How do adolescents perceive and experience poverty and the stigma associated with poverty?

By

Siphumelele Nkosingiphile Nene

Student Number: 201510067

This dissertation is submitted in *partial* fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Science (Counselling Psychology), in the School of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus.

Supervisor: Ms. Vivien O'Neill

Date Submitted: November 2011

Declaration

I, Siphumelele Nkosingiphile Nene declare that

   i)   The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.

   ii)   This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

   iii)   This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

   iv)   This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:

   a)   Their words have been re-rewritten but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;

   b)   Where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.

   v)   Where I have reproduced a publication of which I am an author, co-author or editor, I have indicated in detail which part of the publication was actually written by myself alone and have fully referenced such publications.

   vi)   This dissertation/thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the dissertation and in the Reference sections.

Signed…………….

- Submitted in *partial* fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Science(Counselling Psychology) in the School of Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg
-

As the candidate's Supervisor I have approved this dissertation/thesis for submission
Vivien O'Neill

Signed……………

Acknowledgements

God is my everything. I am thankful to him for his many blessings and faithfulness. His grace, love and mercy always bring me through.

I would like to thank the following people who assisted in the writing and completion of this paper:

- My supervisor, Ms. Vivien O'Neill, whose patience, calm demeanor and endless encouragement helped me immensely in completing this dissertation.

- Professor Nhlanhla Mkhize and Mr. Molelekoa Kometsi for being my pillars of strength and mentors. I will always be grateful for your professional guidance and support.

- Dr. Beverley Killian (my first supervisor) for laying the foundation for this paper by introducing me to the study of poverty, assisting me during the proposal writing stages and helping me get ethical clearance for this study.

- My parents, Miss Sibongile Angeline Ngidi and Mr. Zithulele Selby Nene, for their unconditional love, support, encouragement, wisdom and all the sacrifices they have made for me.

- Dr. Anna Soares, for her continuous support, motivation and unwavering belief in me.

- Philisiwe Khumalo, for getting us the school in Escourt where the data for this research was collected. I would also like to thank the school for allowing me to collect data there and the learners for their enthusiastic participation.

- Ms. Megan Abigail White, Thesis Editor for her good work and professionalism.

Table of Contents   Page

List of Tables   **Page**

vii

Acronyms

HIV/AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
NRF	National Research Foundation
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
GHS	General Household Survey
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
SSA	Statistics South Africa
CSG	Child Support Grant
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
UYF	Umsobomvu Youth Fund
IMF	International Monetary Fund
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programs
UN	United Nations

Abstract

The objectives of this study were to explore adolescents' perceptions and experiences of poverty and its associated stigma when at school and within their communities. The study attempted to do this by uncovering the effects of poverty on adolescents' lives; exploring their understanding of the meaning of being poor; exploring how the poverty-related stigma impacted their self-esteem, identity and experiences of the world; and investigated the elements of stigma that maintain the social distance between adolescents from poverty-stricken households and their peers. The study employed a qualitative research design. It used a focus group approach in conjunction with participatory research techniques such as ranking exercises.

The issues that the participants raised revolved around a lack of access to money and how this in turn resulted in a lack of access to many other things, which led to a low quality of life for poor children and youths. The definitions they gave of the concept of poverty made reference to a lack of access to things such as houses, food and money. Other indicators of poverty that were mentioned related to the physical and psychological manifestations of the problem. The causes of poverty identified by the participants could broadly be grouped into two groups, namely financial aspects, and personal and family aspects. The issues the participants raised relating to poverty indicated that many of the problems faced by communities, families and children affected by the AIDS pandemic are linked to poverty. Conclusions from the study demonstrated that poverty is multidimensional in nature and therefore affects children and their families in a multitude of ways. The results also showed that the issues mentioned by the participants were not just products of poverty but problems in their own right.

Chapter One: Introduction

Children affected by HIV/AIDS are likely to be adversely affected by poverty and social exclusion (Giese, Meintjes & Monson, 2005; Naicker, 2006). In 2006, approximately 3.5 million children in South Africa were orphaned. ,Orphanhood' has been defined as a child under the age of eighteen years who has lost either a father or a mother or both biological parents (Leatt, 2006a). HIV/AIDS has been cited as the main reason for half the country's orphans (Avert, n.d). This number is expected to remain high until 2030.

In developing countries (particularly those in Africa), AIDS has become the leading cause of death (Winkler, 2003). The progressive nature of the disease exposes children to poverty, deprivation and emotional trauma, all of which have been shown to affect their overall well-being (Andiman, 1995). In the South African context, vulnerable children are defined as those children who are "orphaned, neglected, destitute or abandoned; have a terminally ill parent or guardian; are born of teenage or single mothers; are living with a parent who lacks income generating opportunities; are abused and/or disabled " (Richter, Manegold & Pather, 2004, p. 4).

A major contributing factor to the social havoc being wrought by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and by the country's widespread poverty is the social discrimination that they create, since HIV/AIDS and poverty are individually and collectively associated with major stigma. It is in circumstances like these that the interrelatedness of HIV/AIDS and poverty is most clearly demonstrated.

HIV/AIDS is much more difficult to manage in the context of poverty because of the limited resources and viable options available to the poor. The most vulnerable in society – namely women and orphans – are the most likely to experience poverty as well as to encounter discrimination. When a community is poor, it is easy for its members to validate or ,make sense' of their discriminatory actions (Bond, 2003). For instance, a poor family may decide that it is a better option to buy household goods instead of medication for a chronically ill HIV-positive family member.

Much of the research into poverty and HIV/AIDS, as conducted by the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa (HSRC), has focused on those provinces within the country where there are particularly high levels of poverty (The Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005). These provinces include KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, the Free State and the Eastern Cape. The focus has largely been on rural communities; such a decision has been driven by the need to improve the welfare of the children in these communities, to explore all the other poverty-related issues that maintain the cycle of poverty, and to find ways to break these cycles (The Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005).

In Southern Africa, where the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is increasing at an alarming rate, most of the interventions should be targeted at rural communities, since poverty has been shown to be most concentrated in such areas (Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher & Koch-Schulte, 2000). In poor rural communities, poverty is passed down from generation to generation, which means that such contexts tend to reproduce patterns of poverty and thus maintain the stigma associated with poverty.

Public and social policies are driven by the need for social development. Social development has been defined as the enhancement of the quality of people's lives (Tyler, 1998). The goal of social development is to ensure that every member of the population has access to the resources that will enable him or her to maintain an acceptable quality of life (Tyler, 1998). Government policies are primarily concerned with developing government's as well as individuals' capacity to be able to provide themselves with the basics necessary for survival, health and being able to work (Townsend, 1970). These basic necessities include food, clothing, employment, and access to health-care and shelter. Poverty undermines people's access to such constitutional rights (Richter *et al.*, 2004).

According to the statistics produced by UNAIDS in 2006 (Aginam, 2006), most of sub-Saharan Africa does not have access to HIV/AIDS prevention or treatment. Despite on-going efforts at prevention, treatment, and research, HIV/AIDS is still spreading. The fight against HIV/AIDS is in a state of crisis. Even though the number of people living with HIV/AIDS has been rising in every region of the world, sub-Saharan Africa remains the worst affected region (Aginam, 2006). The data shows that, in at least five Southern African countries

(namely, South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland), more than 30% of pregnant women are HIV- positive.

According to statistics produced in 2006, southern Africa was hard hit with a lowered life expectancy. Life expectancy in Botswana, the Central African Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe had dropped to as low as forty years (Aginam, 2006). In 2009 the estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa was 5.6 million (Avert, n.d). Since many African countries do not have reliable disease mortality and morbidity data or reliable records pertaining to clinical cases, hospital admissions and even causes of death, these statistics may not be fully accurate (Aginam, 2006).

As suggested above, there are many complicated relationships between poverty, HIV/AIDS and stigma. As adolescents are at a developmental stage in which identity is being formed, poverty and its related stigma may be particularly destructive. This study thus explored adolescents' perceptions and experiences of poverty and its associated stigma at school and within their communities.

Chapter Two discusses some of the prominent theories in poverty literature, their limitations and contributions, and poverty research in South Africa. Chapter Three, the methodology section, discusses the design used for the study, how the sample was selected, processes that were involved in obtaining entrance into the research site, getting consent from the parents and legal guardians of the children as well as assent from the participants themselves. Chapter Four discusses the findings describing themes that emerged from the data across different variables such as age, gender and socio-economic status. It also discusses how the results relate to literature on poverty, how they differ or are similar to previous research and if anything new is contributed by the study. The final chapter, Chapter Five, concludes the study and discusses limitations of the study/ problems encountered in the study and makes recommendations relating to the alleviation of poverty in society especially poverty of children and the youth.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1   Defining poverty

The literature makes a distinction between four types of poverty, namely absolute, relative, subjective and overall (Richter, 1994). These will be discussed in this section.

2.1.1   Absolute poverty

Absolute poverty is defined as the purely economic dimension of poverty. It focuses on one's lack of access to material resources (Leatt, 2006a; Townsend, 1970). Some texts refer to it as the subsistence definition of poverty. In South Africa, the General Household Survey (GHS) calculates a household's income and how much it will cost that household to buy everything needed to take care of the children in the family. The number of poor children is then derived by calculating how many children fail to have access to the calculated amount of money required for their support (Leatt, 2006b). This type of poverty has reduced in developed countries but continues to be a problem in Africa and other developing countries (Gough, Eisenschitz & McCulloch, 2006).

2.1.2   Relative poverty

The relative definition of poverty focuses on the economic as well as the social dimension of poverty. Even though a household of relative poverty can afford the necessities, there are some things that they do not enjoy in comparison to the living standards of other people in society (Leon-Guerrero, 2005). There are problems with some of the relative income measures in South Africa as they consider households to be poor when they are located within the bottom 20% to 40% of income distribution (Leatt, 2006a). This is problematic because there are many people who may not be located at these levels but who are yet extremely poor and who struggle to survive and have no basic food security.

The relative definition of poverty highlights the implications of inequality in society (Leon-Guerrero, 2005). Inequality refers to relative differences between incomes among different groups of people. Such a concept requires an understanding of the differences between the rich and the poor. The concept of inequality also highlights the issue of socio-economic stratification within society (Townsend, 1970). The implication of this concept is that in order to understand poverty, researchers cannot study the poor alone. They have to study society as

a whole because people's relative levels of poverty are better understood by also studying the rich. Relative poverty can also be seen as relative to the demands society makes on the individual (Gough *et al.*, 2006). With a Gini coefficient of 0.72 since 2005, South Africa has one of the biggest gaps worldwide between its rich and its poor (Shah, 2010).

2.1.3 Subjective poverty

The subjective approach to poverty refers to the emotions and experiences that arise because one is poor, which are placed in comparison to the emotions and experiences of the ‚socio-economically' privileged (Montgomery, Burr & Woodhead, 2003). Richter (1994) states that poor people often feel a sense of being socially denigrated for being poor and, in addition, experience feelings of insecurity as a result of not having access to money which could enable them to adequately provide for themselves and their children.

2.1.4 Overall poverty

The concept of overall poverty (Gough *et al.*, 2006) renders those of absolute and relative poverty obsolete. This view of poverty recognizes that different social groups lead different social lives, their work patterns are different, and the way their households are formed is different as well (Gough *et al.*, 2006). Thus, for example, in most western households, the number of people living in one household is relatively small. African households tend to be much larger in size. The poverty threshold is thus different across these households because people expect different minimum resources to lead a particular kind of life.

2.2   Measuring poverty

In per capita terms, South Africa is an upper-to-middle-income country but despite this, most South African households live in poverty or with the continuing threat of becoming poor (Olivier and Jansen van Rensburg, 2006). As argued in the previous section, the distribution of income and wealth is among the most unequal in the world, with unsatisfactory and unequal access to education, healthcare, electricity, clean water and opportunities for autonomy (Olivier and Jansen Van Rensburg, 2006).

In a country like South Africa, where there are high levels of casual and part-time employment, it becomes difficult to accurately measure people's income (and thus their level of poverty). There is always the possibility that during the data collection process a person may be employed and earning enough money for the family to survive. However, it may be that immediately after the data has been collected that person loses his or her job – does one consider that person well off because they earn money most of the time during the year or poor because they do not have job security and the family goes through periods of having nothing at all?

In addition, casual employment usually pays less, and this process often devalues and disempowers workers. In conditions of high unemployment, and especially in jobs that do not require formal schooling and training and/or are on a part-time basis, employers can reduce pay and intensify work (Gough *et al.*, 2006). In such work situations companies can replace employees easily because they are not really dependent upon the skills or the experience of the worker. An example of such a job would be working as a cashier at a big supermarket chain. If one cashier resigns, the company will not have difficulty finding and, in some cases, even training, a new cashier because it does not cost them much and cashier skills are not in as high demand as engineering, for instance. As a result of this perceived lack of value to the company, employers can afford to pay employees less for more work hours as they have less to lose compared to the employee. In these circumstances, workers earn less money and have lower job security yet have to work longer hours (Gough *et al.*, 2006).

Social insurance, notably unemployment insurance (known as the Unemployment Insurance Fund or UIF in South Africa), does not cover those outside of formal employment, and those outside of formal employment are the large majority of employed South Africans. While about 6.8 million people benefit from the grant system, the level of income support is low, since that money has to provide, on average, for at least five additional household members (Olivier and Jansen Van Rensburg, 2006). Forty-five percent (45%) of South Africans live in abject poverty. These individuals are mostly black and/or female and/or children and/or living in rural areas.

The information available to society about levels of poverty in different societies is usually based on household surveys that measure living standards. One of the main problems with this way of collecting information is that regardless of the criteria used, living standards tend to be always either understated or overstated. This is usually observed in information collected from the poorest and the richest portions of society rather than from the average-income people who can be regarded as having enough of what a household needs (Rein, 1970). Another important issue is that the criteria used to measure living standards tend to produce differing results. The financial resources available to families change and vary at different times. The problem then becomes differentiating between those families that are temporarily poor and those that are only temporarily not poor. In addition, using income and expenditure as measures of poverty is problematic in that it is unclear what should be surveyed: current or regular income (Rein, 1970).

2.3   Understanding poverty

Much of the literature on poverty has focused on defining poverty, measuring it, understanding the economics and politics that are involved in it, designing strategies to alleviate it, and making it one of the top priorities in the policy agenda of every country. It is only in recent years that „hearing the voices of the poor' has been seen to be one of the most important (if not the only) way to understand how poor people experience poverty (Smith Institute, 2004).

