

An Evaluation of the Implementation of the South African Skills  
Development Policy in the Amaoti Area

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degree of Masters in Social Sciences in the School of Social Work and  
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## **DECLARATION**

Submitted in fulfilment/partial fulfilment of the requirement for  
the degree of Masters in Social Science in the Graduate  
Programme in Social Work and Community Development,  
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I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was used and that my Supervisor was informed of the Identity of my editor. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters in Social Sciences in the Faculty of humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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## **Abstract**

The skills shortage and unequal standards of training in South Africa provided the stimulus for the Skills Development Policy. The purpose of the study was to analyze and appraise the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership (AVFL), a skills development programme implemented in the Amaoti area. The aims were to establish what changes occurred to the scheme, which was implemented on a piece of land of land with no farmer as an employer; and to ascertain whether the AVFL achieved its intended purpose of providing participants with agricultural skills. Data were gathered via one-on-one interviews with six participants and two focus groups. One major finding that emerged from the study was that the programme equipped participants with agricultural skills.

Another significant finding was that the elderly project learners did not accept being supervised by young mentors and perceived it demeaning. This resulted in a strained relationship between the two groups and subsequently led to non-productive supervision. The concurrent training of both learners and mentors also contributed to the strained relationship between the two groups. The study also found that the recruitment process did not adhere to the Skills Development Act, which prescribed that learnership participants should be recruited from labour centres. In the case of the AVFL, recruitment was conducted in the community. The use of land was problematic in that there were no resources.

Recommendations included: 1) training of mentors should be done before the implementation of the learnership and should take into account cultural implications such as age differences; 2) resources need to be available on the land including water, ablution, and sick bay.

## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

ABM	-	Area Based Management
ABET	-	Adult Basic Education Training
ANC	-	African National Congress
AVFL	-	Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership
CBD	-	Central Business District
CCM	-	Constant Comparative Method
DoL	-	Department of Labour
DUT	-	Durban University of Technology
DIT	-	Durban Institute of Technology
ECD	-	Early Childhood Development
ETQA	-	Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies
ET	-	Education & Training
EOSD	-	External and Outreach Skills Development
FET	-	Further Education Training
GPM	-	Garden Project Manager
HE	-	Higher Education
HRDS	-	Human Resources Development Strategy
IDP	-	Integrated Development Plan
ILTDP	-	Ilungelo Labadala/TAFTA Development Project
INK	-	Inanda Ntuzuma KwaMashu
ISD	-	Internal Skills Development
LED	-	Local Economic Development
LG	-	Local Government
MoL	-	Minister of Labour
NGO	-	Non-governmental Organization
NMPLC	-	Newlands Mashu Permaculture Learning Centre
NTB	-	National Training Board
NTSI	-	National Training Strategy Initiative
NSB	-	National Standards Board
NSDS	-	National Skills Development Strategy

PAETA-	Primary Agriculture Education & Training Authority
RDP -	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSA -	Republic of South Africa
RPL -	Recognition of Prior Learning
RLF -	Rainman Landcare Foundation
SA -	South Africa
SARS -	South African Revenue Services
SAQA -	South African Qualifications Authority
SAQAA –	South African Qualifications Authority Act
SDA -	Skills Development Act
SDLA -	Skills Development Levies Act
SDP -	Skills Development Policy
SLF -	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
SGB -	Standards Generating Bodies
SETA -	Sector Education Training Authority
TAFTA-	The Association for The Aged
URP -	Urban Renewal Programme
UK -	United Kingdom

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction and overview**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study is an analysis and an appraisal of the Skills Development Policy (SDP) in the Amaoti area. The focus of the study is on an agricultural learnership, the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership (AVFL) which was implemented in Ward 53, in 2005 and 2006. The study seeks to explain what occurs if a food production learnership is implemented on a piece of land that was not designated for agricultural purposes and not on a formal farm with an employer who is the farm owner. The study is informed by the local economic development (LED) theories, and those of sustainable development and the sustainable livelihood framework.

Multiple sources are used for data collection including focus groups, telephonic and face-to-face interviews of the recipients and implementers of the project. The data collected is analyzed using qualitative research method. The method enables the researcher to obtain a deep insight and opinions of the Learnership participants. The findings of the study are used to sketch out the evaluation of the South African policy on learnerships.

