three key elements mentioned above; structure, technology, and people. Organisational and management theory speculates that the performances of structure, technology, and people are a measure of improvements in organisational learning and growth (Jackson, 2003, p.10). Ideas about organisational change and management theory in a system, such as in funding partnerships, enable a critique of the shared learning and growth between the donor and the recipient organisations. That is, it is possible to scrutinize partnerships between the funding agencies, the funders, and recipient organisations on the level of the decision-owner/maker, problem owner/solver, actor, and witness (Jackson, 2003, p.10). Funders are normally ‘stakeholders’, and a category with an interest in what the partnership system is doing.

This theory also enables the examination of representatives and managers of funding projects as the ‘decision-makers or owners’, and a group with the power to make things happen in the system - in this case, a partnership. Finally, the leadership, project managers, and employees of the recipient organisations and projects are considered as the ‘collaborators or subordinates’, and a group which carry out the basic tasks in the system (Jackson, 2003, p.10). Jackson (2003, p.11) sums up and argues that “the encounter of holism with management and organisation theory” has made it possible for systems thinking to be equal to the task of analysing organisational systems.

In short, Jackson’s (2003, p.10) argument about organisational and management theory may apply to powerful partnerships and organisational growth as follows: 1) stakeholders (donors) as ‘problem-owners’ may seek out, and worry about the way that some elements in the system (partnership) perform; 2) leaders and managers (donor agencies and -representatives) as ‘problem-solvers’ may seek to know the way that they are affected by some elements in the system (partnership), either by failing to influence the behavioural patterns of these elements, or by trying to improve the behavioural patterns; and 3) subordinates (recipient organisations’ leadership, project managers, co-workers/team, and

the beneficiaries of the funding projects) of the system (partnership) may worry about influencing the behavioural patterns of the elements in the system in an upward direction (Jackson 2003, p.10).

In this regard, structure, technology, and people remain key elements of measure in this relationship. Thus, in order to intervene and to manage the technologies and structures of the funding partnerships and recipient organisations as the existing mental models, and as purposeful systems, “we need to consider how significant the concept of boundaries becomes” (Jackson 2003, p.10). Jackson (2003, p.10-11) shows, regarding the subject of the concept of boundaries, that people identify their purpose and make decisions about structure and technology based on their values and ethics. All these factors contribute towards the boundaries, philosophies, power, and politics of organisations. Therefore organisational change is about intervening and managing the boundaries of the organisation, as well as seeking to improve them without denying the presence of power.

Greenberg (2011, p.605) argues that there cannot be organisational change without organisational development. The author defines organisational development “as a set of social science techniques designed to plan and implement change in work settings for purposes of enhancing effectiveness of organizational functioning” (Greenberg 2011, p.605). In this case, organisational development is the implementation of planned or unplanned organisational change. Therefore, it may be possible to align organisational and management theory, organisational change, and organisational development ideas with system dynamics, in order to understand how to tackle organisational management problems such as boundaries. Thus for the NGO sector in South Africa and probably Africa at large, the question on how leaders and managers are capacitated for managing organisational change, especially where boundaries are determined by funding and donor influences, becomes paramount.

2.4.3 Leadership development

System dynamics, as an applied holism approach of significance for managers in promoting the learning organisation, “can reveal the systemic structures that govern their behaviour” (Senge 2006, p.161). It is argued that the approach achieves this task by engaging the other four disciplines: “personal mastery; managing mental models; building shared vision; and team learning” (Jackson 2003, p.72). Thus where leaders foster personal mastery, they develop an organisational quest for growth, meaning that the organisation becomes a place and space without threats:

where it is safe for people to create visions, where inquiry and commitment to the truth are the norm, and where challenging the status quo is expected (Senge 2006, p.162).

In simple terms, this is when the organisation values personal growth by buttressing its organisational life with the autonomy of the individual members, and the autonomy of groups, in taking initiatives and in encouraging independent interventions to the needs of the organisation.

When leaders promote mental models in the organisation, they rework their collaborators’ “ways of thinking” (Senge 2006, p.190). They develop a collective social attitude based on:

shifting from mental models dominated by events to mental models that recognize longer-term patterns of change and the underlying structures producing those patterns (Senge 2006, p.190).

The critical point here is that the leaders of organisations base key decision-making processes “on shared understandings of interrelationships and patterns of change” (Senge 2006, p.190). That is, organisations need the thinking capacity of the general employee in the same way that the thinking capacity of leaders is needed. Shared vision is when co-workers strive to achieve goals and priorities “that matters deeply to them” (Senge 2006, p.192). This results in:

a reinforcing process of increasing clarity, enthusiasm, communication and commitment. As people talk, the vision grows clearer. As it gets clearer, enthusiasm for its benefits builds (Senge 2006, p.211).

Therefore, organisations build vision from internal conversations and stories. From this, decisions become a result of both inclusive governance, and of a vision developed from groups and not just individuals.

When leaders promote team learning, group thinking and group action are developed as processes “to create the results its members truly desire... [that is]⁹ ... talented teams are made up of talented individuals” (Senge 2006, p.218). Team learning is where intuitive thinking and dialogue have a bearing on complex issues in the organisation, namely ground-breaking and harmonized action, and the effective role of team members on other teams (Senge 2006, p.219). Central to team learning are “the practices of dialogue and discussion” (Senge 2006, p.220). According to Senge (2006) therefore, when system dynamics applies other disciplines, it enables individual skills to be harnessed in a harmonized way in the organisation, creating a situation where each employee or team member can influence effective and collective leadership.

2.4.2.1 Effective and collective leadership

According to Greenberg (2011, p.477), effective leadership is a key determinant of organisational development. The author then goes on to define leadership as “the process whereby one individual influences other group members toward the attainment of defined group or organizational goals” (Greenberg 2011, p.477). Influence over followers has to be non-coercive to achieve the intended goal, and this means that leaders may also be influenced by the followers (Greenberg 2011, p.478). Developing a point of view from further discussions such as management theories, Greenberg (2011, p.478) makes a distinction between a leader and a manager. The former is primarily designated to envision and articulate the organisational mission and the strategy to achieve that mission, while the latter is elected as an implementer of the mission and of the strategies envisioned by the leader. In this kind of distinction, one can immediately note a top-down leadership and management style, if the envisioning and articulation of the organisational mission and strategy can be left to the leader alone.

⁹ My own addition.

Cardona (2000) argues:

relational leadership looks not only at the leader's influence to motivate collaborators but also at his or her influence to retain them in the partnership (Cardona 2000, p.203).

Cardona (2000, p.203-204) makes the distinction of three types of relational leadership, namely; transactional, transformational, and transcendental. Greenberg (2011, p.482) describes transformational leadership as "people who do things to revitalize and transform society or organizations". The author outlines various leadership styles that include autocratic, delegation, participative, and combined models, as a way to best describe the influence that subordinates may have over organisational decision-making (Greenberg 2011,p.482cf). Cardona (2000) refutes transactional and transformational leadership, arguing:

"transcendental leadership: is the leadership defined by a contribution-based exchange relationship. In this relationship the leader promotes unity by providing fair extrinsic rewards, appealing to the intrinsic motivation of the collaborators, and developing their transcendent motivation" (Cardona 2000, p.204).

Greenberg (2011, p.489) confirms transcendental leadership as 'the leader-member exchange' model (LMX theory), which suggests:

leaders form different relations with various subordinates and that the nature of such dyadic exchanges can exert strong effects on subordinates' performance and satisfaction (Greenberg 2011, p.489).

There are therefore various positions regarding organisational leadership styles but it seems that these two authors agree upon the "in-group" or "practice of team leadership" styles (Greenberg 2011, p.489). A leadership defined by subordinates' contribution-based exchange relationship or leader-member exchange methods, promotes an in-group involvement and participatory partnership between the leaders and co-workers. This is only possible after the leaders' development of spaces for negotiation, communication, and integrity-competences among co-workers. This is what Cardona (2000, p.206) describes as "the perspective of relational leadership... defined as an influence relationship". This relational leadership seems to link with system dynamics as 'the fifth discipline' (Senge 2006). In other words, both the leader and his/her co-workers

influence each other in a dynamic way, thus forming partnerships with greater or lesser added value. This means that partnership is a mutual leadership between persons - whether in high or low roles - as they exist in the same organisation. However, authors do not exactly give us the step-by-step method to achieve contribution-based exchange or leader-member exchange relationships.

Most importantly, Greenberg (2011) concludes:

being an effective leader isn't easy. ... However ... it is possible for almost anyone to develop the skills needed to become more successful as a leader (Greenberg 2011, p.498).
As a result, Greenberg (2011, p.498) then defines 'leadership development' as "the systematic process of training people to expand their capacity to function effectively in leadership roles". This is the option that leadership should achieve by:

developing networks of social interaction between people; close ties within and between organizations; developing trusting relationships between oneself and others; developing common values and shared vision with others (Greenberg 2011, p.499).

Bourne and Walker (2004) suggest the "third dimension - tapping into powerlines" model for project management skill, and Parry and Hansen (2007) give the organisational story model that separates the leader from leadership so that the organisational story itself can be the leader.

2.4.2.2 Leadership in the organisational story method

According to Parry and Hansen (2007, p.283), the organisational story captures the organisation's life. That is, an organisational story is a vehicle for organisational life options. For example, the team members find methods to direct their behaviour and sense-making in the vision and mission of the organisation. Again, the organisational story as a method for leadership development can be linked with the five disciplines outlined by Senge (2006). Parry and Hansen (2007, p.282-183) argue that "the story can enact leadership as much as any person can act as a leader... Leadership becomes an operationalization of the organizational story". That is, for the organisational story method to translate into leadership development, it has to generate norms, values, and culture by endorsing the "management actions, changes in strategy and employee

interactions” (Parry and Hansen, 2007, p.283). It is a method that relates to what Cardona (2000) argues as relational leadership and the encounter between holism, management, and organisation theory (Jackson 2003).

Hence, leadership development is linked to the organisational story through these factors: sense making; collective identity; and the role of power (Parry and Hansen, 2007, p.289-290). All these factors are, as noted by Parry and Hansen (2007, p.290), set on “story making”. Story making is about meaning making, whereby the organisation builds a brand name that can compete with other brands in the industry, through conversations between its own workers and leaders. In the reflection given above in this chapter, by Leon (2011), if donor organisations partnering with CERES and other recipient partners used the ‘story making model’, there could have been relational administrative styles - relational leaderships. The ‘story as leadership’ method is when the ‘leader’ is separated from the ‘position’ and is allowed to enter into conversation with co-workers as a co-worker him- or herself. This model ensures specific critical relationships and demonstrates goals achieved and those to be achieved. Therefore leaders and co-workers achieve sense making together, by defining their roles in the story of the organisation, and by improving their sense of commitment and involvement. The leaders and co-workers fill the gaps by leveraging each other’s experience as a collective identity. The role of power cuts across other factors as a shared power. This relates well to the ‘system archetypes’ and to the disciplines of ‘shared vision’ and ‘team learning’ (Braun 2000; Jackson 2003; and Senge 2006) discussed above. This story making may indicate that:

multiple voices and ideas can be represented in the story without the compulsion to resolve differences in order to avoid impeding forward movement towards goals (Parry and Hansen, 2007, p.294).

This model can be relevant in the power relationships in development practices. As Parry and Hansen (2007, p.295-296) argue, the persons holding leadership roles in organisations should have the ability to sense the circulating stories, and to then refuel and re-launch those stories for the betterment of the organisation. In addition, leaders should be aware that every event and action in the organisation turns into a story that is owned, told, and re-told by co-workers. Such is an organisational story whereby

leadership is separated from the 'leader' as a person or an individual. Leaders require organisational stories and conversations to engender vivid effects of group thinking. This is one method that is considered in this research about growth at the Sinomlando Centre.

2.4.2.3 A 'third dimension - tapping into the power lines'¹⁰

In the above sections, Jackson (2003) notes that people define their roles, values, and decision-making using the boundaries of the organisation. Bourne and Walker (2004, p.227) examine relationship management skills at project level as an imperative to achieving project outcomes, as would be expected from the project lifecycle by the stakeholder. Bourne and Walker (2004) argue:

relationship skills are required to aid the effective application of hard skills – it is people, using knowledge, creativity (and often technology) that realise projects, not techniques or hardware (Bourne and Walker 2004, p.227).

Organisational projects are conceptualised, managed, led, and transformed by people and not by technology. The argument made by Bourne and Walker (2004) can be related to the view of Jackson (2003), that managers have the responsibility to develop their own leadership skills from the bounds of their organisations. This can also be linked to Senge's (2006) view of building learning organisations:

Attunement to new learning communities, networks of relationships based on common aims and shared meaning, becomes both a strategy and an outcome for leaders (Senge 2006, p.307).

That is, the management of synergies in business relationships - across the board - is about people's adeptness at managing, regardless of one's social standing and roles in the partnerships.

This skill is what Bourne and Walker (2004, p.227) suggest as "tapping into the power lines - a Third dimension". The authors argue that it is a very important project management skill and competence, particularly in the contexts of power in partnerships between donor agencies and recipient organisations. The authors demonstrate the value

¹⁰ See also, Bourne and Walker (2004).

for the recipient project managers' understanding; of the power sources that drive partnerships, and also of the wisdom that effectively harnesses the energy generated by the system towards the success of his/her organisation's project. 'Third dimension' skills in project managers ensure the 'wisdom' and 'know-how' of organisational and leadership complexities, fragmentations, and the often confusing alliances of power influence in running projects (Bourne and Walker 2004, p.227).

The 'third dimension' model is preferred for analysis in this study due to its focus on project managers. It can be useful for evaluating project managers' skills in recipient organisations such as the Sinomlando Centre and/or CERES. It can also be relevant in evaluating managers' perceptions on their roles in partnerships, and their influence in the future of the organisation. Bourne and Walker (2004, p.234) refer to this as "striking a balance between left-brain and right-brain activities". As it is with the system dynamics approach, in particular system archetypes tools (Braun 2000; Jackson 2003; and Senge 2006), the 'third dimension model' is the art of leveraging contesting strategies of the influential stakeholders in the organisation. For instance:

even when the project manager lacks formal power, he/she needs to be able to influence people and outcomes; through building and nurturing the power they have in optimising 'coalitions of support' ..." (Bourne and Walker, 2004, p.234).

The literature studied here may be instrumental in evaluating and facilitating growth at the Sinomlando Centre.

2.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to explore literature that critically examines the following concepts: power; partnership; systems and systems thinking; and organisational and leadership development. The chapter identified that in different partnership environments, power is any framework where 'the source' has the ability to influence 'the target' to change their option and course of action. Studies cannot exactly pin down the definition of 'partnership' but there exist novel research activities that maintain the partnership discourse. The discourse on the use of power in funding partnership or in aid

partnerships is dominated by the unequal relational strategies between the global North and South. It is apparent that partnerships desire to achieve effective development practices amidst insufficient resources. As a result of power prevalence, partnerships appear fraught with an array of managerial mechanisms and technologies. Terms and conditions of partnership are often dictated by the ideological positions from the Northern donor agencies. This managerialism in aid-partnership is considered a power problem for small recipient partner organisations, and it makes partnership systems complex.

Power asymmetries in partnerships are ubiquitous. As such, systems and systems thinking development are found to be key to the question of organisational growth and leadership, and management capacity in the context of partnerships. Thus the system dynamics approach as the fifth discipline, in particular its system archetypes tools, is considered as giving leaders and managers a grip and an understanding of the interrelatedness of elements in the system, and of the real levers of change and improvement in the behavioural patterns of the organisation. This is considered as an encounter between holism and organisational and management theory. If the system dynamics approach is harnessed with the organisational and leadership development methods, management theory will be considered relevant in the evaluation of the management and leadership capacity in an organisation.

In the context of this study, powerful partnerships in organisational and leadership development, and systems and systems thinking development for managers in the NGO sector, are less prevalent in South Africa compared to other parts of the world, like the United States of America. In conclusion, even though this literature may look to be lacking in content, drawing as it does on the South African NGO context, much of the research's developed views are relevant and may assist in the analysis and discourse fluency for this project's research question: how does partnering with funder/donor organisations, and reliance on the University policies, influence the leadership and management capacity of the Sinomlando Centre? The following chapter, Chapter 3, looks at the research design and methodology (Chiliza 2004, p.43).

CHAPTER THREE

Research methods and design

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature that explores themes that include power, partnerships, systems and systems thinking development, and organisational leadership and management development. The current chapter focuses on the research methods and -design employed in this work. It presents various search strategies that this research project applied. It begins with the aim and objectives of this research project and then follows research methods and design, and the methods of data analysis. Each section spells out the techniques that add value and that contribute to the entire research project.

3.2 Aim and objectives of the study

Since the context of this study is about the power influences of funding partnerships and the University policies on growth at the Sinomlando Centre, this study seeks to identify and to understand Sinomlando staff members' perceptions. That is, the major aim is to explore Sinomlando employees' perceptions of the way in which organisational and leadership development at the Centre is influenced by the funders/donor agencies and by the University policy systems. This aim is divided into three further objectives:

- To explore organisational life at the Sinomlando Centre in relation to the funding partnerships - also known as donor agencies - and the University policy system;
- To explore the influences of the funding partnerships and of the University on the Sinomlando Centre's leadership- and management development;
- To evaluate, in consideration of the influences of the funding partnerships and of the University systems, the contribution of these two systems to the Sinomlando Centre's organisational growth.

3.3 Research method and design

According to McDavid and Hawthorn (2006, p.83), research design is fundamentally about examining the linkages depicted by the research project and the observed outcomes. Durrheim (2006) defines:

a research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research (Durrheim 2006, p.34).

Tredeoux and Smith (2006, p.161) add:

a research design is a plan or protocol for a particular piece of research. The plan defines the elements (e.g., variables, participants), their interrelationship, and methods (e.g., sampling, measurements that constitute the piece of research (Tredeoux and Smith 2006, p.161).

This study is grounded in these research design descriptions and it applies them as the planning and action between the research question and the unfolding or carrying out of the research itself.

The location of this study is the Sinomlando Centre, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. As stated above, the decision for the location is two-fold, since the organisation is functioning as a result of: 1) its partnerships with donor agencies for funding; and 2) its existence within the University policy system. This two-fold existence and functioning raises the following questions regarding the description and purpose of the research design and methods: power; partnerships; policies; and growth in the organisation.

3.3.1 Description and purpose

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006, p.5-7), the nature of the researcher's enquiry is defined by one of the three paradigms of the social sciences, namely, positivist, interpretive, and constructionist. Therefore, research methodology is determined by the choice of one of these dimensions. McTaggart (1997, p.7) looks at participatory action research as "research about the conscientious objectification of concrete experience and

change”. This research method taps more into socially constructed reality, and the research may need to adopt a “politicised epistemological stance, and employ methodologies that allow the researcher to deconstruct versions of reality” (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 2006, p.5-7). The method is determined by a constructionist paradigm and is therefore not suitable in contexts of person-to-person relations and action ideal for social empowerment (Bhana 2006, p.438-439). For that reason, this research approach is not applied to this study.

Durrheim (2006, p.47) distinguishes between quantitative and qualitative research approaches on the basis of the conclusions researchers draw from different kinds of information, and the different data analysis techniques to be applied. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2002, p.87) argue:

the main reason for doing qualitative research and using qualitative methods are the objectives of the research project and the background and previous experience of the researcher (Gronhaug 2002, p.87).

Thus, the qualitative and interpretive approach and methods allows data to be collected in the form of written or spoken language, and to be analysed by identifying and categorising themes and trends. As categories of information emerging from the data are identified, selected issues or trends are studied in depth, openness, and detail (Durrheim 2006, p.47).

In this research project the influences of power in partnerships, on the Sinomlando Centre’s organisational growth, is a reality consisting of people’s subjective experience. It is therefore appropriate to adopt a narrative and interpretative research paradigm, harnessing a qualitative approach and methods, and to use the interactional and interpretational frameworks for the epistemological stance of the research (Creswell 2003, p.50-51; Terre Blanche and Durrheim 2006, p.5-7). Thus, the approach generates theoretically rich conventional methods of disciplined inquiry, such as participant observation, interviews, archival, textual and discourse narrative analysis, to support conceptualising and interpreting actions and experiences, and the arriving at full and rich descriptions of these experiences (Braud and Anderson, 1998, p.277-281). The research

data collection strategies and instruments are constructed from the narrative and interpretive perspective, as well as from the qualitative research approach.

3.3.2 Data collection strategies

Data were collected from the Sinomlando Centre context using qualitative strategies. The Sinomlando Centre is a real world shaped by human feelings, experiences, social situations, and/or phenomena that shape the perceptions of the employees (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002, p.86-87; and Kelly 2006, p.287). The employees are involved in this context, and experience the effects of the two dominant systems, that is, the funding and the University worlds. Narrative and interpretive procedures or techniques are a major qualitative component for this research, in order to analyse data and to arrive at findings (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002, p.87; and Kelly 2006, p.287). Sandelowski (1991, p.161) defines narrative “as a framework for understanding the subject and interview data in qualitative research”. Narrative research proponents and experts argue that this approach “challenge(s) taken-for-granted beliefs, assertions and assumptions” (Fraser 2004, p.182). Furthermore, the: “methods of narrative analysis range from more traditional content analysis, through thematic analysis, to discourse analysis” (Lindegger 2006, p.465). Therefore the narrative and interpretive analysis approach enables the acknowledgement and understanding of the employees’ ‘taken-for-granted’ perceptions about growth at the Sinomlando Centre.

The following data collection methods are largely considered consistent with the narrative and interpretive analysis perspective: 1) archival (historical review); 2) interviews; and 3) observations (Rubin and Babbie 1997, p.264cf; Remenyi, Williams, Money, and Swartz, 1998, p.176-177; Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002, p.87cf; and Kelly 2006, p.297cf).

3.3.2.1 Archival (historical review)

Many organisations document their activities and performances (Rubin and Babbie 1997, p.264). In the case of this project, archival review involved reading and reviewing some of the Sinomlando Centre's primary and secondary sources about the past, present, and projected future. This historical review method constitutes the first and direct encounter with the organisationally documented texts. The texts are normally the existing records and reports, and the policies, agreements, and contracts produced and analysed, either internally or externally, in line with the occurrences of events in the organisation (Remenyi, *et.al.*, 1998, p.177; Rubin and Babbie 1997, p.264; and Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002, p.89). Thus, the documentation selected and studied for this project was made accessible by the Sinomlando management. For example, among many other official organisational documents: annual reports; partnership contracts and policies; finance and funding reports and proposals; minutes from some of the meetings; projects/programmes work plans; and the organisational webpage. The obtained documentation provides data about past and current Sinomlando organisational life, leadership and management practices, funding partnerships, and existence in the University. Nevertheless, this method produces data with minimum relevance to this research project.

3.3.2.2 Interviews

In order to be critical, the study cross-checks archival sources using face-to-face interviews (Ghauri and Gronhaug 2002, p.100). Narrative expert, Fraser (2004, p.184), argues that “narrative interviewers may unearth hidden or subordinated ideas”. Kvale (1996, p.31) states further that “interpretations of the meaning of the described phenomena” are a “real interaction between the researcher and the respondent” (Ghauri and Gronhaug 2002, p.100). Babbie and Mouton (2001, p.248), in consideration of the South African context, argue that “interviewing face-to-face” is the most common method to collect survey data, where the researcher asks the questions orally and records respondents' answers.

This study applies the interviewing method as a conversational encounter between the researcher and the interviewee. In other words, the interview method is open-ended and consists of in-depth conversations. The interviews, as “skilled performances” (Kelly 2006, p.297), are conducted on a one-to-one basis with each of the Sinomlando Centre’s permanent and temporary staff members. The individual interviews provide a description of lived experiences about the ‘hidden or subordinated’ perceptions existing at the Sinomlando Centre regarding its organisational life, leadership and management, and partnerships. This data collection method further enables exploration of the descriptions of Sinomlando’s organisational life, and the details on funding partnerships, policies, and organisational development.

Holstein and Gubrium (1995, p.19) argue that the meaning-making process and instrument begins with the researchers and respondents and the way that they choose to orient to the interview process. Therefore both the respondent and the interviewer must be considered competent in their asking and giving of accounts. This makes the respondent and the interviewer the creators and organisers of the meanings they convey. Thus, through questioning and answering in the interviewing process, the interviewer and the respondents are the meaning-maker instruments, since they are familiar with organising the meaning of the Sinomlando context. The researcher as interviewer is a meaning-maker because of two specific reasons: firstly, he possesses a clear meaning of the research question; and secondly, he has access to the Sinomlando organisation and interacts with the staff members on a daily basis. The staff members, as research respondents, are meaning-makers during the interviews because they possess the subordinate voice regarding issues of funding partnerships and growth at the Centre.

During personal (face-to-face) interviews, unstructured and semi-structured question methods are the second instrument created and used (Kvale 1996, p.20; and Ghauri and Gronhaug 2002, p.101). A set of questions are preconceived, drawn, and then asked by the researcher. The interview questionnaire schedule eventually is drawn to guide the interviewing process, and each interview is recorded using a digital audio recorder (Ghauri and Gronhaug 2002, p.102). This interview method produces 13 interview

narratives pivotal to the research narrative. The samples of these interviews can be made available on request, in both audio and text formats.

3.3.2.3 Participant observation

Participant observation is a relevant data collection method in order to allow some listening and analytical narrative interpretation of the material in the existing reports and records, as well as in order to balance the interview data from the Sinomlando Centre, (Cockley 1993, p.7; and Ghauri and Gronhaug 2002, p.90). This observation method is usually in the form of immersed field investigation, where the researcher becomes fully involved in the context being studied (Ghauri and Gronhaug 2002, p.90; and Kelly 2006, p.308).

In consideration of the argument by Holstein and Gubrium (1995, p.19), that the meaning-making process and -instrument starts with the researchers and respondents, participant observation is not exempted from the meaning-maker instrument. As a staff member of the Sinomlando Centre, the researcher naturally immerses in the organisational life, in the leadership and management systems, and in the funding partnerships and policies contexts, after a decision to field-study the organisation while participating in its day-to-day organisational activities and duties (Babbie and Mouton 2001, p.292; Ghauri and Gronhaug 2002, p.90; and Kelly 2006, p.314).

This is achieved by watching and listening closely to Sinomlando colleagues during the 2011 Strategic Planning meeting; the Programme meetings; the Management Committee meeting; and other informal meetings. The staff members, as participant observation respondents in some of these observed Sinomlando forums, were the submerged voice regarding organisational life, succession planning and management, funding, and donor agencies. Therefore any voice quoted and the accompanying notes are based only on the meetings observed. The instrument created is the participant schedules and it is used to draw out dominant issues at the Sinomlando Centre that include: reactions and communications in correspondence - such as e-mail and the internet; expressions of, and

encounters with thought patterns and their feedback; and impressions evoked by events in the organisational structures and systems. A journal book and digital audio recorder (note book) are handy instruments in collating all the information deemed necessary and useful for the research (Kelly 2006, p.315). Again, observation notes can be made available on request.

3.3.3 The design of the instruments

Kanjee (2006, p.484) states that there are a number of measurement scales contained in a questionnaire to draw out reliable information from respondents, and they have “open-ended items for qualitative responses”. Fraser (2004, p.184) posits this idea of open-ended schedules and explains that it is “a conventional style of interviewing”. Further, it is explained that “open-ended questions allow respondents to communicate their experiences or opinions about a specific issue in their own words, without any restriction” (Kanjee 2006, p.486). Therefore, the open-ended interview questionnaire (schedule) and the participant observation schedule created and “arranged into a well-ordered and easy-to-read final questionnaire” (Kanjee 2006, p.489), are facilitated under the following three topical frames:

1. The impressions on the organisational life at the Sinomlando Centre in terms of the general relation with the funders and the link to the University;
2. The understanding of structural system, that is, the leadership and management style at the Sinomlando Centre;
3. The impressions on the influence of the funding partnerships and of the University, on leadership- and management development at the Sinomlando Centre.

An example of the designed interview schedule used is presented as Appendix III.

A digital audio recorder, though as a research instrument not designed by the researcher, is purchased and made useful during the personal interviews. Every respondent’s voice is digitally recorded and preserved for future reference (Kelly 2006, p.298-299), and each

recording is easily transcribed. A journal-book, again as a research instrument not designed by the researcher, is used in both formal and informal observed meetings, and every produced reaction and expression is noted and/or recorded and later typed into soft copy (Kelly 2006, p.315).

3.3.4 Recruitment of study participants

Holstein and Gubrium (1995), drawing on Willis (1990), argue:

we must consciously be aware that from the start the selection of interview respondents represents an orientation to people as much as it is the sampling of a population (Holstein and Gubrium 1995, p.25).