This change in focus has been driven by the realization that prior efforts to solve this problem have for years relied heavily on the work of academics, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and special interest groups. However, this process has often left out the key spokespersons, in other words, the poor themselves. By hearing the voices of the poor, researchers are able to go beyond their debates and agendas and are able instead to focus on poverty in a way that is lived and understood by poor people (Smith Institute, 2004).

Over the years different theories on poverty have emerged and been developed. Some of the premises of these theories will be challenged in the section on the politics of poverty. According to Bradshaw (2007), the following four theories have proved the most prominent:

(1)   The individual or family lives in poverty because of their irresponsible behavior.

(2)   There are „sub-cultures' of poverty and these sub-cultures absorb vulnerable children into their belief systems.

(3)   Poverty is not an individual problem but rather it is a socio-political problem that can only be addressed when the inequalities in society are dealt with at a level above the individual, family and community.

(4)   Poverty is caused by geographic disparities (for instance, the likelihood of successful businesses taking their business to rural areas and townships is low because of the social problems that prevail in such areas).

According to Richter (1994), the loss of family members, particularly breadwinners, results in children who may well suffer from hunger, lose their educational opportunities, and be forced to migrate to live with extended family members in other areas or become homeless. When a family member dies, families experience changes in family structure, composition and roles. The grandparents may be forced to once again take on the role of parent. The family may experience the inability to provide adequate parental care for the children. The family's financial resources for healthcare and education often become strained and, in some households, the older children may be faced with the responsibility of raising their younger siblings. Communities that face increased poverty end up being unable to maintain the infrastructure within the community. In such communities, individuals will often end up showing psychological stress, will suffer from breakdowns, and there will be elevated mortality and morbidity (Richter, 1994).

The literature on poverty no longer uses just the word „poverty' to describe this social ill, but instead makes reference to many other terms with regard to the negative outcomes resulting from the issue. These include terms such as „social exclusion', 'inequality' and „labeling'. The use of the term „social exclusion', for instance, is due to the fact that such a term makes the problem of poverty more complex by not just discussing a lack of money but also the qualitative social problems that arise from not having money (Smith Institute, 2004), for example, ill-health, drug use, educational failure and the committing of crimes. However, people from different social groups experience these problems differently. This demonstrates

that a redistribution of income to the poor is not and cannot be the only solution to the poverty crisis in South Africa (Gough *et al*., 2006).

With all these differing views it becomes unclear how poverty should in fact be understood. Should it be viewed in terms of a lack of money, the social problems it creates or the restrictions in opportunities that it creates for poor people? From an absolute poverty viewpoint, the government is able to recognize the basic necessities of children but the problem is then to correctly or adequately define minimum provisions (Townsend, 1970). Answering these questions would mean that clear standards can be used to measure the differences between the rich and the poor.

The importance of each approach to defining poverty is unquestionable, as each approach offers something different and important to the literature on poverty and also illustrates the complexity of the issue of poverty. The problem, however, lies in deciding which one is fully explanatory and most appropriate for informing policy. The different conceptualizations and measurements of poverty clearly demonstrate that poverty is multidimensional in nature and therefore a good understanding of the concept requires an understanding of the different conflicting theoretical frameworks that inform them (Chisholm, 2004).

2.4   Policy and interventions

Research conducted in South Africa between 1995 and 2000 (Hoogeveen & Ozler, 2006) indicated that, following the post-apartheid elections of 1994 and a few years into democracy, the majority of the country's poor were black and poverty was not a major issue within the country's white community. There were noted inequalities between the different racial groups in every sphere of life. These inequalities were seen in terms of access to proper healthcare, housing and education. The policies of apartheid South Africa favored the white community more than any other race group, which is why most of the interventions following the first democratic elections were targeted at the black community. These interventions, which have developed continuously over the years, were also put in place to deal with certain new challenges that followed the 1994 elections; one of these new challenges was the problem of a high crime rate nationwide that has led to increased emigration (Hoogeveen & Ozler, 2006).

2.5   Childhood and adolescence

Humans are social beings by nature and as such have an innate desire to know and form relationships with other people. According to Lang and Fingerman (2004), children grow up surrounded by what these authors term „social ties'. These social ties serve many important functions for human beings. Children learn new things through these human relationships: they develop personalities, they change, and they grow into adolescents who begin the process of making their own decisions. These social ties are an important aspect of normal development; however, they vary across contexts and this is why it is important to study them in different contexts, in this case in the context of poverty (Lang & Fingerman, 2004).

A person's development throughout his or her lifespan entails forming and keeping different types of relationships. These relationships serve different purposes as the person grows and, although most of them are positive in nature, there are those that have the potential to hinder a child's development (Antonucci, Langfahl & Akiyama, 2004). Having relationships with other people is very important for adolescents because these relationships provide the person with support and stability. One of the weaknesses of human relationships is that they are often influenced by social factors such as wealth, status and education. For the growing child who lacks most of these things, growing up may not necessarily be a pleasant process.

Blieszner and Roberts (2004) describe friendships, which are an important part of adolescent life, as being different to family relations in a child's life because they are voluntary relationships. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1950, as cited in Blieszner & Roberts, 2004) focuses on the challenges that people face in developing and maintaining relationships. According to Erikson's theory, every stage in a person's life has some growth-related task that the person has to master in order to be able to master the challenges that will come in the future. For the stage of adolescence, the basic task is developing a sense of identity. Adolescents are also acutely aware of how they appear to others such that if they are unable to fit in to their peer groups, they risk experiencing a deep sense of rejection and the development of a negative self-image.

Thus it is important that researchers are aware of the possible impact of negative feelings and experiences that result from being poor, seeing that childhood and adolescence are periods in one's life that can be beset with feelings of inferiority versus feelings of confidence. Such

feelings and experiences during childhood and adolescence might complicate these phases of development hence the need for the present study, which investigates the social distance between adolescents from poor homes and those who are not poor.

2.6 Childhood poverty

Childhood poverty has been defined as poverty experienced by children and young people (Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre, n.d). The focus of studies on childhood poverty is to investigate the negative impact that growing up without access to resources has on children and their development. An important point that researchers of childhood poverty make is that the study of childhood poverty as a field of research on its own does not in any way undermine the importance of studying the poverty of other groups, for example, black women. It only highlights the importance of understanding poverty at different life stages (Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre, n.d).

Children in South Africa are afforded many rights by the constitution, but HIV/AIDS and poverty undermine these rights (Richter *et al.*, 2004). Much of the current research on poverty explores the impact of poverty on children, especially those children made vulnerable due to circumstances other than poverty alone. Focusing on movements in and out of poverty is important in terms of showing how many children are poor and the reasons why they are so. The declining incidence of childhood poverty in a country may indicate either of the following: that the number of children rising out of poverty is increasing or that the number of children entering into a state of poverty is decreasing (Bradbury, Jenkins & Micklewright, 2001). It is difficult to monitor these changes in South Africa, as most South African children are persistently poor (Leatt, 2006a). Children appear to go from one level of poverty to another at different times during the year and very few manage to move out of poverty altogether.

Understanding the dynamics of child poverty in a country allows researchers to know the incidence of poverty in children as well as its trends. According to Shah (2010), there are 2.2 billion children in the world and half of those children live in poverty. Bradbury *et al.* (2001) have argued that the number of persistently poor children is rarely presented as a national statistic in either developing or developed countries. This is problematic because having such a large body of literature on childhood poverty is useless when there is insufficient matching

statistical information. In order to fully understand the causes of childhood poverty, researchers first need to understand the causes of poverty among their parents (Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre, n.d).

According to Leatt (2006b), the General Household Survey (GHS), which is conducted annually by Statistics South Africa (SSA), shows that the number of child-headed households is on the rise. Childhood poverty in South Africa is attributed to high unemployment rates, HIV/AIDS, and the apartheid legacy that the current government inherited in 1994. In terms of HIV/AIDS, if parents die and leave their children as orphans, this exposes them to (or exacerbates) poverty. Even the process of moving from being HIV - positive to having full-blown AIDS drains the financial resources of a household.

Even though there are many studies that document the effects of poverty on children in terms of outcomes such as their future economic attainment, these studies do not say much about the processes by which poverty influences these outcomes. Furthermore, little is known about how individual children react to these difficult conditions and the implications of such findings (Corcoran, 2001).

Another key factor that the concept of childhood poverty highlights is the importance of the childhood phase in the human lifecycle. Some scholars argue that the concept creates misconceptions about children as it assumes that they are a homogenous group, when there is evidence that children are unique and diverse. In addition, children's needs differ at different ages and their needs also differ according to gender (Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre, n.d). For example, girl children are often discriminated against in terms of access to education and healthcare, especially when resources in the family are limited (Kohen, 2000).

However, the notion of childhood poverty acknowledges the fact that the kind of poverty experienced by children is different to the kind of poverty experienced by adults. Childhood poverty matters because children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and they have specific developmental needs that differ from those of adults. However, as suggested above, even within the same household, children may not have equal access to a family's resources. In some societies, girls and foster or adopted children may suffer from discrimination. The South African government has realized that its policies with regard to adult poverty are not

always good for children and that their needs differ depending on gender (Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre, n.d).

Despite the above, young people's experiences of poverty do tend to be similar to those of their families, communities and countrymen as children belong to families with adults and live in communities with adults (Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre, n.d).

A number of factors can cause childhood poverty. Possible factors are: a country's economic trends, war, poor and corrupt governance, and epidemics. Such things can be both causes and outcomes of poverty. The South African Government has attempted to alleviate childhood poverty in South Africa by introducing social assistance programs such as the Child Support Grant (CSG) and school feeding schemes (Leatt, 2006b).

Such programs do not fully alleviate the problem, however, as the amount of money that has been granted has not been enough and also there are many other problems that people experience when trying to apply for a Child Support Grant (Meintjes, Budlender, Giese & Johnson, 2005). For instance, some people do not have the documents (i.e. identity documents and birth certificates) that are required to make them eligible to receive such social grants or they do not have the transport money necessary to enable them to go and apply for the social grant (Leatt, 2006b). In some communities, the walking distance to the nearest social development office is too far. Some parents or guardians have to organize childcare for when they want to try to access the system, and childcare costs them money that they may not have or struggle to afford. There are also problems of eligibility in terms of accessing the grant, such as the child being over the legal qualifying age for a child grant (Leatt, 2006b).

2.7   Poverty-related stigma in an HIV/AIDS context

2.7.1 Stigma and discrimination

Powell (2002, p. 2) defines stigma as a "socially constructed, negatively valued differentness" that is created through categorization. This categorization affects the social acceptance and respect (or lack thereof) that is given to people who are different to the individual making the categorization. The stigmatized individual or group "may be openly, covertly or unconsciously avoided" (Powell, 2002, p. 2). Stigmatization is a contextual

construction that represents the norms, values and belief systems of people. Discrimination results when the constructs of one group are different to those of another group and when one group considers themselves superior to another group based on constructs such as class, race and gender (Powell, 2002).

Researchers regard the devaluation and dehumanization of people as the central features of stigmatization (Dovidlo, Major & Crocker, 2000). The stigmatized person's social identity is affected. As a social construct stigma has two components to it: recognizing the differences between self and others, and devaluing the other person. Stigma also relates to prejudice in that people who are stigmatized are often victims of prejudice and discrimination. According to Dovidlo *et al.* (2000), the presence of stigma in the world suggests that it has some functional value for those who do the stigmatizing.

While some traditional psychological approaches to stigma may imply that it is partly or fully a problem of individual ignorance, current approaches have suggested that stigma is in fact a complex social process that is linked to competition for power in society and is tied into existing social mechanisms of exclusion and dominance (Deacon, Stephney & Prosalendis, 2005). Stigma and its effects can be explained in the following ways: functionalist (where stigma is described in terms of discrimination) and individualist (where stigma is an issue of individual ignorance) (Deacon *et al.*, 2005).

It is important to differentiate between what people say about poverty and what they say about those living in poor circumstances. If people understand stigma as a problem of fear and blame rather than ignorance, this can help them understand stigma without resorting to individualism or functionalism.

2.7.2 Stigma and poverty
The perception of threat appears to be at the foundation of stigma. This is the blaming model of stigma (Deacon *et al.*, 2005). According to Weiner (1995), when people are stigmatized it is often because the stigmatizer attributes a certain level of blame and responsibility to that person regarding the issue that is the cause for the discrimination. The person who is being stigmatized is blamed for his or her situation. There is anger behind the stigmatizing action.

In the case of poverty, people are often deemed to be in control of their economic well-being and thus responsible for their poverty if they are poor (Weiner, 1995).

This shows that in the process of stigmatization, opinions are not necessarily based on researched facts but rather on the person's thoughts about how a poor person has control over his or her destiny. Such thinking often leads to poor people being called lazy and disorganized when, for instance, a country's government could raise tax to pay for poor children's primary education. The literature notes that in the western world, Africa is blamed for its current state, even though many of its woes are the result of the past colonization of the continent by western powers. In some parts of the west there is even the view that if people would only work hard enough there would not be any poor people left on the planet; this is obviously untrue, as the sub-section on the controversial politics of poverty will argue. Poverty as a source of discrimination represents the relative and subjective dimensions of poverty. The school context emphasizes the impact of the visibility of poverty: some children must make use of the school's feeding scheme, some do not have the required school materials and some do not even have a uniform or shoes. The resulting discrimination further victimizes children who are already struggling and this discrimination is also a common feature among adolescents where those who do not „fit in' are rejected (Richter, 1994). Poverty is more than its economics: it is a social issue that impacts on relations between people and shapes how they perceive, treat, and respond to one another and themselves.

Researchers agree that South Africa is becoming increasingly economically polarized, with most of the government initiatives that were intended to uplift the poor failing. Initiatives such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) have been shown to enrich a small percentage of the black population, a percentage that already belongs in the elite class of black South African society. Interventions directed at the youth, such as the Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF), often do not reach the targeted youth (i.e., poor, disadvantaged, township and rural youths) (Meth, 2008).

The literature is clear with regard to the argument that poverty is one of the important factors in understanding social exclusion (Narayan *et al*., 2000). There is a systematic deprivation in important spheres of a person's life, such as the socio-economic and the cultural (Narayan *et al*., 2000). People may be born into an excluded group or become excluded due to a change

of circumstances and chronic processes such as poverty, unemployment and infection with HIV/AIDS. Social exclusion may be informal, deliberate, unintentional, hidden or visible.