The chapter begins by stating the problem statement and the background to the study, which traces the manpower training before the take over by the ANC-led government. It then introduces the revolution of skills development in South Africa (SA) and the legislative framework underpinning the SDP after 1994. The project site is introduced to contextualize the project under review, before clearly asserting the aims and objectives of the study. The rationale of the study then follows. A general indication of the research design and methodology are introduced and the chapter concludes by outlining how the thesis will unfold.

### **1.2 The problem statement**

The shortage and unequal standards of training in South Africa (S.A.) are a hindrance to the development of the country and contribute to the unemployment of a majority of South Africans. In general S.A. is experiencing an investment crisis, both foreign and domestic, especially fixed investments which create new jobs because money is spent by businesses

on building new factories or buying new machinery (ANC, 1997:7). It is expensive to create jobs in high-tech industries such as the chemical and electronic industries. The costs that go into creating these jobs include items like buildings for factories, machinery, research and training of staff. These are the industries that can cause S.A. to be an effective competitor in the global economy (ANC, 1997: 14), and these are the industries where S.A. is lacking. The vast majority of employed people in S.A. are unskilled or semi-skilled. This situation is compounded by a serious shortage of skilled technicians and managers (ANC):1997). The ANC further asserted that under the apartheid system the full potential of a small part of the South African population was developed. Consequently, the new government inherited a white, male dominated management sector. In 1997 there were 16500 chartered accountants in S.A., 79 of them were black and of those only 20 were Africans (ANC, 1997:16). This scenario prevents the country from becoming an international competitor.

Most notably in South Africa the skills problem manifests itself in high levels of unemployment, unequal distribution of income, inequality of opportunities, crime, violence, substance abuse and other social ills associated with poverty and low investment in the country.

The realization of the skills plight has encouraged redesigning of the education system, the establishment of new structures and the promulgation of new policy frameworks to address the problem by the national government. For instance, in order to address the skills shortage in South Africa, the National Skills Development Strategy was introduced in 2001 (details of this strategy are discussed in chapter two), the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills (JiPSA) as part of the Accelerated and Shared Growth for South Africa (AsGISA) was launched in 2006. The JiPSA programme seeks to equip South Africans with skills in order to participate in accelerated growth. Kraak and Press (2008:347) also agree that the AsGISA initiative for South Africa identified shortages of professional skills as a major hindrance on public infrastructure and private investment programmes. At a Local Government level some municipalities are taking the responsibility to address the skills issues. In Durban the Metro has established a Skills Development Unit within the Municipality through its Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The plan conceptualizes quality of life as encompassing three focus areas; poverty alleviation, economic

development and skills development. The skills development section works with external bodies to maximize the value of programmes such as in-service training, the Student Loan Scheme, Trainee Programmes and Learnerships (EThekweni Municipality; Skills Development Unit (Leaflet). An in-depth discussion of these changes in S.A. is introduced in the background section of this thesis. This revolution of skills development seeks to address the skills deficits in recognition of the social ills mentioned above.

### **1.3 Background to the Study**

In South Africa (SA) the formal education system excluded skills training in its main stream learning. This exclusion produced matriculants and even university graduates without skills. The situation necessitated the establishment of specialized institutions such as technical colleges, training centres and now Further Education Training colleges (FETs) to offer training in trades such as boiler-making, panel beating, electricity and internships for lawyers and accountants. Furthermore, some of those South African institutions kept out a large number of South Africans on the basis of entrance requirements which the applicants did not meet.

In recognizing the shortage of skills amongst Blacks and lack of equity in workplaces, the government together with the minister of Labour introduced the Employment Equity Act (EEA) of 1998. The EEA aims to stop unfair discrimination in the workplace and to build a work force that represents all South Africans.

In narrowing the gap in skills attainment amongst the South African workforce, the government has also introduced the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programme. The RPL recognizes the skills attained outside of the formal schooling system. From these developments learnerships are but one component of the spectrum of training in SA. Since 1998 the learnership model of work place training has been promoted and is in progress.