Durrheim and Painter (2006, p.132-139) define and categorise sampling into various strategies, and each stage fits into a particular research paradigm and approach. This study adopts the non-probability sampling strategy, using a purposive sampling (Durrheim and Painter 2006, p.139). This sampling strategy was chosen because of the awareness that the thirteen Sinomlando Centre staff members, whether as individuals or as a group representation, are available and willing to participate in this research. In addition the strategy ensures that as a collective, the thirteen staff members make a real case (Durrheim and Painter 2006, p.139) about organisational growth in the context of powerful partnerships.

In other words, this final recruitment and size is determined by the fact that a respondent had to be a staff member (permanently or temporarily employed) participating in day-to-day organisational life during the period of the field study; January 2011 to November 2011. The researcher approached some of the respondents individually and in person, and for some, emails were sent inviting them to participate in the study. All thirteen respondents voluntarily agreed to participate in the interview process. Seven are permanent and quasi-permanent senior staff; three are coordinators (temporary); and two are facilitators/mentors (temporary). These respondents were active in the life of the organisation before the study was conceived, and remained active for the duration of the field study. All thirteen respondents are still active in their duties. Dates and times for

interview appointments were set, including the meetings for which the observation studies took place. Ten of the thirteen interview respondents also participated in the different meetings that were observed. In chapter 4 of this dissertation, Roman numerals are used in place of the names of the interview respondents - for confidentiality purposes.

3.3.5 Pretesting and validation

At the Sinomlando Centre, growth is geographically, socially, culturally, and politically influenced by the organisation's partnerships with donor NGOs, and by its reliance on the systems of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. In this scenario, decision making is dependent on the Director of the organisation and on no other members of Management. As a result of this situation, questions have emerged around two issues: 1) power, partnerships, and policies; and 2) the perceptions of managers in negotiating their options in funding partnerships and in University policy, as active elements of organisational growth. From this problem statement, the research question arises: how is leadership and management capacity at the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa, influenced by the power of the funding partnership system, and by the University's research centre policy system? This research question produced the interview schedule and the observation topical frame, as presented in section 3.3.6 above, so as to measure each individual staff member's impressions and perceptions of this problem at the Sinomlando Centre.

The administration of the open-ended questionnaire and of the topical frame instruments, seeks to determine whether each person's perceptions and impressions of the organisational life, of the management and leadership system, and of the partnerships system at the Sinomlando Centre, are represented by, and correlate with the information found in the archival documents (Durrheim and Painter 2006, p.153). In this regard, the archival data are considered as pre-tested data. This correlation is determined by the Sinomlando Centre staff members, as the *ad hoc* narrators and interpreters of 'what is' and 'what can be' at Sinomlando. The participants' narratives and interpretations

represent the Centre's positioning within: 1) funding partnerships; and 2) the University policy system.

Moreover, one short and open-ended questionnaire (Kanjee 2006, p.485-486) was created to solicit responses from all staff members, irrespective of the social distance and positions that each holds in the organisation. The open-endedness of the questions was chosen because it allows for the engaging of research respondents in a friendly way, with follow up questions as "subscales" (Kanjee 2006, p.485) that produce a range of perceptions. This approach tries to elicit neutrality and non-bias for both interviewer and respondents, as argued by Kanjee (2006, p.485): "some scales include many items, as the reliability of multi-item scales is stronger than the reliability of measures with few items". Using this approach, respondents expressed many but mixed opinions freely and without restriction. The interview conversations were recorded on a digital recorder (Kelly 2006, p.298-299), as explained in section 3.3.4 above.

With the observation process, a similar short and open-ended topical frame was also created to guide participant observation across various staff and management meetings, where at least >50% of the sample size of the identified participants was represented. A digital recorder and a notebook or journal were used for note-taking, in line with the topical frame, to avoid pitfalls of subjectivity; as argued by Kelly (2006, p.315), "it is therefore doubly important that you should make copious notes, often referred to as field notes". Documents were closely studied and notes were generated. Then for validation, data obtained from participant observation and interview studies were triangulated with data obtained from the archival study.

3.3.6 Administration of the questionnaire

The settings for individual interviews were in staff offices at the University. All thirteen key respondents were interviewed individually but an appointment was made weeks or days before the interview date. Prior to the interview the respondent received the Informed Consent Form, with a release clause (shown as Appendix II). He/she was

invited to read through the form and to understand it before signing it. During the interview the questionnaire was administered in the form of a conversation, where the interviewer asked open-ended questions to which the respondent gave their opinion, and at the same, time their voice was digitally recorded. This questionnaire took between 30 and 60 minutes to administer. The first interview was on January 31, 2011, and the last interview was on May 5, 2011.

As with the observation study, an email was sent to the Sinomlando management requesting access to observe meetings for research purposes. Another request was made specifically for observing the Management Committee meeting. Permission for all these requests was granted by the Sinomlando Centre Director on behalf of the management team (as per Appendix I at the end of this dissertation). The study then began with a brief visit by the Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement-Terre Solidaire (CCFD-Terre Solidaire) Officer for the South Africa-Madagascar desk on January 25, 2011, and ended with a Management Committee meeting on March 8, 2011.

3.4 Analysis of the data

Based on the research question, “how is leadership and management capacity at the Sinomlando Centre influenced by the power of both the funding partnership system and the University policy system?”, then it is apparent that the objects of the study are the individuals in a group, as well as groups in the organisation in relation to funding organisations and the University. That is, the study draws its output from the Sinomlando employees as units of analysis (Durrheim 2006, p.41-42) but it is important to spell out the qualitative methods of analysis.

3.4.1 Methods of analysis (primary data)

Terre Blanche, *et al.*, (2006) argues that:

data analysis involves reading through your data repeatedly, and engaging in activities of breaking the data down (thematizing and categorising) and building it up again in novel ways (elaborating and interpreting) (Terre Blanche, *et al.*, 2006, p.322).

In the case of this study, the first method of analysing primary data is to transcribe verbatim from the digitally recorded individual interviews (Kelly 2006, p.302). Transcription involves listening attentively and first engagement. Then the transcribed verbatim is turned into a narrative text which is broken into themes and categories of individual data. In the same way, the observation notes are collated and dissected into a sensible and relevant field-narrative text, which is in turn categorised into themes and trends.

According to Fraser (2004):

line-by-line narrative analysis produces such fine-grained 'data' and is so labour intensive ... [but] smaller studies ... may involve analysing sections of narratives and may incorporate the highly detailed material that comes from analysing stories line by line (Fraser 2004, p.186).

Terre Blanche, *et al.*, (2006, p.323) explain that at this stage of working with the transcribed verbatim as well as the field narrative text, the researcher will read and dissect through the narratives as many times as possible. That is, a 'line-by-line' narrative and interpretive method is used, harnessing thematic content analysis (Fraser 2004, p.184; Lindegger 2006, p.485). Then, from both the interview narratives and the participant observed narratives, themes are identified and categorised or broken down into simple sub-issues, points and statements, and linkages and gaps. This process of breaking down data into small details enables the synthesising, interpretation, and evaluation of each narrative text to produce developments of perceptions and to identify the number of times that each perception is repeated, either by one respondent or by other respondents. Findings are then generated from the identified development of perceptions. A single but comprehensive Sinomlando Centre narrative is generated last as a way of substantiating and synthesising the detail in individual narratives. This analysis of the primary data is presented in Chapter 4 of this research.

3.4.2 Theoretical analysis (a conceptual framework)

The study draws from various theoretical provisos - such as systems and system thinking development, power, partnerships, and organisational and leadership development - in an effort to dissect the primary data, as indicated in Section 3.4.1 above. This is in order to further regurgitate the comprehensive Sinomlando Centre narrative into a discourse about organisational growth. This research applies systems approaches, and in particular the work of Jackson (2003) and Senge (2006) on system dynamics as the fifth discipline. From this conceptual framework, the study engages the tools of the system archetypes to make an objective case of the Sinomlando Centre; that organisational development and - life are shaped in relation to the power influences found in partnership complexities. Senge (2006) argues that when system thinking is engaged with four other disciplines - personal mastery, managing mental models, building a shared vision, and team learning - it gives managers the skills to see the interrelationships in the organisation. In order to process organisational growth at the Sinomlando Centre as a logical case, the 'fifth discipline' framework (Senge 2006) is synthesised by the following perspectives: on behaviour in organisations; on organisational and leadership development (Greenberg 2011); and on organisational and management theory (Jackson 2003).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to present ways and means of answering the research question, including by objectives, by project design, and by techniques. It achieved this objective by showing and linking the research objective with data collection strategies and with the theoretical analysis method. This research project's logical discourse about the Sinomlando Centre, as a case for growth, power, and partnerships, is presented in Chapter 5 of this study; before that, however, Chapter 4 presents data, findings, and narrative text.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data analysis and presentation of findings: the Sinomlando Centre narrative

4.1 Introduction

Walker and Bodycott (1999) argue:

organisational and leadership stories only become genuine vehicles for enlightenment and learning when people actually listen and seek to unearth their meaning ... When people listen to stories, they rarely question what the narratives convey about the person, the organisation or the culture from which the story is derived (Walker and Bodycott 1999, p.441).

This implies that the process of ‘listening’ and opening up ‘meanings’ contained in the narratives should be taken and engaged-in seriously in order for the ‘organisational and leadership stories’ to produce the intended learning and growth. This chapter engages in, and unpacks meanings contained in the collected narratives. It lends itself to ‘unearthing meaning’ expressed in observation study notes, interview narratives, and interwoven with archival studies. This Chapter is a presentation of data. It begins with the primary data from the observation and interview narratives, and then the data analysis that points at the specific thematic trends of perceptions, presenting these opinions as specific research findings. The key section of the Chapter interweaves the primary data with the secondary data obtained from the archival information, into a single, multi-vocal, and comprehensive Sinomlando Centre narrative.

4.2 Data analysis

In order to understand the perceptions of Sinomlando employees about the way that organisational growth at the Sinomlando Centre is influenced by the funding partnership system and by the University policy system, the primary data are gathered and collated using two study instruments: simple and participatory observations; and narrative interviews. This data analysis is therefore drawn from the narrative interviews and from the observation studies using both the “line-by-line narrative” (Fraser 2004, p.185) and the “descriptive narrative” (Sandelowski 1991, p.163) techniques. Theme lines and sub-

theme lines drawn out of both the individual interview narratives and the observed study notes are broken down into collective perceived predispositions. Themes and sub-themes are firstly presented, in two tables and in two graphs, below. The sub-themes are narrowed-down to specific perceptions and three graphs.

4.3 Participant observation study analysis

In **Table 4.1** below, column 1 shows the study instrument and the number and types of meetings observed. Column 2 indicates the major theme which is the lead question during field research, and column 3 indicates the collated and broken-down data into subthemes. Column 4 indicates the number of times (frequency) that each subtheme may have been repeated by one or more respondents. It is possible, for example, that one respondent may have repeated a view in the same meeting, or in other meeting discussions. Column 5 carries the projected findings.

Table 4.1 Observation data analysis

Study Instrument	Major Theme	Sub-theme	Sub-theme frequency	Finding
Simple and participatory observations - observation studies: the Management Committee, Programme Committee, and Strategic Plan meetings.	Organisational life. The nature and functioning of the Sinomlando Centre's organisational life in the context of the University and funding agencies.	The Sinomlando Centre needs clear organisational policies and procedures for the employees to understand the constituency of systems. There are loose ends in the organisation and everything is centred on the director – human resource, financial and projects synergies and planning. People do not know how to protect or to be protected in the organisation.	23	Lacks policy consistency
		The Sinomlando Centre has a constitution and is recognised as a Non-Profit	7	Dual legal status

		Organisation in accordance with South African law; it however also has the face of a Research Centre of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.		
<p>Leadership and management.</p> <p>The nature the Sinomlando Centre's governance in the context of the University and funding agencies.</p>		<p>The Sinomlando Centre Management Committee is a rubber stamp mechanism for decision making processes. The Committee applies its mind to certain issues and comes up with preliminary decisions about strategic plans, human resources, staff development, succession plans, and financial/budgeting. Reporting is to the Sinomlando Board, that reports to the School Board.</p>	19	Top-down structure
		<p>The Sinomlando Centre has a culture of staff development that is positive for generating employment and positions for staff members in the organisation. Thus, employees are offered scholarships to study for Honours, Masters and PhD degrees, and in-house training is offered for fieldworkers.</p>	8	Skills development strategy
		<p>Events and activities are all aligned, personified and delegated upwards to the Director – The director's thinking is applied to any conceptualisation, be it project- or operational financial planning and budgeting. The opportunity for capacity development is discussed but not with the intention to hand over skills and thus encourage confidence in Senior Managers.</p>	26	Monopolised leadership
		<p>The Sinomlando Centre has efforts for group thinking methods realised in Management Committee-, Programme-, and Strategic Planning meetings that focus on designated</p>	10	Collaborative management

		<p>funds and the Centre's status at the University. The Centre makes efforts towards transparency by combining different approaches when discussing organisational succession plans and project budgets, and by including people at both lower management- and fieldworker levels.</p>		
		<p>Between programme staff and management it is always dicey, leaving individual staff members anxious and frustrated because they may be asked to come up with a decision without relevant information.</p>	19	Lacks management coordination
		<p>Management-structure responsibilities in the present Sinomlando Centre, such as funding-proposal writing, financial management (knowledge, budgeting, and reporting on the flow of funds), and Annual Report writing, are noted as predominantly done by the Director. The Director chairs all meetings and reports on his own decisions regarding funders and funding. The team is made to believe that it will be difficult to find a replacement for him at the moment.</p>	14	Lacks succession foresight
	<p>Partnerships and Growth.</p> <p>The influences of funding partners and UKZN on growth at the Sinomlando Centre.</p>	<p>The Sinomlando Centre learns from the dynamics and philosophies of International donors. Some donor agencies put specific tools in place to manage their grants. This is empowering and brings evolution to the Sinomlando Centre.</p>	12	Growth and evolution

		<p>The Director has a good knowledge and understanding of donor partners, and their varying frameworks and specific focus. This is especially so for partners whose administration is in regions of France, Germany, and Belgium, and that are of Catholic development initiatives and services. The Director knows how and when to approach these parties when fundraising. In this way he is able to understand the predictability and unpredictability of each fund, and this leads him to decide on transitional situations in the Sinomlando Centre, such as staff members' workloads, contracts, and remuneration benefits. It is noted that the Leadership thinks that the Director's continued involvement in the Sinomlando Centre will enable the European donors to remain confident in the organisation's vision and leadership.</p>	34	Director influencing donors.
		<p>The Sinomlando Centre Leadership understands and points at constraints by the donor agencies, in particular, frameworks that carry decisions that are made at levels where the Centre does not have control. Therefore with some agencies, decisions come as instructions and not negotiations, which results in internal-organisational disjointed and exclusive communication. For example, a dispute concerning financial management is cited with the CERI partnership.</p>	23	Unpredictable Donor influences

		Having a Research Centre face at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the Sinomlando Centre survives on the Director's Professorship role and position. He produces research credentials, as is expected of him by the University. The Director is appointed through the laws of appointments in the University, and he then maintains the status quo in the organisation by teaching, researching, publishing, and by financial contribution. There is insecurity and anxiety about the uncertainty of the support, as well as about the freedom of existence and operations of the Sinomlando Centre at the University	17	The University's influence on Sinomlando
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Table 4.1 above, presents the rate of recurrences of sub-themes, as articulated perceptions by Sinomlando employees, across all observed forums during research. **Table 4.1** tries to depict, based on a line-by-line narrative analysis technique, twelve insights and perceptions about the Sinomlando Centre's organisational life, leadership and management (organisational governance), and partnerships and growth. **Figure 4.1** below, is a summative bar graph representation of these twelve insights and perceptions across the observation studies, showing the behaviour of each trend. Following this bar graph is the data analysis section from the face-to-face interview narratives.

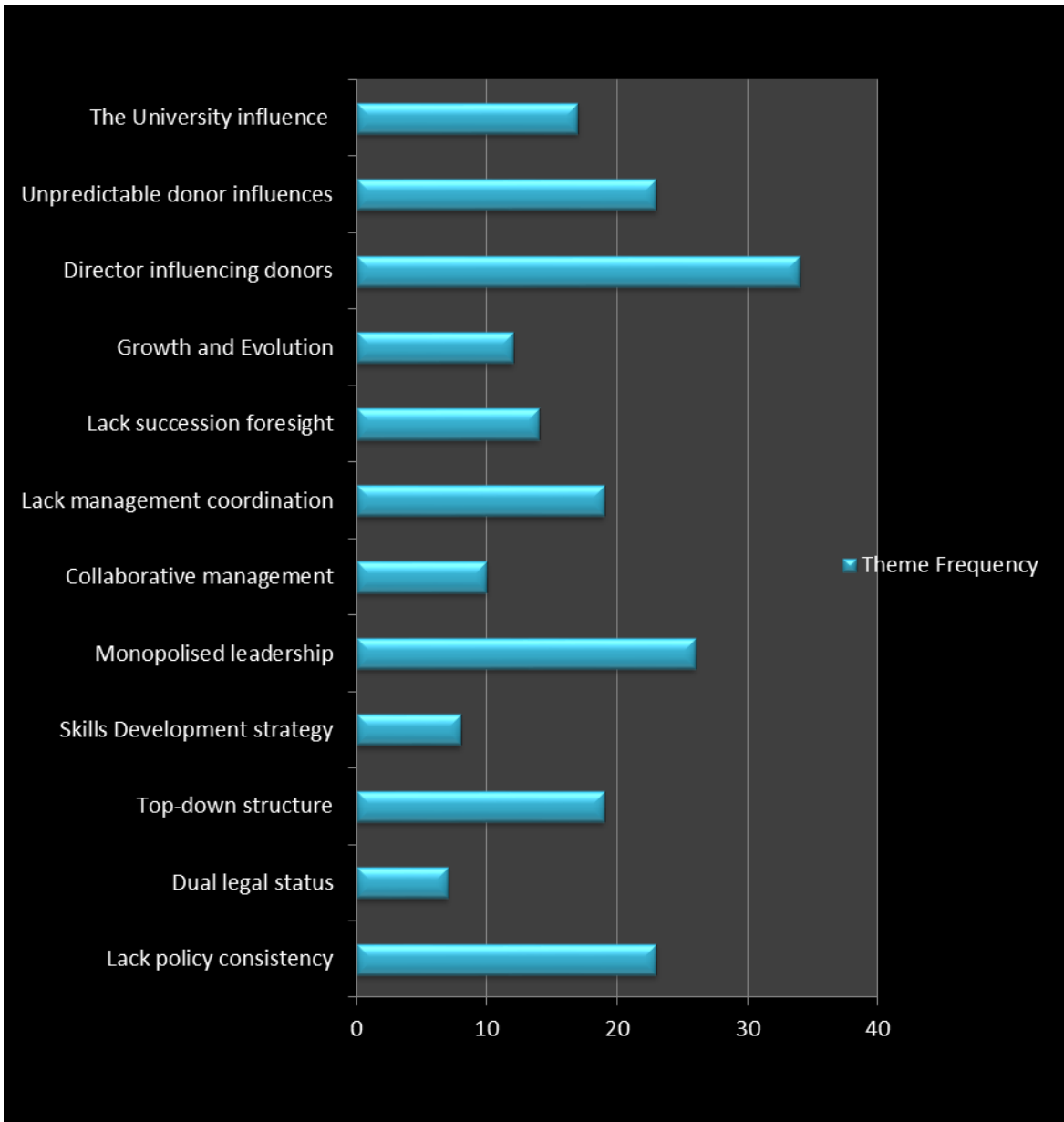


Figure 4.1: Research findings from the observation studies

4.4 Interview data analysis

In **Table 4.2** below, similarly to **Table 4.1** above, column 1 shows the study instrument. Column 2 indicates the major themes from which lead questions for the interviews were developed during field research, and column 3 indicates the collated and broken down data into subthemes. Column 4 indicates the number of times (frequency) each subtheme may have been repeated by one or more interviewees. Again, it is possible that one interviewee may have said one point of view repeatedly when either responding to the same interview question, or when responding across the major interview questions. Column 5 reflects the projected findings.

Table 4.2 Interview Data Analysis

Study Instrument	Major Theme Cluster	Sub-theme	Sub-theme frequency	Findings
Narrative interviews - semi-structured individual interviews				
	Organisational life.	The Organisation is described as a research Centre for Oral History and a project of, and based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, dependent on the founder(s) and director and external funding. It obtained the NPO number from the South African Department of Social Development.	20	Dual legal status
	The nature and functioning of the Sinomlando Centre's organisational life in the context of the University and funding agencies.	The Organisation has a Constitution, vision, mission and values. It is known for building capacity, in partnership with local organisations, in retrieving histories and memories to enhance resilience to traumatized people.	23	Identity

		The Organisation is portrayed mainly as driven solely by the Director, as a family and a team that works together and has a united sense of purpose. Colleagues have a sense of unity, togetherness, passion, inherent levels of dedication, work ethic, and a huge amount of interpersonal warmth from the founder(s) and leaders.	22	Charismatic
		The employees are not aware of organisational policies and procedures on paper, or those specific to Sinomlando. There is a lack of internally binding information about the systems in the Organisation and the employees identify this as seeking to please other organisations, especially donor organisations. It is governed by UKZN policies and procedures.	15	Lack of policy consistency
		The Organisation identifies and chooses relevant people. That is, it targets people with fairly good academic and organisational skills, trains them further, and redeploys them.	10	Skills targeting and retention
	Leadership and management. The nature of the Sinomlando Centre's governance in the context of the University and funding agencies.	People at Sinomlando have job descriptions. The Director and managers have an interface role between funders, the University, and the Sinomlando. The project managers, coordinators and mentors have fieldwork roles.	13	Clear roles
		The Sinomlando Organogram shows: at the top is the Board; below that the Management Committee; and then the Programme Committees and fieldworkers.	6	Top-down structure
		The agendas for decision making, information flow, and processing at Sinomlando are decided on by the Director and higher Management and filtered down to middle management. It is a bureaucratic and hierarchical structure whereby only the Director is connected to the Sinomlando Board, the Funders, and the University. Other senior managers' functions are delegated only at the director's discretion.	40	Bureaucratic and hierarchical leadership

		There is a lack of operational organisation, planning and communication, coordination, feedback, and transparency at the Sinomlando. There are disguised consultative efforts with less value for the grassroots contribution, thus breeding inconsistencies in the information flow.	32	Lack of management coordination
		Individual managers and staff at Sinomlando are appreciated for listening, supporting, encouraging and responding to the contribution of colleagues' needs.	15	Fair leadership
		Various meeting structures pose a challenge in making information reach all staff. Strategic planning involves everyone in the short term.	13	Consultative management
		There is a culture of staff training and skills development at the Sinomlando. Employees have space for self-reliance, independent work, reliability, experience, exposure, on-the-job training (learning as we go), and their input is incorporated in management responsibilities. Succession planning has been discussed openly many times. Senior employees can think through and search for new possibilities to adapt to the new contexts, to learn and improve relations with the funding agencies.	24	Organic development strategy
		There is a lack of capacity, and the workload, salary, and remuneration policy are not favourable to fieldworkers. Employees often feel frustrated, anxious, vulnerable, and have critical roles to play due to the limited contractual time frames. They see their roles in keeping to the routine to please, adhere to, and comply with the policies and procedures of the funders and UKZN.	30	Unfavourable policy system

<p>Partnerships and growth.</p> <p>The influences of the funding partners and the UKZN on the growth at the Sinomlando Centre.</p>	<p>Sinomlando uses the policies and procedures of both the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the funding partners. Employees are not aware of the Sinomlando partnership policy that defines their roles in partnerships. Sinomlando, unlike the University and funders of the organisation, does not have a lasting legacy.</p>	21	Lack of partnership policy
	<p>The Sinomlando Director does the fundraising and communication with the funding partners and agencies. He uses his academic profile and religious affiliation credentials to manage donor partnerships through formal and informal meetings, correspondence (emails), and international conferences. A White person for the partners from the North matters. He is the only one in the Organisation with funding and fundraising experience and, other senior managers and staff are knowledgeable either of only one funder, or of one funded project. Employees do not know how to deal with the partnership dynamics at play between the funders, the University, and the Sinomlando.</p>	46	The Director influences donors
	<p>The Sinomlando employees feel that there is mutual learning, knowledge and experience exchange, and integration of specific frameworks and targets in funding partnerships. Partnerships raise awareness of the funders' influences in the Sinomlando management structural system. Many funders often sway the Sinomlando from its vision, work and structure. In funding partnerships, the Sinomlando management and employees strive to be compliant and transparent by reaching targets and reporting on the basis of the funding agencies' agendas and frameworks.</p>	56	Donor influences

		UKZN controls Sinomlando's decision-making and policy formulation. Sinomlando relies and complies with the University policies through the Director's research and teaching credentials and ensuring that employees register for studies. For the Sinomlando staff, being part of the UKZN provides them with assurance for their employment, access and exposure to information and facilities, opportunities to study, and their work's identification with the University earns them value and respect from local stakeholders.	35	University influences
		The disadvantages for the Sinomlando staff are that the UKZN policies and procedures are unfavourable because funding is considered 'external', and the social distance between the Sinomlando staff and University academic staff is visible.	20	Unfavourable University policy

Table 4.2 above, is a presentation of the occurrences of each of the sub-themes. These nodes are generated from the line-by-line narrative analysis technique from the thirteen interview narrative texts. As a result, eighteen insights and perceptions were depicted about the Sinomlando Centre organisational life, leadership and management (organisational governance), and partnerships and growth. These are then presented as a final analysis in a bar graph, **Figure 4.2** below. A narrowed-down analysis is presented in three bar graphs below; Figures 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5, in terms of the major research themes: organisational life; leadership and management (organisational governance); and partnerships and growth.

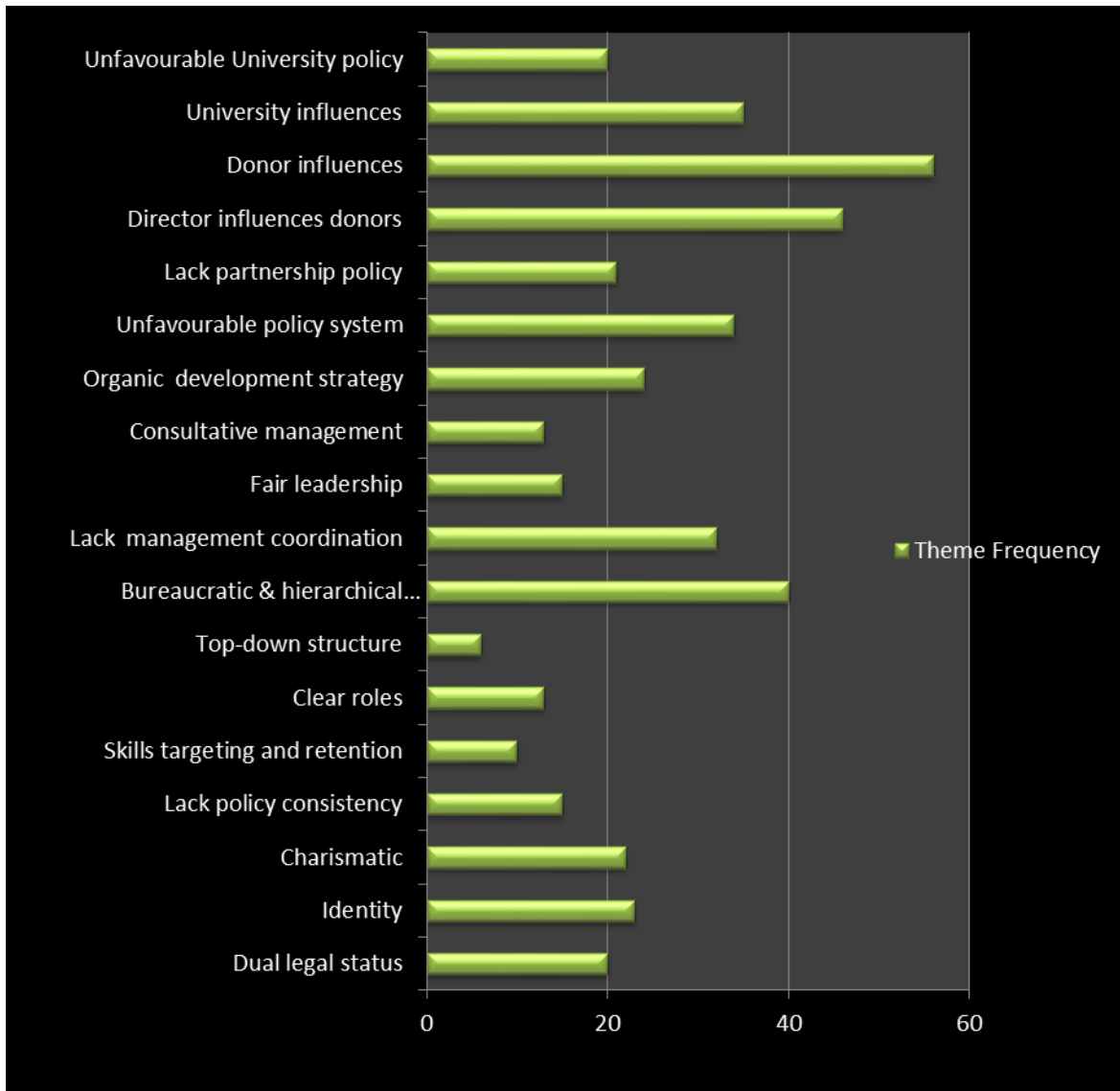


Figure 4.2 Research findings from the interview narratives

4.5 A narrowed-down analysis

The data from the observation and interview narrative texts presented above are synthesised and constricted into a comprehensive analysis of the detected insights and perceptions about growth at the Sinomlando Centre. Thus, this section is a concise analysis that attempts to put these established perceptions into the perspective of the thesis. **Figures 4.3 – 4.5** below, are bar graph presentations, where each graph is a brief visual interpretation of the performances according to each insight identified. Below is

Figure 4.3, a bar graph showing the employee perceptions about organisational life at the Sinomlando Centre.