According to Everett *et al*. (2007, as cited in Meth, 2008), poor people have waited so long for poverty policies that will bring about changes in their lives that their frustration at having to constantly wait for change has resulted in social disorder, as can be seen through the events of recent times. An example of this process are the xenophobic attacks that were experienced in the country in 2008 (Meth, 2008). Stigmatization is, in the context of poverty, often „allowed' to unfold. This usually happens through the process of „othering', where the role of stigma is to separate „them' from „us'. Poverty as a cause of stigma revolves around people's experiences of being excluded and disadvantaged. These feelings are then internalized into self-hatred and feelings of shame and isolation (Bond, 2003).

2.7.3 Stigma, poverty and HIV/AIDS

In poor communities, HIV-positive people are considered a burden when they become sick because they are unable to contribute financially to the household. This leads to family members developing negative attitudes towards the sick person and sometimes blaming the person for their condition (Bond, 2003).

In most societies people tend to hide their HIV status as a result of the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS (Draimin, Hudis, Segura & Shire, 1999). Parents usually do this to protect their children from discrimination. Research conducted into AIDS, stigma, social support and coping has revealed that when families lose a member to HIV/AIDS, those people who are supposed to be their source of emotional support are often the ones who turn away from them (Draimin *et al*, 1999). Family members may separate themselves from the family and the stigmatized family often loses community support, which results in a loss of access to important resources such as neighbors, schools and churches. This AIDS-related stigma therefore results in social exclusion (Draimin *et al*., 1999).

Discrimination against HIV-positive people is thus still a major problem. Stigma has a unique impact on the physical and psychological well-being of HIV-positive people. People who are stigmatized are usually considered to be deviant or shameful, for whatever reason, and can be rejected or shunned. Stigma marks the boundaries a society creates between „normal' and

‚abnormal'. De Bruyn (1998) defines ‚felt stigma' as shame associated with poverty and the fear of being discriminated against because of being poor. ‚Enacted stigma' is defined as the actual discriminatory experience.

Most HIV/AIDS stigma research has been conducted within the United States of America. Due to the high incidence and prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Africa, more focus is now being placed on HIV/AIDS stigma in Africa. Traditional approaches to stigma maintain that if people are educated on the matter, then the related silence will be broken and people will act in a less ignorant manner.

2.7.4 Stigma and identity

With regard to labeling and stigmatization, McCarthy and Dimitriadis (2001) regard the process that is involved in creating an identity as being relational, because it is dependent upon the outside world. The search to understand oneself within the context of the world may lead to negative connotations about some of the things that go on in the world. The world may then be seen as a cruel place and one's identity may be constructed as positive. By highlighting this fact, McCarthy and Dimitriadis (2001) demonstrate how labeling is an unavoidable process and one that involves order and separating in order to make sense of the world. Labeling, in itself, is neither oppressive nor destructive but it becomes dangerous when it is linked to resentment hence the negative effects of stigmatization.

2.8   The politics of poverty

Due to the controversial nature of the causes of poverty and the question of whether or not governments in Africa and globally are doing enough to alleviate and even perhaps eliminate the problem of poverty, there have been many arguments put forward by researchers. These arguments differ in terms of where blame is attributed. This section of the literature discusses some of these arguments as put forward by the researchers and academics who have shown interest in them.

According to some reports, the number of people living in absolute poverty is falling. Lines (2008) disagrees with this claim by arguing that those reports are based on India and China (which also fall under the category of developing countries) and he also adds that those reports do not give a clear indication of the severity of the problem in sub-Saharan Africa.

The reasons why Africa is poor and regressing economically have long been the subject of many debates at global economic conferences and academic conferences worldwide. The views differ but what remains constant is the fact that Africa is still in crisis and some of the interventions that have been put in place to solve the problem are failing. Below is a discussion on the reasons that researchers have raised to explain why Africa continues to experience extremes of poverty.

2.8.1 *Political conflict and Africa's colonial history*

Although economic growth has been slow and even non-existent in some African countries, populations have continued to rise (Katsumi, 2009). One of the major arguments put forward by the global economic powers (such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund [IMF]) is that bad governance and political instability are the main reasons for poor growth in Africa. However, research by anti-poverty scholars has indicated that in some African countries like Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Angola and Sudan, there have been significant growth rates in the economy even though these countries have some of the worst governance in the world (Katsumi, 2009). On the other hand, African countries like Malawi have not suffered from political conflict since gaining independence from their western colonizers but have still struggled with poverty. According to Katsumi (1999), such findings show that this claim lacks merit and needs to be eliminated.

Honore de Balzac once said that "behind every great fortune is a crime". Some researchers argue that this seems to be the case with Africa and the role of western powers. Some researchers argue that the western world's wealth is founded on resources that were stolen from Africa through colonization (Wafula, 2009). However, as suggested above, the world at large and even the general public believe that Africa is responsible for its misfortunes. To support the role played by loss of resources during colonization, Collier (2007) states that there are African countries that were once less poor than countries like China and India but are now poorer than those countries. Collier (2007) argues that in order for the global economic system to work as it does, some countries have to suffer in order for others to profit.

2.8.2 Debt payment and foreign aid

Bad governance, greed and corruption are indeed major problems in Africa but poverty in Africa is also influenced by strong external factors. These factors relate to how the international financial system is structured and how these systems sometimes contribute to the problem more than they are trying to help, as it appears to the general public (McKay, 2004). Many people are not aware that the policies of organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank are not structured in a way that is sensitive to the needs of poor countries in the world. The World Bank, for instance, has been heavily criticized for being more concerned with paying back loans owed to the United States of America than trying to improve the economic situation in Africa (McKay, 2004).

According to Brobbey (2009), the debt crisis in Africa is a major problem because over the past ten years some African countries have paid back debt (with interest) to the west but are still as indebted as they were ten years ago. Brobbey (2009) argues that foreign aid is not what it appears to be. For every US$1 received in aid, African countries have to pay back US$1.50 in debt services (Brobbey, 2009). In 2004, the few African countries that were eligible for funding to fight HIV/AIDS under President Bush's AIDS initiative for Africa received US$2.4 billion and in 2008 had to pay US$9.1 billion in debt services (Brobbey, 2009).

2.8.3 Africa's natural resources

Unlike countries like China where economic growth has alleviated poverty, Africa seems to be paradoxically cursed by its biggest asset, natural resources. Research indicates that for a country to have an abundance of a certain valuable resource does not necessarily mean growth (Collier, 2007). In most cases, this actually works against development initiatives because "resource exportation tends to make the natural currency appreciate, bring about rent-economy and corruption, retrench production sectors, and make a rich country with poor people" (Katsumi, 2009, p. 150).

2.8.4 Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP's)

To pay back some of the debt they owe and be able to borrow money again, some African countries have had to impose strict programs on their people. These programs are known as SAP's (Brobbey, 2009) and they entail cutting government spending on healthcare, education

and social services. These programs also require that a country devalue its currency, lower export earnings, cut jobs and reduce pay for government employees, and privatize public industries (Brobbey, 2009). Although these programs are supposed to help a country in the sense that it becomes eligible for more foreign aid, they can have a strongly negative effect on the daily lives of its citizens. Wafula (2009) argues that such programs should be viewed as crimes against poor people. However, they are not being viewed that way because while the IMF and World Bank are the ones supervising world hunger initiatives, their interests lie in power and wealth accumulation (Dadzie, 2009).

Africa has also experienced the interest and involvement of a number of multinational corporations. These have dealt with the problem of poverty in Africa from a business mindset and have been said to have 'inherited' Africa from the IMF and World Bank (Dadzie, 2009). The claim being made here is that multinational corporations have great power and influence with regard to some of the policies implemented by the IMF and World Bank because the corporations are big economic contributors in the west.

Collier (2007) argues that the eradication of global poverty is a possibility but only if those in power really want to eradicate it. The western world has all the resources that are necessary to help Africa out of its many crises. If the west were to help Africa with many of its problems in a way that liberates it from being heavily-indebted in the process, that might actually lighten the west's load in terms of providing foreign aid every time conflicts arise in Africa. By investing in Africa more, the west might make a significant and positive difference to people's lives. An example of the western world's capability to help Africa if they wished was demonstrated during the recent recession. Billions of US dollars were given to major corporations that went bankrupt. That was money that was already available to them, money they could have used to help the people of Somalia, for instance. Although they are not obliged to so do, they could do it just because much of their wealth was in fact built on resources stolen from Africa and other third world economies. Western countries could modify trading rules to ensure fair trade and end exploitation by multinational corporations. As demonstrated above, many scholars are in agreement that power and wealth seem to be more important than solving the problem of poverty in Africa (Collier, 2007). However, while much can be said about the western world's contribution to the poverty crisis in Africa, shortcomings of African leaders also need to be dealt with.

2.8.5   The millennium development goals

Over the past few years, there has been a lot of focus on the Millennium Development Goals established by the United Nations (UN) to monitor poverty through 2015 (Collier, 2007). According to Remenyi (2004), the Millennium Development Goals set by the UN are aimed at reducing extreme poverty by 50%, providing universal primary education for all, eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education, reducing infant mortality by two-thirds, reducing maternal mortality by three-quarters and providing access to reproductive health services for all. On paper these goals look praiseworthy and some scholars believe that they are obtainable but the challenge lies in whether enough is being done to realize the goals and whether those efforts are making adequate progress. According to Shah (2010), if current trends do not change, the goal to halve the number of underweight children will be missed by 30 million children as a result of slow progress in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter clearly demonstrates the complex nature of poverty from how it is defined to how it is measured and understood. These different conceptions of poverty also imply that the issue needs to be tackled from many angles in order to effectively deal with its many dimensions. The chapter also highlighted the specific needs of children and adolescents and the ways in which poverty and stigma are related in a context of HIV/AIDS. Also highlighted in this chapter was the political nature of poverty and how, to some extent, this can be viewed as a maintaining factor for poverty. This chapter also noted that significant progress has been made in poverty research over the years but there is still much to be done in a constantly changing global economy and society.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1   Aims of the study

The aim of this study was to explore how poverty and its associated stigma are experienced by adolescents when at school and within their communities. It attempted to do this by:

(1) uncovering the effects of poverty on adolescents' lives;

(2) exploring adolescents' understanding of the meaning of being poor;

(3) exploring how poverty-related stigma has impacted their self-esteem, identity and experiences of the world; and

(4) investigating the elements of stigma that maintain the social distance between adolescents from poverty-stricken households and their peers.

By studying the stigma associated with being poor, this study hoped to develop a better understanding of the feelings of shame, disempowerment and worthlessness that are associated with being poor (Richter, 1994). It has explored the phenomenon and lived reality of being poor (Richter, 1994) so as to better inform policymakers and those who develop intervention programmes about the people who will be the recipients of their policies and interventions.

In addition, the present study also hoped to add to the research findings that have emerged from the works of organizations such as the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa (HSRC). Much of the literature on poverty within the context of HIV/AIDS has focused on the AIDS-related stigma and there is still much to be discovered about poverty as a cause for stigma within South African communities. The study has investigated poverty from a theoretical background, which acknowledges that child poverty goes hand-in-hand with adult poverty, which is determined by the socio-economic inequalities that exist within a society. The relationship between poverty and the stigma related to HIV/AIDS highlights the importance of conceptualizing both variables in the context of other social processes, processes such as deprivation and a limited capacity to cope (Bond, 2003).

3.2   Research design

The study employed a qualitative research design. It employed a methodology similar to that of the 2005 NRF-funded research project that explored barriers to learning within an HIV/AIDS context (Van der Riet, Hough, Killian, O'Neill & Ram, 2006). Permission was sought from and granted by the research team who reported their research in the chapter „We Struggle to Learn' in the final report of the NRF project. This was done so as to adapt the methodology that they used to suit this research study, and also to use some of their participatory techniques for data collection (Van der Riet *et al.*, 2006). It is important to note that specific approaches were developed within the NRF learners' group data collection process and specific components of the biographical information form were identified so as to be used and/or modified in this study.

The design was both descriptive and explanatory (Dane, 1990) in that it entailed differentiating the phenomenon that is poverty from others, which it did by examining how poverty was defined and understood by the sample participants so as to compare their conceptualisations with those discussed in the literature. The research was explanatory in the sense that it involved examining the close relationship between poverty and stigma. The core issue being explored was: Does poverty in the context of HIV/AIDS cause stigma, and does that stigma have an impact on the identity formation process of adolescents who come from poor households?

Although generalizability is not an important factor in qualitative research, discussion of findings is important because these findings do contribute significantly to the body of literature in the subject being investigated. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research focuses less on quantification and more on meaning (Millward, 2000).

3.3.   Sampling

Sampling in qualitative research is often purposive because qualitative researchers have to select information-rich cases as they have the responsibility of describing in depth the findings of their research (Henry, 1998). Non-probability sampling is defined as sampling whereby research participants have unequal chances for inclusion in a study (Dane, 1990). The type of sampling used in this study was convenience sampling, which is a type of non-

probability sampling. The individual participants were selected based on their availability and interest in the study.

Even though there may be drawbacks to purposive sampling, it is still important to make sure that the sample is selected strategically to ensure that participants and group composition are in line with the aims of the study (Millward, 2000). This study required adolescent learners from an urban or peri-urban area. This was taken into consideration when choosing the school.

The study was conducted in a peri-urban school in Escourt, KwaZulu-Natal. Permission for the study was sought through several meetings with the school principal and two heads of departments, who then granted permission for the study to take place at the school. As a result of time constraints and other unforeseen circumstances, the researchers were only able to use one Grade 7 class out of the three Grade 7 classes in the school. Letters explaining the project were distributed to this Grade 7 class (see Appendices C and D) which was made up of 40 learners; however, only 16 learners responded. Those 16 learners made up the sample for this study. In total there were six 12-year-olds, seven 13-year-olds; two 14-year-olds and one participant whose age was unknown as he did not write his age on the form (see Table 1). All of the participants were black. Given that black learners are likely to come from families which have experienced historical disadvantage, this was an appropriate sample for this study.

TABLE 1: Biographical details of the participants

Total number of participants (16)	Age of participants	Number of participants per age group	Gender distribution
	12 years	6	Males: 6
	13 years	7	Females: 10
	14 years	2	
		Total= 15 participants	Total= 16 participants

*One participant did not write his age on the form

3.4 Procedure

The data was collected in conjunction with the data collection process of a colleague. Both researchers conducted all focus groups together. The study and all its aspects were fully explained to the 16 participants. A verbal presentation of the study was given to the learners before they were given the letters of information, assent and consent forms (see Appendices A, B, C and D).