The shortage and the dissimilarity of skills was a direct result of subjecting South Africans to different education standards and consequently, the disparity in skills attainment by different race groups. In acknowledging of this imbalance in qualifications the Minister of Labour (MoL) proposed a National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) in 2001 which aimed at broadening the skills development concept to include all South Africans (National Skills Development Strategy, 2001:23)

Broadening the skills development concept meant the introduction of the institution known as the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) whose role is to oversee the reconstruction and redevelopment of education and training in South Africa. The institution is regulated by the SAQA Act of 1995 (EDUTEL: Skills Development; 15221:12). SAQA has two focus areas namely Standards Setting and Quality Assurance. To ensure effectiveness in these focus areas SAQA established sub-structures to execute these responsibilities on behalf of SAQA. These sub-structures are the National Standards Bodies (NSBs) and the Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs), and the Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs) (EDUTEL; Skills Development, 15521:21) The NSBs are responsible for recommending standards and qualifications to the SAQA and SGBs are responsible for generating standards and recommending them to the NSBs. The ETQAs ensure the quality of learning achievements (EDUTEL; Skills Development, 15521:22) All these changes in the education system discussed above followed a skills development revolution which had begun in the earlier years.

The actual revolution of the skills development in South Africa dates back to 1991, in the transition era in the country, when the National Training Board (NTB) of the transitional government developed the national training strategy. This board was, however, seen as not representing all interest groups, as it neglected the interests, for example, of disabled people and women; and it was in 1993 replaced by “a more representative task team.” (DoL, n. d.:3). In 1994, after the first democratic elections and takeover by the new government this body produced a report called the National Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI) that argued for the integration of education and training, the provision of education and training that is congruent with national needs. The NTSI advocated for a nationally agreed framework of standards and qualifications and a credit system that allowed for portability, for articulation and progression (DoL, n. d. 3). The Minister of Labour (MoL) adopted these policies and commissioned the development of legislation in skills development. The process resulted in the promulgation of the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 (SDA) and the Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999 (SDLA).

The main aim of the SDA is to develop and/or improve the skills of the people of South Africa. Chapter four of the Act prescribes the establishment of learnerships as one of the

programmes to address the skills shortage in the country. According to the Act, learnerships combine structured learning at colleges or attendance at Further Education Training colleges (FETs) and other institutions of learning with practical work experience of a specified nature and duration done in the workplace. The learnership training leads to an occupational qualification registered by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (Section 16 (a) (b) (c)).

### **1.3.1 Overview of Learnerships**

*Who qualifies for a learnership?*

According to the learnership guide from the Department of Labour, learnerships are not restricted to any age group. This means that learnerships are available for young people leaving schools and colleges, for unemployed people as well as for those already in jobs. The only condition that the government stipulated regarding the selection of people for a learnership is that the selection of people should adhere closely to the equity targets of 85% of learners to be black, 54% be women and 4% be people with disabilities.

The SDA allows employers to offer learnerships to their employees or unemployed people. To address the training costs, the SDA makes provision for the funding of learnerships through the Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999 (SDLA). The funding for learnerships covers all the areas of the programme: education and training, mentoring, supervision and assessment. (DoL, 2001:2-4). The employers offer learnerships because they are a learnership party that pays the skills development levy. The skills development levy is a compulsory levy scheme for the purpose of funding education and training. Section 3, 1(a) of the SDLA stipulates that the levy of 1% of the leviable amount is payable by the employer to the South African Revenue Services (SARS). Learners are paid the learner allowance whilst the learnership is in progress. The allowances and conditions are agreed with each learner before the programme begins.

*Who are involved in a learnership and what are their roles?*

A learnership is based on a legally binding agreement, the Learnership Agreement, between the learner, the employer and training providers, with a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) and Department of Labour also playing significant roles. The Act places obligations on all three parties to the Learnership Agreement. For all the three

parties to the agreement the document states their rights and responsibilities to the learnership concerned. A SETA's role is to organize and facilitate the funding of the learnership in a specific area of the economy and to ensure that the training is of the required standard (quality assurance). The Department of Labour recruits, selects and refers unemployed people who meet the minimum criteria for a particular learnership to employers looking for learners. For this reason unemployed people are encouraged to register as work seekers at the Labour Centres (DoL, n. d. 2-4)

Although learnerships are a government programme and are a top-down solution, the introduction of the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership was community driven in the sense that the people initiated the process.