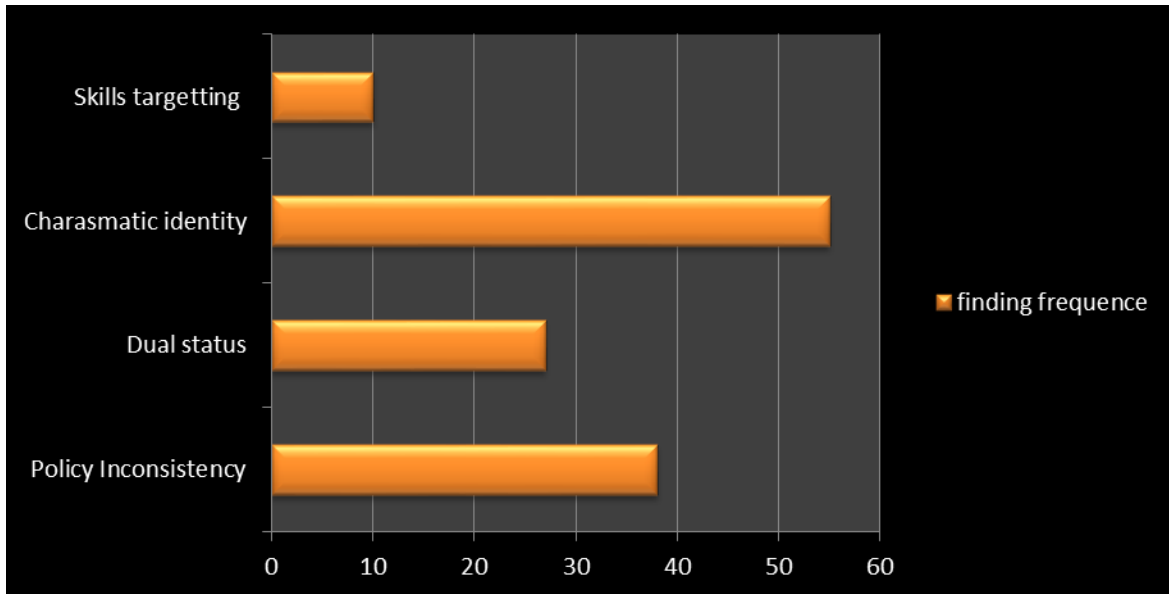


Figure 4.3 The Sinomlando Centre's Organisational Life

Figure 4.3 above, shows that the employees at the Sinomlando Centre, across all forums and positions, are articulate about the charismatic identity and policy inconsistencies in the organisation. Even though employees are expressive about the dual status and skills targeting at the Centre, where these insights are raised there is a great need for greater attention from the leadership and management. Overall, these insights and articulations do represent the employee's general description and understanding of the Sinomlando Centre organisational life. The graph, **Figure 4.4** below, presents the theme on leadership and management.

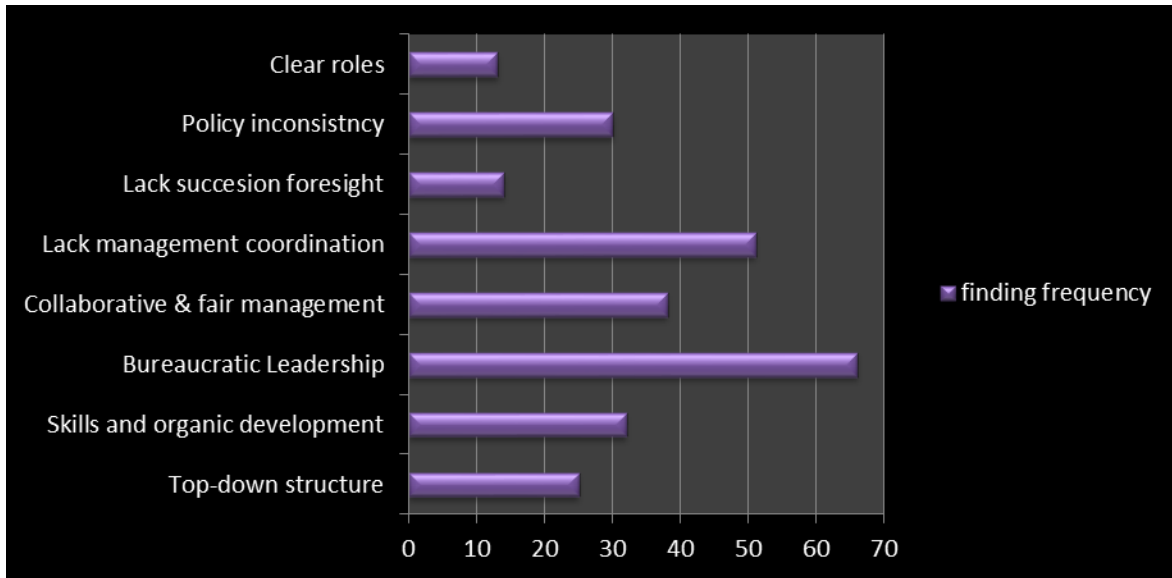


Figure 4.4 The Sinomlando Centre's Leadership and Management

Figure 4.4 shows that the staff members at the Sinomlando Centre are sensitively vocal about the bureaucratic leadership style, lack of management coordination, policy inconsistencies, and collaborative and fair management. Though not voiced as much, the top-down skill- and organic development, lack of succession foresight, and the clear roles and job descriptions are expressed tactically by the employees. Largely, this can be presented as the employee interpretation of the leadership and management at the Sinomlando Centre. At this instance there are also perceptions on the partnerships and growth at the Sinomlando Centre presented in the bar graph, **Figure 4.5**, below.

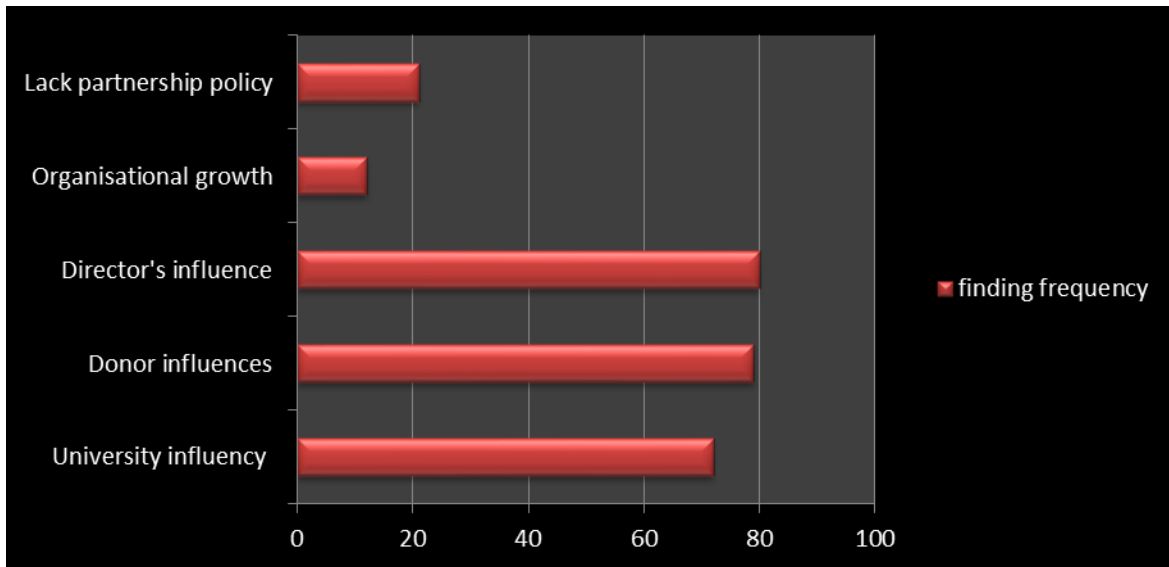


Figure 4.5 Partnerships and Growth

Finally, **Figure 4.5** indicates that what dominates the minds of employees about the influences of partnerships on growth at the Sinomlando Centre, are the Director, the donors, and the University. Organisational growth, as in possible change, and lack of partnership policy, are expressed less. Moreover, this is the way employees evaluate levels of influence and their impact on growth at the Sinomlando Centre.

These three bar graphs (**Figure 4.3 – 4.5**) suggest a detailed Sinomlando Centre narrative text. This narrative is a broader and interpretive synthesis of all the findings as they are depicted in graphs above, and presented below.

4.6 Presentation of findings

4.6.1 The employees describe the Sinomlando Centre organisational life in four ways:

4.6.1.1 It exists and functions within both a dual status and environment

The Sinomlando Centre exists and functions in a dualistic environment and status – with the NPO statute and in terms of a research unit status of the University. For that reason, organisational life at the Sinomlando Centre is best described and understood as a

triangular systemic structure involving the interplay between the University, the Centre Director, and the donors or funding agencies.

4.6.1.2 The Sinomlando Centre has charismatic identity

The Sinomlando Centre is driven by the charismatic identity and a sense of purpose embedded in the leadership and members. Thus for its mission and vision, the credentials and profile to be 'out there' is due to the character of the founding Director and the captivating human atmosphere. As a result, Sinomlando organisational life is best described and understood as having a family- and team-like character marked by individual passion, inherent levels of dedication, and a strong work ethic.

4.6.1.3 The Sinomlando Centre is known for skills targeting strategy

The Sinomlando Centre correctly identifies, chooses and deploys relevant and skilled people. Therefore, the Sinomlando Centre is understood in the manner in which it brings people into the organisation, trains them, and eventually redeploys them in its ranks according to organisational needs.

4.6.1.4 The Sinomlando Centre is identified with organisational policy inconsistencies

The Sinomlando Centre is described as needing clearer organisational policies and procedures for the employees to understand, identify with, and even fall back on. Consequently, the Centre is largely characterised by a lack of employee-ownership of organisational policy formulation and implementation.

4.6.2 The Sinomlando Centre's governance is perceived in the following seven statements:

4.6.2.1 The Sinomlando Centre's governance is a top-down structure

The Sinomlando Centre governance functions in terms of a top-down leadership and management style. Thus, the Sinomlando organogram is known to have the Board at the top; below it is the Management Committee, and then the Programme Committees and fieldworkers.

4.6.2.2 The Sinomlando Centre has clear staff roles

Along with the top-down organogram, Sinomlando's employees are aware of, and clear about their job descriptions.

4.6.2.3 The Sinomlando Centre believes in skills and organic development

The Sinomlando Centre is recognised for its organic and skills development strategy. There is a visible culture of exposure to academia, training and practice, and through that, employees gradually get incorporated into management ranks.

4.6.2.4 There is consultative and fair management effort

The Sinomlando Centre leadership makes an effort to consult, collaborate, and be fair. This is realised in the culture of involving everyone, from top to bottom, in formal meeting structures and in some of the management activities.

4.6.2.5 The Sinomlando Centre leadership is believed to be bureaucratic

The leadership design, style, method of transmitting information, and the shape of the Sinomlando Centre is bureaucratic, hierarchical, and top-down. It is observable that organisational events and activities are recognised, aligned to, central to, and personified with the high-profile Director. As such, at Sinomlando the decision-making processes, information creation, and processing are found to be more often than not dictated to, rather than negotiated with people.

4.6.2.6 The Sinomlando Centre lacks clear policy system- and management coordination

It is evident that the Sinomlando Centre is depicted as being characterised as an organisation lacking in clear management policy and coordination. It is realised that the structure of communication, planning, feedback, and transparency are always unpredictable and leave individual staff members anxious and frustrated.

4.6.2.7 The Sinomlando Centre lacks succession foresight

The Sinomlando Centre is perceived as an organisation that lacks succession planning and foresight. When the organisation engages in succession planning issues, the employees are always left in states of ambivalence. Instead, the Leadership creates an awareness that seems to show up the complexities, deficiencies, and/or unpreparedness of the team for change.

4.6.3 Four points evaluate the Sinomlando Centre, partnerships and growth:

4.6.3.1 There are unfavourable University policy systems for the employees

The University is considered the ‘mother’ of the Sinomlando Centre. However, it is a ‘mother’ that endorses, dictates, and controls Sinomlando’s decision-making and policy implementation at the expense of the staff.

4.6.3.2 The donors influence the Sinomlando Centre’s organisational growth

There is value in international or foreign funding NGOs and agencies. However the awareness is that the unpredictable and complex dynamics and philosophies of funding NGOs and donor agencies can either make or break the Sinomlando Centre.

4.6.3.3 The Director influences organisational funding and fundraising

Without the current and founding Director, the Sinomlando Centre could collapse. In other words, everything about the Centre that is aligned, identified, and personified with the Director - from the donor partners (fundraising) and the University systems, to the organisational functioning (administratively and operationally), could collapse.

4.6.3.4 The Sinomlando Centre lacks a partnership policy

The Sinomlando Centre lacks partnership policies and procedures of its own. Nothing is considered standard and specific to the Centre, instead there is almost absolute reliance on the dictates of the funders' policy and procedures, and the policies of the University.

4.7 A narrative of the Sinomlando Centre

This section is a multivocal narrative about how growth at the Sinomlando Centre is influenced by the power of the funding partnership system and that of the University policy system. This is developed from the above sections - data analysis and results - and it is weaved with archival information to give the bigger picture, show the engine-power, and discuss partnerships and growth at the Sinomlando Centre.

4.7.1 Scanning the big picture

The archival research, interview narratives, and observation studies show some common views in the description of the broader view of Sinomlando's organisational life. The lead question was 'how best can you describe the nature and functioning of the Sinomlando Centre?'. In addition to this question, research respondents were also asked questions such as 'how is the Sinomlando Centre organisational life shaped in terms of strengths and weaknesses, decision-making strategy, organisational performance, and organisational governance and policies?'. Responses to these questions and themes provide a description about the general control, social existence, and functioning of the

Organisation. The responses paint a picture about Sinomlando having a dual legal status, charismatic identity, skills targeting strategy, and organisational policy inconsistencies.

4.7.1.1 Dual status and identity

Overall, the Centre has a complex dual status. It is described and portrayed by, and from its name, ‘Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa’, an externally funded, University-based research and community development project which is solely driven by its founder and Director, and by an independent non-profit organisation statute (AGM Report 2003, p.2; Denis 2005, p.2-3; 2006, p.12; and 2009, p.5). The option for acquiring a legal Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) statute from the Department of Social Development (DSD) of South Africa is a counter-strategy to administrative problems looming in the current University research/unit statute (Denis 2009, p.6). The identity of the Centre is leveraged by its mission, vision, and the methodology of oral history and memory boxes as vehicles for its research and community development on building resilience among traumatised adults and children (AGM Report 2003, p.2; Denis 2004, p.5; 2007, p.2; Denis, Makiwane and Ntsimane 2008, p.1; and 2009, p.6).

Sinomlando’s organisational legal existence, functioning, and control are best known from a triangular systemic environment: 1) external (foreign) funding; 2) being housed at the University; and 3) driven by one Professor, founder, and Director. Respondent (VIII)¹¹ confirmed the Sinomlando organisational existence, saying, “we describe ourselves as a research and community-based project of the School of Religion and Theology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, aiming at building capacity in Oral History and Memory Work in community based organisations [...] But later on we thought of becoming more independent of the University [...] we also have an NPO number which means legally we have a bit of a dual status [...]”. A similar description is given by Phiri (2005, p.vii) and Denis (2009, p.5).

¹¹ The interview participants remain unknown, and “respondent” with a roman numeral in front is used in place of their names.

4.7.1.2 Skills targeting and charismatic identity

At the Sinomlando Centre there is a human and social environment, and this is best represented by metaphors such as ‘a group with a strong sense of purpose’, ‘a family’, ‘and sort of militant’, ‘a company’, ‘a baby of the University’, and ‘a team’. For example, respondent (III) imagines and describes Sinomlando “as a family. [...] a lot of us have worked together for a long time and we work towards one goal, [...] we work towards a goal of growing. [...] I believe it! I think the Sinomlando has a good layer of team work”. Hence, from such expression there is a sense of appreciation for charisma transpiring from a family-like and team-like spirit and environment. This spirit is leveraged by the Centre’s strategy to target both good skills and motivated individuals capable of working in a team. The passion, good work ethic and commitment of individual employees and leaders makes Sinomlando a fair working environment.

Sinomlando is shaped by observable human and social strengths. Respondent (IV) explains that this strength of the organisation “[...] comes mainly from the founder or founders because they are mainly hands-on in terms of the management. Even with the operations, to a certain extent, they are very much involved [...]”. Respondent (VIII) expresses “it’s actually quite motivating. So, in that sense, it’s not an ordinary organisation. It is an organisation with a sense of purpose”. Respondent (IX) also points out at this ‘sense of purpose’, saying that the Centre “is shaped by its relevance because without this relevance it could not succeed”. Another respondent (V) notes that “other strengths would be [...] it tends to pick people with fairly good academic qualifications and all the strengths that go with that, IT skills, organisational skills [...] It has some long-standing members, Philippe and Nokhaya, Radikobo, Clifford [...] Therefore, it has a history of its own”. Respondent (X) expresses that the atmosphere makes work possible because “I can actually communicate with all the people that work for the Sinomlando at the same level”. That is, the Centre has a charismatic identity described by three distinct features: community development relevance; sense of purpose, but over and above these components; the human and social atmosphere.

4.7.1.3 Organisational policy inconsistencies

Weaknesses about the Sinomlando Centre are also depicted. There is need for policy consistency on the day-to-day organisational functioning. Apparently, staff members struggle with layers of issues gathered as organisational policy-related challenges, ranging from management coordination and administration systems, to operations. Policy inconsistency challenges are considered to be caused by the existence of the Centre in the University. For instance, respondent (I) criticises and states that sometimes “I don’t know whether it is the head or the tail; things are just inside out, outside in. I mean there is no organisation”. Results of policy inconsistencies are evident in the lack of structural communication, planning, unpredictable changes, and inconsistencies and disguised consultation, where employees feel - and they are vocal - that the views and emotional experiences that they raise are neither considered nor implemented in decision-making processes. Respondent (XI) decries, “I think Sinomlando, as an organisation that says ‘it is an organisation that works with people’s feelings’, there are times when I feel myself [...] that they work with feelings but not my own feelings [as their employee]; our feelings as their subordinates are not well considered”. Understandably, the Sinomlando Centre is conceived as shaped by a haphazard or deficient internal policy and procedure system. As a result, employees do not feel protected by laws specific to the organisation, or they cannot protect the work of the organisation.

To this effect, the Sinomlando Centre is also conceived as relying largely on keeping to the status quo. That is if there are policies, then they are about maintaining favour with the University policy systems such as human resources, finance, and procurement procedures. Respondent (X) explains “all our financial policies and procedures are done through UKZN; so again we are governed by UKZN policies”. The University policies and systems are unfriendly to the organisational needs of Sinomlando, particularly on operations and funding-partnership environments. This shapes the manner in which decisions are processed and arrived at. Respondent (IV) expresses the lack of knowledge about the policies, saying “I don’t know if we are following particular policies for our employees to be able to work at a pace that we can manage”. At times the Director can

veto other voices, which may possibly be the reason why respondent (VIII) states “at the Sinomlando, we don’t use the ‘language’ of policies”.

The policy issue is an ‘elephant in the room’ scenario at the Sinomlando Centre. During one observed meeting, it was noted that there are times at the Centre that require the employees to rely on policy and procedure in order for them to make informed decisions. The employees feel frustrated and anxious when they do not know what the organisational policies are. For example, at a Management Committee meeting, a manager raised a concern about the link between the lack of clarity on policy and the decisions that are taken on certain critical issues. This manager argues “so that we don’t seem erratic in what we do. If we, for instance, are questioned, or a situation arises [...] and we get another competent person who is a specialist in a particular area, how do we treat issues like this [...] Can we have at least a policy [...] that can guide us [...] as a principle”. Another manager emphasised in the same meeting “we need to have a policy”. In a different forum, another senior manager also cautiously pointed out “policies can be vetoed by big people”. Respondent (I) utters “I find that they will keep changing the policies; there are no policies at all, be it on paper”. The understanding is that there are no Sinomlando policies *per se* to shape and clarify organisational governance, existence, and functioning - or even for the employees to fall back on. Hence Sinomlando is conceived as shaped by unclear policy and procedures.

4.7.1.4 The Sinomlando Centre - the bigger picture

The bigger picture of the Sinomlando Centre is entrenched in its dual status visible in a triad systemic environment and dynamic, namely: 1) the University, 2) the funding agencies, and 3) the founding Director. Thus, the Centre is described and understood from its charismatic identity buttressed by individual passion, commitments, and leadership. Conversely, the Sinomlando Centre is also shaped by organisational policy inconsistencies. It seems that the major source of this challenge is the systemic environment of the University, the donors, and the Director. This policy inadequacy is a bone of contention and makes it difficult for the Sinomlando Centre to synchronise its

management processes and operational issues, and employees do not know how the policy binds and/or affects them as individuals or as a group, but over and above that, employees do not know how they can contribute to organisational policy formulation and implementation. But what drives the Sinomlando Centre machine?

4.7.2 Engine Power

In consideration of the archival research, observation studies, and interview narratives at the Sinomlando Centre, the power to govern and function is linked to the dependence on funding, the University, and the person of the Director. Therefore this research explored the composition, implementation, and control of the Sinomlando leadership and management. The lead questions focused on the long-term roles and functions of each structure and individual employee. The questions sought, are to ‘describe the management synergies of the funding organisations and of the University in relation to the leadership systems at the Sinomlando Centre’. The follow-up questions that were applied included ‘describe the management and leadership systems, style, influence, the flow and processing of information, and the creation of new leadership platforms at the Sinomlando Centre in terms of the partnership synergies with the funding agencies and the University?’

4.7.2.1 Top-down structure and organogram

The organogram shows the long-term control and function of the leadership and management structure at Sinomlando. It is understood as a top-down structure, with the Sinomlando Board at the top responsible for approving the organisational annual budget and safeguarding of the constitution. Below the Board is a two-structure management system. The day-to-day affairs are steered by the Management Committee which comprises of the Director; the two Programmes Managers, and the Finance Administrator; they meet formally fortnightly (Denis, Makiwane, and Ntsimane 2008, p.15; and Denis 2009, p.7-8). Then, below the Management Committee are the two Programme Committees, the Oral History, and the Memory Work, comprising the project

management staff and fieldworkers or the operations teams. The Director, on behalf of the Management Committee, reports to both the Sinomlando Board and that of the School of Religion and Theology and produces annual reports, financial reports, funding proposals, partnership agreements, working tools (manuals and so on), and researched material (publications) (Denis, Makiwane, and Ntsimane 2010, p.1). The key policy mechanisms for the Centre are the Constitution and Partnership Agreements (Denis 2009, p.7-8).

Further, the archival documents show an evolved organogram, an organic management platform, and human resource structure. As an Oral History Project, Prof. Denis is the founder, coordinator, and research leader of the team. Ms Nokhaya Makiwane is the research assistant and co-founder, with Prof. Denis, of the Memory Box project, with Mr James Worthington as the administrator; in 2003, the project had six full-time members (AGM 2003, p.2). All the employees at Sinomlando in 2010 were employed on contract, except the Director, with nine full-time and about twenty part-time staff members (Denis, *et al.* 2010, p.1). Due to the Centre being located at, and existing under the wing of the University, all staff members are regarded as collaborators of the Director's research projects and are thereby named as either researchers, research assistants, or 'student workers' (Denis 2005, p.3). For example, in the documentation, two different Sinomlando Centre organograms have been identified, indicating an evolving management structure:

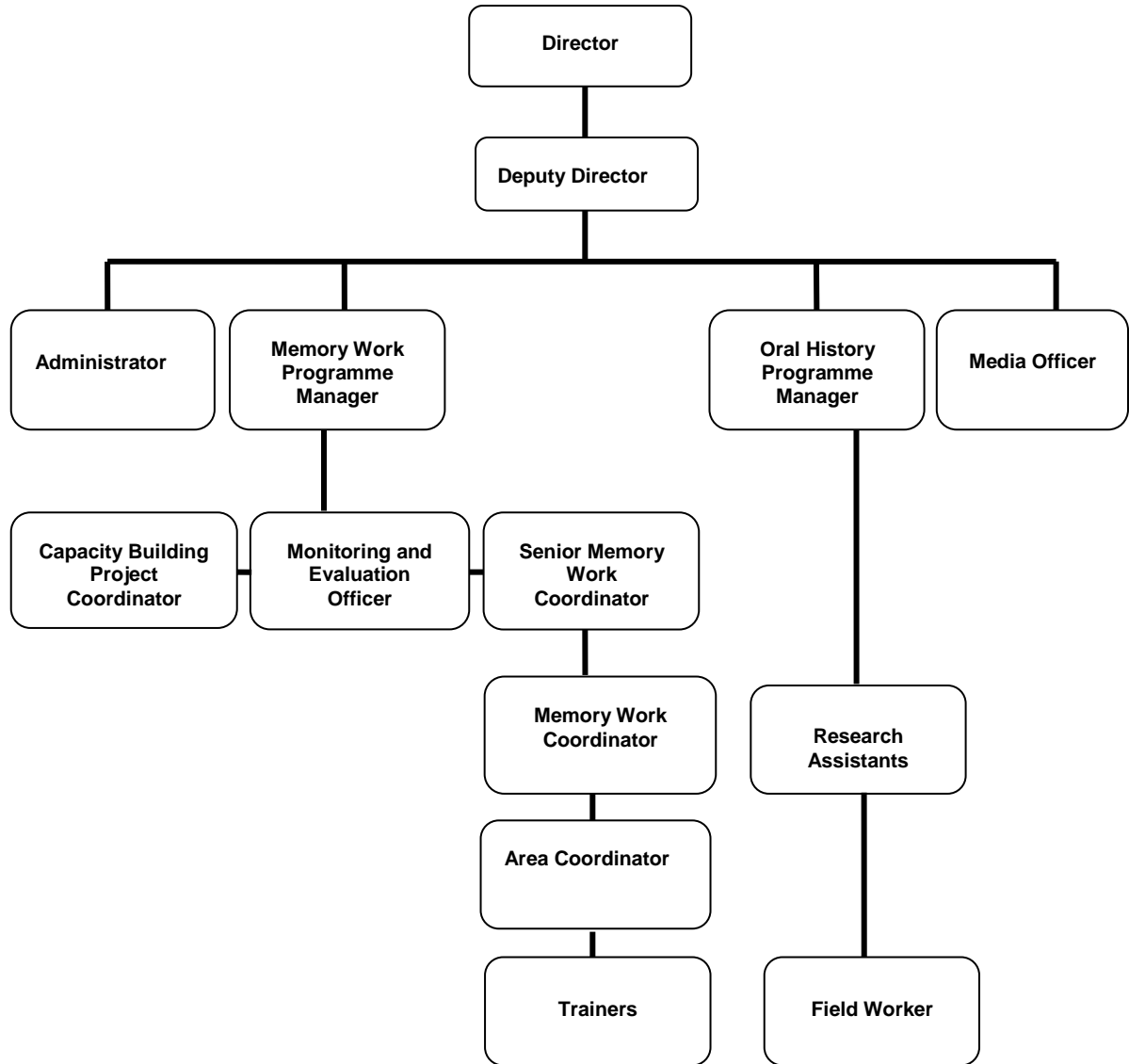


Figure 4.6 Organogram in March 2009 (www.sinomlando.ukzn.ac.za/ accessed 18 November 2010).