Both consent (for the parents) and assent forms (for the learners) had information about the the nature of the study, how the participants would be selected, what data collection methods would be used, how long those methods would take and also emphasised that school activities for the participants would not be disrupted as the research would be conducted after school hours. The letters explained confidentiality, what it meant and why it was important to maintain throughout the research process. Other things mentioned in the letters were the voluntary nature of the study, the right to withdraw at any time during the research process and that the discussions would be audio-recorded (see Appendices A, B, C and D).

It was important to not only get the consent of the parents but also assent from the children themselves in order to ensure that the children did in fact want to participate and were not just coerced by their parents/legal guardians to do so (Lindsay, 2000). Permission to tape record the sessions as well as publish the results of the study was explicitly sought from the parents, the participants and the school principal (Lindsay, 2000). Such permission was granted by all the parties involved. During the focus group discussions, pseudonyms were used instead of personally identifying information. The principal was informed that a copy of the findings of the report about the study would be given to the school.

3.4.1 Focus groups

According to Van der Riet and Boettiger (2009), in doing qualitative research it is important to maintain equal participation and collaboration between the researchers and the participants. This is necessary in order to avoid any feelings of unequal power distribution that may intimidate the participants and hinder their participation. Researchers, just by virtue of being researchers, possess status which gives them power and influence over the participants. Hence, there is a need for ethically responsible research (Coolican, 2006) to protect

participants from harm and exploitation as well as to make the research process as comfortable for them as possible. One way to achieve this is through the use of focus groups.

Van der Riet and Boettiger (2009) state that one of the many advantages to using focus groups instead of individual interviews is that focus groups are less intimidating and less time consuming. The use of the focus group method in this study was motivated by a number of reasons. In particular, it would allow the researcher to engage in a discussion with the participants on the topic whilst being able to moderate the flow of the discussion.

Focus groups have been viewed as beneficial to qualitative research because they elicit differing perspectives on an issue and encourage discussion that can be analysed and interpreted (Millward, 2000). The free flowing nature of focus group discussion allows the researcher the opportunity to further explore a participant's understanding of a particular issue. The participants' beliefs, values, opinions, understandings and attitudes are seen as valid in their own right (Millward, 2000). Another advantage noted in literature about the use of the focus group method is that group dynamics can also be analysed (Millward, 2000; Van der Riet et *al.*, 2006).

The researcher had hoped to run separate focus groups for the boys and the girls for the purpose of breaking feelings of isolation and allowing for less-constrained discussion in this sensitive age group. Putting participants of the same gender together would allow for similar opinions to emerge but also allow for the discovery of differing opinions. However, as described above, there were too few male participants to make a focus group viable and hence a single larger focus group was conducted.

3.5   Data collection

Various participatory research methods were used to obtain the participants' perspectives of poverty and the stigma associated with it. Focus group discussions were conducted and were conducted in both *isiZulu* and English. The teacher who was our key correspondent informed us that although the school is a "black" school, the learners at the school are taught in English and encouraged to speak English most of the time.

A ranking exercise was conducted on one of the subtopics being investigated and the learners were also asked to fill in a structured biographical questionnaire. Due to the very limited hours the research team was given by the school, the researchers were not able to conduct a four-stage focus group as intended, but instead were forced to make it a three-stage focus group discussion. This allowed both researchers to be able to ask all their intended questions as well as conduct the planned exercises. Appendix I contains the research questions as they were addressed in the three focus groups.

Focus group one focused on getting to know the learners. The researchers introduced themselves to the learners and gave them an opportunity to introduce themselves through an icebreaker. Group norms were established and confidentiality pledges were signed (see Appendices E and F). The research questions covered in this focus group discussion included what it means to be poor; how one can tell if a person is poor (visible indicators of poverty). Participants were also asked whether some learners at their school are discriminated against because they are poor and, if so, in what way and by what types of people.

Focus group two started by reminding the learners about group norms and the importance of confidentiality. This was followed by a ranking exercise investigating the perceived causes of poverty in communities. In this exercise, the learners were asked to identify what they perceived to be the causes of poverty. These were written on the board and the learners were then asked to look at them, think about about them and decide which three they felt were the most important. The votes by the learners were noted next to each identified cause and the causes were then ranked according to their perceived importance. Another question the learners were asked in this focus group was why some people in their communities are poor.

After the ranking exercise, the learners were asked to complete a structured biographical questionnaire by themselves (see Appendices G and H). The questionnaire asked questions about the household the learner participant was coming from so as to get an understanding of the socio-economic background of the participant. The purpose behind using these questionnaires was to increase the depth and validity of the information gathered from the focus groups. This was also done so as to hopefully obtain more personal information, which might have been withheld during the focus group discussions.

Things asked in the questionnaire included the following: number of members in household, number of adults in household, number of children in household, number of working adults in household, access to proper sanitation and running water, number of meals for the child per day on average, difficulties experienced at school relating to money or lack thereof and experiences of being stigmatized because of being poor.

The biographical information forms that the participants filled in were written in their mother tongue of *isiZulu*. Although the literacy of the participants had been established at the beginning, the participants were encouraged to ask the researchers if there was anything in the forms that they did not understand (Scott, 2008).

Focus group three also started with a reminder about group norms and then explored the participants' dreams for the future in terms of family, careers, etc. Questions that were asked before exploring their dreams for the future included how children from poverty-stricken homes viewed themselves in the light of their circumstances. Another question discussed was whether Government interventions aimed at helping the poor were sufficient. A small party was then thrown for the learners to thank them for their time and participation.

3.6   Data analysis

In this study, patterns or themes relating to poverty and its associated stigma were investigated using thematic analysis (Muthukrishna, 2005). The process of analysis involved transcribing the focus group discussions verbatim, translating them into English and interpreting the transcription data. This involved repeated reading of the transcripts in order for the researcher to familiarize herself with the data. In this process, emerging themes were identified.

The themes were then grouped together into main themes and sub-headings and the relationships between the emerging subtopics were analyzed and each topic further developed for in-depth analysis (Muthukrishna, 2005). The focus of this study was on poverty and this meant exploring participants' perceptions of poverty and how they experienced it in the world. It looked at a number of factors such as different understandings of poverty, the concept of „othering', indicators of poverty, access to resources and stigma associated with HIV/AIDS and poverty.

Interpretation of these themes involved finding meaning in the participants' conception of poverty and the stigma associated with poverty. The researcher identified quotes illustrating particular themes relating to the questions asked in the discussions. In the following chapter, these will be described and explained with reference to existing literature and statistics on poverty.

3.7   Ethical considerations

Ethically responsible research revolves around self-determination (Dane, 1990). Participants have the right to be given all the necessary information about the research so that they are able to evaluate all the information provided to them regarding the study, to weigh the pros and cons of being in the study, and to decide for themselves whether or not they would like to participate in the study. Consideration of all the ethical issues involved in one's research is therefore always important. All ethical guidelines were adhered to during this study.

From the beginning, the research team was transparent about the aims of the project and that the project would not bring about any immediate social change with regard to the issues it explored nor would it lead to the accessing of resources. Respect for the participants was maintained throughout the process.

No form of deceit was used in getting the learners to participate. The aims of the study were verbally explained to the learners before they were given the letters of information and consent and also before commencing with the focus group discussions and participatory techniques. The participants were informed of the duration of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. According to Coolican (2006), researchers must ensure that participants are protected from harm and discomfort and this included informing the participants in the letter of information that the subject to be covered in the research would be of a sensitive nature and might lead to possible mental/emotional stress.

Even though confidentiality (see Appendices E and F) was established as a group norm, the participants were enlightened as to the limitations of full confidentiality in focus group discussions (i.e. there is no guarantee that some people will not disclose information revealed

in the discussions). However, they were assured of anonymity as well as confidentiality within the limits allowed by law.

Care was taken to ensure that the children felt supported, cared for, listened to and contained during the focus group discussions and during all the data-gathering processes (Frazer, Lewis, Ding, Kellett and Robinson , 2004). Conducting a study on such a very personal issue meant that the researcher had to be careful not to harm the participants in any way, emotionally or otherwise. This required the researcher to be sensitive to the learners' emotional states and to avoid pushing them to speak further if it seemed that they were becoming uncomfortable or distressed about a topic. The learners were encouraged to speak with either member of the research team if they needed to at any time during the research process should they have been distressed by things discussed in the group. None of the participants showed distress during the data collection process.

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion of Results

4.1   Introduction

Poverty is a social and economic issue. Shah (2010) states that approximately 22 000 children die each day due to poverty-related causes such as malnutrition and ill-health. The issues that the participants raised revolved around a lack of access to money and how this in turn has resulted in a lack of access to many other things, which leads to a low quality of life for poor children and youths. This chapter reports on the study's results by discussing the following: (1) the results of the biographical questionnaire that show the socio-economic status of the participants (these include indicators of poverty as demonstrated by access to resources, family composition and size, as well as the impact that the poverty of older members in the family has on the children in the household); (2) the participants' definitions of poverty; (3) the causes of poverty in communities; (4) the stigma and discrimination experienced by poor children (and poor people in general); and (5) the effects of poverty on identity and self-perception. Excerpts are included to illustrate the findings (note that FG stands for focus group).

4.2   The biographical questionnaire

According to the data obtained from the individual structured biographical questionnaires (see Appendices G [*English version*] and H [*isiZulu version*]) that were filled in by the learner participants, there were six 12-year-olds, seven 13-year-olds, two 14-year-olds and one participant whose age was unknown (as it was left out on his form) who participated in the study. There were ten females and six males in the group. The original objective was to select a sample from a poor/disadvantaged background, since poverty was what the study aimed to investigate. However, as a result of time constraints and other unforeseen circumstances, the sample from which this data was collected did not in fact come from a poor background. This was indicated in the responses given by the learners on the forms that they completed.

These forms were designed to supplement the data collected from the focus group discussions. The reason for having the participants fill in the forms themselves and in private was to obtain personal information about the participants that would assist in finding out

about the economic status of the households from which they come. The questionnaire asked a number of questions regarding variables related to poverty.

Of the sixteen participants, six indicated that the number of members in their household was between three and five. Another six participants indicated that the number was between six and seven. There was one participant each for the remaining categories: eight to nine household members, ten to eleven, and fourteen or more. The average number of children per household was four. The same participant who left out his age on the form also did not indicate how many people lived in his household.

Total No. of members in a household	3-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	14+
	6	6	1	1	1

Table 2: Number of household members for the participants
* One participant did not fill in the answer to this question

Although there were cases where multiple breadwinners were identified, the main breadwinner identified by the majority of the group was the mother. Twelve of the sixteen participants identified the mother as a breadwinner in the household. The number of working adults in the home was on average two. There were some discrepancies identified in the biographical data. While there was consistency in the reported numbers of breadwinners in relation to the number of working adults in the home for the majority of the participants, there were cases where other contributing adults in the home were not counted as breadwinners, perhaps because of the amount of contribution they make.

There were also cases with conflicting data. In one case, the participant stated that there were between three to five people living in her household but then she also stated that the number of working adults in her home was six. This could mean that she may have included relatives who do not live in the household when she was counting the number of working adults. The discrepancies between breadwinners and working adults could also indicate that even though there may be a large number of working adults, they may not be contributing to the household financially.

Eleven of the sixteen participants said they have a toilet that is located inside the home, while five participants indicated that they use an outside (pit) toilet. Fresh water inside the house was reported as being available to 80% of the sample. Thirteen of the sixteen participants (i.e. 81%) indicated that they eat three meals on average per day. The remaining three participants stated that they have on average two meals per day. Fourteen of the sixteen participants (i.e. 87.5%) had already had their school fees paid. It is clear from these statistics that the participants were coming from fairly well-resourced homes. Shah (2010) states that approximately 1.1 billion people in developing countries do not have adequate access to water and 2.6 billion lack proper sanitation. One in three children does not have adequate shelter, one in five has no access to safe water and one in seven has no access to health services (Shah, 2010).

The question of the focus for research and analysis has been one of many controversies in child poverty studies as the child, the family of the child and the community the child lives in are all important variables to be investigated (Schiller, 1976). The findings discussed below show that each is worthy of investigation because if the community is poor, there are things the family cannot have access to and there are things that the child cannot have access to. The relationship between the three is exactly what should be studied.

4.3   How the participants understood the experience of poverty

When it came to defining poverty, the participants demonstrated an awareness of the multidimensional nature of poverty. The definitions they gave of the concept made reference to a lack of access to things such as houses, food and money. These are some of the comments that the participants made about poverty:

> *A lot of things come to my mind when you say someone is poor. That means that the person does not have a house, food, it means a lot of things…* (FG1)

> *What comes to my mind … is that there is nothing at your house. When you say poverty, there's just nothing.* (FG1)

33

You sleep on an empty stomach! (FG1)

[…] just imagine empty pots by the corner at your house, maybe in the morning they are still there and even when you come back from school they are still there by the corner, all of them, empty. (FG1)

I see by the place they live in, if they live in a shack. (FG1)

Other indicators of poverty that were mentioned related to the physical and psychological manifestations of this problem. In terms of poverty's physical manifestations, the participants referred to people who are thin or unkempt:

The person looks skinny. (FG1)

I see by like maybe that person wears torn clothes. (FG1)

If it's a girl, you see that especially if their hair is long, maybe before … every weekend they would go to the salon but now they don't and it's been four years since they went to the salon and now the hair is all nappy and full of twisted ends and they don't bath when they come to school. (FG1)

One of the participants referred to (a child) having *"a big stomach that is shiny"* (FG1), which is most likely a reference to the abdominal swelling common in kwashiorkor. Children coming from poor homes may become more easily susceptible to sicknesses. In South Africa, the General Household Survey calculates income in families to determine which members of the population are poor and how many there are thus enabling government to estimate how many people require government assistance in the form of grants (Leatt, 2006b). When the results of the survey deem a particular family to be poor, the implication is that the family lacks adequate finances to sustain the household and therefore the children in that family are at a greater chance of suffering from illnesses relating to malnutrition (Leatt, 2006a). Poverty has been shown to have a negative impact on children's overall development (Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre, n.d.). For instance, if a child does not have anything to eat at home, they are unable to focus in class and work to their full potential (Richter, 1994).