In 2005 One hundred and thirty-five (135) people, who were growing crops or vegetables in an area known as the "buffer strip" (by the local residents from Amaoti), approached The Association For The Aged (TAFTA), a non-governmental organization (NGO) operating in Amaoti for guidance. Their aim was to obtain formal training in agricultural skills. The goal was to form a legal entity that would allow them to lease land namely, "the buffer strip" for commercial farming purposes. Under the previous government the buffer strip was a vacant piece of land which separated Amaoti a Black area from Phoenix an Indian area.

TAFTA could not afford to fund training for 135 people (the number who registered for training) but guaranteed training for fifteen (15) listed people. The TAFTA Garden Project Manager entered into negotiations with the eThekweni Municipality on behalf of the Amaoti people, and secured a learnership through the Primary Agriculture Education Training Authority (PAETA). This training authority was responsible for training Levels 2 and 4 in agriculture. It has since been replaced by the Agri-Seta in 2006. Following those negotiations, the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership (AVFL) was implemented, partnering the Amaoti people and the eThekweni Municipality.

#### **1.4 Project Site**

Amaoti forms part of the Inanda District. It is located 27kilometres North West of the Central Business District (CBD) of Durban. Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu (INK) areas



together constitute an Urban Renewal Node of the Urban Renewal Programme (URP) identified by the former President, Thabo Mbeki, in 2001 as one of the five pilot Area Based Management (ABM) learning areas.

The largest part of the Amaoti area is still an informal settlement like most areas lying on the fringes of cities. This was a direct result of urban labour migration. Such areas encourage growth of social ills like violence, crime and substance abuse, which are associated with poverty and unemployment. Due to the nature of the Amaoti community, the introduction of a food production learnership, the AVFL, as a local economic development programme was significant.

### **1.5 The aim and objectives**

The aim of this study was to evaluate a specific learnership, the AVFL, to see if it contributed to skills development since learnerships are an instrument intended for human capital development, and to enhance the quality of people's lives. There is a need to understand implemented learnerships because the learnership concept is still evolving. The evaluation of the implementation of the learnership policy contributed to the growing knowledge of this concept.

The objectives of this study were as follows:

- To review the implementation of the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership in order to draw comparisons between what the policy prescribes about implementation of learnerships and what was implemented.
- To gather the views, attitudes, perceptions and feelings of the AVFL participants about the outcomes of the AVFL on their welfare and livelihoods whilst the scheme was in progress.
- To draw on the AVFL's participants views with regard to strategies, if any, that could be employed if similar vegetable farming learnerships were replicated elsewhere.

Key questions asked:

The main questions that this study attempted to address were:

- What changes occur to a vegetable farming Learnership if it is implemented on an open piece of land in a residential area with no farmer who is an employer?
- What procedures were followed to have the AVFL implemented at the buffer strip? (a piece of land that separated the Phoenix area from the Amaoti area. It attained its present name during the apartheid era).
- How was the AVFL of any benefit to the participants?

Possible indicators could be the development of skills, food security and increased income levels.

### **1.6 The rationale of the study**

South Africa, like other developing countries, is influenced by the rapid technological advances of the twentieth century which places pressure on education systems to produce people with diversified skills. This acknowledgement to multi-skill people induced a shift in thinking of education for employment towards education for employability (EDUTEL: Skills Development, 2006: 55). Learnerships and skills programmes are projects intended for multi-skilling people so that they are employable. The ultimate goal is to address unemployment and poverty. Therefore, any successful implementation of learnerships should contribute towards the betterment of people's lives. This learnership's evaluation attempted to answer the following questions: Has the AVFL changed people's lives? And can it be replicated?