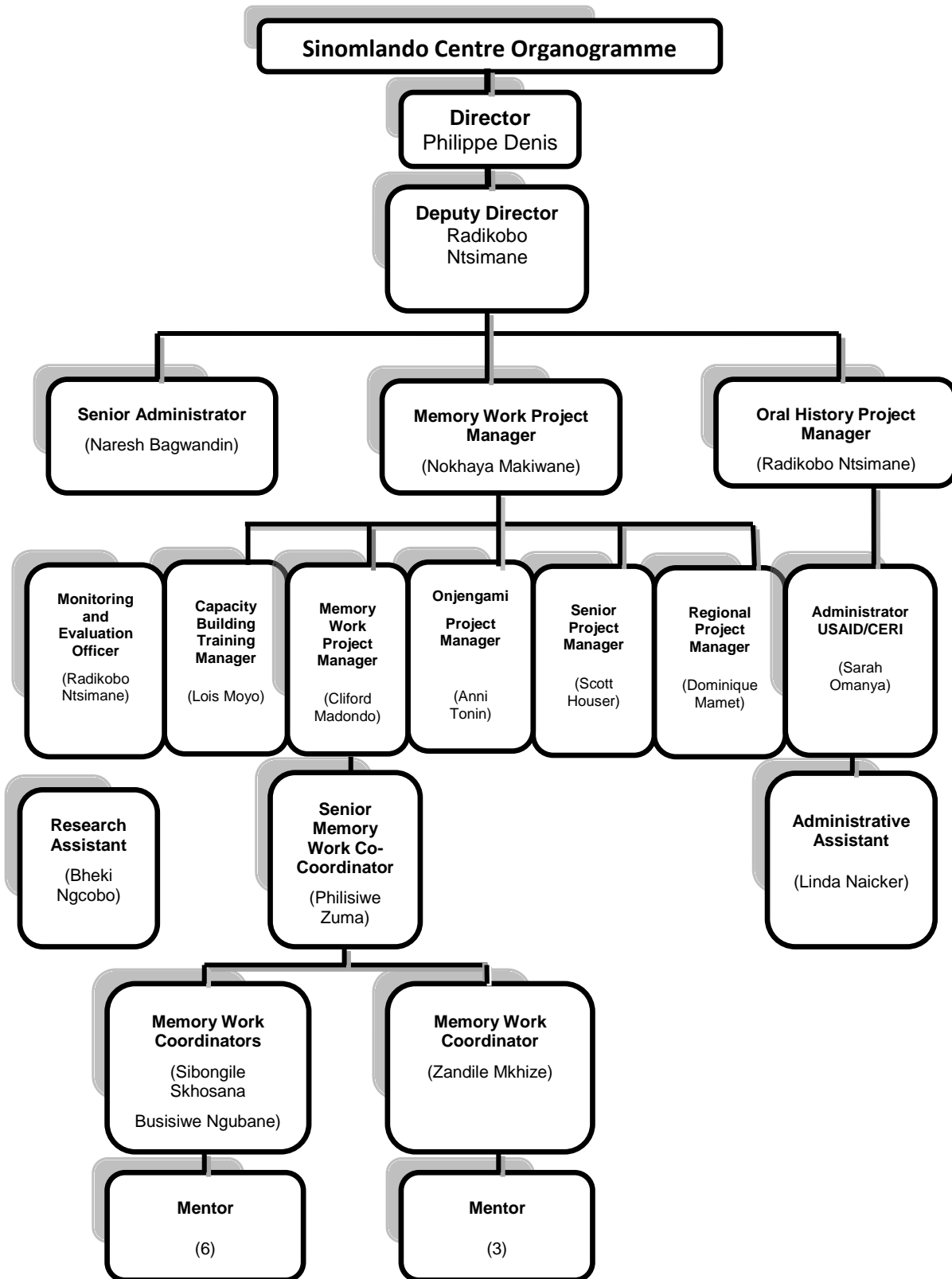


Figure 4.7 Organogram in March 2010 (www.sinomlando.ukzn.ac.za/ Accessed 18 November 2010).

Figures 4.6 and **4.7** show the change in the management structure within the space of one year. This is understood to have been influenced by the 2008 organisational re-merger with the Children's Emergence Relief International (CERI) project (Denis, Makiwane, and Ntsimane 2008, p.15).

4.7.2.2 The long- and short-term roles of employees

At the Sinomlando Centre, long- and short-term roles and functioning of individual employees is conceived in terms of the job descriptions in relation to the organogram. Employees think and express that there is a lot to learn from their roles, and that each has a sense of purpose. Respondent (VI) explains this sense of purpose as follows, "I am still a junior manager, but I have quite a lot of control over the budget which other managers at my level probably don't have in the same way". Respondent (IV) also confirms the existence of the top-down organisational management, "we have the Board. But in terms of deciding really what the Sinomlando is doing or what it is embarking on, it is the Management Committee". Respondent IX also explains "the decision making strategy is on its management. The Sinomlando has a management team that is made up of the leader of the Memory Work wing of the Sinomlando, and the leader of the Oral History wing of the Sinomlando, the Director of the Sinomlando and the administrative officer/financial administrator of the Sinomlando". This explanation confirms and expounds the perceived top-down governance structure, as presented in **Figures 4.6** and **4.7** above.

4.7.2.3 Efforts for collaborative management

The top-down management structure points at the nature and functioning of the Sinomlando Centre leadership and management structures. The leaders are hands-on in the executive and at the operations level, making an effort to involve all the employees in decision-making and feedback processes using a culture of formal meetings.

Following the 2008 restructuring process, the meetings focused on formalised management structures such as the Strategic Planning, the Management Committee, and Programmes Management meetings (Denis, *et al.*, 2008, p.15). Meetings as management structures are designed in an inclusive and consultative style. These structures incorporate the upper- and lower-level groups in discussions and reviews of issues such as the organisational finance position and cash flow, succession planning, and the human resource situation. At the Sinomlando Centre, strategic planning is always happening on a short-term basis and not on a long-term one. Strategic planning is always designed on the basis of designated funds and grants, and the central status in the University (Strategic Plan notes 2007; 2009; and 2010, p.3, and 5-6).

4.7.2.4 Bureaucratic leadership

Observation and interview narratives show that the employees think, feel, and describe the consultative style of leadership and management as superficial, bureaucratic, hierarchical, and controlled. It is observed that the Director chairs and normally predetermines decisions before meetings. The Director reads and writes minutes during meetings, reports on funders and funding status, and the organisational financial position or budget. Thus the power for decision making, information creation, and flow is with the Director rather than with the organisation.

For example, a senior manager at a programme meeting emphasised the Director's view "so we want to align what was prioritised at the strategic plan in the light of [the Director's] big promise; actually he has promised everywhere he has been [...] somehow he wants to see this happen [...] It has been brought in as core business and we have to pay attention". Respondent (XIII) also cautiously expresses "I must be honest with you, I am sure there are certain things I will not want to say here because I have the right not to. So, let me say the decision making process is not very, to a greater extent, inclusive. When, for instance, strategic decisions have to be made, they generally involve everybody [...] but someone is responsible because someone is answerable or accountable to somebody else as well". Respondent (VII) adds "it is that sometimes they just do

things their own way. Then you just find yourself being told that things are this way and that. How you take it, or feel or think about that [it doesn't matter], if the boss has said [something] there is nothing you can say or do". These articulations conclude that in this organisation, decisions are perceived to be dictated downwards and always carry the Director's mind-set and authority.

Evidently, respondent (XIII) contradictorily wishes that governance was really horizontal and collaborative as is proclaimed, and explains using a two-fold comparison "there are times when in a crisis mode; it's managed like an army. The Director will be like 'no questions! Why?' Yours is to do and die, because in the Sinomlando we operate like soldiers. We are always ready for the regiment [...] I am using that analogy because when it comes from above and it gets to the level below, it's like there is a stone or a rock that has been pushed and then that rock goes down, that rock goes [down] to the beneficiary". The Sinomlando governance is, as a matter of fact, experienced as heavy and gruesome in style. Thus, this governance system is designed to filter down the ranks in such a way that agendas, decisions, information creation, processing, and flow are made and driven only from the top and not from the bottom and the middle.

This bureaucratic and monopolistic style of leadership at the Centre is blamed on the donor agencies and the University that are perceived as bureaucratic in approach. For instance, during a CERI partnership close-out meeting, a senior manager mildly expresses "I know what they don't know [...] between programme staff and management it is always dicey [...] I never know what is not enough and what is enough until questions are asked". Respondent (VI) also expresses "other frustrations are probably those, again, to do with the University system. Given its enlarged bureaucracy, I find it almost incomprehensible and don't seem to achieve what you would expect them to achieve which is to manage finances and human resources". A senior manager explains the cause of disjointed and exclusive communication down the ranks that "maybe even [the Director] himself as the Director feels overwhelmed by the way this partnership has been carrying on, hence the disjointed and exclusive communication on a number of

matters [...] this other partner [CERI] is like a boss to him because they tell him, ‘you are not done! [...]’ it is very difficult”.

This entire bureaucratic leadership and management style and structure are also imprinted on the founder’s charismatic and credential identity. All sectors of the Sinomlando Centre are personified by the Director, as he himself confirms that the shape of the organisation is dependent “especially on me, my own profile, connections, and capacity”.

4.7.2.5 Lack of management coordination

The employees think that the Sinomlando Centre leadership style described above tends to generate and influence a lack of management coordination and structural communication. Often the leadership is unavailable when it is needed most by the operations team. For example, respondent (III) articulates “I struggle with not enough communication [...] I don’t think there is good-enough communication. I know that there were efforts to create a Management Committee, but that has created other kinds of resentment and frustration because not everyone is involved in some of the decisions that get to be made and the activities of what is going on, and therefore the communication doesn’t filter down properly”.

A challenge for the Sinomlando leadership is embarking on new ventures and projects before listening to the middle management and employees in operations, and reflecting on new lessons emanating from the previous project experiences. This challenge is part of the policy inconsistencies, lack of transparency, and feeling of confusion and disorganisation due to the management feedback style. For example, respondent (XII) explains this policy inconsistency “I can tell you [...] I have never seen any policies; written documents of the Sinomlando saying ‘we are working from this first point, second our vision and statement’ and all those [...] that’s why you come to understand that the lower structure is not freely involved [...] in the Sinomlando itself. It means that the whole upper management is saying ‘this is ours and as long as it’s ours, we give them instructions only’”. Thus the management policy inconsistencies result in management

coordination difficulties that leave employees feeling as if they do not have ownership of the Sinomlando Centre.

4.7.2.6 Culture of staff development

The Centre is known for its strategic platform and plans for skills development and retention, using a culture of staff development. The employees are appointed, trained, and/or subsidised by the organisation in an effort to promote a shared vision and mission, aligning them with the leader's vision (Denis 2004, p.3). For instance, respondent (VII) expresses "it is just that the Sinomlando provides us with skills and ensuring that we are skilled enough. Again, as of now the Sinomlando has changed a lot and improved. Yes, even now we're going to do computer skills". The Director, as the project leader, motivates for scholarships and bursary funds for the funders to sponsor - either in part or in full - the studies of some of the senior staff from Honours to PhD level at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

For instance, during a programme meeting, the Director clarified the benefit of staff development to the organisation's human resources by stating "in a sense as you know Clifford has a scholarship from CCFD [...] from that we have budgeted a certain amount of six months for his unpaid leave. [...] The same applies with Lois with SANPAD. [...] So this staff development has a positive impact on employment". Thus, the skills development strategy impacts positively on the long-term roles and functions of the individual employees, and on the culture of skills development.

Besides scholarships and organised training, the organisation helps the employees to be self-reliant and to excel in the profession by exposing each person to new environments. This exposure to new environments includes engaging with international partners and funding agencies, and working independently and under less supervision. Respondent (X) explains his own development during an interview, "I have got more financial work to do with the Sinomlando than at the University because with the University I don't do the actual budgets and I do not do the actual trial balance and year end reports [...] I think

I built up financial experience working for the Sinomlando rather than actually working for the University”. Respondent (III), commenting on her own growth, states “I think the recognition by the Sinomlando that I have skills and then giving me an opportunity to practice those, has helped to create my leadership skills”, and to this view, respondent (XIII) adds about her own development that this is achieved, “sometimes by throwing me in the deep end, very deep end”. Respondent (VIII) prides himself on this culture of skills development and thinks that “the Sinomlando, compared to other NGOs that I know, has something quite unique and very precious which I value a lot. It’s what I call ‘organic development’”. This means the Centre values ‘self-development’.

This Sinomlando Centre staff development ethos is unique and it is proving to be helpful to the organisation because individual employees are growing through the organisational ranks. Respondent (VIII) explains the background to this cultural effort, “so, if I speak of my own development, it’s not a once-off thing. It’s a forty year thing. But certainly, it is the Sinomlando’s global evolution I think; and the evolution of the Sinomlando make us become increasingly professional [...] I developed myself; the Centre must develop the Sinomlando. I did [...] I think I have developed quite a lot in all sort of ways”. Thus this culture of ‘self-development’ exemplified here is about individual employees taking initiative to develop their leadership competencies.

4.7.2.7 Lack of succession foresight

The archival research, observation studies and interview narratives show that the Sinomlando Centre lacks succession foresight. The Centre Director is appointed by the Sinomlando Board in accordance with the Board of the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, by the University of KwaZulu-Natal for a three-year period. During a strategic planning discussion about succession planning, the Director explains confirming this appointment “I can say, according to the constitution, I am appointed for three years. So my appointment [with] the School is in December [...] if you have a status quo like now, I am a senior staff member of the University, I am a Professor, I am the Director of the Sinomlando. It is supposed to be like that [...] that is a status quo [...] I personally

think with the existing team, [human resource, communication and project management] I think, of these, I will be the easiest to be replaced.” This means that according to the Sinomlando’s existence in the University system, only a Professor or senior lecturer can assume the Director position of the Centre.

Furthermore, respondent (VIII) explains “I said the nature of funding is different, the development of [the] culture is becoming more technocratic, the University is changing a lot, it is also becoming more technocratic, more inhumane, if you like more top-down [...] So I think the strength of the Sinomlando is to be responsive to new needs and new challenges. Without that I don’t think we should exist in fact”. It is thought, felt and believed that in the event of changes to the environment in which the Sinomlando exists, that the current Director is central and a lifeline of this organisation. All other employees and their roles anchor on the drive and the personality of the Director.

Respondent (III) states “if we may not have that funding and if we may not be in the University, the Sinomlando may cease to exist and therefore my role ceases to exist”. This correlates with the explanation that respondent (IX) is making “the major weakness of the Sinomlando is, it gets foreign funding; it gets external funding [... and] the fact that the Sinomlando is housed at the University and it is a research centre that is mainly run under one professor; [...] who is the founder and Director of the Sinomlando. Should he go, we don’t know if we can find someone who has the same passion as the founder to drive the Sinomlando. So it is dependent on external funding; foreign funding and also on the drive of the founder”. Respondent (XI) thinks, indifferently, that “there are things you improve, there are others that you will have to accept as they are, and you will never ‘know ways’ to change them. So when they are presented to you they are put and there is nothing you can do”.

Respondent (I) states that, “if issues are discussed they should be implemented. An example is the succession planning that has been discussed many times but has not been implemented”. Respondent (VIII) put this succession planning situation into perspective stating that “we depend on external funding. We have to fight for funds. It’s very

competitive [...] Another one of course is that [the Sinomlando] is a bit of charismatic organisation [...] should some of the founders disappear now, we're not sure that it is ready to continue. [...] it depends especially on myself, my own profile, connections, capacity [...] I am the only staff member of the University and I have the rank of senior professor and I am the most active publisher and the most active teacher. So if I have to go, the whole balance [...] may be disturbed somehow". Thus the succession issue is discussed only as it exists in the mind of the Director and not 'the mind' of the Sinomlando organisation. Hence, the discussions around this succession issue leave the employees believing that the Sinomlando Centre is not ready for leadership change. In other words, such a change threatens the status in the University and the confidence and interests of the donors regarding the monies offered.

The underlying view, also confirmed by the archival study, is that at the Sinomlando Centre changing the leadership structure is not possible as yet. Everything is centred on the funding base that is driven solely by the Director relying on academic credentials as a religious personality trait, Professor, and a senior lecturer. Evidently, all documents studied indicate that they are produced and disseminated by the Director (AGM Report 2003, p.2-3; Denis 2004, p.2; and 2005, p.1). During a strategic planning session, a senior manager commented on how this organisation is personalised by the Director and states that the "Sinomlando has always been a small organisation and I am sure a lot of things have been always centred on you [...]". At a CERI close-out organisational capacity assessment meeting, a senior representative of this funding partner reiterated and directed a comment at the Centre Director that "risking free-exchange of ideas for change is very healthy and this can contribute to growth [...] I have experienced that [with the Sinomlando Centre]". Thus the leadership is cautious to expose employees to the opportunities for free exchange of ideas for change. As a result, it is enough for staff members to maintain and ensure routine responsibilities. For instance, the employees' efforts ensure an adherence to and compliance with the funding agencies and the University policies and procedures. Individual employees do not see themselves influencing processes of organisational change, for which respondent (IV) gasps "I don't really [...] see my role being part of that".

4.7.2.8 The Sinomlando Centre governing power

To this end, the documentation, observation studies, and interview narratives establish that the Sinomlando governance is powered by a top-down leadership and management structure. The organogram, strategic management formulation, and decision-making processes are designed, set, and driven top-down, that is, the Sinomlando Board and Management Committee form the top executive level and the Programme Committee forms the operational level. Observable organisational management structures and functioning are formal meetings like the strategic planning, management committee, and programme meetings.

It is demonstrated in this section that the Sinomlando Centre top-down governance results in a bureaucratic leadership style in which the organisation is completely in the Director's pocket. That is, the Director holds the organisation's purse strings by controlling the funding base. Moreover, the Director is the social and motivational force that determines the long-term roles and functioning of the organisation and of the Centre team members. Thus, opportunities for organisational capacity are discussed subjectively but not as intentional activities because signs of fearing risky opportunities such as succession planning, and leadership and management change, are evident.

What do the Sinomlando employees think of their roles insofar as compliance and maintenance of the status quo are concerned? In this view it may be valid to interrogate the Sinomlando Centre on the vision of organisational leadership and management. That is, there is a need to scrutinise further the possibility of depersonalising the Sinomlando Centre from the Director as a leader, and to decentralise power. Even though people appreciate efforts that the management and leadership make, a challenge for the core-staff is to find a space and pace to bring forth crucial discoveries, contributions, and experiences that can influence organisational change management. It is valid to also interrogate points of consultative discussions through structures such as Strategic Planning, the Management Committee, and Programme meetings, which are noted as ignoring the team members' contributions.

4.7.3 Partnership and growth

The interview narratives and the observation studies evaluate power in partnerships at the Sinomlando Centre. The organisation is portrayed as relying on the policies and procedures of the University, the donor agencies, and the goals of the Director. In order to get a better assessment, the question that was administered to research respondents is, ‘to what extent do power, partnership, and policies contribute to the organisational capacity of the Sinomlando Centre in relation to the funding system and the University?’ Further follow-up and facilitative questions assessed the long term experiences of the Sinomlando staff within the University and with the donors. It was also important to assess the influences of these stakeholders on the leadership and management systems. Partnerships and growth at the Sinomlando Centre are perceived on the basis of the Director’s influence, the donors’ influence, the lack of partnership policy, and the influence and unfavourable policy of the University.

4.7.3.1 University of KwaZulu-Natal influence

Operating under the banner of a Research Centre or Unit, the Sinomlando Centre identifies with, and functions within the culture of collaborative partnership (UKZN Research Policy I 2007, p.1). Collaborative partnership is encouraged University-wide, allowing internal research entities the independence to fund-raise for research activities (UKZN Research Policy I 2007, p.1). In this respect, the University has influence over the Sinomlando Centre, and respondent (IX) explains this influence, saying “the University is the mother-body; the umbrella of the Sinomlando. For instance, the head of the Sinomlando Board is the Head of the School. The University at large, through its Research Office, can decide whether the Sinomlando Centre continues to be part of the University or not [...] can decide on the availability of office space for the Sinomlando and can decide on our operations when the University authorities see that we are operating on what one would say is illegal or unethical behaviour [...] the Management of the Sinomlando is headed by the Director who is the staff member of the University. So this Director cannot go against the demands of the University because that would be

detrimental to the Sinomlando”. Again, respondent (XIII) also adds “the Sinomlando is the baby of the University. Therefore, it has to follow the rules of the University, of course”. Clearly, the existence of the Sinomlando Centre is not independent from the University’s systems and procedures.

The archival documents and observation study around the Centre’s relationship with the University, shows that the existence of the Sinomlando is guided by the standards stipulated by the Research Office’s policy. In this case, the Director is appointed as a Professor and senior lecturer, and the University consider him the research leader, independent to raise funds for his research projects that add value to the broader research output of the UKZN. For systems at the Centre to run, from staffing appointments to procurement, they have to be approved by a research leader, a Professor, and a Senior Lecturer, according to the University human resource systems and financial procedures. The Director, as a lecturer and Professor, is salaried by the University, and all other staff members are remunerated from his external funds (Denis 2007, p.1). In 2009, the Director expressed in a letter addressing the Sinomlando staff that, as the Director of the History of Christianity Programme at the University, he is *de facto* Director of the Sinomlando. Therefore the new Director of the Centre should be an academic of some standing, appointed at the Senior Lecturer- or Associate Professor level (Denis 2009).¹²

4.7.3.2 Unfavourable University policy system

Observational studies and interview narratives confirm that there are advantages and disadvantages for working from and under the UKZN. The advantages include employment assurance from which employees feel there is job security, and access to skills development opportunities, University community facilities, and information. Sinomlando work always has a University brand, especially the mention of the Director who is also a Professor of good standing. Therefore this brand also gives the employees some immediate reputation, authority, and status among people from other NGOs.

¹²Letter to the staff (2009).

For instance, respondent (XI) states “there are opportunities we have or we get just because we are under the University”. This is confirmed by respondent (VI) “some of us have to do our Masters, our Honours, and our PhDs. We need to be giving back to the University in appreciation of the facilities they offer us, and there has to be a certain amount of teaching time in the classroom. So I am aware of those sorts of things, but I don’t know the policies. I am aware of those requirements that we need to be giving back for what we get”. Respondent (XIII) explains her own link with the University “I am a student here. No, actually I don’t have any involvement except to work with our finance administrator”. Thus the relationship between the Centre and the University is an opportunity for the employees, at both a personal and organisational level because some of the team members have to be students and others have to teach.

However, it is unavoidable that working under the University is an inconvenience to the operational needs of the Sinomlando Centre. The control in the University systems impacts on the systems of the Sinomlando and it is greatly felt by the management and the employees. The first complexity and challenge is around the Sinomlando research centre, or unit status within the University. Thus, the organisation does not have a research centre or unit recognised by the University Research Office; but again, it is not an NGO *per se*. As a way to try to find a compromise, the leadership at the Sinomlando acquired the NPO status and a register number, as a legal statute in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Social Development.

It is noted in observation studies that complexities around the Centre’s status dominates when the management and employees are discussing succession planning. The reason detected is that discussions around succession planning are not independent of the existence of the Centre within the University. Discussing succession planning means tampering with the title and position, ‘Professor’ currently held by the Director. This is a challenge to the organisational deliberations on leadership development. For example, a Senior Manager tried to justify the Sinomlando Centre system in the University “so, as a research Centre, we survive by producing researched material, especially from the field, and the University commends us, not only the Sinomlando but our School for the Centres”. It suffices to point out that the organisation working with and existing under

the law-wing of the University revolves around the Professorship of the current Director, who does research and teaching. The research outputs that do not identity with the organisation but rather with the personality of the Director, in the form of publications generated from the organisation's work, are a measure of compromise that enable the Sinomlando to receive free University services that include IT, human resources, and office space, among other benefits.

Moreover, the employees are not aware of specific policy that binds the Centre with this bigger institute. The employees are not well acquainted with the University policy system linked to the Sinomlando policy system, and besides, the University policies and procedures are not favourable to the Sinomlando operating systems, for example, contracting of staff members, and procurement and payments in relation to community work and activities. By way of example, with the Sinomlando funding considered by the University as 'external', staff feel that termination of employment contracts is almost always on the cards. This means that once the employment contract is terminated, that it is the end of any access to the University's facilities and opportunities. This is the way in which the University policies and procedures are influential to the accountability of the Sinomlando leadership.

For example, respondent (I) boldly states "Sinomlando should be an independent body from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This will enable clear direction and growth. Being under the University [...] stagnates the project". Respondent (III) thinks and adds "it makes management feel accountable. They have certain accountability to the University; they need to report to that". The Sinomlando leadership and management are imagined as having no freedom in decision-making and policy formulation outside that of the University. Respondent (III) explains the way the University system impacts on her "we're a little bit at the mercy of the University because of the benefits it has for us; for our sustainability". Respondent (IV) also adds "there is definitely awareness that if we stay within the University [...], and if we went away from the University [...], what would that mean for the organisation". Thus the destiny of the Sinomlando Centre is with the current Director, who should remain a Professor at the University.

Evidently, respondent (XI) points out “then it becomes a huge challenge for me to share something with a Professor because my experience and that of a Professor are not the same. I am just a fieldworker and a Professor is a Professor”. That is, the Sinomlando fieldworkers and managers feel intimidated and uncomfortable with many areas, like participating in any academic activity like School meetings because of the vast social distance between, for example, a ‘mere’ fieldworker and a Professor. All of the Sinomlando fieldworkers and middle managers are not academics, and the fieldworkers are not even at the level of either the University support staff, or of students for that matter.

Management tensions are detected around the Sinomlando Centre’s compliance with the University’s finance and procurement policies and procedures. This unfavourable situation affects the smooth growth and management of the Sinomlando’s projects because the playing field is not level enough for the employees to challenge the bigger system. For instance, respondent (XIII) confirms “it’s a big system that has an influence on us. When things go right they do, when things sort of go the other way [...] again they do. [...] Sometimes it causes tension, especially when it comes to things like procurement systems. One day you hear of voucher another day you can have a ‘hold’ in advance, this or that. It can cause tensions. It is a bit of a challenge”. Respondent (X) expresses a similar view that at times the Sinomlando “management actually gets quite annoyed with the policies of the University that promises made are not kept”. Thus such policy and procedure tensions are generating a feeling of helplessness, stress, and low morale amongst employees.

4.7.3.3 Donors influence growth

The observation notes and interview narratives are in agreement with the archival studies, that the Sinomlando Centre has developed relationships and networks with over fifteen National and International funding NGOs and agencies (Denis 2007, p.15; AGM Report 2003, p2-3; and Denis, *et al.* 2008, p.15). Clearly, working with funding agencies varies from one donor’s and/or agency’s philosophy to the other. Funding NGOs’ philosophies

and grants determine the way the Centre develops project strategies, leadership, and management coherence. For instance, sometimes the Sinomlando Centre management is instructed by partners, such as the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, CCFD, European Union, Secours Catholique, Missio, UNICEF, CERI, and USAID/PEPFAR, using terms and conditions about who the beneficiaries of the grant should be (Denis 2004, p.6; and Denis, *et al.* 2008, p.3). As a result, sometimes the Centre finds itself forced to change the focus of its work and priorities. Thus in funding partnerships, those with the purse strings call the shots.

Many donor agencies put in place the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. This technical mechanism manages the Centre as the grant recipient. Moreover, from this mechanism the Centre learns management synergies with the funders and funding agencies. For instance, the Director put the management of partnerships into perspective by stating “two years ago we had an external evaluation requested by CCFD and also by Secours Catholique. The two donors paid an external evaluation”. Respondent (III) indifferently states “well, I feel we're actually dependent on the funders as any NGO. So we're almost at the mercy of the funders”. The Sinomlando Centre depends on donors to fund its community project work and human resources, and in return shows the ability to manage grants and related administrative systems. Monitoring and evaluation comes with the donors' packages of stringent conditions and ideological positions, and these determine the Centre's organisational behaviour and patterns (Denis 2004, p.6; and Denis, *et al.* 2008, p.3). The Sinomlando leadership understands that due to the plummeting global economy, the donor world is in funding crisis, and that competition for funds by recipient NGOs is on the rise.

Each funding partner and/or agency has policies and legal frameworks to manage the grants and administrative systems for, and with the recipient organisation. Respondent (XII) comments “you know the politics of organisations and donors, let's say funders and the implementers are totally confusing for me. The donors always want to see their monies going to a safe place and also they want to see their money implemented in a right way”. Respondent (VI) states and adds “well, it was that kind of framework in which he [the Director] had to submit the proposal in the first place, so that obviously

shaped [...] I remember now, they [donor] had a specific framework [...] and that made things easier for me; the targets were clear, money was clear, the allocation of funds for particular things was clear". The Centre generally feels that the frameworks, policies, and procedures are scaffolding-like structures for controlling the monies given.

With such mechanisms in place, some of the Sinomlando's long-standing funding partners and agencies prefer to be hands-on from the onset until to the end of the funding period. On the other hand, other funders prefer maintaining a remote involvement and support, for which the Director explains "we have a mix-up of relationships. Nokhaya went up there last year; Clifford is going this year and me too, to see them, partners in France [CCFD]. We had Charlotte Boulonge last week. We had an exposure programme last year. There are all sorts of signs that they like what we do. [...] each donor has a focus". CCFD-Terre Solidaire, as an example given in this explanation, has a culture of mutuality. Thus the Sinomlando manages the grants by themselves and CCFD are less involved in administrating the organisational systems. All that CCFD does is to facilitate the grant support using the strategies of visitation, monitoring, and evaluation. For example, CCFD visits (per the explanation above) are a process - that may be based on both the Catholic ethos and French mind-set regarding social development of the world - geared towards assessing the organisational dynamics of the Centre and the shared vision on development.