The psychological and behavioural manifestations of poverty included: looking unhappy, poor concentration, tiredness, irritability, weakness, poor health, and talking frequently about food. Some of the comments made by the participants in this regard were as follows:

> *I see the person by seeing that they look troubled, you see that the person feels alone, they are hungry, and they show that they are hungry.* (FG1)

> *I see them by not being able to concentrate on their studies, in class others will be learning and that person will just be sleeping, they are so hungry they can't even speak.* (FG1)

> *I see them by being irritable because they say hunger causes irritability* [laughter]. (FG1)

> *Some lose weight, some get sick and become weak and don't play at school.* (FG1)

> *[…] and when we are sitting together like we are right now for instance, sitting just talking, they'll be very quick to talk about food every chance they get because they don't have it.* (FG1)

> *I see by the person going to other homes asking for food.* (FG1)

4.4   Perceived causes of poverty

The participants were asked to identify some of the things that they think cause poverty in communities. They identified twelve factors in all (see Table 3 below). After they had listed the causes, the participants were asked to rank the causes in order of perceived importance. The top three as ranked by the group were: unemployment, an increased pregnancy rate, and the use of loan sharks. On the basis of their rankings, these three aspects were explored in more detail.

Table 3: Perceived causes of poverty

CAUSE OF POVERTY	SCORE	RANK
Unemployment	10	1
Increased pregnancy rate	8	2
Use of loan sharks	5	3
High inflation rate	4	4
Belief systems	4	4
Too much reliance on government for assistance	3	5
Low self-confidence	3	5
High levels of alcohol consumption	3	5
Not wanting to study further or dropping out of school	2	6
Being too picky job-wise	2	6
Competing with neighbors for status	2	6
Death in the family	2	6

It became very clear that (unsurprisingly) unemployment was seen by the participants as the most important cause of poverty. It is perhaps more surprising that pregnancy was identified as a major cause of poverty. This may have been because this was a group of young adolescents, who will potentially, soon become sexually active and they were thus indirectly showing their awareness of the risks involved. It may also have been because the question was asked alongside a discussion around HIV/AIDS.

The causes of poverty identified by the participants could broadly be grouped into two groups, namely financial aspects, and personal and family aspects. Financial aspects include unemployment, high inflation, and government grants. Personal and family aspects include pregnancy, traditional belief systems, low self-confidence, alcohol consumption, not wanting

to study further or dropping out of school, being too picky about jobs, competing with neighbours for status and a death in the family. The use of loan sharks seems to be a factor that bridges financial and family systems.

4.4.1   Financial aspects – unemployment

Many of the participants pointed to the problem of unemployment as being the biggest cause of poverty. The participants showed that they are aware that unemployment is a fundamental problem in the country, as they linked it to many of the other issues they raised. They felt that unemployment results in poor communities that lack money and subsequently lack food, clothing, proper nutrition, school uniforms and other necessities, as well as access to opportunities. Here is what some of the participants had to say about unemployment:

> *It's because many people don't want to look for work and ... there are no jobs.* (FG2)

> *Ehh, it's ... prices have gone up in shops, people earn little and jobs aren't that many. People are poor and don't have money.* (FG2)

> *It's unemployment. People aren't employed.* (FG2)

> *People don't work and then they don't get money and end up poor.* (FG2)

As a result of high unemployment in the country children face many challenges brought on by absolute poverty which is the economic dimension of poverty, according to Richter (1994). The problem of high unemployment in South Africa is also reflected in the wide economic gap between the rich and the poor (Shah, 2010). According to Olivier and Jansen van Rensburg (2006), this economic gap results in unequal access to education, health care, electricity, clean water and opportunities for individual autonomy.

4.4.2   Financial aspects – inflation

Also pointed out by the participants was the high inflation rate resulting in high food prices as well as increases in the cost of other living expenses. The learners felt that people are poor because they cannot afford to buy basic necessities. The rising cost of living was reflected in

the opinions expressed by the participants:

> *Rising food prices in the shops.* (FG2)

> *You can't buy clothes, food is expensive in shops; what can you buy with R200? You use the R10 to go to town and then you are left with R200, what can you do with that?* (FG3)

Isaak and Hankel (1983) state that inflation is both an economic and a social phenomenon as it affects every sphere of a person's life and is inevitable due to the constantly changing economic climate. They argue that people need to have personal management strategies for handling their finances well so that they are not adversely affected by its changes.

In the second quote the participant was referring to the monthly Child Support Grant provided by the government as being R210. This is an indication that the learner had inaccurate information about how much exactly the Child Support Grant is. This was noted with other participants as well. In October 2008 when this data was collected the Child support grant was R230 a month and in 2010 the child support grant was R250.00 a month.

4.4.3   *Financial aspects - government grants*
Another finding was that there is too much reliance on government for financial support and other forms of social support. This included the provision of RDP houses for the poor and free treatment at community clinics which participants felt also causes poverty, although some felt that the grant system was helping some poor people. Some of the participants felt that this dependence on government has not only made some problems worse but has also made people lazy:

> *It's because many people are too dependent on government for the grant. They think that they can just sit around and wait for the grant money.* (FG2)

> *It's that some people are used to getting houses built for them.* (FG 2)

Isn't it the government builds people two-room houses? The child knows that at home they are watched; they do naughty things, play with the mother's money and then go to the JZ place [JZ place is the name that some people use when referring to RDP houses. JZ stands for Jacob Zuma and his name is used because he represents government which builds people RDP houses] *stay by herself and say that she has nobody, no work and then ends up getting the money if it's a girl.* (FG2)

However, other participants felt that government interventions were not only helpful but necessary too.

It's enough because government gives them a grant, educates them for free, they go to clinics for free. There are lots of things government is doing. (FG3)

Opinions differed when it came to deciding whether government interventions were adequate or still needed improvement, or whether they should be given at all. Meintjes *et al.*(2005) & Leatt (2006b) argue that the Child Support Grant does not alleviate poverty because the amount offered to poor families is small. They also argue that the process of attaining government support is difficult on its own because in some communities, especially those in the rural areas, government offices are far away and people may have to walk long distances to go and apply. Another problem they highlight is that even when the poor person is able to get to the offices, they may not necessarily get the help they need due to problems such as not having the right documentation, for instance. Such problems may discourage some people from making use of government support structures. Remenyi (2004) concurs with Meintjes *et al.* (2005) and Leatt (2006b) in that while government initiatives may minimize the impact of poverty on poor people, this is not enough and cannot be viewed as the answer to the problem in the long term.

Specific problems with the social grant system were mentioned by the participants. These included fraudulent obtaining of grants by non-deserving people, the amount being too little (see discussion above) and people using the grant money for things it was not intended for:

There is still more that can be done as they are providing the grant. It's not enough especially these days. What can you do with R210 because you can't really do anything with it? You can buy maize and maybe four cabbages but you can't eat that for the rest of the month. (FG3)

I say it's enough because some kill their babies but continue claiming the grant. (FG3)

4.4.4 Financial aspects - loan sharks

When asked about how the use of loan sharks causes poverty, the participants voiced concern about adults who use loan sharks without being aware of the potentially negative consequences. They named different reasons why they thought people used loan sharks and how this was not good:

Also, it's because some people like to borrow money from loan sharks. (FG2)

People borrow money they can't afford to pay back. (FG2)

Ehh some mothers...let's say she gets paid R1000 and maybe when the money is finished they go and borrow money from the loan shark and then at the end of the month that R1000 goes to the loan shark and then the money is finished. (FG2)

You borrow money from a loan shark and then you can't pay them back and then they say they are going to take everything in your house. (FG2)

It's that money you get from loan sharks has interest. You find that if you borrow R100 000 maybe they say the interest is....they multiply it five times and that means you are going to pay more than the money you borrowed. (FG2)

The learners also felt that some parents ended up borrowing money because of pressure from society to have nice things. They also stated that in some cases parents end up in this debt trap trying to provide for and please their children. Other reasons cited included some traditional Zulu cultural practices such as the payment of *lobola* and how people's greed has

spilled over into such once-respectable traditions, resulting in families exploiting each other financially in the name of tradition.

> *Because people just ... [pause] it's because some people like things and then just borrow money without thinking.* (FG2)

> *Some children force their mothers by wanting expensive things and then the mom has to go to a loan shark.* (FG2)

4.4.5 Personal and family aspects - pregnancy

Another issue that the participants felt contributed to poverty was the increased pregnancy rate in the country especially among the youth. The learner participants felt that because of the government grant that is given to mothers from poverty-stricken homes, the youth are now having children irresponsibly so that they can also get the grant money. This awareness of the problem by the participants was impressive in that, while some individual young female living in poverty may be tempted (either by circumstance or choice) to view having children as an easy way of getting the money, raising this issue in discussion as a problem showed that the participants were able to logically see that it is not a solution as having children is a life-long responsibility that costs much more than what the grant provides in the first 18 years of the child's life. Here is what some of them expressed about the matter:

> *...when people get pregnant then you find that at your house ... they were the only person working and then ... [unclear] maybe they spend R500 buying groceries. Then you bring a child into the home ... [unclear].* (FG2)

> *... some children get pregnant on purpose ... they want this grant.* (FG3)

> *They even have up to five children! Just getting five R240.* (FG3)

Greathead (1992) states that teenage pregnancy is a problem worldwide but more so in developing countries. She further states that due to the low level of maturity in most teenage girls, they are often unable to comprehend the magnitude of the situation they find themselves in once pregnant. Teenage pregnancy changes the girl's life, her life goals and

plans and disrupts her education and restricts choices in all aspects of her life.

4.4.6   Personal and family aspects - traditional beliefs

Another interesting factor that emerged from the data was the outdated beliefs some people still hold on to, beliefs that hinder their progress and keep them in poverty. These include beliefs such as that the woman is not allowed to work because that is a man's role. Here are some of the things the participants had to say about traditional beliefs:

> *It's these old rules from the rural areas that like when a person is able to write a letter to Johannesburg, they leave school.* (FG2)

> *It's these old rules which say that only the man works...but then the man works and doesn't bring money home.* (FG2)

Wilkinson (1997) argues that one of the challenges still facing mainstream psychology today is that differences relating to males and females are often viewed as inferiorities (in women) except in instances where women's roles are confined to nurturing tasks. She argues that whilst some progress has been made in attempting to view females and males as equals, society cannot deny the impact of the history of women's struggles. These include struggles such as being denied access to education and entrance to some professional careers and how these have in the past been used to justify woman's perceived limited success in such settings (Wilkinson, 1997).

4.4.7   Personal and family aspects - low self-confidence

Some learners suggested that people do not have enough confidence to take the initiative and make changes that would enable them to find ways of getting themselves out poverty. While this may be as a result of personal choice, it could also be as a result of being discouraged by one's circumstances with an associated sense of helplessness and hopelessness. Richter (1994) argues that some of the consequences of poverty for people include loss of educational opportunities which in turn result in decreased opportunities for employment (or employability) which may in turn lead to high levels of psychological stress and breakdowns in such communities.

Bradshaw (2007), on the other hand, argues that some theories of poverty have shown that some poor communities develop „sub-cultures' in which children exposed to them get absorbed by them and end up adopting their belief systems. An example of this would be a sub-culture that does not value education. Although his or her circumstances may be difficult for the child, these sub-cultures may worsen their situation, exposing them to (and even reinforcing) negative attitudes. These sub-cultures are powerful because in some poor communities where children are taught the value of education and encouraged to like school even though they are poor, some of these children actually do succeed in life and grow up to be well-adjusted, productive members of society. This is what some of the learners had to say about the self-confidence of poor people:

They see themselves as an embarrassment to other people and see themselves as nothing. (FG3)

It's that most people are not independent. People don't believe in themselves. The person says its better I just stay at home instead of going to work because I am not good enough. (FG2)

Some … most feel useless. (FG3)

And also some people don't like to try. Maybe they think that they won't take me because I don't have matric. (FG2)

4.4.8 *Personal and family aspects - high levels of alcohol consumption*

The participants noted heavy/problematic drinking as another contributing factor to poverty in some communities. They stated that while unemployment may in fact be a major problem in the country, some employed people do not value being employed and sometimes miss work because of their drinking or they make excuses not to go to work on pay day so that they could go consume alcohol. This is what the learners had to say about the problem of high levels of alcohol consumption:

People like to say they can't get jobs. Some do get jobs but play around at their jobs … [unclear] they go drink alcohol… (FG2)

43

When they get paid they may just take the whole day off, go hang out by the sheebeen spot and come back home drunk. (FG3)

Sometimes you find that they drink. (FG3)

A study done in Uganda in 2007 by the Chronic Poverty Research Centre found that high levels of alcohol consumption in poor communities did not just have an impact on the individual and his/her family alone but also impacted on their community and society as a whole. Lost productivity, violence and crime were some of the issues mentioned resulting from heavy drinking (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2007). In discussing direct and indirect links between alcohol consumption and poverty, the study also showed that heavy drinkers from poor communities are likely use the little money they make to buy alcohol whereas this money could better be used to support their families. The study stated that in the 2004 WHO global statistics report on alcohol consumption, South Africa was ranked 47th in the 185 countries ranked. An increase in government campaigns, such as the Arrive Alive campaign, aimed at curbing drinking in South Africa may have been prompted by the high levels of alcohol consumption by the general public.

4.4.9   Personal and family aspects - not wanting to study or dropping out of school
Another cause of poverty that the learner participants identified was that some children and older people do not want to study. In addition, they felt that some of the people who have studied are reluctant to further their studies which would increase their skills and subsequently increase their chances of getting employment. This reluctance to study further may be indicative of some youths' disillusionment with government and private businesses as there are a large number of unemployed graduates in the country. Studying further when there are low chances of employment may be seen as a waste of time and financial resources, resources that are limited in poor households. This may also be an instance of the kind of hopelessness discussed in Section 4.4.7 above. Here is what one participant said:

It's because many people don't want to go to school. (FG2)

Other participants felt that even when some people are given opportunities, they waste them by not taking them seriously:

> *Many people don't want to go to school and when they are told to learn, they play around.* (FG2)

Dropping out of school was another issue mentioned as a cause of poverty. This is what some of the participants said:

> *People are not educated. They rush off to do other things and leave school.* (FG2)

> *Most kids these days rush to go and have sex and then they get pregnant and then maybe drop out of school.* (FG2)

Dropping out of school may be both a cause and a consequence of poverty. Montgomery *et al.*, 2003) state that dropping out of school is one of the negative consequences of being poor. In poor communities, limited resources are more likely to be spent on survival which an impoverished family is likely to consider much more important than investing them in an uncertain future. In addition, as the second excerpt above shows, some of the factors related to poverty are interrelated; in this instance, falling pregnant leads to dropping out of school and both are likely to exacerbate poverty.