### **1.7 Research Methodology Design**

This analytical and evaluative study seeks to explain the outcome of the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership in order to predict outcomes for learnerships implemented under similar circumstances. The processes add rigour, breadth, richness and depth to the enquiry as experiential data of project participants is gathered. The researcher believed that to evaluate the implementation of the AVFL, the views of the recipients should be known. Multiple sources utilized included observations, conversations, formal semi-structured interviews, focus groups, journals and media publications. Conducting individual semi-

structured interviews enables the researcher to choose informants with different contributions to make, whether influenced by their insights, knowledge or position they hold. Focus groups ensure that the researcher collects different ideas. (Denscombe, 2003:167)

The AVFL had 105 participants in all. The researcher targeted all of the AVFL learners but separated two broad categories of participants namely farmers and mentors for data collection purposes. For the sampling for interviews ten (10) farmers were selected for individual interviews to give the study enough scope to explore pertinent issues of the scheme. The researcher also ensured this sample included both sexes, youth (18-35 years) and adults to ensure a broad representation of opinions for data collection. (Fink, 1995:165). The sampling for two (2) focus groups targeted twenty (20) mentors for data collection. The focus group method is suitable for this study because the topics for discussions are not of “delicate, controversial or personal nature,” which could block the flow of discussions (Folch-Lyon and Trost, 1981:445).

For interviews and the focus groups the instruments applied for interviews were semi-structured questions. Open ended questions were formulated for the focus groups.

The data analysis employed the Constant Comparative Method (CCM). This method of data analysis includes the following steps. The reference coding of the raw data, unitizing data according to meanings, categorization of data and the identification of themes and their interrelatedness and finally developing generalizations and writing of a report.(the CCM is discussed further in the chapter on Research Methodology).

### **1.8 Structure of the Thesis**

In order to gain a better understanding of the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership, the study introduces literature on skills development in the literature review (chapter two). The local economic development theories with greater emphasis on those postulated by Nel (1999) are also introduced as the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter three discusses the Learnership under review in details in order to provide understanding of what really happened in the programme.

The research methodology and methods is covered in chapter four.

The presentation of collected data and analysis will then follow in chapter five. Data analysis leads the study to a discussion of the findings and links the theoretical framework to the current reality. The study assists in isolating those changes that occur to a vegetable farming learnership that is implemented in a residential area with no farmer who is an employer before making recommendations and conclusions in the last chapter.

### **1.9 Conclusion**

The chapter introduces a discussion on the skills problem in South Africa and how the government is attempting to address it. At this stage I conclude that the South African government is committed to finding a solution to the problem of skills in the country as more programmes to address the skills shortage are introduced. The following chapter focuses on the literature review.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature on the human resources issues, such as education, training and work placement, which influenced the development of the Human Resources Development Strategy (HRDS) in SA. The HRDS is perceived as the overarching master plan from which the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) flows. It was adopted in order to contextualize the study. The discussion on the NSDS gives rise to the education and training issues and the learnership concept. The learnership concept is a re-organized South African model of the apprenticeship concept which is adopted worldwide, more especially in countries such as Britain, New Zealand, and South Korea. In SA the government has put in place formal strategies to demonstrate its intent and commitment to skills development.

In this chapter the learnership theory is examined based on its design, how it operates and the legislation underpinning the concept thereof. This discussion will also incorporate a number of critical elements that are considered crucial in the context of this study, emanating from the studies that have been conducted on the subject of learnerships.

For practical purposes the discussion in this chapter takes place in three main parts. The first part explores the Human Resource Development (HRD) strategy. This section focuses on issues pertaining to the economy, education and training, and human resources. As highlighted by Van Dyk et al (1992) who established a critical link between economic growth and human resource demand and stated that there is evidence that these two factors are linked. The second part of the chapter focuses on the discussion of the NSDS with the aim of providing a background to the examination of the learnership concept. The third part focuses on the theoretical framework underpinning the concept of learnerships. This section incorporates local economic development theories, livelihoods framework approach and sustainable community development theory. It is understood that learned people are able to improve their standard of living because they are employable. McGrath, (2005:1) argues that there is recorded proof that people with more education and training

are more likely to be successful in accessing income generating opportunities than their counterparts.

## **2.2 Part 1: The human resource development (HRD)**

### **2.2.1 The Rationale behind HRD and the link between Education and Economy**

Human resource development addresses human capabilities, abilities and knowledge of how to meet the people's needs in order to improve their standard of living and quality of life. It is a process in which the people acquire and develop the knowledge and skills necessary for occupational tasks (ANC, RDP 2004:61). Education and training become critical if human resource development is to be achieved. Education and training will have a positive impact on the fundamental aspects of peoples' lives, such as, finances, social relations, and health. According to Van Dyk et al (1992) it is a generally known fact that the demand for human resources is influenced by economic growth, structural economic changes, technological changes and production expenses. Of significance, is the critical link between economic advancement and human resource demand. In order to satisfy the human resources demands, there is a need for special skills levels which Van Dyk et al (1992:28) distinguishes as follows:

LEVEL 1: People with higher education degrees or equivalent qualification- postgraduate- or alternative people who are in executive management positions.