Besides the different philosophies applied by various donor partners the CERI-USAID/PEPFAR partnership was another point of reference during the interviews for this study. Understandably, this CERI-USAID/PEPFAR agency absolutely controlled and managed the grant and the project, and persuaded the Sinomlando Centre to change organisational systems and structures on the basis of the US Government's foreign and bilateral policies. Thus, through this political attitude, for the three years of funding, USAID deployed its own agencies - like NuPITA - to manage and facilitate systems-change at the Sinomlando Centre under the regime of Organisational Capacity Assistance (OCA). The result was painful but positive for the Sinomlando Centre, as the Organisation redefined its organisational structure and put in place a three-level

organisational governance structure and system. This restructuring process encouraged the adoption of a hierarchical structure, management, and systems administration at the Sinomlando Centre: the Board, or Council; the Management Committee; and the Programme Committees (Denis, *et al.* 2008, p.15; Denis 2009, p.7; and Denis, Ntsimane, and Makiwane 2010, p.3cf).

This USAID hands-on strategic management and approach changed the face of the Sinomlando Centre and governance, from functioning in a family-like manner, to a more institutional and organisational style (Denis, *et al.* 2008, p.3 and15). Respondent (XIII) explains this USAID impact “when I talk about USAID, actually USAID did not dictate to us. Well actually yes and no! [...] in fact, I learnt that some big funders or some partners who are funding us, who are giving us big monies can or may dictate to us in this way, but the idea here was not to dictate. It was to say they wanted to know that things would be clear and clean and audited well”. Obviously, hands-on partnerships are very influential in the Sinomlando’s organisational governance and functioning.

In view of that, the funding partnerships are a big influence on all Sinomlando leadership and management systems. According to respondent (VI) “the funding systems’ influence is that the management is not at liberty to just do whatever they want to, say, ‘this is our organisation so we do what we want’. So whatever decisions our management makes [...] complies with what is required of the funding. So funding guides the way our management structures the programs”. This means that funding is always earmarked for specific purposes. For example, the Sinomlando strategic planning and management processes are always conducted on a short-term basis, focusing on funds. Documentation shows that in 2010 alone, the Centre had two Strategic planning meetings. This means that the flow and control of funds affects the Sinomlando management’s control in making, or not making key decisions such as budget planning. Therefore the Leadership is always on the lookout to reduce the budget, and/or to conduct urgent downsizing while still pursuing the same project timeframes and targets.

Funding partnerships are always learning curves. Though staff members appreciate such partnerships for wonderful opportunities, both for the Sinomlando Centre and for the individual employees, these opportunities are ever short-lived. Respondent (XIII) confirms this view and states “first of all I think the big change was taking up the CERI project [...] There was a change in the structure of the organisation. Adding, in terms of members of staff there was a change and growth in terms of positions and in terms of training. People were trained in areas, even if it was on-the-job-training, but were trained in areas that were new to them”. This highlights that an observable opportunity brought to the Sinomlando Centre is a multifaceted organisational change, including skills- and team development. For instance, the individual Sinomlando employees learn new organisational and project functions and techniques, such as the value of reaching targets and meeting the funders’ expectations.

However, there is a dichotomy to this growth influenced by funding partnerships at the Sinomlando Centre. Respondent (XIII) express “in terms of the implementation, reaching out to bigger numbers, working under pressure, making sure that delivery is done under enormous pressure and sometimes unpleasant conditions; I take it that it is growth”. The Centre team members, including management, are subjected to high workloads, overtime, and pressure for deliverables. For example, when funding agencies and/or representatives visit the organisation, they request to meet the local partners and beneficiaries for whom funds are given. With regards to pressure for targets and deliverables, respondent (II) remarks that it causes the “unpredictable changing of things affecting the working hours, and reporting. Our managers have an obligation to report every project activity that is taking place. Since we are understaffed, I find that sometimes our managers have to go to do fieldwork and come back and do administrative work. Our managers are weighed down by the workloads and their performance is low. It’s not that one does not want to perform well, but if he/she is needed in the field and he/she is also needed in the office for meetings and for reporting [...] It is part of the job [...] there are targets in each one’s area of work”. Thus for the managers to be found juggling fieldwork and management, means that the Sinomlando suffers from a staffing

capacity shortfall, and as a result employees think and feel that funding partnerships are only developing the top people, and not people in the middle and fieldworkers.

In view of that, the involvement of managers and employees with the donor agencies is another contradiction. Clearly, involvement depends on the Director's links with the donor partner and his discretion, and so it differs from one funder to the next. Rightfully so, not everyone can be a fieldworker and not everyone can be a manager. Therefore there are definitive and influential roles for the Sinomlando middle- and junior staff members on funding partnerships, as respondent (X) confirms "there is no connection between our funders and our staff".

Moreover the Sinomlando middle managers and fieldworkers are involved with funding partnerships, simply at the level of taking the representatives for site visits. Respondent (V) confirms "my role will be to ensure that the funding that is coming to the Sinomlando is used in the proper way", and respondent (III) adds "I suppose reminding colleagues or reminding staff members of the importance of being accountable for the money we are receiving and the facilities that we have access to opportunities here. But really my role stops there. It's not just reminding staff that we have a wonderful opportunity here, but to say 'let's make the most of it'. We're accountable for the money we receive". Thus the employees' involvement with the funding partnerships is engraved into the Centre's compliance with the funders' policies, procedures, and meeting of targets. For example, respondent (II) points out "it is to report. Since we [fieldworkers] are working, from the Director downwards, we [fieldworkers] are the ones who implement what is given by the funders; we [fieldworkers] are the ones who go to the field, and when we come back we report as to how activities are going. That is taken up till it reaches the Director who will then talk to the funders that this is the problem".

4.7.3.4 Lack of partnership policy

As mentioned above, the funders generally ensure compliance from recipient counterparts through grants management and systems administration. The Sinomlando

Centre does not exist in the University to get funds, but rather it leverages the University policy systems in order to manage and administer funds received from donor agencies. In a way, the Organisation does not have partnership management systems and administration policies of its own. Respondent (XIII) explains this policy scenario and states “the Sinomlando operates in a different way. The funders are not there to change their policies because of the Sinomlando; hence each funder has a legal component as much as the University does. So when it’s time, for instance, to make a contract, these two entities [funding agency and the University) meet. The Sinomlando does not have their own because as the baby of the University, the University plays that role. But, of course, the Sinomlando is part of that process”. This view illustrates that the Centre does not have partnership policy systems of its own, either for the management to fall back on, or for the funding partnerships to remain an opportunity for organisational growth.

Furthermore, if the Sinomlando Centre partnership policies do exist, then they are not very clear. For example, respondent (XII) argues “as long as I don’t take part in the meetings about funding I would not know those policies”. But respondent (X) explains “donors will fund what’s on the proposal [...] the proposal is drawn up by our Director. Oh, no the funder will have theirs. Yes, they will have their own policies. [...] So we have to follow our funders’ policies [...] Our policies and procedures, when it comes to financial, HR and receiving of monies and audit and everything, we follow the University policies and procedures”. That is, the funding proposals drawn up by the Director serve as the internal policy for the Sinomlando Centre to drive partnerships.

Normally, the Sinomlando Centre is bound by the funding agencies’ policy criterion. That is, what the Organisation can or cannot do with the money would have to comply with the dictates of the funder. Respondent (VIII) concludes “so it’s not really a policy. It’s a strategy to find a compromise between the two parties and try to convince the donors to do what we want to do and sometimes accept a compromise. In order to understand, the donors will only give certain type of framework. They have their own criteria and it’s a constant adjustment between the two spheres”. Respondent (XIII) confirms that the “Sinomlando has to compromise because it’s in the best interest of the

programmes [and projects]”. Thus the Sinomlando leadership just tries to find a balance between transparency and compliance with the funder, while still pursuing the same vision and mission without a policy *per se*.

A Senior Manager explains “hence, [the Director] at one point said it is difficult to deal with a relationship that has many layers, where you don’t know where the other layer fits. Sometimes NuPITA is the other layer bigger than CERI, at some point CERI is a bigger layer than NuPITA. Where does USAID come in? Where does PEPFAR come in? Where does the USAID South Africa mission come in? Where does USAID Washington DC come in? It is very difficult to deal with layers that are undefined”. This explanation illustrates that the Sinomlando Centre struggles to define standard policy on partnerships for employees. Therefore, the perception is that the Sinomlando leadership is always finding a compromise and a balance in the synergism. This is always pulling a rabbit out of a hat and unfortunately it is limiting the Sinomlando’s Leadership- and Management development.

This compromising strategy undermines the Centre’s growth because internal organisational management disparities and inconsistencies are clearly expressed. For example, respondent (I) notes “we need to have proper systems in place. Tools must be consistent!”, and respondent (XI) adds “but at [one point] times I worried because the places where we worked were very different and remote. I would be concerned because I would end up using my own money while I am at work”. These remarks basically show that the employees are grappling with gaps in the Sinomlando’s partnership management.

4.7.3.5 The Director’s influence on partnerships

According to the observation and archival studies, synergism between the funding community and the University and the Sinomlando Centre is a formally coordinated structure at one level, and a more personal one at another. As a formally coordinated structure, through the Sinomlando Board, the Director ensures that all the different role players work together to influence the actual management of the organisation.

Respondent (VIII) explains that “our donors, we just meet them. I mean the relationship is regulated through the funding proposal, reports and visits. The overseas donors are mostly in France and Germany for various reasons including my research and other things; conferences and so on and important meetings. I am on several academic committees. I do travel and I visit French and German donors once a year at least [...] some also visit us every two or three years [...]. So we have these channels of communication with the donors: emails, reports, visits. I would say that’s the most. Yah note, it’s not obvious! It cannot be fully coordinated with a structure; but there are some elements of structures”.

Thus the Director uses his personal, religious and academic credentials to facilitate the linkages between the Centre and the funding world, especially those from Europe and of the Catholic tradition. The Sinomlando Board and Management Committee are not structures that formally achieve and control donor and funding partnerships. Observable processes and visitations are subjective to the director due to his personally coordinated strengths and profile, his Catholic links and ethos, and his European roots as a French Belgian. As a result the Director coordinates and leads the Sinomlando Centre with the assistance of donor organisations of similar ideological positions and ethos.

Respondent (VIII) argues that “I think a good leader has to relate to those role players all the time. That is a key component of my role as a leader is to make sure that we relate to the University, to the funders, to the partners, to the community at large, to the media in a sort of positive way. [...] again, the issue of translation, I must understand the funders’ needs and get the funders to understand ‘our’ needs because naturally people are self-centred or selfish [...] I need to understand and explain to my staff”. The Director’s credentials enable the funders to believe in the vision and mission of the Sinomlando Centre. Even though senior managers are delegated certain responsibilities every now and again, the Director is the sole driver of the Sinomlando organisational relationships with the funding agencies and with the University.

There is an incomprehensible lack of continuity planning, communication and organisation on the part of the future funding partnerships. Respondent (I) expresses that: “the director should try and expose the managers to the funders and fundraising settings. [...] he cannot be [a] jack of all trades”. This explanation shows that the organisational relationships are more personal than organisational. Unfortunately, this system in which the Director is the indispensable influence on donors confuses the employees’ in understanding organisational alliance systems. This is evident especially in terms of who makes decisions, and how and when decisions are reached, what and whose policy is at work, and when things change. As a result, employees are always at the periphery of the Sinomlando relationship with the funding partners.

The employees conceive their roles as differing from position to person. Senior staff can be an interface between the Sinomlando and the funding partners, but rarely between the Sinomlando and the University. For example, respondent (XIII) explains her role and understanding of the system by stating that “well? [...] I am not sure what my roles are, because I don’t really deal with that system. But one can say I read the contracts. I have to understand [...] those contracts and make sure that we follow the agreement as much as we can”. Other employees see themselves as just pawns in the one-man game of funding partnerships.

The exclusive arrangement in dealing with the partnership system sometimes exerts pressure on individual managers. Other employees feel that the only option is to be loyal to both parties but at the same time remaining neutral. It is difficult for an employee to identify his or her roles with the Sinomlando leadership’s current approach to influence donors. For instance, respondent (VII) explains that “there isn’t any role that I have on that issue [...] it is an issue that the management and top leadership deals with. There is not a single role a person like me can play”. Respondent (XII) confirms this explanation that “it’s the senior management who discuss funding and whatever”. Hence, the Sinomlando employees’ responsibilities are limited to keeping the routine duties, fulfilling the expectations of the funding agencies and maintaining the organisation’s reputation with the University. In addition, respondent (V) argues that “I mean like [the

Director] is way up there and into everything. So there are other people like coordinators who know little in terms of what the University policy is, or what the funders' policies are because it is not within their parameters of operation". Thus the Director, and not the Sinomlando Centre as an organisation, is pivotal in determining the capacity and involvement in the partnerships.

4.7.3.6 Partnerships and growth

From the documentation, observations, and interview narratives, it is clear that the Sinomlando strategic planning processes are based or dependent on the due processes and conditions within the funding and the University environments. Another point is made that for the Centre to be perceived as at the mercy of the University, and of the funders and donor agencies, the organisation actually relies on the compassion of its stakeholders and their administrative system.

The current Director and founder can keep the Sinomlando Centre abreast with the funders and the University systems. Thus it is perceived that the effectiveness in managing funding partnerships hinges on two pillars: 'the Director and his credible credentials', and the 'label or tag [of] the University'. Sustainance of these partnerships is fairly established in the light of the personality traits and influences of the Director. Evidently, the Sinomlando employees are detached from all partnership dynamics in relation to this organisation, and rely on the Director's tact to interpret the language, mind-set, and systems of the funders and of the University.

The fact that the institutional existence and organisational consistency of the Sinomlando Centre are confined to the founding Director rather than organisational, implies that the organisation may be faced with difficulties in the areas of organisational development and partnership policy formulation. That is, for the Sinomlando being at the mercy of the Director may mean that the Director is the source of power compromising opportunities for organisational growth. Internally, the task at hand can focus on how all employees

may relate to the synergism in order to access and share in the relevant information that can better the future of the Centre.

4.8 Summary of research findings

Table 4.3 Summarised findings

Focus research area	Summarised findings
The Sinomlando organisational life is described as:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Organisation is established in a dual status visible in triad systemic environment and dynamics; - the Organisation is understood and appreciated as a charismatic identity buttressed by individual passion, commitment and leadership; and - the Organisation is also shaped by policy inconsistencies hindering the synchronisation of management processes and operational issues.
The Sinomlando leadership and management style and system is perceived as:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - designed, established and functioning as a top-down structure; - a bureaucratic leadership style and the Organisation is completely in the Director's pocket; - there is evidence potentially of risking opportunities for the organisational continuity plan; and - compliant in maintaining the status quo.
The discernment on the influence of funding partnerships and the University on the Sinomlando Centre is that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Sinomlando strategic planning processes are dependent on the due processes and conditions within the funding and the University environments; - the Organisation actually relies on the compassion of its stakeholders and their administrative systems like policy and procedures; and - the partnerships with the funders and the University are fairly established and sustained by and in the light of the personality traits, credentials and influences of the current director.
Overall summarised findings	
Powerful partnerships and growth at the Sinomlando Centre are such that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Sinomlando Centre is kept abreast by a triad of relational influence and a dynamic between the funders and the University and the current Director; - the Director is like a central-lock system in shaping the Sinomlando Centre; - growth in leadership and management is subjective and not objective and organisational; and - the power that influences growth at the Sinomlando Centre resides with the Director and it is compromising opportunities for organisational growth.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter aimed at presenting data analysis, research findings, and a narrative text based on the data and findings. It has achieved this objective by establishing that the Sinomlando employees perceive that the power that is influencing growth at the Centre exists in the person of the Director, his credentials and his profile as a University professor and on the basis of his links with the overseas funders. The findings are summarised in a tabular format in section **4.5** above. These findings are relevant to the next section of this dissertation, which is Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion: Growth at the Sinomlando Centre - powerful partnerships

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses partnership influence on organisational growth at the Sinomlando Centre. The discussion draws from the findings and the narrative text presented in Chapter 4 of this research project. It engages the findings addressing three overall objectives of this study in the light of literature study in Chapter 2 above. This means that conclusions on the employees' perceptions about growth at the Sinomlando Centre are addressed regarding the concepts, power, partnerships, organisational management, and system dynamics in relation to the University and the NGO donor system. That is, this chapter attempts to answer the question of how the Sinomlando Centre organisational life, leadership, and management development is influenced by these two big systems: the funders and the University.

5.2 Organisational life at the Sinomlando Centre

This section considers the broader picture of the organisational life at the Sinomlando Centre. The descriptions by the research respondents establish that the existence and functions of the Centre are predominantly shaped and organised by forging a dual legal identity and relationships with the funding NGOs and with the University. In this regard, the Sinomlando Centre's financial and strategic management systems are shaped, planned, and organised in accordance to the NGO and the donor funding systems, and are administrated according to the University systems. Therefore, four findings have been presented with reference to the narrative text on the Sinomlando organisational life, which are the dual legal status, the charismatic identity, the skills targeting strategy, and the organisational policy inconsistencies. This section discusses, evaluates, and develops

a broader understanding about the organisational design and the systemic shape of the Sinomlando Centre in relation to the dictates of the partnerships with the donor NGOs and those existing within the University.

5.2.1 Organisational design and functioning

5.2.1.1 Organisational and academic legitimacy

The explanations in the narrative text in Chapter 4 above show that the legal existence, nature and functioning of the Sinomlando are best described from a dualistic statute and a triangular systemic environment. Thus the Centre is perceived as an organisation that organises its policy and procedures, governance and resources, within the interplay and the dictates between the donor NGOs and the University. This is considered a dualistic environment because these two structures and systems give the Sinomlando Centre its organisational and academic legitimacy.

This Centre is identified and described as drawing organisational purpose, behaviour, and pattern from two identities. Firstly, the Centre functions by having an NPO [or rather NGO?] number in compliance with South African law on non-profit companies. This allows the organisation to be recognised as a legitimate NGO in South Africa and also by the international donor and funding agencies. Secondly, the Centre is established as a research unit and/or a project of the University which permits this organisation to be known as a genuine research and academic entity. The proponents of systems thinking argue that the involvement of human beings in organisations constitutes both those as social systems and the open systems that develop and draw purpose from the environment of existence (Jackson 2003, p.6). Relating this argument to the finding and dual status description about the Sinomlando Centre gives the impression that this organisation is a social and an open system. Thus, legally the Sinomlando exists and works as a community development NGO and works as a research and academic unit of the University.

Organisationally, the existence and functioning of the Sinomlando Centre is articulated from a dualistic statute and systemic environment. Thus, another view is that work and life in this organisation is foreign donor NGO-driven. For that reason, the Sinomlando employees feel and see the Centre as ‘always at the mercy of the University’ and ‘dependent on foreign funding, and being at the mercy of its founder and Director’. According to Davidz and Nightingale (2007), in systems thinking development a ‘supporting environment’ is basically the consideration of the provision of organisational incentives, schedules and costing, management styles, organisational boundaries, and so on. Therefore, if the donor agencies and the University is seen as ‘being merciful’ to the Centre, it is clear that the external financial and management systems influences the Sinomlando organisational boundaries and incentives.

Apparently, the incentives and organisational boundaries provided for by the University include legitimate academic status and the sharing of resources and administrative systems ranging from human resources, financial administrative policy and procedures, to office spaces and IT. In addition to the example of the University, organisational incentives and boundaries provided for by the donor funding agencies comprise NGO legitimacy with validated community development projects (work plans and timeframes), budget planning and costing, and project management and administrative technologies.

5.2.1.2 Complex dynamics

The establishment of the dualistic identity presents a complexity about the Sinomlando organisational design, shape, and dynamics. Thus, organisational energies are inevitably bouncing between the dictates of the NGO funding systems and the University systems. On the one hand, the acceptance of funds from the humanitarian and development donor NGOs and agencies means that the Sinomlando has to fulfil the obligations such as project targets and deliverables within given timeframes. On the other hand, existing at the University and driven by one University professor means that the Centre must also meet certain research, teaching, and learning obligations. In short, the Sinomlando Centre is expected to meet the requirements of the University, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, meet the requirements of the funders. Evidently, this is bouncing between

two spheres of influence which make it a complex environment for such a small organisation like the Sinomlando Centre.

According to systems-thinking scholars, organisations as ‘open systems’ depend on the inputs from their environment of existence, and organisations change these inputs by producing outputs that they again return to that environment (Jackson 2003; and Greenberg 2011). Jackson (2003, p.9-10) argues that this mutual exchange between the organisation and its environment of existence can make the organisation be considered as a ‘purposeful system’. Greenberg (2011, p.37) argues that open systems, in the form of organisations, represent subsequent dynamics and ever-changing energies prompted by the environment in which the organisations exist. Thus, the Sinomlando’s NGO characteristic, financial, and strategic management energy flows in accordance with the energies released into the international NGO donor funding environment. Furthermore, the teaching, learning, and research traits of the Centre stem from the settings in the University. Clearly, further complexities about this organisational existence and functioning are depicted. For instance, the Centre must behave administratively in a way similar to the Biblical analogies and dictates of giving to Caesar that which belongs to Caesar, and that when in Rome do as the Romans do.

This shows that in order to produce ‘outputs’ and returns, those ‘outputs’ in the relevant ‘environment’ of the Centre must strike a balance between these two large systems. The founder and current Director is that balance. Thus, the Sinomlando employees cannot describe the organisational life linking it to the University and the funders without speaking about the role of the founding director in those relationships. A perception is that in such a complex dynamic the Director’s personality turns out to be a homogeneous catalytic agent between the University system and the NGO donor funding systems. This homogeneous influence by the Director is another unavoidable system and dynamic in the organisational design and shape of the Sinomlando Centre.

Therefore, the Sinomlando Centre should be seen and understood from the view that it generates an academic character and inputs from the University environment, and at the same time engenders an NGO character and inputs from the donor funding environment.

Nevertheless, the Sinomlando leadership set-up allows the returning of its generated outputs into this systemic environment in a neutral and balanced way. It is therefore correct to argue that the Director is ‘a predicate’ between the Sinomlando Centre and the two big systems of the University, and the donors. This means that the Sinomlando organisational complexity, existence, and functioning is understood as a triangular systemic environmental problem. With reference to Greenberg’s (2011, p.37cf) argument, the observed movement and exchange of inputs and outputs between the leadership, the University, and the donor funding systems, prompts an on-going, and an unforeseeable and complex organisational dynamics and systems change at the Sinomlando Centre; this predicts the possibly overshadowed depth and breadth of organisational growth.

5.2.1.3 Captivating human atmosphere

The Sinomlando Centre is established as an organisation that is driven by a charismatic identity and a sense of purpose. The Centre is also identified as being shaped by a relevant-skills targeting strategy. How do these findings fit into the Organisation that has already been described as a complex system, and which exists and functions as such? On systems thinking development, Davidz and Nightingale (2007) argue that ‘experiential learning’ is about describing the ‘work and life’ in the organisation. At the Sinomlando Centre, ‘work and life’ are entrenched first in the mission and vision, and then in the founding leadership and in the family and team-like mentality.

In this regard, the Sinomlando Centre’s ‘experiential learning’ can be described and seen in the captivating human atmosphere. It was apparent that the respondents described the Organisation as ‘not an ordinary organisation’, but that it is ‘shaped by the relevance’ of its work and by its ‘organic development’ life. Transpiring from such trends of thought is an understanding that the Centre is a unique and social system imagined as a family or team, and/or a group with a sense of purpose. All these characterisations emerge from the fact that the Organisation recruits skilled people who are passionate and dedicated,

and who have a good work ethic and interpersonal warmth. These organisational qualities envisage an opportunity for growth at the Sinomlando Centre.

5.2.1.4 Unclear organisational policies

This research discovered that the Sinomlando Centre does not have clear organisational policies with which the employees can understand and identify. For example, the Sinomlando employees perceived and expressed a struggle with the day-to-day organisational loose ends and functions, and with the manner in which management- and administrative decisions are discussed, reached, and eventually executed. This all indicates organisational policy-related challenges.

These challenges emerge from, and are flagged in policy and procedural issues. Administratively, the lamenting of staff is about lack of structural communication, coordination, planning, and unpredictable changes. For example, the respondents agree that it is only the Director who does the reporting, budget planning, and presentations on financial management. The interpretation is that the style of financial management and budgeting lacks inclusive and objective planning and analysis. A related example to this interpretation is that some senior managers have access to project budgets and have absolute decision-making powers on those budgets, while other senior managers do not have those privileges; yet the expectation regarding deliverables is the same. Finally, the human resources and operations management issue is that the Sinomlando culture of overworking, straining employees, and disguising consultation, impacts on the availability of managers. It is evidently bemoaned that the Director often imposes unclarified decisions, and this leaves managers ‘hanging’ and not able to independently execute those decisions.

The leadership agrees that such policy-related challenges exist. However, the blame is shifted to the dualistic order and to the systemic environment that as discussed above, the Sinomlando Centre is subjected to. For instance, it is apparently viewed that the University tag and policy environment only allow that the Sinomlando leadership be

appointed in accordance with the Professorship or senior lecturer qualifications and credentials. Along the same view, it is argued that competition for funding and rigid policies in the donor NGO environment only require the current Sinomlando Director to be an all-rounder because of his international funding and fundraising acumen, links, and credibility. For example, it is obvious that the Director is the one who makes personal direct contacts and visitations to some of the donors - especially those Organisations in Europe - and who searches for, and responds to calls for funding proposals and fundraising opportunities. As a result, this funding system only requires that the Centre follows specified financial management technologies per funding project, and per each donor's framework and ideology.

Drawing these views and relating them to Jackson's (2003, p.9-10) argument about organisational and management theory - that in organisations as systems there are 'decision-makers or problem owners', and there are 'actors' and 'customers or clients' - the organisational policy-related scenarios show that the Sinomlando's employees remain 'actors' and 'customers or clients' to the decisions made elsewhere. This is therefore a systemic scenario. The interaction between the Centre leadership, the University, and the donor funding systems is the hub of all organisational policy-related challenges at the Sinomlando Centre.

Therefore, from a systems thinking development perspective and according to Davidz and Nightingale (2007, p.11), 'the individual traits' are about the quality of individual personalities, thinking, open-mindedness, communication, organisation, and vision-sharing in the organisation. How does this work for the Sinomlando Centre? The mere fact that the strength of the Centre is seen in the role of the Director as an individual may bring forth an argument that organisational policy-related inconsistencies cannot be blamed on donor funding and the University in isolation. Thus, the captivating influence of the Director's individual personality traits on the formulation and execution of decisions can also in many ways be argued as a limitation to organisational policy and procedural consistencies.

A limitation to both organisational policy and procedural consistencies can be discussed in relation to the obvious dichotomies. The employees remark on a consultative and fair management on the one hand but on the other, they bemoan the lack of management coordination. Even though roles and job descriptions are perceived as clear, there still exists a considerable bureaucratic style of leadership. Lastly, besides the skill- and organic development ethos, there is a lack of intentional succession foresight.

All these contrasts are indicators of the way that the Sinomlando is shaped and run in a disorganised manner. Other personalities at the Sinomlando Centre remain at the periphery, since everything is synonymous with the Director's individual personality traits. That is, it can be concluded that the employees perceive that the design and functioning of the Sinomlando organisational systems remain a part of the Director's personal capacity. That is, it is a system embalmed in his academic credentials, religious affiliation, and credibility. As a result, internally the Director remains the sole 'decision-maker or problem owner' of the interrelationships, financial administration, strategic vision and processes, and human resources. Thus the Director enforces, owns, steers, and re-directs the Sinomlando policies, procedures, organisational relevance, and trustworthiness. The employees methodically attune their personalities, thinking, open-mindedness, communication, organisation, and vision-sharing into the Director's ownership of the Sinomlando Centre. This is the reason for the complexity around the Sinomlando organisational life and policy.

5.2.1.5 Organisational prognosis

A gloomy prognosis for the Sinomlando organisational design and function, as discussed in sections above, can appropriately be related to Greenberg's (2011) argument, drawing on the organisational behaviour and process perspective that:

it is widely accepted that the most appropriate type of organizational design depends on its external environment. In general, the external environment is the sum of all the forces impinging on an organization with which it must deal effectively if it is to survive. These forces include general work conditions, such as the economy, geography, and national resources, as well as the specific task

environment within which the company operates - notably, its competitors, customers, workforce, and suppliers (Greenberg 2011, p.561).