4.4.10 Personal and family aspects – being too picky jobwise

Another issue mentioned was that people are choosy when it comes to the kinds of jobs they are willing or not willing to take. Another issue mentioned relating to this was that people have a tendency to compare themselves to others in terms of how much they earn or how educated they are and what types of jobs they think they deserve.

> *It's because people are very picky. You find that a person will look at their neighbor maybe they...maybe they work but they only have matric and then they say I won't work until I get paid more than my neighbor.* (FG2)

4.4.11 Personal and family aspects - competing with other people

Other causes of poverty that were mentioned by the learners were people competing with each other for status. This theme was also apparent in the last quote from the previous section. This is what some of the participants said:

> *It's because some people are competing with their neighbors. They want to be like the rich, they buy cars and other things.* (FG2)

> *...It's this thing of jealousy. You find that someone buys play station and then you also want to buy it.* (FG2)

4.4.12 Personal and family aspects - death in the family

The learners felt that the death of family members was another cause of poverty. Richter (1994) argues that in the context of HIV/AIDS and poverty, the loss of family members not only disrupts the family structure in that grandparents may sometimes be forced to take on the parent role again, but that the death of breadwinners or caretakers may also cause children to starve and even become homeless.

> *You find that maybe your granny was receiving pension and then she dies and then you are left with nothing because she is dead.* (FG2)

4.5   Stigma and discrimination against poor children/adults

When asked about the types of people who are most likely to discriminate against poor children at school and in communities the learners stated that it is usually people who are well off, people living in urban areas, children who are spoilt at home and given everything they demand or ask for.

> *It's people that see that, oh, at home we are rich and your house is poor and there is nothing at your house. There is no food.* (FG2)

> *Rich people say look at me, at my house, groceries come in but they don't at your house.* (FG2)

Yes, it happens that things depend on how you are financially and that we carry lunch boxes and you think that you can play with us. ... You have a lunch box so you are fine money-wise, and you get arrogant and say, "Oh your family is poor! You don't have a lunch box, you don't have money, that's fine now get stepping on the direction you were walking before you got to us, you can't be part of us, we play with people who have money and you are poor. No thank you, we don't want you." Or they say, "You can be our friend" but then they run away from you, you come and they are all carrying lunchboxes and you're thinking you are all meeting by the corner and the meeting you come they laugh and ... they run away from you. (FG1)*

Participants also felt that how a poor child is treated by others depends on that child's attitude. If the child is nice, people feel sorry for him/her and do not stigmatize them so much for being poor but if the child is difficult, some people are not so compassionate towards that child. This excerpt below neatly illustrates the low status accorded to the poor – a poor child is tolerated if he or she shows an ‚appropriately' humble attitude, Here is the opinion of one of the participants:

I would say it depends on that child's attitude. If maybe that child is forward and demanding then people say you know what, why should we be bossed around by this one? When even during break they are just going to stand there and not give anything but you find that if the person is maybe quiet… they are trustworthy then people … (FG1)

When a child is rejected by their peers because of reasons related to poverty (stigma or because other learners feel overburdened by having to share their food with the poor child), emotions of anger and shame impact on the child's self-concept (Richter *et al*., 2004)

When asked why they thought some people discriminate against poor people by keeping their distance from them, for instance, two participants indicated that perhaps they are disinterested or uncomfortable to engage with the poverty of others. The second quote also suggests that people may dissociate themselves from the poor for fear of being ‚pulled down' by poverty.

Ohh, it's that most people don't want to learn about ... [pause] other people's poverty or discriminating against other people. (FG2)

It happens that people talk about the person because they want to feel good about themselves, to show that they are better. (FG1)

Also mentioned in relation to poverty and its visibility indicators was the „sugar daddy' phenomenon. The participants pointed out that some teenagers find themselves in situations where they end up dating an older man (or woman) so that they can provide for themselves and their families. The majority of the group agreed that most teenagers who have sugar daddies (or sugar mommies) find themselves in this situation because they really are poor, but there were also participants who felt that things such as peer pressure and materialism also contribute towards teenagers choosing such a path. The participants spoke about the risks and benefits of being in such a relationship. Here are some of the comments that they made in this regard:

Like when it's somebody maybe thirteen to sixteen you see them with a sugar daddy or sugar mommy. (FG1*)*

Most of them do it so they can eat but there are a large number of children who don't do it for that; they do it for … most do it for peer pressure. You find that your friends tell you that you are the only boring one in this crew: "We all have our sugar daddies and you don't. When it's the twenty-fifth we go to the banks and press on ATMs and you just don't do anything. We wear Levi's jeans and you wear Network jeans, please don't bore us." Your friends tell you that, so a lot of people are forced by their friends and then you find that you end up doing things. (FG1)

[…] some do it because you find that your mom or your dad or whoever it is you live with and you are the only child and that person is the only adult you live with and you find that they work, but they spend all the money. Living with them is like living with no adult. They don't care about the things you need for school, maybe there's a trip coming up or whatever or

you need, uniform, and then you end up thinking, "Maybe ... why don't I
just get myself a sugar daddy and everything will be alright? Things will
go well for me." And for the boys they get sugar mommies because
sometimes you find that a boy has been trying his luck with girls, he tries
and tries and fails and then at the end he thinks, "Eish, you know, there is
this older lady ... maybe because I'm tall [laughter], maybe because I'm
tall she might think I'm grown up and when I have her and maybe like she
works well, I get things from her, from a car to a cell phone to
everything". (FG1)

4. 6   Impact of poverty on identity and self-perception

The last issue relating to poverty that was investigated was whether or not being poor has any kind of impact in terms of how children and young people view themselves. Although the participants did not have much to say on this issue, those who commented on the issue agreed that poverty does have a negative impact on how poor children see themselves, especially in relation to other children. These are some of the opinions expressed by the participants:

They look at themselves as alone, with nobody to take care of them. (FG3)

It makes them look at themselves as a joke…. (FG3)

There are those that think that they have no life because they are poor.
(FG3)

They look at themselves negatively and then kill themselves. (FG3)

They see themselves as not important. (FG3)

From the subjective definition of poverty which refers to the emotions and experiences of being poor (Montgomery *et al.*, 2003), this means that the child compares him- or herself to other children in terms of what they have and what he/she does not have. This may cause the child to have a negative attitude towards themselves, their peers, teachers and schooling in

general. For some children, the negative emotional consequences are so severe that they may consider suicide.

4.7 Conclusion

In analysing the data, two categories of overarching themes emerged relating to the definition as well as perceived causes of poverty and stigma. These themes were identified as financial aspects and personal and family aspects. Sub-categories that fell under financial aspects were: unemployment, high inflation and government grants. Sub-categories that fell under personal and family aspects were: pregnancy, traditional belief systems, low self-confidence, alcohol consumption, not wanting to study further or dropping out of school, being too picky about jobs, competing with neighbours for status and a death in the family.

In considering the perceptions of the participants, it was clear that the themes interrelated in that they all linked back to the question of access to, or no access to, money. This illustrated the complex and multidimensional nature of poverty. Even though causes of poverty were identified and discussed, a recurring theme that seemed to run through the discussions was the issue of personal accountability. This issue was illustrated in discussions about, amongst others, people's expectations of government to assist them, pregnancy and getting social grants, lost productivity as a result of heavy drinking, parents getting themselves in debt to please their children and competition with neighbours.

In the next chapter, conclusions are drawn from this study and the researcher reflects on the whole research process, problems encountered and what could have been done differently. The report concludes by considering areas of development for schools, families and communities in terms of developing awareness about the impact of poverty on their lives and what can be done to improve the situation.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

As discussed in previous chapters, the objectives of this study were to explore adolescents' perceptions and experiences of poverty and its associated stigma when at school and within their communities. The study attempted to do this by uncovering the effects of poverty on adolescents' lives; exploring adolescents' understanding of the meaning of being poor; exploring how the poverty-related stigma impacted their self-esteem, identity and experiences of the world; and investigating the elements of stigma that maintain the social distance between adolescents from poverty-stricken households and their peers. By studying the stigma associated with being poor, the study hoped to develop a better understanding of the feelings of shame, disempowerment and worthlessness that are associated with being poor. The objectives of the study were at least partly achieved.

5.2 Reflection on the findings and limitations of the study

After ethical clearance for the study was granted, the process of finding a suitable school began. It was originally intended that sampling take place in two stages: firstly, it would be purposive (Henry, 1998) when it came to identifying a suitable school, and secondly, it would be random in terms of how the learner participants from that school would be selected. Depending upon the size of the class, every third or fourth learner would be selected to participate in the study. However, finding a suitable school was very problematic as there were some misunderstandings with the school that was originally identified as the research site. This school had been chosen as the research site because it already had an existing relationship with the Child and Family Centre of the School of Psychology at UKZN and also because the learners at the identified school came from disadvantaged backgrounds. These ranged from middle socio-economic groups to extremely poverty-stricken households which made the population pool from which the sample would be chosen suitable for the project. In addition, many households in the school's catchment area are affected by HIV/AIDS.

However, as reported in Chapter 3, data was eventually collected somewhere else, in a school in Escourt. This posed many challenges as the school in Escourt could only provide the researchers with one Grade 7 class with which to conduct the study thus making the sampling very limited. As described above, it had been intended to use random sampling of learners

which would have ensured that every learner had an equal probability of being included in the research (Dane, 1990). Twenty learners were to be sampled. In the event, the 16 learners who participated in the study were the only learners who showed interest in the study and were available at the time. In addition, equal gender representation in the study was the initial target but was not realised as the sample ended up being comprised of 10 females and 6 males.

The sample was also different (in terms of socio-economic status), from the kind of sample that the study originally intended to work with. The researcher had hoped to investigate poverty with participants who came from disadvantaged homes. However, the participants who made up the sample for this study came from relatively well-resourced homes. This meant that although their general ideas about poverty and its associated stigma may have been the same as those of other adolescents from different backgrounds, poor or not poor, the outcomes of the study may have been different to what might have been if the sample was made up of children coming from a range of households.

Irrespective of the difficulties that were encountered in finding a suitable school, the researcher did eventually manage to find a sample that was reasonably suitable. The participants were all adolescents and they came from a community that is also ravaged by the effects of HIV/AIDS. Their views and opinions still gave insight into the problem of poverty as experienced and/or viewed by adolescents.

In terms of the data collection procedure, the study originally aimed to use a four-stage focus group approach in conjunction with participatory research techniques such as ranking exercises. These were intended to draw out and facilitate participation from the less verbally expressive of the participant. However, the focus groups could only be conducted over a period of three days due to the limited time the school offered.

The structured biographical questionnaires that were used in the study were initially intended to be completed by the researcher through one-on-one interviews with the participants. However, again due to time constraints, these had to be completed by the learners themselves thus inhibiting the process of the researcher getting to know the participants and their backgrounds before commencing with the focus group discussion. Allowing the learners to

complete the questionnaires themselves had a benefit in that each participant had privacy when filling in sensitive information about their household's economic status. It also provided the researcher with additional information about each participant. However, it could have been helpful to have had the one-on-one interviews to enable to researcher to gain more depth in understanding the responses the participants gave. Conducting individual interviews at the beginning could have explained many things such as why some participants seemed very comfortable in the group while others did not say much. It could also have provided insight into the (relatively small) differences in access to resources noted between participants even though the group was coming from neighbouring communities. The results of the study indicated that the research was successful because many of the issues raised by the participants relating to poverty were reflected in the literature.

In terms of data quality, although there were instances during data transcription when it was unclear what some of the participants were saying in the tapes, the bulk of the recorded focus group discussions were clearly audible making for easy transcription and translation.

Having collected the data with another researcher was both helpful and restraining at the same time. It was helpful in that both researchers were constantly available to help each other but it was restraining in that although both studies were investigating stigma occurring in an HIV/AIDS context, there was more shared by the participants about HIV/AIDS stigma than poverty-related stigma. However that could also be an indication that as much as poor people tend to be stigmatised, not much attention has been paid to the stigma of poverty.

The study was nonetheless successful in that the hypothesis that was being investigated was answered by the data. As stated earlier on in the chapter, the core issue being explored was whether poverty in a context of HIV/AIDS causes stigma, and whether that stigma has an impact on the identity formation process of adolescents who come from poor backgrounds. The data indicated that there is indeed a link between these factors.

In retrospect, some aspects of the study were somewhat weak. The questions could have been more interesting and revealing if, for instance, more than one school was used for the research. One of the points that researchers of poverty highlight in their literature is that understanding poverty requires understandings of conceptualisations of it from both sides of

the spectrum, i.e. the poor and the rich. The study could have been conducted at a township school (predominantly black and poor) and a private school (predominantly white and well-off). This would have given more information on the lived realities of participants of different races as well as participants from a wide range of socio-economic classes.

The researcher's biggest disappointment was that she only realised during data analysis that there were points where she could have probed more or approached the question from a different angle but this did not occur to her at the time of data collection. Discussing the above-mentioned points is not intended to discredit the research but rather to show that the results of any qualitative study can sometimes be „shaped' and /or „restricted' by external factors such as time and the researcher's level of experience. Being aware of such challenges not only developed the researcher but has equipped her with better research skills for future academic endeavours. A great deal was learnt from doing this study and much useful and valid information came out of the study.

5.3 Recommendations

The results of this study brought to the surface many issues relating to poverty. Based on the results of this study the following recommendations can be made:

- ✓ Greater investment in the education of children and the youth is necessary especially the education of females as current research (Shah, 2010) indicates that women make up 70% of the world's poor population and carry most of the financial and other poverty-related burdens.
- ✓ The general public needs to educate itself about the politics of poverty so as to better understand a day in the life of a poor person as well as assist wherever possible through community service and development.
- ✓ Although poverty is caused and maintained at a level beyond that of the individual, poor people can also empower themselves by making use of government support initiatives as well as community development initiatives run by NGO's. This can assist them in becoming self-reliant.
- ✓ Government and business need to evaluate their development initiatives so that more jobs can be created and the economy can prosper.
- ✓ Poor people need to be educated about the National Credit Act and what their rights are as consumers in terms of borrowing and repaying loans. Research (Brobbey, 2009) indicates that many poor people are over-indebted and as such cannot escape poverty. Teaching poor people about managing whatever little money they have, teaching them about the National Credit Act and debt will demonstrate to them how they can protect themselves from being over-indebted by not borrowing money they cannot pay back.
- ✓ The increasing number of orphans in the country demands that people become more compassionate and adopt these children, invest in their futures and in the future of the continent by educating them and loving them.
- ✓ The elimination of government corruption can make significant changes in the lives of poor people.
- ✓ Government can also change the economic state of the country as well as reduce the huge gap between the rich and the poor by taking care of all its citizens. This entails providing support for small businesses as well as tackling the issue of crime which has caused a major brain drain in the country.