LEVEL 2: People with standard ten (10) plus further formal training at technical institutions, technikons or colleges

LEVEL 3: People with standard eight to ten (8-10) and

LEVEL 4: Semi-skilled and unskilled and those in temporary employment.

The relationship between the economy and human resources in South Africa (SA) is conceptualized differently by Kraak (2008) who advances the argument that in SA there is a "disconnection and misalignment characterizing the education–economy relationship". Kraak (2008) contends that the dissociation between education and economy may be attributed to a number of factors such as:

a) The country's economy is not creating jobs to absorb skilled personnel, such as university graduates, especially in the manufacturing sector where most permanent jobs are created.

b) The skills offered by institutions of higher learning are not needs-based. Apart from the discrepancies between educations and the economy the SA education and training system has been plagued with limitations inherited from the apartheid era.

Erasmus and Steyn (2003:26) agree that there is a disconnection and misalignment in the economy-education relationship, arguing that education and training policy is loosely linked to industrial policy. In some instances this disconnection results in the oversupply of qualifications in categories where there is already an oversupply of qualified people and in that way saturating the limited labour market. These problems extend to workplaces as well.

The SA political transition brought about reconstruction of the workplaces through the bargaining strategy in an attempt to address the current economic climate. According to Webster and Van Holdt (2005), the thrust of the bargaining strategy was to establish a new framework linking grading, training, skills development, pay and work organization in industry. The resultant effect of these agreements are narrowed wage gaps, wage levels determined by the level of workers' skills; and restructuring based on more skilled work and higher value added as the workforce became more skilled.

Instead of improving workers' lives, new problems emerge with those changes. Webster and Van Holdt (2005:17) assert that there is a growing trend towards South African employers reconfiguring contracts of employment, with the aim to reduce costs and exposure to the risks that accompany employment.

### **2.2.2 The Education and Training System in SA**

Before 1994, racial and gender discriminatory policies were central to both the education and training system. For example, there were different educational systems developed for different races, and there were courses that were designed for men or women only. Another problem that existed during the apartheid era was that the educational and training systems themselves grew apart in ways that are problematic. For instance, the apartheid regime established technical colleges for people who were not successful in the mainstream educational institutions. (Dlamini, 2004). Furthermore, Kraak (2008) stated that after the democratic government had taken over there were still problems identified within the

educational system. The outcome from education as a system is still not satisfactory. There is a decline in growth and achievement which is witnessed post 1994 as articulated by Kraak (2008). The identifying features of this decline incorporate: education's declining national budget since 2000; low levels for provisioning for early childhood development (ECD) and adult basic education and training (ABET); declining matric pass rates; the possible capping of higher education (HE) enrolments; declines in the enrolments of Further Education and Training college students and poor throughout rates in schools, colleges and universities (Kraak, 2008:2)

Concerning skills, Kraak, (2008) stated that observations indicate that SA does not face a numerically severe 'skills crisis' as yet, but a set of systemic malfunctions which need urgent attention. In essence, SA is currently facing shortages of particular expertise in specialized areas. It is particularly the professions that face the largest magnitude of scarcity. The National Scarce Skills List reveals that the skills problem is far more likely to be associated with a 'critical' shortage plaguing a specific area of expertise, specialization or experience (Kraak, 2008:42). Some critical malfunctions to be prioritized include the poor employment conditions in the public sector. Poor salaries and employment conditions result in the brain drain of skilled South Africans going overseas in search of better salaries and favorable employment conditions or entering the private sector within South Africa. Another malfunction identified by Kraak, (2008:42) as needing urgent prioritizing, is the parallel of supply and demand of skills, as indicated above that these do not match the need. The Education and Training institutions are failing to provide the numerical level of new graduates in the short and medium terms. For the country to move forward, the new government prioritized the overhaul of the educational system by redressing the apartheid legacy first.