The employees understand and identify the Sinomlando subsystems - organisational processes, structures, and design with the University and the donor funding environments. Actually, the Centre is an organisation that engenders its purpose from these two large external systems. Both systems form an external environment for the Sinomlando Centre. The discussion has demonstrated, in agreement with Greenberg (2011), that the University and the donor funding are environments that generate 'forces that impinge' on the Centre. Jackson (2003, p.9) calls this ability of an organisation like the Sinomlando to deal with and survive all the imposed influences an "environment fit". This research can now make an overall assumption that the external environment and systems, namely, the University and the foreign donor and funding organisations, encroach upon the broader Sinomlando organisational design, plan, work, and state of affairs. The former is an academic and institutional system and the latter is a philanthropy system. But then, in between these systems there is another influential but internal system, namely, the Sinomlando founder and Director.

According to Jackson's (2003, p.10) argument, from an organisational and management theory perspective, it is important to consider (Rus 2009) the value of the 'concept of boundary'. In this regard, the way the boundary is seen depends on the worldviews of the people assessing the system (Jackson 2003, p.10). Therefore, a projection on the Sinomlando organisational design and function, as discussed in sections above, shows that two external environments determine and define the boundaries of this organisation. This study can postulate that organisational boundaries at the Sinomlando Centre are determined by "different philosophies, power and politics" (Jackson 2003, p.11).

Overall, a diagnosis can be made therefore that life at the Sinomlando Centre is contrary to Jackson's (2003) and Senge's (2006) positions that managers as systems thinkers can be creative in improving social and learning organisations. Instead, managers can decide and act appropriately. For instance, Senge (2006) appreciates the engineering theory of systems and states that "an understanding of living systems helps us appreciate the

capacities of teams, organizations, and larger systems to learn and evolve” (Senge 2006, p.267). There exists, at the Sinomlando Centre, a non-linear interrelatedness, cost-measurements, goals and feedback loops and processes communicated, coordinated and exchanged between the University, the donor NGO partners, and the Sinomlando Director. The *raison d'être* is that the Director's homogeneous dynamic and catalytic role and influence get in the way of managers and employees' access, growth as a team, and ability to learn as an organisation about the relational behaviour and interaction between the two larger systems: the University and the foreign donor NGO partners. Thus, one can argue that at the Sinomlando Centre organisational life and systems are limited.

It can be further argued that the Sinomlando Centre's organisational life is incapable of 'the capacities of teams', organisational learning and growth (Senge 2006). Since the organisational design and function scenario at the Sinomlando Centre is defined by two supportive systems, it is imperative that the Centre's leadership and management learn; together with the rest of the employees, as “systems thinkers” (Senge 2006, p.267). Davidz and Nightingale (2007) argue conclusively that:

it is not surprising that a systems approach is needed to develop systems skills, where individual characteristics and experiential learning are aligned with a supportive environment (Davidz and Nightingale 2007, p.13).

At the Sinomlando Centre an alignment of 'individual characteristics and experiential learning' within a 'supportive environment' (Davidz and Nightingale 2007) is needed. Thus, the leadership should make it possible for the managers and employees to engage relationally with the foreign donor NGO partners and agencies and with the University.

The Sinomlando Centre may encourage system skills and systems thinking development for the managers heeding to some of the expressed views –'skills and organic development', 'charismatic identity' and 'human atmosphere' in order to achieve capacity in organisational design and function. This means that the Centre as an organisation may have to start encouraging and affording managers opportunities to independently make sense of what is working and what is not working for the

organisation as it exists and functions between the University and the foreign donors and funding agencies. The sections below elaborate on the ‘system adeptness’ that the managers at the Sinomlando require.

5.2.2 The Sinomlando systems work

In the section above it is established that the Sinomlando employees understand and identify the organisational design and function with the University and the donor funding environments. It is also argued that there is a non-linear interrelatedness between the University and the donor funding and the Sinomlando leadership. Given that scenario, the current section **5.2.2** tries to demonstrate the ways in which the Sinomlando systems work in such a supportive and systemic environment to achieve the needed leadership and management development.

5.2.2.1 Reinforcements and balancing processes

So far, the interplay between the University, the donor funding system, and the Sinomlando leadership is evidently inevitable. It is also clear that at the Sinomlando Centre the employees feel that there are activities and decisions that would not be changed by subordinates. In addition, the leadership decisions reach the employees as non-negotiable directives.

Besides the Sinomlando existing in a dualistic statute and in the systemic environment, the organogram shows hierarchical and top-down governance. In sections above, the lack of management coordination, organisational policy, procedural inconsistencies, and a lack of succession foresight have been discussed in relation to this organogram. Such a structure and function of governance existing at the Sinomlando Centre accommodates organisational change, whether ‘planned or unplanned’ (Greenberg 2011), which is influenced by the interaction between the University systems, the funding agencies’ systems, and the Centre leadership systems.

As much as the interrelationships between the University, the funding agencies and the Centre leadership are geared towards generating the resources, bureaucracy is obvious. Apparently, the University is viewed as a structure that functions on ‘top-down’ approaches, and then dictates the manner in which the Centre conceptualises its new projects and the planning, controlling, resolving, and altering of administrative processes. Through such ‘top-down’ approaches, the Sinomlando is thought as practising and implementing the same ‘top-down’ approach to governance structures on information creation and flow, staff involvements, resources, culture, and administration. In a similar way, Hernman and Dijkezeul (2011) argue that humanitarian NGOs provide aid based on particular ideological positions, as explained in Chapter 2 above and later in this Chapter. It is therefore clear that the Centre relates with the donor funders from unarticulated philosophies, power, and political positions. Such factors and positions engender systems of governance characterised by a lack of management coordination, organisational policy- and procedural inconsistencies, and a lack of succession foresight.

An analysis of the Sinomlando governance scenario, from the perspectives in the theory of system dynamics, elicits the need to point out particular reinforcements and balancing processes (Braun 2002, Jackson 2003, and Senge 2006). The systemic interrelationships between the University and the donor funding and the Sinomlando leadership engenders patterns of behaviour accustomed to complex feedback loops as discussed above. Where such complex feedback loops exist, system archetypes have been found equal to the task of demonstrating the patterns of behaviour, such as the ‘reinforcing (positive) feedback processes and balancing (negative) feedback processes’ with ‘delays’ (Braun 2002, Jackson 2003, and Senge 2006). The system archetypes open the door for the Sinomlando managers to develop the systems thinking (Jackson 2003). As a manager who is trying to learn from the systems thinking perspectives, here is an attempt to demonstrate the manner in which the system archetype tools can assist to explain the scenario of the Sinomlando Centre patterns of behaviour:

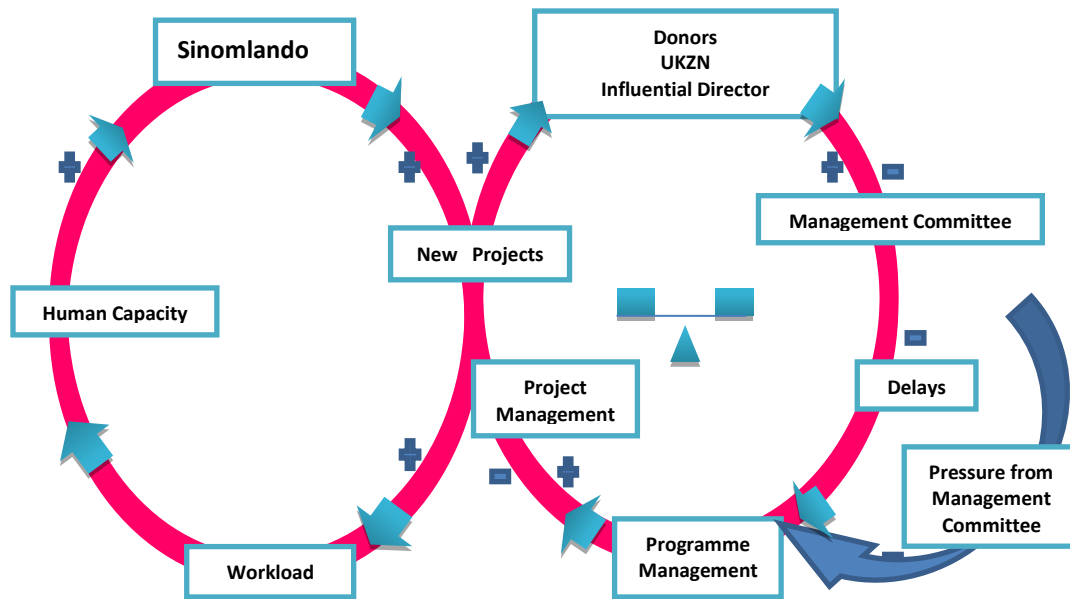


Figure 5.1: Limits to Growth at the Sinomlando Centre (Braun 2002, p.2; Jackson 2003, p.71-72; Senge 2006, p.94-112).

It can be deduced from this ‘limits to growth’ system archetype diagram, **Figure 5.1** adopted from Jackson (2003, p.71-72) and Senge (2006, p.94-112), that at the Sinomlando Centre, the patterns of organisational behaviour and action are influenced by the UKZN, donor agencies, and the internal leadership structure. That is, the Centre employees, as an organisation, feel the influence and power of the University, the funders, and the Sinomlando Director. Braun (2002, p.1) argues that system archetypes are effective tools in “describing common patterns of behaviour in organizations”. Jackson (2003) further qualifies the argument based on Senge’s (1990 & 1994) conclusion:

that it is possible to identify certain system archetypes that show regular patterns of behaviour, due to particular structural characteristics, that continually give rise to management problems (Jackson 2003, p.71).

Senge (2006, p.94) states that managers in learning organisations will be able to create organisational reality if they think in terms of system archetypes. Managers will be able to reshape employee perceptions, see structures at play, and see the leverage points in those structures. In an organisation there are always limits, and thing(s) that will push and eventually make themselves known or felt (Braun 2002, p.2). Given the value in

understanding levels of influence that produce common patterns of behaviour at the Sinomlando Centre a few observations can be drawn.

In **Figure 5.1**, a feedback loop (positive) is produced *en route* to the improved management structures (Management Committee), and from there a balancing (negative) loop develops in the direction of the programme and projects management (project planning and implementation) to new projects. A side feedback loop (negative) between the management committee and the programme- and project management, is pressure exerted by the management committee as a result of pressure created from the University, the funding agencies, and the leadership. The feedback loop (positive) develops downwards from the new projects into the increased workloads and then picks upwards onto human capacity. From the human capacity, the feedback loop (positive) develops into the direction of the budget planning and formulation.

These loops, in **Figure 5.1**, confirm that certain perceived difficulties about the Sinomlando governance are indicated as ‘delays’. These ‘delays’ are created by this non-linear hierarchical structure and relationship. The new projects, though engendered by the budget and planning, increase the workload (targets and obligations) at the Centre. Increased workload augments the management and leadership’s increased efforts in budget planning and formulation, and eventually to seek more funding and more sympathy and approval from the University. Yet, an increase of new projects and project targets calls for enlarged human resources. Although making efforts and paying attention to development, and in pursuit of the Sinomlando organisational goals, the leadership and management as a balancing mechanism in the system is found distracted by the larger systems; the University, and the foreign funders. That is, the Sinomlando leadership becomes commandingly involved with the project operations, either because of the pressures from the University and/or the funders, or the management happens to be unavailable for appropriate project-operation decision and -reflection. Such a ‘balancing’ effect creates and leaves tracks of frustration and low morale in the operations team members.

The hierarchical network feedback loops confirm the influence of the University, the donors/funders, and the leadership over the Sinomlando Centre. Therefore, this network feedback can be argued as representing the limits to the organisational growth and governance structural design at the Sinomlando Centre. A determined perception is that it is difficult to understand or pin down the depth or breadth and independence of the Sinomlando organisational life, in particular, its governance structure, ethos, and function. In other words, it is difficult to understand the Centre systems. The foreseeable consequence is that the Sinomlando Centre will continue to find it difficult to synchronise strategic management-, administrative-, and operational processes.

5.2.3 Design for dependence

It is important to interrogate further illustrations on the systemic influences that limit the organisational growth and governance at the Sinomlando Centre, by focusing on the management system design. In the above sections, the objective behind the Sinomlando existing and functioning under the wing of the University, and relying on the donor NGO funding partners, is to find leverage for survival and sustainability. Evidently, this supportive environment is the fundamental solution towards the Centre organisational development. That is, the solution for organisational sustainability and survival is to continue sourcing funds from international donor agencies, and at the same time maintaining the status quo with the University. If this is the organisational situation at the Sinomlando, how then does the Organisation manage its own systems?

According to Braun (2002, p.4), Jackson (2003, p.72), and Senge (2006, p.103), the critical study of the feedback loops certainly indicates thorny but “complex [and]¹³ interdependent problems” (Senge 2006, p.267) and considers fundamental management structural responses in the organisation. Therefore, the authors agree that the ‘shifting the burden’ system archetype tool can be helpful in an organisation where there is always “tension between the attraction towards devising a symptomatic solution to a visible problem and, the long term impact of fundamental solutions aimed at underlying

¹³ My own addition.

structures” (Braun 2002, p.4). In this regard, as a learner in systems thinking perspective, it is imperative to try and describe the fundamental influences on the Sinomlando management system using the ‘shifting the burden’ diagram below:

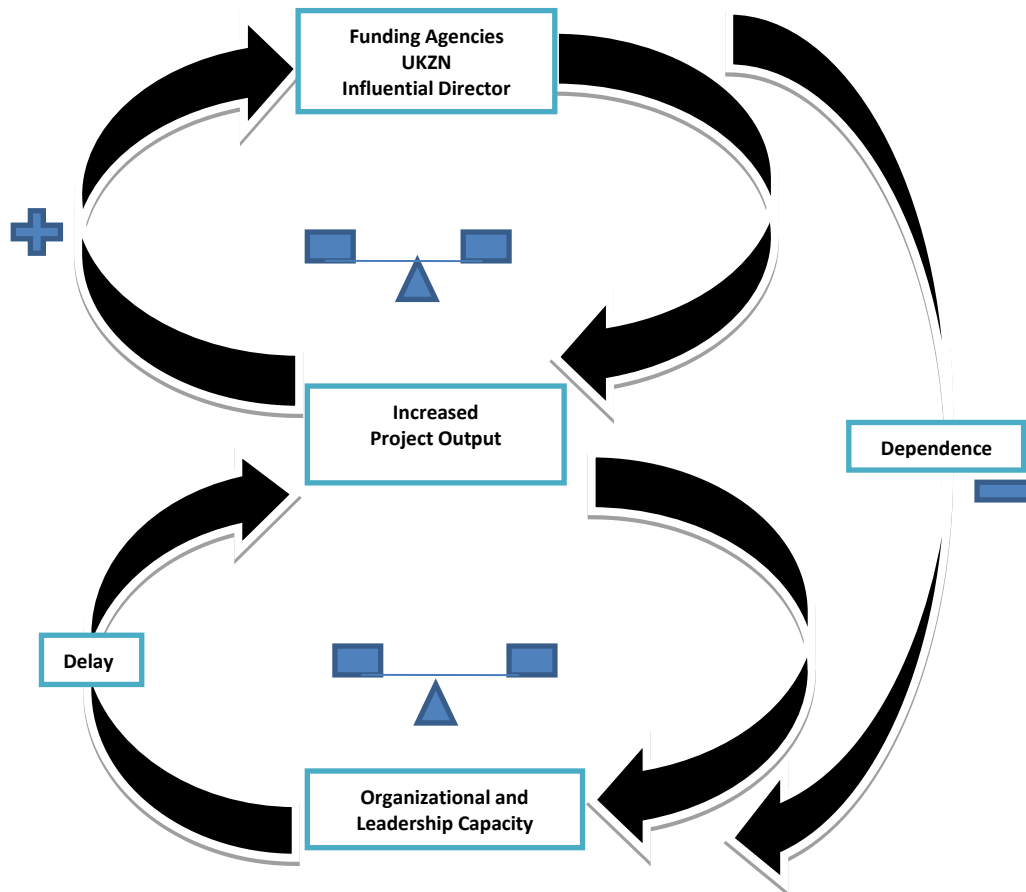


Figure 5.2: Shifting the Burden at the Sinomlando Centre (Braun 2002, p.4; and Senge 2006, p.105).

Represented through this system archetype tool of ‘shifting the burden’, in **Figure 5.2** above, are deep-seated leading and observable influences and key leverage points on the Centre management. It can be deduced then, that the Centre leadership ensures an increased and sustained organisational life (increased project output), as a ‘problem symptom’ (Braun 2002, p.4; and Senge 2006, p.105) by securing funding from the international funders, by obtaining institutional approval from the University, and by maintaining the influential ethos of the founding leadership (Funding, UKZN, and

influential Director) as a 'symptomatic solution' (Braun 2002, p.4; and Senge 2006, p.105). The Centre remains dependent on the funders for its financial solutions, and on the University financial policy and procedures as systems administrative solutions. The Centre is also dependent on the founder and Director to keep negotiating and strengthening the relationships with the funding agencies and the University authorities, as well as to ensure that all organisational structures and processes remain relevant to the goals, policies, and procedures of these stakeholders (Dependence).

Out of this management dependence scenario, represented as 'side effects' or 'delays' (Braun 2002, p.4; and Senge 2006, p.105), the Centre fails to judge its own organisational growth needs (organisational, management, and leadership development). Hence, the employees' lamentations over weak management coordination, organisational policy, and procedural inconsistencies, as well as the absence of succession foresight are evidence that the challenge at the Sinomlando is one of losing 'capacity for self-reliance' or 'independence' in organisational, management, and leadership development (Braun 2002; Jackson 2003 and Senge 2006).

In **Figure 5.2**, there are two levels of leverage points for leadership and management: the top circle and the bottom circle. Under normal circumstances, the levels should complement each other. However, it is noted that at the Sinomlando, levels are non-linear. As a result, the triangular and top-down relational environments and approach to the governance structures and functions, means that the top circle is more powerful than the lower. Management leveraging is at one level, and does not trickle down to the second circle. It can therefore be confirmed that existing in the University, relying on foreign funding, and having one Professor and Director is indeed a self-limiting structure for the capacity and independence of leadership and management at the Sinomlando Centre.

A contention can be made in consideration of **Figure 5.2** that the Sinomlando leadership relies more on quick-fix management interventions to existing management and administrative problems. The dichotomies discussed in the sections above form another

example of how leadership and management interventions at the Centre only focus on existing problems. This is considered a problem for organisational development because whether planned or unplanned, changes are made; temporarily leaving the underlying problems to continue with the possibility of reappearing at a later stage (Braun 2002, p.4; and Senge 2006, p.100). Plainly, the leadership at the Centre relies on juggling administrative systems (that is, keeping to disguised budget planning, transparency, and analysis) and strategic management systems (that is, keeping to short-term organisational-, human resources-, and succession planning).

5.2.4 Re-thinking self-organisation

The University and the donor funding environment have complex and interdependent systems but form a supportive systemic environment for the broader Sinomlando Organisational life. Moreover, the discussion and demonstrations above establish that the systemic and supportive environment makes it possible for the organisation to thrive and have a sense of purpose. With the founding leadership standing in as the sole catalyst within this systemic situation, it is inevitably proven that the Sinomlando organisational governance, design, and function are locked up in the top-down influences of both the University and funding partnerships environments. It is concluded that the employees perceive the influences in the supportive environment as a lock-out for the broader organisational development of the Sinomlando Centre.

Thus the employees' perceptions about the Sinomlando organisational scenario resonate with Senge's (2006, p.171) conclusion:

perhaps when we rediscover organizations as living systems, we will also rediscover what it actually means to us as human beings to work together for a purpose that really matters (Senge 2006, p.171).

That is, in the systemic relationship between the University and the donors, the leadership will need to discover some sense of 'working together' with the co-workers to improve and sustain the broader organisational life of the Centre. Importantly, if systems thinking development is argued as being fundamental to leadership development (Davidz and Nightingale 2007), then the Sinomlando Centre will achieve broader organisational

growth only after improving systems thinking. Systems thinking development may be fundamental for leadership development at the Sinomlando Centre because the employees and senior managers will be intentionally exposed to understanding and identifying the partners that impact the relationships between the University and the funders.

This research then concludes that the University, the funders, and the current Director are perceived as creating circles of inabilities for broader Sinomlando organisational growth; in particular in organisational design, -planning, and -continuity. This cannot guarantee the Centre a capacitated leadership and management system. It can therefore be suggested that if the Sinomlando Centre is striving for genuine innovation and leveraging in broader organisational life, then the employees' individual personalities, skills, passions, and commitment must be considered seriously in the broader stakeholder-environments. The Organisation may - as a counter to the current self-limiting systemic structures - also need to re-think self-organisation, by revisiting and reflecting realistically about its 'dual status' in relation to its 'charismatic identity'. The following section delves further into the Sinomlando organisational governance.

5.3 Organisational governance at the Sinomlando Centre

The above section 5.2 demonstrates that the Sinomlando organisational design and function depends on a systemic environment. The systemic environment limits self-organisation and space for management capacity at the Centre. This section of the Chapter discusses the assumption that there is awareness about the need for mechanisms to develop organisational governance at the Sinomlando Centre. This awareness is built on the belief that everyone at the Centre, from the bottom to the top of the organogram, should naturally be involved in key areas of leadership and management of the organisation; like administration and planning, financial planning (budgeting process), project planning and coordination, the organisational continuity process (succession planning), and partnership and networking with the stakeholders. Therefore this research examined perceptions about the structural composition, information processing, and

control in the Sinomlando Centre leadership and management. It is ascertained from the narratives, that even though the Centre is currently adequately led and managed using top-down management strategies and processes, capacity in organisational governance is an unintentional and difficult exercise.

Thus by evaluating the way that the Sinomlando staff members see and think about the strategic management processes, and the way that employee roles and involvements within the supportive and systemic environment are defined, the interviews and observation narratives reveal specific unattractive internal governance scenarios. These scenarios, in no order of preference, are the eight findings with which this discussion is now engaging: clear roles for employees; organisational policy inconsistencies; lack of succession foresight; lack of management coordination; collaborative and fair management; bureaucratic leadership; skills and organic development; and top-down governance structure.

5.3.1 Governance

The Sinomlando Centre leadership- and management systems, strategies, and processes, are designed to fit the status quo. The employees perceive the Sinomlando Centre as being driven and controlled by a top-down organogram and structure. The findings indicate that the nature, style, and system of leadership and management are powered, in descending order, by: the Management Committee, the Programme Committee, and the fieldwork team. This structure ensures that information is created and disseminated from the top ranks to the lower ranks only. What looks like a contradiction is that, most of the times information is generated, circulates, and often remains at the top level without filtering down to the bottom levels as is often claimed. **Figure 5.3** below demonstrates this information creation and flow system at the Sinomlando Centre:

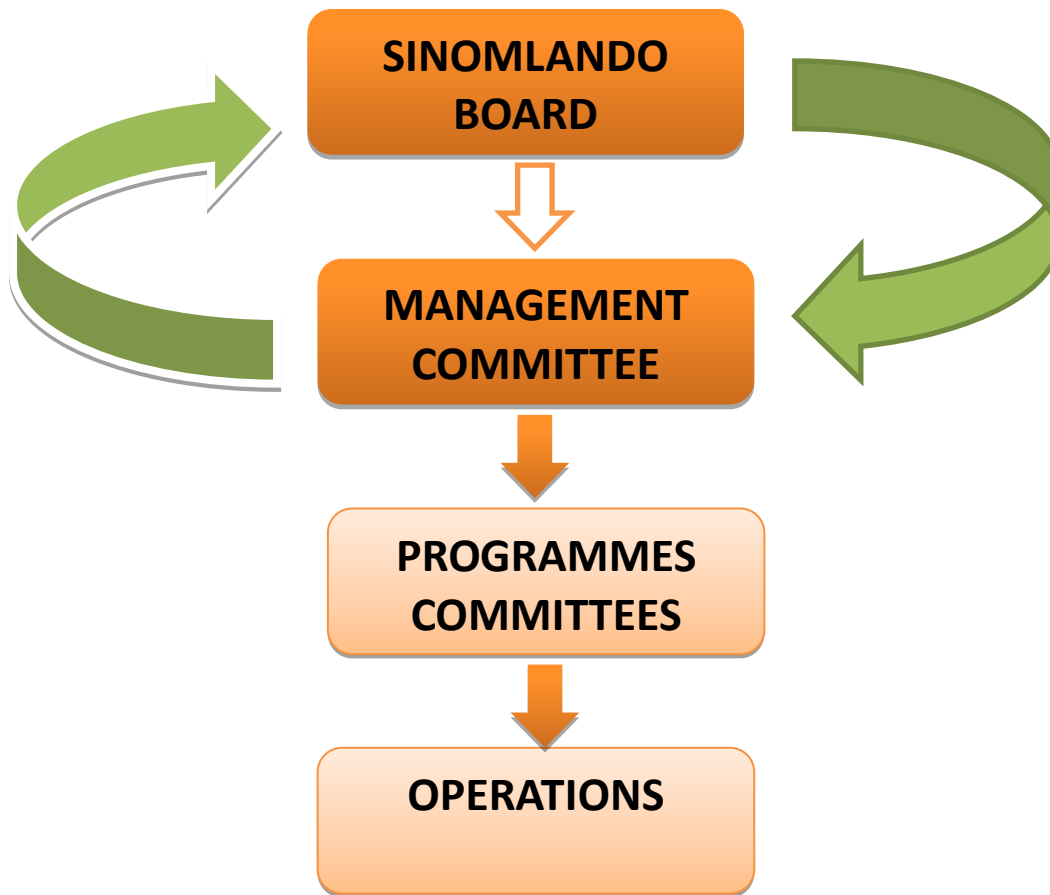


Figure 5.3: Sinomlando Centre organisational structure, top down leadership, and management style.

It is evident from the findings that this governance scenario, as presented in **Figure 5.3** above, generates very specific issues that the Sinomlando Centre grapples with. On a positive note, it is acknowledged and appreciated that there are efforts to have clear job descriptions and roles, skills- and organic development, and fair management. However, the mere fact that the Sinomlando employees spontaneously articulate the fluidity in administrative policies and procedures is actually an indication of a difficult leadership and management style. As such, a contention can be drawn that internal competences are very minimal in a top-down leadership and management structure and style.

It follows then that at the Sinomlando Centre, the top-down leadership and management approach is entrenched in a conformist attitude. That is, a normal or traditional structure is one which initiates the discussions leading to a decision-making event and action.

Only when that structure is convinced about the information that has been created, will it then release that information to the lower structures. The process of thinking and deliberating, and of eventually releasing the flow of information, starts and ends with the Leadership. At the Sinomlando Centre, it is believed that if the discussion is initiated from the middle or the bottom, then it is creating a new structure of governance.

Evidently, this is a top-down governance style associated with a hierarchical structure and bureaucratic culture. The illustrated system of governance is created to maintain the building of a great name and concept, *vis-à-vis*, the status quo. That is, instead of being a force for good, and a great cause for the organisation, as argued by Grant and Crutchfield (2007, p.35), the leadership system at the Centre is found to be a handmaid of the University and of the funding agencies, rather than serving the organisation itself. In this scenario, it is the Director's name that takes precedence. Perhaps it is correct to contend that the Sinomlando governance structure is not designed to strengthen the internal capabilities and creative ways of the organisation. Thus the nature, style, and system of leadership are not inclined towards a collective and organisational development culture (Grant and Crutchfield 2007, p.32).

There is another mind-set portrayed in the research narrative text in Chapter 4 above, to confirm this top-down governance. The staff's clear roles and job descriptions are marred by suppressed voices. Some expressions show that a senior manager is evasive in acknowledging his/her roles, job descriptions, and involvements in decision-making processes. Such evasiveness may indicate that the Sinomlando Centre has considerable internal bureaucracy that is also seen in senior managers often feel that someone is answerable or accountable to somebody. This perception shows a fear to challenge authority. As a result, the authority of the Sinomlando Director is expressed as orthodoxy. Evidently this is a refusal, or rather a self-deprivation, for progressive leadership and responsibility.

That is, at the Sinomlando, the management system, -design, and -functioning are personified by the founding Director. It may be hard for the Sinomlando employees,

especially the managers, to challenge this system of governance. Such a daring can easily turn personal when it is meant to be organisational. It is therefore unavoidable that the current structure of the Sinomlando leadership and management is perceived as being constructed in a manner which ensures compliance rather than noncompliance, whether it is with the University, and/or with the donors/funders, or even with the Director.

It is however difficult for this research to consider the Sinomlando Centre as strengthening its internal management and leadership capabilities. The contention is that the development and strengthening of the organisational governance of this Organisation is predictably lower than is portrayed. Absolute control is at the top (the existing management committee structure), as is the current leadership design and style, while the Centre is only sustaining its internal operations and bowing to the status quo. Thus the current Sinomlando leadership and management structure cannot, as Grant and Crutchfield (2007, p.35) argue, “catalyse large-scale change”. It is clear that the Sinomlando Centre will not achieve or survive far-reaching organisational change if the current Director is not holding and pulling all the purse strings aligned with funding partners, agencies, and the University.