References

Aginam, O. (2006). Global governance of HIV/AIDS and development. In M. Smith (Ed.), *Beyond the African tragedy: Discourses on development and the global economy* (pp. 139-154). London: Ashgate.

Andiman, W. (1995). Medical experts of AIDS: What do children witness? In S. Geballe, J. Gruendel & W. Andiman (Eds.), *Forgotten children of the AIDS epidemic* (pp. 32-49). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Antonucci, T.C., Langfahl, E.S., & Akiyama, H. (2004). Relationships as outcomes and contexts. In F.R. Lang & K.L. Fingerman (Eds.), *Growing together: Personal relationships across the lifespan* (pp. 24-44). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Avert. (n.d.). *The impact of HIV upon South Africa.* Retrieved January 19, 2011, from http://www.avert.org/aidssouthafrica.htm

Blieszner, R., & Roberts, K.A. (2004). Friendship across the life span: Reciprocity in individual and relationship development. In F.R. Lang & K.L. Fingerman (Eds.), *Growing together: Personal relationships across the lifespan* (pp. 159-182). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bond, V. (2003). *Stigma when there is no other option: Understanding how poverty fuels discrimination toward people living with HIV in Zambia*. Retrieved April 8, 2009, from http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/Files/pubs/pubs/books/oc50/oc50/oc50Ch10.pdf

Boyatzis, R.E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Bradbury, B., Jenkins, S.P., & Micklewright, J. (2001). A dynamic view of child poverty. In B. Bradbury, S.P. Jenkins & J. Micklewright (Eds.), *The dynamics of child poverty in industrialized societies* (pp. 1-23). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bradshaw, T.K. (2007). Theories of poverty and anti-poverty programs in community development [Electronic Version]. *Journal of the Community Development Society, 38*(1), 7-25. Retrieved March 5, 2009, from http://www.rptconline.org

Brobbey, P.A. (2009). Debt burden and poverty in Africa. In T. Shiraishi, T. Yamagata & S. Yusuf (Eds.), *Poverty reduction and beyond: Development strategies for low income countries* (pp. 21 - 30). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre. (n.d.). *Children and poverty: Some questions answered*. Retrieved June 12, 2010, from http://www.childhoodpoverty.org/index.php/action=documnetfeed/doctype=pdf/id=46/

Chisholm, L. (2004). *The state of South Africa's schools*. Pretoria: HSRC. Retrieved February 11, 2009, from http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za

Chronic Poverty Research Centre. (June 2007). *Drinking into deeper poverty: The new frontier for Chronic Poverty in Uganda, Policy Brief No. 1/2007*. Retrieved November 7, 2011 from http://www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/publication_files/CPRC-UG_PB_2007-1.pdf

Collier, P. (2007). *The bottom billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Coolican, H. (2006). *Introduction to research methods in psychology* (3rd ed.). London: Hodder Arnold.

Corcoran, M. (2001). Mobility, persistence and the consequences of poverty for children: Child and adult outcomes. In H.S. Danzinger & R.H. Haveman (Eds.), *Understanding poverty* (pp. 127-161). London: Sage.

Dadzie, D.S. (2009). Perpetuators or alleviators? The politics of globalisation and poverty in Africa. In T. Shiraishi, T. Yamagata & S. Yusuf (Eds.), *Poverty reduction and beyond:*

Development strategies for low income countries (pp. 31-42). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Dane, F. (1990). *Research methods*. Pacific Grove, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Deacon, H., Stephney, I., & Prosalendis, S. (2005). *Understanding HIV/AIDS stigma: A theoretical and methodological analysis*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

De Bruyn, T. (1998). *HIV/AIDS and discrimination: A discussion paper*. Retrieved June 12, 2010, from http://www.aidslaw.ca/publications/interfaces/downladFile.php?ref=46

Dovidlo, J., Major, B., & Crocker, J. (2000). Stigma: Introduction and overview. In T. Heatherton, R. Kleck, M. Hebl & J. Hull (Eds.), *The social psychology of stigma* (pp. 1-28). New York: Guilford Press.

Draimin, B., Hudis, J., Segura, J., & Shire, A. (1999). A troubled present, an uncertain future: A case study of well adolescents in families with AIDS. In S. Taylor-Brown & A. Garcia (Eds.), *Prevention issues and approaches* (pp. 37-50). Yale University Press.

Frazer, S., Lewis, V., Ding, S., Kellett, M. & Robinson, C. (2004). Middle childhood. In S. Frazer, V. Lewis, S. Ding, M. Kellett & C. Robinson (Eds.), *Doing research with children and young people* (pp. 161-174). London: Sage.

Giese, S., Meintjes, H., & Monson, J. (2005). Schools as nodes of care and support for children affected by HIV, AIDS and poverty. In M. Jacobs, M. Shung-King & C. Smith (Eds.), *South African Child Gauge* (pp. 37-42). Cape Town: University of Cape Town Children's Institute.

Gough, J., Eisenschitz, A., & McCulloch, A. (2006). *Spaces of social exclusion*. London: Routledge.

Greathead, E. (Ed.) (1998). *Responsible teenage sexuality: A manual for teachers, youth leaders and health professionals.* Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa, Pretoria: Academica/Van Schaik.

Hankel, W. & Isaak, R. (1983). *Modern inflation: Its economics and its politics.* Lanham, NY: University Press of America.

Henry, G. (1998). Practical sampling. In L. Bickman & D. Rog (Eds.), *Handbook of applied social science methods* (pp. 101-126). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Hoogeveen, J.G., & Ozler, B. (2006). Poverty and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa. In H. Bhorat and R. Kanbur (Eds.), *Poverty and policy in post-apartheid South Africa* (pp. 59-94). Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

Katsumi, H. (2009). What is happening to "poor Africa"? In T. Shiraishi, T. Yamagata & S. Yusuf (Eds.), *Poverty reduction and beyond: Development strategies for low income countries* (pp.146- 163). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kohen, D. (2000). *Women and mental health.* London: Routledge.

Lang, F.R., & Fingerman, K.L. (2004). Coming Together: A Perspective on relationships across the life span. In F.R. Lang & K.L. Fingerman (Eds.), *Growing together: Personal relationships across the lifespan* (pp. 1-23). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leatt, A. (2006a). Child poverty: Its meaning and extent. In J. Monson, K. Hall, C. Smith & M. Shung-King (Eds.), *South African Child Gauge* (pp. 19-23). Cape Town: University of Cape Town Children's Institute.

Leatt, A. (2006b). Income poverty in South Africa. In J. Monson, K. Hall, C. Smith & M. Shung-King (Eds.), *South African Child Gauge* (pp. 24-30). Cape Town: University of Cape Town Children's Institute.

Leon-Guerrero, A. (2005). *Social problems: Communities, policy and social action*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Lindsay, G. (2000). Researching children's perspectives: Ethical issues. In A. Lewis & G. Lindsay (Eds.), *Researching children's perspectives* (pp. 3-20). London: Open University Press.

Lines, T. (2008). *Making poverty: A history*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

Masson, J. (2000). Researching children's perspectives: Legal issues. In A. Lewis & G. Lindsay (Eds.), *Researching children's perspectives* (pp. 34-45). London: Open University Press.

McCarthy, C., & Dimitriadis, G. (2001). Labelling resentment: Re-narrating difference. In G. Hudak & P. Kihn (Eds.), *Labelling: Pedagogy and politics* (pp. 225-234). London: Routledge Falmer.

McKay, J. (2004). Crisis in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In D. Kingsbury, J. Remenyi, J. McKay & J. Hunt (Eds.), *Key Issues in Development* (pp. 142-163). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Meintjes, H., Budlender, D., Giese, S., & Johnson, L. (2005). Social security for children in the time of HIV/AIDS: The (mis)use of foster care? In M. Jacobs, M. Shung-King & C. Smith (Eds.), *South African Child Gauge* (pp. 32-36). Cape Town: University of Cape Town Children's Institute.

Meth, C. (2008). *Basic income grant: There is no alternative*, Working paper no. 54 (pp. 1-51). University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Development Studies. Retrieved July 22, 2010, from http://sds.ukzn.ac.za/files/WP54.pdf

Millward, L. J. (2000). Focus groups. In G.M. Breakwell, S. Hammond, & C.F. Schaw (Eds.), *Research methods in psychology*) (2nd ed.) (pp.303-324). London: Sage Publications.

Montgomery, H., Burr, R., & Woodhead, M. (Eds.). (2003). *Changing childhoods: Local and global* (4th ed.) London: Wiley & Sons Ltd in association with The Open University.

Muthukrishna, N. (2005). Research methodology and design. *Mapping barriers to basic education in the context of HIV and AIDS: A report on research conducted in the Richmond District, KwaZulu-Natal.* Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Naicker, S. (2006). *HIV/AIDS as a barrier to learning: Exploring the lives of affected children in the Richmond District.* Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Narayan, D., Patel, R., Schafft, K., Rademacher, A., & Koch-Schulte, S. (2000). *Voices of the poor: Can anyone hear us?* London: Oxford University Press for the World Bank.

Olivier, M., & Jansen van Rensburg, L. (2006). South African poverty law: The role and influence of international human rights instruments. In L. Williams (Ed.), *International poverty: An emerging discourse* (pp. 107-141). London: Zed Books Ltd.

Powell, J.J.W. (2002). *Stigma.* Retrieved February 11, 2009, from http://www.mpibberlin.mpg.de/en/institut/dok/full/powell/stigma/stigmapreprintJPowell02.pdf

Rein, M. (1970). Problems in the definition and measurement of poverty. In P. Townsend (Ed.), *The concept of poverty* (pp. 46-63). London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Remenyi, J. (2004). Poverty and development: The struggle to empower the poor. In D. Kingsbury, J. Remenyi, J. McKay & J. Hunt (Eds.), *Key Issues in Development* (pp. 190-220). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Richter, L. (1994). Economic stress and its influence on the family and caretaking patterns. In A. Dawes & D. Donald (Eds.), *Childhood and adversity: Psychological perspectives from South African research* (pp. 28-47). Cape Town: David Phillip.

Richter, L., Manegold, J., & Pather, R. (2004). *Family and community interventions for children affected by AIDS*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

Schiller, B. R. (1976). *The economics of poverty and discrimination* (2nd ed). Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice- Hall Inc.

Scott, J. (2008). Children as respondents: The challenge for quantitative research. In P. Christensen & J. Allison (Eds.), *Research with children: perspectives and practices* (2nd ed.) (pp. 87-108). London: Routledge.

Shah, A. (2010). *Poverty facts and statistics*. Retrieved January 19, 2011, from www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats

Smith Institute. (2004). *Conceptualizing poverty*. Retrieved February 11, 2009, from www.smith-institute.org.uk

The Nelson Mandela Foundation. (2005). *Emerging voices: A report on education in South African rural communities*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Townsend, P. (1970). Measures of income and expenditure as criteria of poverty. In P. Townsend (Ed.), *The concept of poverty* (pp. 100-112). London: Heinemann.

Tyler, F. (1998). Psychology, social policy and social development. *Psychology and Developing Societies, 9-10.* London: Sage Publications.

Van der Riet, M., Hough, A., Killian, B., O'Neill, V. & Ram, A. (2006). We struggle to learn. In N. Muthukrishna (Ed.), *Mapping barriers to basic education in the context of HIV and AIDS: A report on research conducted in the Richmond District, KwaZulu-Natal* (pp. 15-77). Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Van de Riet, M., & Boettiger, M. (2009). Shifting research dynamics: Addressing power and maximizing participation through participatory research techniques in participatory research. *South African Journal of Psychology, 30*(1), 1-18.

Wafula, R.J. (2009). Poverty in Africa: An inherited, created and superimposed epidemic. In T. Shiraishi, T. Yamagata & S. Yusuf (Eds.), *Poverty reduction and beyond: Development strategies for low income countries* (pp. 13- 20). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Weiner, B. (1995). *Judgements of social responsibility: A foundation for a theory of social conduct.* New York: The Guilford Press.

Whiteside, A., & Erskine, S. (2002). *The impact of HIV/AIDS on Southern Africa's children: Poverty of planning and planning of poverty*. Durban: University of Natal. Retrieved June 12, 2010, from http://wwww.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000020/HIVAIDS_children.pdf

Wilkinson, S. (1997). Feminist psychology. In D. Fox & I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), *Critical psychology: An introduction* (pp. 247-264). London: Sage.

Winkler, G. (2003). *The courage to care: A workbook in HIV/AIDS for schools*. Southdale: Catholic Institute of Education.

University of KwaZulu-Natal

School of Psychology

P/Bag X01 Scottsville

PIETERMARITZBURG, 3209

South Africa

Phone: +27 33 2605166

Fax: +27 33 2605809

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am a Counselling Masters Psychology student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and am conducting research on aspects of adolescents' development and their reactions to poverty and the stigma associated with poverty. I will be conducting this study because my findings have the potential to help already existing psychosocial interventions for vulnerable children, in that new information, perspectives and ideas could be obtained from the adolescents.

I would like the adolescent to take part in an individual interview to begin with, whereby biographical information can be obtained, as providing the opportunity for me to get to know him or her. Following this, he/she will be asked to participate in four focus group discussions with other learners about experiences of poverty and poverty-related stigma and its influence on them as adolescents. The groups will last approximately one-and-a-half to two hours each. These will take place after normal school hours, and the researcher will make sure that this process does not negatively affect your child's schooling.

All information will be kept confidential. Your child will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time if s/he so wishes. Should any articles be published from this research, anonymity of the community, school and individuals will be maintained by not using any

identifying information. In the event that your child finds the discussions distressing in any manner, an intern psychologist will be asked to assist your child.