5.3.2 Fluid administrative policies

This research can also ascertain that the Sinomlando administrative policies are superficial. The employees perceive that the Centre lacks strengthening- and developing internal management competencies. For instance, sometimes the Leadership just monopolises and dictates decision processes and actions, and there are no administrative policies specific to the Sinomlando that can properly guide the decision-making processes. This simply suggests that the whole middle management and the entire lower structure are not freely involved in policy formulation and decision making.

Though the management is acknowledged as being fair and consultative, it is also detected that the employees feel consultation at the Sinomlando to be disguised. That is, power and monopoly manifest themselves in the lack of management coordination and in

a disguised collaborative attitude. In other words, power is indifferently vested in the team members. It is speculated that predetermined directives are driven and implemented as if they were influenced by a collective. It follows then, that the Centre management committee functions as a directive and policy, rather than as a supportive structure. Generated procedures are not helping the employees to feel and express themselves proactively as part or members of the Organisation.

This research established that discussions develop toward making decisions and taking action at meetings; policy, the Director's role, and/or what is organisational, cannot be determined. Along with this view is the example that the senior managers at Sinomlando Centre struggle to differentiate what the Director is, and what the Organisation is. Thus, the self-governing procedures are identified as solely controlled by the Director. This may suggest therefore that the fluidity and loose ends in administrative policies result in a lack of cohesion which creates ambiguities in the Sinomlando Centre systems. Perhaps it is correct to argue that this Organisation lacks a shared-leadership ethos.

5.3.3 Leadership story not a process

The research found that the processes that allow the Sinomlando managers to negotiate options and long term roles in the life of the Organisation are seen as determined by the interplay of elements in the environment. As has been discussed above, the employees have difficulties with making a distinction between what the Sinomlando is and what the Director is, which points at yet another reality about the Sinomlando leadership. Organisational policies and procedures are vehicles of events about strategies, principles, guidelines, and course of action towards a leadership process and organisational story. In other words, policies and procedures comprise a visible and a viable story about the organisation.

According to Parry and Hansen (2007, p.295), the organisational story that is linked to leadership is a system where leadership is developed as a process. Conversely, the Sinomlando story is described as a system built and coupled with the leader as a person

and not as a process. Evidently, respondents expressed a sense of relationship that is based on professor-student partnerships and/or asymmetries. Coupling the organisational story with the leader as a person in the professor-student partnership manner creates internal inconsistencies in financial reporting, human resource planning, and project management and coordination. Parry and Hansen (2007) perceive and express leadership development as a process.

Furthermore, it is found that while at the Sinomlando Centre there is a sense of purpose, vision and mission, it is only the Director's views that prevail. For example, the employees note that communication from the top leadership and the management committee does not filter down properly, and believe that their ideas and views are neither taken into account nor taken seriously. This leads to the employees behaving and acting only on directives.

Actually, the Director's prevailing views, as a disguised collective and consultative process, cannot be challenged by those in lower ranks of the Organisation. Therefore, as argued by Parry and Hansen (2003), Cardona (2000), and Greenberg (2011), the leadership process prioritises 'storytelling' and not 'story-making', 'transcendental' and 'team leadership'. That is, as long as the employees feel that there is inadequate communication between them and the top leadership, and that their views and contributions toward the greater good of the organisation are taken less seriously, there will always be a feeling of dissatisfaction and a lack of ownership and control of the Sinomlando brand and Organisation.

Some viewpoints about the notion of 'story-making' in organisations (Parry and Hansen 2007, p.291) can be drawn out of a situation where organisational leadership processes undermine the employees' organisational ownership and control. Parry and Hansen (2007) propose that the enhanced functioning and effectiveness of leadership in organisations can be demonstrated by moving:

from storytelling to story-making as a by-product of attending to the employees' or team members' experience, sense making, and communication (Parry and Hansen 2007, p.291).

The idea about story-making and meaning-making in organisations is that when organisations are built as systems that can invent and re-invent their own brand, they are meaning-making; whereas storytelling is when organisations are residing in history practice and name-making (Parry and Hansen 2007, p.291).

Cardona (2000, p.201-206) examines leadership from a relational perspective. Thus, in the notion of transcendental leadership, the leader and the collaborators influence each other into forming “the type of partnership that the leader is able to create, determines the quality of the collaborator’s behaviour” (Cardona 2000, p.201). Greenberg (2011) holds similar sentiments that leadership in organisations should reflect on the significance of a give-and-take relationship between leaders and followers. Hence, the practice of team leadership as leader-member exchange (LMX) (Greenberg 2011, p.489), and contribution-based exchange (Cardona 2000, p.204), requires consideration.

It is apparent that at the Sinomlando Centre leadership strategies, ethos, and approaches do not tap into the employees’ sense-making, meaning making, and/or team leadership. An appropriate, efficient, and effective Sinomlando organisational leadership development ethos should prioritise seeing, harnessing, and managing the employees’ leadership behaviour (Greenberg 2011). In short, right now the Sinomlando Centre needs a story-making and team leadership development ethos owned by the employees.

5.3.4 Personified and confined legacy

Entangled with the perception that the Sinomlando organisational story is not owned by the employees, is the thinking that the Centre has always been a small organisation. A lot of events and actions, from governance to project management, have always been centred on the Director. This can be linked to the Director holding all the purse strings and all the Sinomlando tentacles. Unmistakably, the personality of the Director is the appellation of all organisational control; from administration and planning, budgeting processes and planning, project planning and coordination, to partnerships and networking with stakeholders.

Understandably, at the Sinomlando Centre this embodiment of leadership in the person of the Director and not in the team members adjudicates the Organisation as a closed story and not as a collective development. Core-staff at the Sinomlando Centre are not in a position to influence organisational change (Greenberg 2011, p.605-606) as seen fit because leadership is individually executed. According to Parry and Hansen (2007, p.292), if individual “personality and reputation” are the turning point of a leadership process at the Centre, then it is difficult for managers, or the employees for that matter, to re-enact the Sinomlando organisational story, as dictated by the changing signs and conditions in the NGO funding world and in the University. For that reason, and in the interest of the Sinomlando’s organisational capacity, organisational leadership attitude resembles a person rather than a broadened organisational option available to the core-employees (Parry and Hansen 2007, p.292-293).

This Sinomlando leadership option does not give the core staff the responsibility to ‘tap into the powerlines’ (Bourn and Walker 2004). For instance, it is noted that across all the Sinomlando management structures and processes, the Director convenes, draws agendas, chairs and writes minutes, and at the same time reports on finances and fundraising, and human resources matters. Clearly, this leadership preference does not allow the employees to work freely and innovatively towards the fulfilment of the organisational objectives and vision.

It seems acceptable and correct to think that the current management team is not ready for any kind of organisational change and leadership. This is evident in the vagueness of the documentation on succession planning discussions and -foresight. Even though the employees appreciate a sense of fairness in the Leadership and Management, as indicated earlier in this work, the discovery that the senior managers take less leadership responsibility by always delegating group decisions to the Director, can be viewed as a self-seeking approval of authority based on what is valued by, and appeals to an individual person rather than to an organ of a collective organisation. Thus, the Director is the person who actually exercises most influence (Greenberg 2011, p.477) over the Sinomlando management teams. Others are there to wait and to take the directives.

The influential control of the Director over every Sinomlando system is inevitable. If a manager, for example, does not have control over funds but he/she is only there to take directives, they cannot be creative and innovative in their leadership- and management position. The respondents argue that the Director influences who the donor agencies are as well as the funds that are received, which accords him power to say ‘this goes’ or ‘this does not’. As a matter of fact, the Director is renowned for owning the pocket strings of the Sinomlando Centre. For this reason, it can be ascertained that the Sinomlando legacy remains personified and confined to the Director, and all employees’ views, values, and aspirations will have to be aligned to his views, goals, terms, and conditions.

This type of leadership confines the Sinomlando organisational behaviour and attitude. This can also be considered as a ‘storytelling’ leadership on the one hand, and a particular kind of relational leadership, on the other. As explained above in this section, organisational ‘story-making’ can be a building of a system that builds a brand, and storytelling is just building history and making a name for, or as individuals. Now, it can be contended that the reality about a leader who is having absolute control and ownership of the Sinomlando Centre, is that leadership- and management development become subjective and focus on building the history for one individual, rather than on building the Organisation as a competing brand. That is, growth is confined and not broadened, nor opened and poured into the “Sinomlando” as an Organisation.

According to the notion of “leadership from a relational perspective” by Cardona (2000, p.202), visionary leaders should create leadership out of their workers or employees by giving them responsibilities to share in the objectives and vision of the Organisation. The author argues further for the “work-based exchange relationship” (Cardona 2000, p.202), whereby a leader is seen “providing fair extrinsic rewards and appealing to the intrinsic motivation of the collaborators” (Cardona 2000, p.204). Greenberg (2011, p.477- 489) argues for “team leadership” and points out that effective leadership is key to organisational behaviour, and that attitude development narrows down the emphasis and focus on the “followers”, or rather the employees. The Sinomlando Director’s provision of extrinsic rewards to motivate the intrinsic values of the managers and employees, seems to make them see and think of their long-term roles only insofar as ensuring their

submissiveness (Cardona 2000, p.204). This is contradicted by the experts in leadership studies, like Cardona (2000), and Bourn and Walker (2004).

Bourne and Walker (2004, p.226) urge project managers, in addition to the hard technical skills and relationship management skills that each person may have, to acquire the skill of tapping into the power lines in order to manage at third dimension in learning organisations. Even though the Sinomlando Centre is stuck in the storytelling practice, managers and employees surely have the responsibility to navigate and sharpen their leadership roles under such organisational conditions. A manager and/or an employee should reclaim his/her misplaced and discharged power by not fearing to make decisions. Bourne and Walker (2004) demonstrate that project managers need to learn the skills of tapping into the power lines as a way of liberating themselves from the perception, as in the case of the Sinomlando Centre, that the Director is the sole giver while the rest of them are receivers. Thus in simple terms, ‘subordinate’ managers can free themselves from power that is misplaced or displaced so that the Sinomlando organisational decisions can work to each person’s advantage.

5.3.5 The Sinomlando governance

This research contends that leadership and management development at the Sinomlando Centre is designed and functions in a bureaucratic and monopolistic fashion. According to Cardona (2000, p.204cf), leadership development should be centred on a contribution-based exchange rather than on leader-based exchange relationships. At the Centre, leadership capacity is bottle-necked, leader-based, and top-down management styles. As a result of such a *modus operandi*, the Sinomlando managers lack the confidence to manage key strategic processes, partnerships, and stakeholder relations with the University and the foreign funders. For that reason, they may be lacking innovativeness and know-how in administration, planning, organising, financial freedom, and controlling. The Sinomlando managers are, as noted by Bourne and Walker (2004, p.227), incapable of managing the third dimension and have no confidence in “tapping into the powerlines”.

A possible remedy is that the Sinomlando governance model may need to embody an intentional and collective leadership development ethos. As argued by Cardona (2000), visionary leadership is about creating leadership out of the workers or employees by providing spaces for shared responsibilities in the objectives and vision of the Organisation. Thus, if 'team leadership' or the 'leader-member exchange' (Greenberg 2011) model - in relation to the notion of organisational story as loose scripts separate from the leader (Parry and Hansen 2007) - are embodied at the Sinomlando Centre collectively, the managers and other core staff members will actively participate in planned organisational change processes (Greenberg 2011, 605cf) and proudly carry the Sinomlando organisational story. Parry and Hansen (2007, p.292) argue that organisational "stories should be loose scripts suggesting specific behaviors without imposing inflexible rules". That is, if the Sinomlando Centre is striving to be a brand and a leader of choice in community development work in South Africa through its Oral History and Memory Work methodologies, then the employees must create, re-create, and own that organisational story without restrictions.

The fact that the employees appreciate the fairness in the Sinomlando management and leadership is advantageous towards developing a story-making leadership, team leadership, or leader-member exchange. Another added advantage is when the Organisation is imagined as 'a family', 'a team' and a 'group with sense of purpose'. This familial or 'team' metaphor facilitates an image and a story of togetherness. In other words, the Sinomlando management and leadership development can always build on these salient and tacit natural drives for togetherness, unity, shared vision, values, and goals. This also shows that the potential for capacity in leadership and management at the Sinomlando Centre is present but should be leveraged by tapping into the observable individual employees' work ethic, passion, and commitment. In other words, the solution to the Sinomlando's growth in leadership is to decouple leadership from the current leadership dilemma (Parry and Hansen 2007).

This potential of the Sinomlando leadership development is further and better explained by Parry and Hansen's (2007, p.293-295) two-fold conclusion. That is, if the

organisational story is to achieve organisational and leadership development, it should be decoupled from the leader. Firstly, organisational stories can work or impact just as leaders would, and can display leadership function. Secondly, the management in an Organisation should make an effort to build a better story in the same way that they try to build better leaders (Parry and Hansen 2007).

Since the Sinomlando Centre exists within a cultural milieu passionate about measuring talent, ability, and performance, then the leadership potential of the individual employees should be genuinely prioritised. For that reason, Cardona's (2000, p.202cf) notion of the transcendental leadership relationship should be considered for the Sinomlando Centre. It is critical to engage leadership relationships that can recalibrate new direction in both organisational growth and leadership development at the Centre.

In order to stimulate a sense of new leadership and management possibilities, the Centre should consider ensuring that the extrinsic rewards are not self-limiting to the individuals' intrinsic values (Cardona 2000). Thus, individual staff's inherent leadership commitments, effectiveness, and efficiency should not be misdirected by traditionalistic and conservative values and culture. If the Centre is to remain a competent and attractive brand to the foreign funding-NGO world, then the current Director role may need to assume a supportive function rather than a prescriptive one. That is, intentionally the Director may start considering developing, coaching, and mentoring the senior colleagues into the Sinomlando strategic structures, systems, and resources. In return, the senior managers should begin to understand and tap into the existing power, systems, and influences at the Centre. Unless both the Director and managers introduce these strategies, there may not be an organisational development, or, to put it more harshly, there may not be a future for the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa.

Therefore there should be an intentional organisational quest for leadership development, namely that everyone at the bottom of the Sinomlando Centre organogram should be involved in finance, governance, and partnerships. However, the discussion in this

section indicates a culture perceived as ailing under a personalised comfort zone. A conclusion is therefore drawn according to Senge's (2006, p.272) argument, that building capacity in organisations is a difficult exercise. The author argues further:

building learning-oriented cultures is demanding because learning stretches us personally, and it is always easier to stay in our comfort zone (Senge 2006, p.272).

As a matter of fact, building a learning-oriented culture, as may be needed at the Sinomlando Centre, is quite a daunting task. Senge (2006) expands on this point of view by stating the clear motivations that drive people to embark on this difficult work of building learning-oriented culture:

some seek a better model for how to manage and lead change. Some are trying to build an organization's overall capacity for continual adaptation to change. All seem to believe that there is a way of managing and organizing work that is superior in both pragmatic and human terms, that significantly improves performance and creates types of workplaces in which most of us would truly like to work (Senge 2006, p.272).

In other words, at the Sinomlando Centre, managing change and capacity for continual adaptation to changes, and/or improving performance that enables everyone to work innovatively, can be refuted. The Sinomlando organisational leadership model and motivation are never clear for the employees. Therefore, both the Director and the employees should be intent and have the confidence "in the story that has been released into the organization" (Parry and Hansen 2007, p.296) to build leadership and management.

This can be achieved, firstly, when the current Director's personified leadership roles that are merely seen in the self-funded arrangements, diplomacy, and social standing, are separated from the Sinomlando organisational story and leadership dilemma. Secondly, this is achievable when a "practice of team leadership" (Greenberg 2011) is intently in place, and in so doing the senior managers are legitimately supported by the Director to feel more purposeful and confident enough to engage in "tapping into the powerlines", as suggested by Bourne and Walker (2004). Therefore, the Director's role should be supportive rather than prescriptive and directive. The Director should be intently open to

the innovativeness of other positions in building leadership capacity for organisational change and continuity at the Sinomlando Centre.

5.4 Powerful partnerships

This third section evaluates the extent to which power, partnerships, and policies are perceived in relation to growth and leadership development at the Sinomlando Centre. This has been virtually established and discussed in the two sections - **5.2** and **5.3** above - in this Chapter. That is, the Organisation exists in a networked structural situation involving: 1) the funders/donors; 2) the University; and 3) the Director. But again, organisational growth at the Centre is viewed alongside the influences of governance systems and situations.

5.4.1 Power at the Sinomlando Centre

It is clear that the Sinomlando Centre exists by negotiating a relationship with two powerful systems: the University; and the foreign funding-NGO world. Building an Organisation from such a relational environment shows that the dictates of power are apparently unavoidable. **Figure 5.4** below is a representation of the nature, functioning, and influence as comprehended and articulated by the Sinomlando employees:

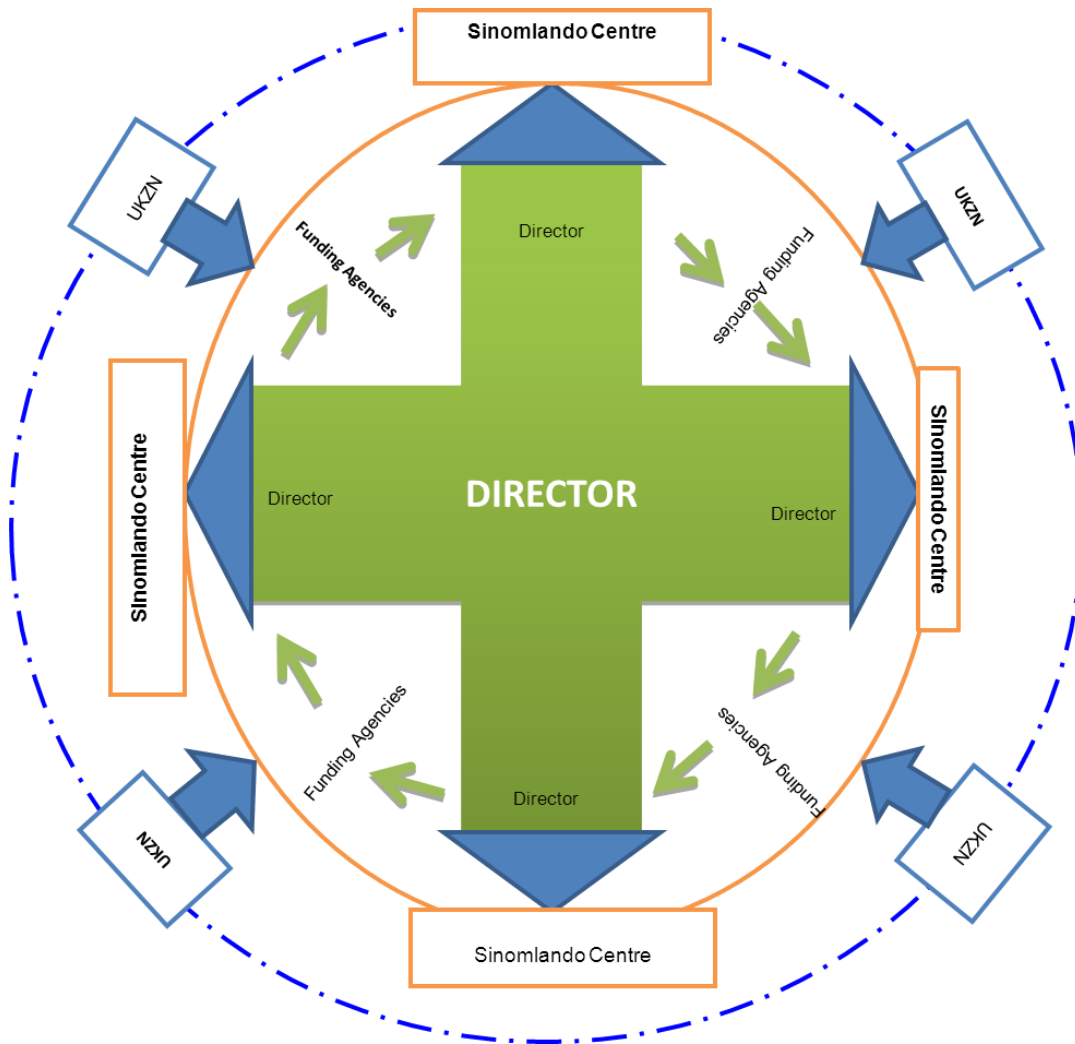


Figure 5.4: Trends of power influences at the Sinomlando Centre.

5.4.1.1 Meeting obligations

The Sinomlando has multiple external and internal power influences. Thus it is perceived, as portrayed in **Figure 5.4**, that the Organisation relies on two systemic and external influences – the University and the funding NGOs and agencies – to keep it afloat. For example, the metaphors ‘the University as the mother’, and ‘the Sinomlando as the baby’ may suggest a relational dependence between the two systems. Thus, a ‘mother’ will always have the power to decide, own, protect, and influence the ‘baby’s’

decision and actions. It is also indicated that unless the Director is involved, these two systems cannot keep the organisation running. The influences are experienced and seen in the form of internal leadership and management styles, and in the personal role in partnership dynamics, as exemplified in the employee perceptions on the funding proposals written up and produced by the Director. Evidently, the perceived roles of the Director may portray that partnerships are managed on a contingent basis.

Moreover, as presented in **Figure 5.4**, the dependence and contingent scenarios develop from the acknowledgement that the Centre extensively relies on the dictates of the University and also of the funders. This dependence scenario is evident in the way that the Sinomlando short-term strategic planning processes are based on the conditional changes in the University administrative and structural systems. The Centre's strategic processes are based on the terms and conditions attached to the funding given by individual funders. The changes in the University administrative and structural systems and changes in conditions positioned by the funders influence the Sinomlando organisational design, positioning, and planning. This surely can be considered as lacking room for a standard partnership policy that is specific to the Sinomlando Centre. Thus, as the Centre exists within these two large systems, the funders find trust and confidence in the credentials and credibility of the Director and in the Sinomlando's 'University label or tag'. That is, the funding world sees and understands their relationship with the Centre as entered into not with the Sinomlando *per se*, but rather with the University where there is a familiar 'face'. It can therefore be contended that power is inherently a thread running through this relational scenario: 1) between the Director as a Professor, and the University; and 2) between the Director for his credentials, and the funding organisations and agencies.

At the Sinomlando Centre, power asymmetries therefore have relational connotations. The scenarios detected resonate with Lister's (2000) argument that power irregularities between NGO agencies cannot be considered as the only constraints, and that instead there is a "wider framework within which those agencies operate, and the mechanisms for establishing those frameworks including the use of discourse" (Lister 2000, p.236). In

quite a specific way, Herman and Dijkzeul (2011, p.6cf) show that humanitarian action and funding NGO agencies, as explored in Chapter 2, can be positioned in four ideological positions: 1. In accordance with the Dunantist position, donors and agencies believe in humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence. 2. The Wilsonian funding organisations believe in the influence of the state's foreign policy. 3. The Solidarist funding organisations and agencies are influenced by a specific political position. 4. Finally, organisations and agencies in Commercial positions are profit oriented and influenced by government agencies.

Such ideological views and positions drive a clear political organisational principle for donor NGOs and agencies. Thus, ideological positions generate frameworks and mechanisms for donor NGOs and agencies to operate from and use in the dialogues that safeguard the aid they give to their overseas counterparts, like the Sinomlando Centre. This is a similar challenge with which the Centre finds itself entangled, as discussed above with the examples of the CERI-USAID/PEPFAR, and CCFD partnerships. The former seem to be driven more by the state's foreign policies, and the latter seems driven by the solidarity position. At the Centre, strategic management processes, administration, project planning, human resources, and finance planning are attuned to the ideological frameworks and mechanisms of each funder or agency. This, for the Sinomlando Centre, is where power complexities reside in the funding partnerships.

In addition to this power complexity in funding-partnerships for the Centre, the University is established to function on frameworks and principles of an institute of higher education. As a result, it cannot be denied that the Centre's existence within the bounds of the University has to comply with such ideological frameworks and principles. This implies that the Sinomlando Centre has to compromise non-profit organisation systems, such as procurement, human resources, finance, and community agendas, by battling with the complexities of the University decision-making processes, administrative bottlenecks, and flow-chart systems. The 'wider frameworks' and 'mechanisms' are a hub of both dependence and contingencies. Power complexities and

asymmetries implanted in these partnership systems forged between bigger organisations and smaller organisations, such as the Sinomlando Centre, cannot be avoided.

It can therefore be concluded that the Centre ensures its survival by meeting both the strategic demands of the academic institution, and the obligations dictated by the funding NGO frameworks. The Sinomlando ought to fulfil some teaching, researching, and learning obligations with the University, as well as fulfilling the funders' confidence by meeting administrative and management mechanisms and technologies, such as targets and obligations (deliverables), reporting and timeframes, and to be financially auditable (budget planning and reliable reporting). Thus the commitment to, and fulfilment of such obligations guarantees the Centre access to both the University's resources and to the donors funding contingencies.

Unfortunately, the Sinomlando Centre as a small body would have to strategically survive the burden of unfavourable power conditions and complexities. Greenberg (2011), in a discussion on organisational relationships, states that if power resides in ideological frameworks and mechanisms, it drives for 'resource dependence' and for 'strategic contingencies' (Greenberg 2011, p.457). This is true for the Sinomlando Centre. Thus through the fulfilment of obligations, the Organisation earns the eligibility to access resources on the one hand, and on the other hand, it tactically aims at organisational eventualities and livelihood. As indicated above in this discussion, for the Centre to survive power complexities and asymmetries in such relationships in a strategic way, it needs to keep to the leadership of one powerful individual who can be equal to the task of meeting any prescribed obligations.

5.4.1.2 Survival strategy mode

Power at the Sinomlando Centre is also visible, tangible, and internal. Again drawing from the discussion in sections above, the Director has absolute control over the Sinomlando governance, structures, and partnerships. It is depicted that every Sinomlando system, from driving the fundraising and relationships with the donor

agencies, to the driving of the organisational agenda within the University structures, is identified and personified with the Director. Thus the Director's influential role in partnerships is found to be an organisational survival strategy for the Centre because it somehow gives the stakeholders some confidence in this leadership. For instance, the mere fact that the Director has a Catholic religious affiliation and also has his roots in Europe, has resulted in the Sinomlando Centre receiving funds from the Catholic agencies that have their headquarters in either France or Germany.

Anderson and Berdhal's (2000) position about the nature and effects of power provides a better perspective regarding the internal dynamics of the Sinomlando Centre. Power between persons gives one: 1) an enhanced tendency to approach and/or a worsened tendency to inhibit; and 2) the ability to provide or withhold valuable resources (Anderson and Berdhal 2000, p.1362). This research established that the personality traits of the current Director inherently influence the donor agencies regarding the Sinomlando Centre and the University. It is this inherent and strategic influence which draws attention to the Sinomlando Director's dominant role in powerful relationships.

Thus, the effectiveness of the Sinomlando Centre in managing the donor partners and the University authorities is understood and associated with the Director's academic credentials, and religious and background affiliation. It is therefore evident that the Director has absolute power over other employees. It is clear, drawing on Anderson and Berdhal's (2000) perspective, that the Director has the enhanced tendency to approach and negotiate with the donor partners and the University authorities. In return, he influences the Sinomlando employees regarding contracts, salaries, and job morale that are decided on the basis of the type of funding and funder, and at the same time, on the dictates of the University's policies. The Director has 'the ability to subjectively provide or withhold valuable resources' (Anderson and Berdhal 2000) to the Sinomlando employees.

This kind of internal power dynamic in organisations can also be related to Greenberg's (2011) argument that power is the "capacity to exert influence over others" (Greenberg

2011, p.445), and that this influence is “to attempt to affect another in a desired fashion” (Greenberg 2011, p.448). The view confirms the employees’ thinking that the Sinomlando Director has the capacity to exert influence over, and to affect others in a desired fashion. That is, the Sinomlando will become extinct without external funding from a very competitive and politically motivated environment, and without depending on the charisma, profile, connections, and capacity of the Director, recognised by the University. Since the Sinomlando employees, in particular the senior managers, do not have the ‘credibility’ and ‘credentials’ of the Director, it becomes apparent that such a situation goes beyond the employees lacking leadership skills. Rather, the situation owes itself to the internal top-down power complexities and asymmetries present in the Organisation; hence the respondents are in agreement that if the founding Director leaves, the whole Sinomlando system could crumble.

It can be concluded, that at the Sinomlando Centre the charisma of the Director is the all-encompassing power in partnerships with the University and with the funding world. Power frameworks can help dissect this charisma. A, ‘the source’, has the ability to influence B, ‘the target’, to change his/her course of planning and action by controlling resources and rewards and having strategic exigencies (Anderson and Berdhal 2000, Lister 2000, Abrahamsen 2004, and Greenberg 2011). In this dissection one finds that power is both external and internal to the Sinomlando Centre. Where power is external, the University and the donors are ‘the source’ and the Centre is ‘the target’. But then where power is internal, the Director is ‘the source’ and the employees are ‘the target’. The effect of the power of the University and of funders over the Sinomlando Centre is that the Organisation does not have an option for existence and survival but compliance. As for the power of the Director over the Sinomlando employees, the effects include organisational survival, strategic advantage, staff-member submissiveness, and routine duties. This means that the Director safeguards the Centre in these partnerships. This reflection on power influences at the Sinomlando Centre poses further questions on the critical organisational capacity around funding partnerships.

5.4.2 Partnership and growth at the Sinomlando

There is an awareness of the consequences if the Sinomlando Centre and its employees remain within the University and/or become independent. It is the same for the relationships with the funders. Evidently and importantly, for the Centre to remain a force and to be relevant, it has to forge and keep partnerships with the two powerful systems of the University and the funders.

These partnerships are perceived as the only way and means that the organisation can forge support and survival. The Centre has, in accordance with Grant and Crutchfield's (2007) argument, managed to build and maintain itself as a strong, relevant, and purposeful system, by investing energy in such a two-headed external relationship. This relates to the finding by Grant and Crutchfield (2007, p.32), that high-impact non-profit organisations work with and through external organisations and individuals in order to create more impact than organisations ever could have achieved alone. This is true for the Sinomlando Centre.

Evidence of the building of relationships for high impact at the Centre is noted in the way that the Organisation has been undergoing diverse and inclusive strategic management restructuring processes. Within these processes, as per Senge's (2006) argument:

building relationships across boundaries between very different types of organizations is becoming a key strategy for influencing larger systems as well ... The imperative to build more diverse and inclusive communities will only grow in an increasingly networked world (Senge 2006, p.310-311),

Thus, two specific organisational benefits from the partnerships with the funders can be established. Firstly, the Centre has had privileges of organisational capacity. Some partnerships have forced the Organisation's diverse, inclusive, competitive and strategic management, especially in financial management (budget planning and analysing), human resources management (organisational and people skills), project management (work plan and conceptualisation of project), administration technologies (reporting targets to donors), and looking at the urgency for the solution in Directorship (succession

planning). Secondly, the individual Sinomlando employees have had opportunities for personal development and growth as leaders. That is, some of the expressed structural changes brought about observable involvement in academic and management responsibilities.

For instance, in the narrative text, the feelings about the strategic management restructuring processes and benefits from the funding partnerships are associated with the CERI-USAID/PEPFAR and CCFD partnership experiences. In other words, there is observable acknowledgement that these powerful partnerships are about empowerment to some extent. The synchronisation of partnership management with strategic management structures and processes, as exemplified by the CERI-USAID/PEPFAR partnership, is seen in the technical tools given to the Centre to manage the grant and itself within that grant. It is made clear that the CERI-USAID/PEPFAR partnership compelled the Sinomlando Centre towards a redesigned hierarchical governance structure, self-management, and some road map towards continuity and sustainability. In the same way, the funding NGO partnerships can still create a much appreciated devolution to the Sinomlando Centre.

Even though such positives are projected, funding partnerships' hierarchical clout on the Sinomlando leadership and management structural functioning still continue. It cannot be avoided that powerful partnerships are culturally bound and agenda specific. This is the reason the perception about employees' involvement in funding partnerships is only insofar as the maintenance of the day-to-day routines, and also that it is left to the Director's discretion to expose and involve people.

For example, aloofness is established among senior employees and managers with regard to individual roles and involvement in funding partnerships and the University. Many express that they do not really see themselves dealing with these systems, nor do they see themselves as having any role to influence these systems. Clearly, in such a sense of passiveness and limitedness, one cannot avoid seeing the Centre as a small Organisation, whose management of partnerships is not linked to the internal team and/or group attitude

that builds relationships, and enables it to become a diverse and inclusive Organisation (Senge 2006).

Perceiving partnerships as culturally bound and agenda specific can be linked to Lister's (2000) findings and arguments:

inter-organizational relationships between NGOs are frequently based on personal relationships ... but not adequately incorporated into the management theory (Lister 2000, p.236).

Therefore, the argument presented is that:

partnerships are strongest if there are multiple linkages that connect the organizations involved. If all relationships are simply managed by organizational leaders, the partnership is vulnerable to changes in individuals and patterns of organizational leadership (Lister 2000, p.236).

The observation about the Sinomlando Centre is that it is culturally 'correct' that all relationships, including with the University, are managed by the Director. This depicts that the partnerships are at risk of changing from this pattern of individual leadership and personal relationships. In other words, it is evident that employees do not envision the Centre's continuity post the current Sinomlando Director because the truth of the matter is that the inter-organisational relationships are not intentionally integrated into the current management capabilities and options.

Another way of looking at the vulnerability of the Sinomlando partnerships scenario is that time and resource constraints are dependent on the individual leadership culture. Lasker, *et al.* (2001, p.180cf) identify the failure of small partners to survive NGO partnerships, and associate it with time and resource constraints. Elmuti and Kathawala (2001, p.208cf) point out that partnerships suffer the clash of cultures, opaque goals and objectives, obscure management coordination, and different operating procedures and attitudes. This representation by different scholars and research findings does not portray the partnership as completely impractical. However the common and broad argument is that there must be consciousness that partnership is a necessary strategy insofar as managing changes between large and smaller systems (NGOs in this regard) and their related environments (Senge 2006). With a similar consciousness, it is found that there

are clashes of cultures and objectives, as well as opaque goals, even though the University and funding partnerships help the Centre to be relevant, adaptable, effective, and efficient. There is also evidence that management integration and design are inadaptable, ineffective, and inefficient, as exhibited by the lack of specific organisational partnership policies, obscure organisational management coordination, and the impact of the different stakeholders' operating procedures and attitudes.

It can be argued that partnerships and growth at the Sinomlando Centre are currently about creating a meaningful strategy for survival and support. This is correctly and relevantly represented in Senge's (2006, p.310-311) argument that building inter-organisational relationships is a key strategy for building living and social systems and organisations to be viable for change. Partnerships are perceived as being empowering and enforcing growth in strategic management processes, and in organisational and people skills. This argument becomes feasible when such relationships are adequately integrated into the management theory (Lister 2000). However, it is not like that at the Sinomlando Centre.

This research contends that the Sinomlando Centre's relationships with the funders and University authorities are based on the Directors' personal relationships, and therefore the management of partnerships is insufficiently integrated into the organisational strategic management capabilities, processes, and options (Greenberg 2011, p.583). Therefore it is perceived that if change happens in the current patterns of the Sinomlando leadership, the organisational funding partnerships are at risk of extinction. This may also mean the extinction of funding opportunities for the Sinomlando Centre and the final nail in the Organisation's coffin. Considering the two-headed relationships discussed above, it can be argued that partnership and growth at the Sinomlando Centre lacks what Senge (2006, p.284) argues as a "strategic architecture [and] learning environment" to maintain "a key strategy for influencing larger systems" (Senge 2006, p.310) for the continuity of the Organisation post the current leadership.

If the Sinomlando Centre has to achieve a tangible and intentional organisational capacity in this partnership situation, then Leadership and Management may need to heed what Senge (2006, p.283-285) calls “think and act strategically”. Firstly, it has to re-look at the organisational partnerships, policies, and procedures. That is, the Centre must have mechanisms and technologies for adaptability and organisational repositioning in case of change in its operating environments. Secondly, there is the need to intentionally re-evaluate the urgency in succession planning and to begin to build a “skilful leadership [that] pays attention to building a healthy learning culture” (Senge 2006, p.284). That is, the Leadership may need to consider risking decentralising current patterns of leadership roles on partnerships and integrating these roles into the strategic management options and processes.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed partnerships influencing growth at the Sinomlando Centre. This discussion drew from the perceptions identified in the interview narratives and observation notes. Thus, the discussion attempted to address the three overall objectives of this research project.

To this end, it has been critically identified that in consideration of the research objective to explore the Sinomlando Centre, organisational life is perceived and described within the environment of two big systems, namely the University, and funding-NGO donors and agencies. Organisational growth at the Sinomlando Centre should be seen as impossible, due to the complexities exhibited by the interplay between these two systems, and the role of the Director. What is consistent with research findings is that the environment is not conducive enough to understand and access the interplay between, and the behaviour patterns of the systems. For an organisation existing in such a challenging systemic environment, the conclusion is that growth is possible through organisational systems- and systems thinking development for the managers and employees. Thus, in order for a manager to be innovative and to have fluency in problem solving and/or integration of the existing Sinomlando organisational structures and

systems, one should have the basis and a clear understanding of the manner in which the University and the donor funding structures and systems function. The contention is that the Sinomlando Centre should be urged to re-think self-organisation, repositioning, and adaptability relevant to this systemic environment in the interest of boosting Leadership and Management.

In the call for awareness, of the mechanism, and the capacitation of Leadership and Management, this research project significantly shows that ownership is key to the design, plan, and functioning of the Sinomlando Centre governance. This project concluded that the Sinomlando Centre organisational governance, structures, culture, and functioning are all understood as indicating that the Organisation is absolutely not owned by the University nor by the employees, but by the Director as a person. With such a tricky status quo, the Centre will only achieve organisational growth and leadership development if organisational vision, policy, and procedure formulation and implementation are owned by the employees as a team and an organisation. Then, a conclusive argument is that leadership development can be feasible in two ways: 1) the Sinomlando organisational story as a process for leadership change should be separated from the personified comfort zone; and 2) if the Centre is an organisation, there is a need to consider a collective leadership strategy. This strategy should reasonably promote a 'leader-member exchange relationship' and tap into the skills, experiences, passion, and commitment of the core-employees. In other words, the Directorship role should function differently in a more supportive way, rather than in the current prescriptive and directive manner.

Finally, the evaluation of powerful partnerships and growth at the Sinomlando Centre indicated that two powerful systems, namely the University and the funding NGOs, are pertinent. As a result, influences on the Centre are inherent in the University, and in the funding NGOs' ideological frameworks, policies, and procedures. The Sinomlando Leadership and Management development processes were found to be designed and structured to comply with these frameworks and ideological positions in which the Director acts as a catalyst. It is argued, therefore, that concrete and planned organisational and leadership capacity is feasible in two ways: 1) the Centre should

consider reformulating and implementing organisational partnership frameworks, policies, and procedures that allow for the decentralisation of power. In that case, the power that is internal to the Centre, as well as ownership and freedom, should be organisational rather than personified, where the managers and the employees are proactively involved in managing partner synergism; and 2) the Centre leadership should consider allowing the integration of the organisational management of partnerships into the strategic management structures and options. The conclusion to this research project is in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER SIX

Recommendations and conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This dissertation studied various scholarships in the following fields: organisational systems and systems thinking; learning organisation; leadership and behaviour in organisations; power and partnerships; as well as research design and methods of data collection and analysis. The observation- and interview data were analysed and categorised into themes. Trends of perceptions were established and presented as findings and as a synthesized narrative. This data analysis and eventually a narrative text generated an objective thesis and a discussion scrutinising further the perceptions on powerful partnerships influencing growth at the Sinomlando Centre. This Chapter looks back at the objective of the study on growth at the Sinomlando Centre, presented and discussed from chapter one to chapter five, and concludes the dissertation. It summarises the implications of this research for the studied Organisation, for scholarship, and for the field studied, and presents recommendations for future studies.

6.2 Summary: implications of this study for the Sinomlando Centre

This section is a quick view of what has been pointed out in this entire study. It also draws attention to the possible effects of this study, in particular: the view that the Sinomlando Centre should rethink self-organisation and repositioning; the critical methods and processes for change management; and widening the opportunity for the capacity for managing partnerships.

6.2.1 Re-thinking self-organisation and repositioning

The question discussed is about the design and functioning of organisational life at the Sinomlando Centre, as it is influenced by the donor NGO partnerships and the University

system. Data collected through participant observation and interviews drew out various perceptions about the way that the Sinomlando Centre depends on foreign funding agencies, and how it exists under the wing of the University and how this influences its organisational design and functioning. Thus, the observed nature of the Sinomlando Centre's organisational life is rooted in the dictates of a complex systemic environment resulting from interrelationships between the funding NGOs, the University systems, and the Sinomlando leadership. Therefore the conclusion from the research is that the Sinomlando Centre organisational systems - like its design, functioning, and strategic management processes - are perceived as being overshadowed by larger systems, namely the donors and the University.

Moreover, the dependence of the Sinomlando Centre on the University, the donor world, and the current Leadership, is dictated by the networks of feedback that generate its organisational life. This means that the Centre Leadership, strategic planning, finance, vision, and coherence, are structured according to both the University as an academic organisation, and to the managerial mechanism that is designed to meet and comply with the managerial technologies and frameworks of the funding NGOs. In such a systemic environment, the Sinomlando Centre is controlled only by the founding Director. As a result, organisational growth at the Sinomlando Centre would mean that an employee and a manager are inescapably controlled and dependent on the influences of the systems produced by both the University and the donor environment. Even though it looks as if the University and the funding NGOs and agencies are contributing to organisational and leadership development at the Sinomlando Centre, this is also conclusively noted as a major limit to the potential organisational growth.

Therefore, the overall top down structure of the Sinomlando Centre is a systems challenge. The organisational structural arrangements, movements and interrelationships discussed in this study show that if the Sinomlando Centre is to continue, it must reposition itself in these systemic environments, and managers should be developed in organisational systems and systems thinking. The boosting of leadership and organisational development can be achieved through a re-thinking of self-organisation,

repositioning, and the appointment of managers who are capable of understanding the systems and the thinking that drives these University and donor NGO systems. For instance, the Centre may firstly think about liberating the Organisation from the burden and the uncertainties of the dual statute and systems, by either becoming independent from, or repositioning itself within the University system. Secondly, the Centre may allow open and free capacity for the senior managers and middle managers to access and interpret for themselves the existing dynamics, interdependence, and interplay between the University, donor agencies, and the current Leadership. This risking of capacity will enable employee ownership of the Centre's organisational life, whereby the team members feel confident about being influential and responsible towards the desired organisational changes and growth.

6.2.2 Re-considering change in management

The assumption discussed was that at the Sinomlando Centre there is a need for awareness and mechanisms for everyone, from the bottom to the top of the organogram, to be involved in leadership and management structures of organisational governance. The perceptions identified from the interviews and observation studies show that the Sinomlando Centre is an Organisation understood as driven by disguised collective development and a bureaucratic leadership ethos. It is clearly understood that only the Director has organisational ownership of the Sinomlando Centre. As a matter of fact, it is concluded that the senior managers are not aware of policies and procedures and do not have financial power and control.

Contradicting views have been identified that effective and efficient Leadership and Management in any Organisation requires a shared and collective development ethos. The Sinomlando employees struggle with a lack of management coordination- and policy inconsistencies, and a lack of intentional succession planning. A lot of information does not filter down properly to all the structures of the Organisation within such a condition because by definition, the interpretation, control, and functioning of the Sinomlando organisational systems depends on the individual personality, connections, and

credentials of the current Director. It is therefore concluded that the employee perception is that there could be less willingness for organisational change in management than would otherwise be the case. In reality, the University and the employees do not have the ownership of the Sinomlando Centre. In other words, if the current Director decides to move on, neither the University nor the employees can claim the Sinomlando Centre.

This means that at the Centre, the top-down governance structure and functioning opposes envisioned organisational capacity. Thus, organisational and leadership growth may be required in order to think progressively and to move away from a delimiting succession foresight. The Director must be intentional in separating the Sinomlando organisational story from individual and personal Leadership. Thus the Sinomlando Leadership may need to re-consider the significance of intentional methods and processes for change in leadership management, in which senior managers can be more assertive, efficient, and feel confident and accountable in financial control, decision making, and policy. This is possible for the Sinomlando Centre, if: 1) organisational story as a process for change is separated from the Leadership as a person; and 2) the Organisation uses broad-based shared-leadership approaches, such as the contribution-based exchange and/or leader-member exchange models.

6.2.3 Widening the opportunities for managing partnerships

In assessing the influence of power on growth and partnerships at the Sinomlando Centre, the section focused on: 1) the funders; and 2) the University. These two structures were vividly pictured as influential to the Sinomlando leadership, management, and systems. The founding leadership was thus depicted as pivotal to both the Centre's link with the University, and to partnerships with the donor agencies. Thus the employee perception is that at the Sinomlando Centre, strategies to manage partnerships are solely driven by one person, the Director. This view is confirmed from a lack of clear and specific organisational partnership policies and procedures. As a result, the influence of power on the Sinomlando partnerships and organisational growth is perceived and spoken about

within these two spheres of influences: 1) the funders and the University; and 2) the current Director.

The funders enforce and determine the managerial structures and conditions that safeguard the grants and donations that they give. Historically, this has made it possible for the Centre to have well-defined and developed organograms and other systems. Alongside the funders, the University ensures that the current Leadership teaches, engages in research projects, and produces publications. Teaching, learning, and researching are understood as prerequisites for the manner in which the Centre thinks of and implements its succession plan. Therefore, the role of power can be seen as two-fold; external, and internal. The Sinomlando Leadership and Management strive to strike a balance or a compromise between this two-fold role of power, by meeting the requirements of the University, and by satisfying the requirements of the different funding agencies.

Nonetheless, at the Sinomlando, the management of power dynamics and synergies that come with being housed at the University and partnering with funding NGOs are centred on the Leadership, more at a personal level than at an organisational level. The senior managers and the middle managers are only involved in keeping routines and are less active in observable dialogues between the Centre and the old and/or new funding partners. A conclusion is made that the Sinomlando Centre does not have the capacity to manage partnerships with other stakeholders because this function is not integrated into leadership and management structures and processes of the Organisation. In this way, post the current Director, the Centre cannot be regarded as ready to be a competent brand and an Organisation that can adapt, reposition, and grow in the face of both a grim funding-NGO world, and academic policy and procedure demands.

At the Sinomlando Centre the senior management team members should not be a makeshift power. In the interest of building organisational and leadership capacity linked to funding partnerships, managing synergism and partnerships requires supportive strategies that build skilful leadership and an effective organisational learning culture. Currently, supportive strategies entail deepening the relationships with the funders and

the University. The Sinomlando leadership may require investing in openness to innovation by balancing and widening the space and opportunities that inculcate both group freedom and a team learning culture. Therefore, the Centre may need to re-evaluate the current system of involving senior managers in strategic areas of partnerships, and then decentralise Leadership power by increasing the learning cycle in which managers can be more confident, functional, and feel responsible for the grants and influence of the University policy activities.

6.3 Researcher's reflection

This research was successful in its main objective of exploring the staff perceptions about funding partnerships, and of the University policy system influencing growth at the Sinomlando Centre. Generally, employees at the Centre are aware of the influences that the donors, the University, and the leadership have on them as individuals and on the Sinomlando as an Organisation. Therefore, the overall lesson is that the employees understand their organisational story at the Sinomlando Centre. The employees understand and describe the partnership and leadership issues that can build the Sinomlando, as well as those that can hinder growth at the Centre. They are able to tell that there is no space for a collective organisational conversation about such issues. It is apparent that the dominance of the human face and -credentials in driving donor partnerships and existing in the University show, on the one hand, the gulf that exists between the staff and the leadership, and on the other hand, the hindrances to the Sinomlando's cultural change and innovativeness. In this regard the research had three sub-objectives.

Moreover, the first sub-objective was to discover the description of the organisational life at the Centre by each staff member. This objective was achieved successfully by hearing the views of each employee about the events shaping the structure and design of the Organisation. The basic lesson therefore is that members of the Centre know and carry with them the organisational life of the Sinomlando Centre. That is, that they know, understand, and live the day-to-day experiences of the Sinomlando organisational events

influential in shaping their work life, both as individuals and as a collective. However, the Centre as an organisation that is founded and rooted in the concept of oral history, is failing its members by not creating spaces conducive for employee conversations that can grow the Sinomlando. People, as staff members and employees, grow the Sinomlando Centre.

The second aim was to examine the employees' understanding of the donors', and of the University's influences on the Sinomlando governance. This goal was also successful because the employees were able to express their perceptions about the ownership, leadership, and management processes at the Centre. From this employee consciousness, it is obvious that organisational leadership and management capacity processes are unintentional. That is, the employees see and feel the Sinomlando governance as "them up there" and "us below" and there is a gulf between the staff and the Leadership. This kind of feeling and understanding obviously points to the Centre functioning in a confused manner and probably casts doubt on future growth.

The third and final goal of this research was to evaluate power influences of both funding partnerships and the University on the Centre. The Sinomlando members have articulated that the influence of the Director is dominant and key to their work life - linked to funding and existence in the University. As a lesson drawn from this situation, in the NGO sector and donor-NGO environment, there is always a human face with some credentials of some standing. That matters the most for the future of the Sinomlando Centre. However the challenge that the Centre has, as indicated in the section above, is that a one-man-show is a hindrance to the Sinomlando's culture, change management, and innovativeness.

6.4 Implications for future study

This research engaged organisational capacity in the context of the South African NGO sector. By engaging the different authors' viewpoints represented in the research findings, the project sought answers from the discourses on organisational systems and

systems thinking, learning organisations, and behaviour in organisations. As an embryonic study, it may not be certain that exact answers for the development of managerial leadership in the wider South African NGO context may have been provided. However, the project was a positive effort. This case of the Sinomlando Centre and its relation with the powerful donors or funding agencies, and the University, is a pacesetter for the broader question about the influences of powerful partnerships in managerial leadership in the South African NGO sector. The study thus successfully reflected on the organisational network fads, as created by multiple and complex power influences, establishing some understanding around the main questions and challenges in organisational and managerial leadership capacity.

This thesis brings forth the academic awareness that in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa, ears must be on the ground to: 1) listen and know what the employees of the local NGO sector feel, think, and understand about the influences of self-linked international funding partnerships and academic institutional systems on managerial leadership; 2) search, identify, and engage with the issue of why local NGOs' leaders, such as at the Sinomlando Centre, thrive and survive and would engage international donors and funding agencies in the managerial leadership processes of their organisations; and finally 3), keep investigating the possibilities of promoting business-like attitudes and strategies to the local NGO managers and leaders.

For NGOs like the Sinomlando Centre, this research may evoke some learning areas regarding the link between building organisational life, learning, and leadership ethos. That is, if funding partnerships are bringing about growth at the Sinomlando Centre in terms of the shared vision and strategic change, it becomes important for the Leadership to try and engage individual employees' passion and commitment as their basis and as members and role players in the Organisation. In other words, partnerships in the Organisation affect employees as individuals and also as a group or a team, and this bring about a learning culture in the organisation. For the future, the Sinomlando Centre should be able to think and reflect about creating spaces and opportunities for collective leadership development and organisational growth. The Organisation has the potential

and can benefit from this study by starting reflective processes of a different nature. Such processes may require considering long term strategic management processes, and collective organisational policy formulation geared towards the desired structural transformation and continuity of the Sinomlando Centre.

To this end, this research which has focused on the Sinomlando Centre highlighted the limits to growth and power influences embedded in partnerships. The discourse tried to build an objective view that the employees perceive growth at the Sinomlando Centre as remaining a systems- and structural problem. Therefore the solution may be to consider self-re-organisation and repositioning, and also that the current Leadership role should begin to function differently to the way that it currently does. Organisational power must be vested in the senior management team members, whereby the executive directives are not prescriptive and an implementation of the status quo, but are more supportive and trusting to the senior managers and the employees.

6.5 Recommendations for further studies

1. The current study looked at powerful partnerships influencing growth at the Sinomlando Centre. As a standard sample, the study population and sample were the Sinomlando Centre employees because they share the same organisational background and almost share similar experiences in the management processes and partnerships. This allowed an understanding of the nature and functioning of the partnerships' influences on capacity at the Sinomlando Centre. An accurately represented sample population would be a wide and varied sample that includes many employees and managers from various local NGOs in the South African context, and/or perhaps from other African countries as well.

2. This study only concentrated on one Organisation, the Sinomlando Centre. A study of more and varied NGOs of similar nature and in similar context to the Sinomlando Centre is likely to give larger trends and results. This kind of a project may

enable a comparative analysis of the influence of powerful partnerships on organisational and leadership development in local NGOs.

3. This study combined research participants. That is, people in leadership, women and men, and race were studied at the same level. A study that separates research participants by demographic profiles and by putting each research participant into their own social bracket is likely to bring about different trends, results, and probably deeper issues about the influences of powerful partnerships on growth at the Sinomlando Centre, or any other local organisation for that matter.

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Appendices

8.1 Appendix I: Letter of Consent from the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work.

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19, September 2010

To whom it may concern

I hereby authorize Mr Clifford Madondo to consult the archives and to interview the staff of the Sinomlando Centre as will be necessary for the writing of a thesis on:

Growth at the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory work in Africa: Power Partnerships and Policies.

With my best regards.

P. Denis

Prof Philippe Denis
Director: Sinomlando Centre

8.2 Appendix II: Informed consent to participate in the research interview

Research topic: Growth at the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory work in Africa: Power Partnerships and Policies.

I would like to appreciate you for agreeing to participate in this research with the above mentioned topic. Please note that before taking part in this research:

- Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any stage of the study for the reasons only known to you alone;
- The research only focuses on your opinion and experiences of leadership and management, and there are no possible discomforts or any possible hazards involved;
- The estimated total time for the interview session is 1 hour and if there is need to re-schedule another interview session you will be asked but still it remains voluntary;
- There are no potential benefits offered for participating in this study;
- During the interview, the interviewer will be recording by writing and audio recording, and once the study is over a copy of the audio tape will be disposed according to the University of KwaZulu-Natal instructions;
- Confidentiality or anonymity to your responses is guaranteed. You are free to allow or disallow the use of your name when quoted in the study;

Researcher's name: Madondo, Mfazo Clifford
Contact details: 073 229 4419/ madondo@ukzn.ac.za
Qualifications: BPhil; BTh; BTh (Hons); and MTh
State degree: MCom
Institutions: Leadership Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal
Name of the Supervisor: Mr S Hardman
Contact details: hardmans@ukzn.ac.za

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE: I allow, or, disallow that my name to be used in the study where I am quoted.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

8.3 Appendix III: Research Observation and Interview Schedule

Researcher's name: Madondo, Mfazo Clifford
Contact details: 073 229 4419/ madondo@ukzn.ac.za
Qualifications: BPhil; BTh; BTh (Hons); and MTh
State degree: MCom
Institutions: Leadership Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal
Name of the Supervisor: Mr S Hardman
Contact details: hardmans@ukzn.ac.za

Date: 17 January 2011

Research Topic: Growth at the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory work in Africa: Power Partnerships and Policies.

1. Organisational Story of the Sinomlando Centre-

- How best can you describe the Sinomlando Centre? What “image/metaphor” can you attach to the organisation?
- What shapes the organisational life of the Sinomlando Centre? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
- What is the Sinomlando Centre's decision-making strategy? Who sets the agenda? In the Sinomlando, who gets involved? Why?
- What are the key mechanisms of the Sinomlando Centre's engagement with its organisational performances?
- What is it that you appreciate at the Sinomlando Centre?
- What is it that you struggle with at the Sinomlando Centre?

2. Management and leadership at the Sinomlando Centre-

- Briefly, explain your position and the role you play at the Sinomlando Centre?
- Describe the management and leadership systems at the Sinomlando Centre?

What kind of management and leadership style does the organisation have?

- How is the flow and processing of information determined in the organisation?
- How has the Sinomlando Centre helped you to create new leadership platforms of your own?
- Describe the management synergies of the funding organisations, and of the University of KwaZulu-Natal in relation to the leadership systems of the Sinomlando Centre.
- In what way do these synergies define your role at the Sinomlando Centre? In what ways do the University policies influence your leadership roles at the Sinomlando Centre?
- How have these synergies defined your leadership role in the organisation?
- How do you promote contribution from your collaborators?
- How do you see your role in terms the processes of organisational change at the Sinomlando Centre?
- What tools do you have in order to influence processes of organisational change at the Sinomlando Centre?

3. Partnership system and growth at the Sinomlando Centre-

- What is your involvement and experience with the funding partnerships at the Sinomlando Centre?
- What are the key policies of the Sinomlando Centre's engagement with funding partners?
- What are the key policies of the funding partners' engagement with the Sinomlando Centre?
- How do the funding partnership systems influence the leadership and management system at the Sinomlando Centre?
- How do funding partnerships systems influence you as a leader and manager at the Sinomlando Centre?
- What is your involvement and experience with the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the Sinomlando Centre?
- What are the key policies of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's engagement with the Sinomlando Centre?
- What are the key policies of the Sinomlando Centre's engagement with the University of KwaZulu-Natal?
- How do the University systems influence the leadership and management of the Sinomlando Centre?
- How do University systems influence you as a leader and manager at the Sinomlando Centre?
- How do you help your fellow staff members to be role players as far as these partnerships and policies are concerned?
- How does your role influence the Sinomlando Centre's relationship with donors and the University?
- How do you see your role in improving the Sinomlando Centre's relations with the funders and the University?

8.4 Appendix IV: Research Interview

Samples of the research interviews can be made available on request.

8.5 Appendix V: Research Observed Meetings

Samples of the participant observation notes can also be made available on request.