I am asking for your permission for him/her to take part. With this in mind, I ask that you give me, as the researcher, permission for your child to participate by signing and returning the attached form to the school. I will also be asking your child individually if they would be willing to take part in this research as the first step. No negative consequences will occur to your child if they refuse to participate.

Yours Sincerely
Siphumelele Nene
Dr Beverley Killian (Supervisor at the time letters were sent out to the school)
Phone: +27 33 2605166
Fax: +27 33 2605809

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

Parent Consent Form

I (parent/caregiver)……………………give permission for my child (child's
name)……………………….to participate in the research study on poverty and the stigma
associated with poverty.

Child's age:………..
Child's gender:……….
Home address:………….

…………….

……………..

…………….

Contact number/ cellular phone: ………………..

Signed (parent/caregiver): …………………….

Signature (Of researcher):……………………

Signature (Of supervisor):……………………..

Date: …………………………..

University of KwaZulu-Natal
School of Psychology
P/Bag X01 Scottsville
PIETERMARITZBURG, 3209
South Africa
Phone: +27 33 2605166
Fax: +27 33 2605809

Mzali /Mgadi wengane

Ngingumfundi wezengqondo esikhungweni sokufunda okuphakeme inyuvesi yakwaZulu-Natal. Ngenza ucwaningo mayelana nenhlupheko nokucwaswa okuhambisana nokuhlupheka ngendlela okwenzeka ngayo empilweni yentsha. Ngenza lolucwaningo ngoba ngikholelwa ekutheni lolulwazi engizoluthola ngesikhathi ngenza lolucwaningo luzosiza ekwehliseni izinkinga abantwana ababhekana nazo futhi luveze ulwazi olusha oluzosiza ekutheni kusizakale izingane nokuthi kusizakale imizamo yokusiza izingane.

Ngifisa kulabantwana, umntwana nomntwana axoxe nomsizi oqeqeshiwe kulolucwaningo. Bese kuthi amaqembu amathathu noma amane kulezizingxoxo axoxe mayelana nokuhlupheka nokucwaswa ngenxa yokuhlupheka. Lezingxoxo zithatha imizuzu engamashumi amabili kuya emizuzwini engamashumi amathathu, bese kuthi izingxoxo zamaqembu zithathe ihora elilodwa nesigamu kuya kwamabili. Lokhu kuzokwenzeka ngezikhathi zokufunda. Ngizowenza isiqiniseko sokuthi loluhlelo aluphazamisi ukufunda kwabantwana ngendlela engafanele.

Lonke ulwazi olutholakele aluzonekelwa noma ubani kuzona zonke izincwadi ezizobhalwa mayelana nalolucwaningo. Kuzokwenziwa isiqiniseko sokuthi laba abakade bethinteka ocwaningweni, okuwumphakathi, isikole, umntwana obekuxoxwa naye, amagama

azovikelelwa angavezwa. Uma kwenzeka ukuthi umntanakho azithole ecindezelekile kulezizimo sizomxhumanisa nabaqondene nalomsebenzi.

Ngandlela thize wena nomntanakho nikhethiwe ukuba nibambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo. Ngicela imvume yakho njengomzali ukuthi uvumele umntanakho abambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo ngokuthi usayine ubuyisele ifomu ozoyithola esikoleni ngokushesha uma kungenzeka. Ngokufanayo ngizocela umntwana ngokwakhe uma efisa, kodwa okokuqala besicela imvume yakho mzali

Yimina ozithobayo
Siphumelele Nene
Dr Beverley Killian (Supervisor at the time letters were sent out to the school)
Phone: +27 33 2605166
Fax: +27 33 2605809

Incwadi Yomzali Yemvume

Mina (Mzali/Mnakekeli womntwana)…………………ngiyavuma ukuba umntwana wami abambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo olumayelana nokuhlupheka nokucwaswa ngezizathu zokuhlupheka.

Iminyaka yomntwana:………………..

Ubulili:……………………………….
Ikheli lasekhaya:……………………..

Inombolo yocingo:…………………..

Umzali/Umnakekeli usayina lapha:……………………..

Usuku: ………………………………..

Umcwaningi usayina lapha:…………………

Usuku: …………………….

Umphathi usayina lapha:…………………..

Usuku:………

University of KwaZulu-Natal

School of Psychology

P/Bag X01 Scottsville

PIETERMARITZBURG, 3209

South Africa

Phone: +27 33 2605166

Fax: +27 33 2605809

Dear learner

I am a Counselling Masters Psychology student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and am conducting research on aspects of adolescents' development and their reactions to poverty and the stigma associated with poverty. I will be conducting this study because my findings have the potential to help already existing psychosocial interventions for vulnerable children, in that new information, perspectives and ideas could be obtained from the adolescents.

The research will be conducted in your school and I will select certain learners to participate in the study from your class list because I cannot include all learners in the study. I would like you to take part in an individual interview to begin with, where biographical information can be obtained, and this will provide me with the opportunity to get to know you. Following this, you will be asked to participate in four focus group discussions with other learners about your experiences of the issue that I am interested in researching. The group will last approximately one-and-a-half to two hours each. These will take place after normal school hours, and the researcher will make sure that this process does not negatively affect your schooling.

It is very important for you to know that what you say in the interviews and the focus groups will be kept confidential. This means that if you tell me something, no one else will know

what it is that you told me. If there are things which other learners in the group talk about, which you find upsetting, there will be an intern psychologist from the university who will be able to assist you. I will not tell your parents or teachers about the things you talk about within the groups.

It is also important that when you hear things in these groups, you must not go and tell other people who were not part of the group. This means that you are keeping the group discussion confidential and this helps all the learners in the group to feel free to openly discuss their true feelings within the group.

I would also like to record exactly what you say in the focus groups, so I will be using tape recorders and these will be kept very safe and will not be played to anyone outside of the research team.

Even if you agree to be in the process, you may also withdraw at any time if you do not want to be part of it any more. If you have understood all of these things and want to be part of this research project, please read and sign the next sheet which is the consent form.

Yours Sincerely,
Siphumelele Nene
Dr Beverley Killian (Supervisor at the time letters were sent out to the school)
Phone: +27 33 2605166
Fax: +27 33 2605809

Child Assent Form

I (Please write in your full name) …………………………………in
Grade……………………..

Please tick the one that is applicable to you

☐
  Agree

☐
  Disagree

To participate in the research process on poverty and the stigma associated with poverty.

Signature (of child):…………………..

Signature (of the researcher):…………………

Signature (of supervisor):……………………..

Date: ………………………

University of KwaZulu-Natal
School of Psychology
P/Bag X01 Scottsville
PIETERMARITZBURG, 3209
South Africa
Phone: +27 33 2605166
Fax: +27 33 2605809

Mfundi

Ngingumfundi wezengqondo esikhungweni sokufunda okuphakeme inyuvesi yakwaZulu-Natal. Ngenza ucwaningo mayelana nenhlupheko nokucwaswa okuhambisana nokuhlupheka ngendlela okwenzeka ngayo empilweni yentsha. Ngenza lolucwaningo ngoba ngikholelwa ekutheni lolulwazi engizoluthola ngesikhathi ngenza lolucwaningo luzosiza ekwehliseni izinkinga abantwana ababhekana nazo futhi luveze ulwazi olusha oluzosiza ekutheni kusizakale izingane nokuthi kusizakale imizamo yokusiza izingane.

Ucwaningo luzokwenzeka esikoleni sakho. Ngizokhetha abafundi abathize ekilasini lakho ukuba babambe iqhaza ngoba angeke sikwazi kuthi sivumele wonke umfundi ukuba abambe iqhaza. Ngicela ukukutshela ngenqubeko yocwaningo khona uzocabanga ukuthi ufuna ukubamba iqhaza noma qha.

Ngingathanda ukuba ubambe iqhaza kwimibuzo mayelana nawe. Lokhu kuzosinika ithuba ukuba ngazi ngawe nangempilo yakho. Emva kwalokhu, wena nabanye abafundi nizobamba iqhaza ezingxoxweni ezine zocwaningo. Izingxoxo zizothatha isikhathi esiyihora kuya kumahora amabili. Izingxoxo zizokwenziwa emva kwamahora esikole ajwayelekile. Abacwaningi bazoqaphela ukuthi izingxoxo azithikamezi isikhathi sokufunda kwakho.

Kusemqoka ukuthi wazi ukuthi konke okushoyo kulezingxoxo kuzogcinwa ngemfihlo. Lokhu kusho ukuthi uma ungitshela into, akekho ozokwazi ukuthi ungitshele ukuthini. Uma kukhona izinto abanye abafundi abazokhuluma ngazo ezikuphatha kabi, kuzobe kukhona umfundi oqeqeshelwa ukuba wudokotela wengqondo waseNyuvesi ozokwazi ukukusiza. Angeke sitshele abazali bakho noma othisha izinto ositshela zona.

Kusemqoka ukuthi wazi ukuthi uma uzwa izinto ezingxoxweni, ungayi ukuyotshela abanye abantu abangekho engxoxweni ukuze abanye eqenjini bakhululeke bakhulume izinto abazizwa ngaphakathi kubo. Bengithanda ukuthi ngithathe yonke into oyishoyo ezingxoxweni ngiyifake emakhasethini. Ngizobe ngisebenzisa amakhasethi omsakazo. Lamakhasethi omsakazo azogcinwa endaweni eyimfihlo, futhi angeke alalelwe abanye abantu, ngaphandle kwami owenza ucwaningo.

Uma uthanda ukubamba iqhaza kulolucwaningo, uvumelekile ukuyeka noma inini uma ungasathandi. Uma usuzwile zonke izinto engizibhale kulencwadi, futhi ufuna ukubamba iqhaza, kulolucwaningo, ngicela ufunde bese usayina ekhasini elilandelayo, elibizwa ngencwadi yemvume.

Ozithobayo
Siphumelele Nene
Dr Beverley Killian (Supervisor at the time letters were sent out to the school)
Phone: +27 33 2605166
Fax: +27 33 2605809

Imvume Yokubamba Iqhaza

Mina (bhala igama lakho ngokugcwele)………………………….owenza ibanga…………………………

Gcwalisa lapha kufanele wena

☐

Ngiyavuma

☐

Angivumi

Ukubamba iqhaza kucwaningo oluphathelene nokuhlupheka kanye nokucwasa okuqondene nokuhlupheka.

Sayina lapha:……………..

Usuku: …………………….

Umcwaningi usayina lapha:…………………..

Usuku:………………………….

Umphathi usayina lapha:……………..

Usuku: ………………………..

Confidentiality Pledge

Promise of Confidentiality

I understand that the issues discussed during the focus group discussions held by the researchers from the University of KwaZulu-Natal may be of a private nature. I therefore promise that I will not talk about the information that I hear from the other learners in the groups.

If I feel disturbed by what has been said in the focus groups, I will speak to the researchers about this.

Child's name: …………………………..

Signature: ……………………………..

Witness's name: ……………………..

Witness's signature: ……………….

Researcher's signature: …………….

Date:…………………………………

APPENDIX F: CONFIDENTIALITY PLEDGE (*ISIZULU* VERSION)

Isithembiso sokugcina ingxoxo iyimfihlo

Ngiyazazi izinto okuxoxwa ngazo ezingxoxweni ezenziwa abacwaningi baseNyuvesi yakwaZulu-Natal ukuthi ziyimfihlo. Ngiyathembisa ukuthi angeke ngixoxe ngazo kwabanye abafundi.

Uma ngiphatheka kabi ngezinto engizizwayo ezingxoxweni, ngizokhuluma nabacwaningi ngalokhu.

Igama lomntwana:……………..
Sayina lapha:…………………..
Usuku: …………………………
Igama lofakazayo:………………
Ofakazayo usayina lapha:……………
Usuku:……………………………
Umcwaningi usayina lapha:…………………
Usuku:……………………
Umphathi usayina lapha: ……………………
Usuku:…………………………..

APPENDIX G: INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURED BIOGRAPHICAL FORM (ENGLISH VERSION)

Name:
Age:
Gender:

☐ **Male**

☐ **Female**

Number of household members:

1-2	3-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-13	14+

Primary breadwinner at home:

Father	Mother	Grandmother	Grandfather	Uncle	Aunt	Other

Number of working adults:

None	1	2	3	4	5	6

Number of children at home:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7+

Access to proper sanitation:

Access to running water:

Number of meals per day (on average):

None	1	2	3

School fees paid:

Yes	No

Difficulties experienced at school (relating to money or the lack thereof):

Experiences of being stigmatized because of being poor:

Igama :
Iminyaka:
Ubulili:

☐ **Umfana**

☐ **Intombazane**

Isibalo sabantu ekhaya endlini:

1-2	3-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-13	14+

Umondli ekhaya:

Ubaba	Umama	Ugogo	Umkhulu	Umalume	U-anti	Abanye

Isibalo sabantu abadala abasebenzayo ekhaya:

Akusebenzi Muntu	1	2	3	4	5	6

Isibalo sezingane ekhaya:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7+

Nisebenzisa indawo yangasese enjani ekhaya (Esendlini noma ngaphandle):

Bakhona ompompi ekhaya/ amanzi niwatholaphi ekhaya:

Uthola ukudla kangaki ngosuku ekhaya:

Lutho	1	2	3

Imali yokufunda isikhokhiwe eskoleni:

Yebo	Cha

Ubunzima / izinkinga ohlangabezana nazo eskoleni ezihlangene nemali (noma ukungabi nayo imali):

Topic: Adolescents' perceptions and experiences of poverty and poverty-related stigma

Focus Group 1:
- Introductions
- Establishing group norms
- Signing of confidentiality pledge

Questions
- What does it mean to be poor?
- How can you tell if a person is poor? (visible indicators of poverty)
- Are some learners at your school discriminated against because they are poor? How? By what types of people?

Activity for the day
- Focus group discussion on participants' definitions and experiences of poverty and poverty-related stigma.

Focus Group 2:
- Reminder about group norms and confidentiality.
- Learners do a ranking exercise on the causes of poverty in communities.
- Learners complete biographical questionnaires.

Questions
- Why are some people in our communities poor? (causes of poverty)

Activity for the day
- Learners discuss causes of poverty and then rank them according to perceived importance.

Focus Group 3:

- Reminder about group norms
- Dreams for the future

Questions

- How do children from poverty-stricken homes view themselves in light of their circumstances?
- Are government interventions aimed at helping the poor enough?

Activity for the day

- Learners discuss government interventions and self- perceptions of poor children

Closing task

- Children discuss their hopes and dreams for the future
- Group party