Since the apartheid education system excluded a large number of South Africans from gaining skills by subjecting applicants to different educational standards, the Minister of Labour (MoL) proposed a National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) to address the disparity in skills attainment by different races in SA. The strategy aimed to broaden the concept of skills development and to ensure the inclusion of all South Africans (National Skills Development Strategy; 2001:23)



## **2.3 Part 2: Legislation and Policy Framework**

### **2.3.1 The Legislative Mandates for Skills Development**

In order to demonstrate the seriousness and commitment to addressing the problem of skills in the country, the South African government developed laws to guide the implementation of skills development programmes. When the new government came to power in 1994, it proposed the refocusing of development on to the poor, and most prominently the developmental and pro-poor responsibilities that the municipalities must have in SA in order to address the various forms of social ills inherited from the apartheid system.. The Constitution (1996) has laid down a constitutional framework contained in the Bill of Rights, sections 24(1) (a) (b), 26(1), 27(1) (A) (b) &(c) that all structures must observe. The rights affirm the quality of life of South Africans, human dignity and equality in relation to the “full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms” and lastly, protection of the environment for the benefit of present and future generations. Therefore, the legislation of the NSDS and the Skills Development Act are founded on the principles of the Constitution.

In addition, the White Paper for Local Government (1998) emerged as a further progressive mandate in support of the constitutional requirements. Developed as an engine to accelerate the implementation of constitutional mandates the White Paper (1998:29) requires local government to play a visionary and leading role in implementing constitutional objects. Such a role includes among others promoting social and economic growth of communities in their municipalities by supporting communities (in the form of finances, technical skills and training) (Bond, 2002).

The tasks of maximizing social development and local economic growth are vested with local government to address the social needs that are essential for the well being of local people. As a guide to municipalities, the Municipal Systems Act (2000) provides a legislative framework for municipalities to work progressively towards addressing the existing inequalities backlogs and transforming the social, economic and political advancements of people in the communities. Following is a discussion of the National Skills Development Strategy.

## **2.3.2 National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS)**

### **2.3.2.1 The Importance of NSDS**

The South African's skills revolution process is driven by a plethora of laws. The three main laws that guide the skills plan are the South African Qualifications Authority Act (SAQAA) (1995), the Skills development Act (SDA) (1998) and the Skill Development Levies Act (SDLA) (1999).

The mission statement of the NSDS is “to equip South Africans with skills to succeed in the global market; to offer opportunities to individuals and communities for self-advancement; and to enable them to play a productive role in society.” (EDUTEL, 2005:7). The NSDS has five objectives and specific targets to address the structural rigidities and inequalities inherited from the apartheid system; to meet the dual challenges of social development and the requirement to compete in the global economy; to transform labour from a low skills base to one that is committed to high quality life long learning; to make the labour market more responsive and able to better cope with the consequences of poverty and diseases on the workforce, and to improve the employability of the country's workforce. In an attempt to narrow the inequality gaps and accommodate previously disadvantaged groups in skills programmes, the NSDS recommends equity targets to reach out to all citizens (DoL, n.d.:60)

To fulfil the mission stated above the NSDS sets success indicators or targets that explain what the strategy wants to achieve in five years time. For the first five years , that is, 2001 to 2005, the strategic objectives were as follows: prioritizing and communicating critical skills for sustainable growth, development and equity; promoting and accelerating quality training for all in the workplace; promoting employability and sustainable livelihoods through skill development; assisting designated groups, including new entrants to participate in accredited work, integrated learning and work-based programmes to acquire critical skills to enter the labour market and self-employment and improving the quality and relevance of provision.

*Review of NSDS Phase One:* A review of the first phase of the strategy by Kraak (2008) identified successes and challenges facing skills development in South Africa. The writer contends that evaluating this phase has not been an easy exercise due to data problems.

These problems included the following: The quantitative data provided by some SETAs could not be substantiated, resulting in skewed outcomes; the difficulty in tracing trained learners to confirm their employment placement status and the absence of an effective information system to provide the requisite information as and when a need arises. (2008:10). Regarding the AVFL in May 2007 the learnership was not registered in the Department of Labour register yet it was completed in July 2006.

Regarding the NSDS Kraak (2008) identified a number of problems that were still plaguing the skills strategy. Those problems included the following:

*The collapse of a demand-led model:* Kraak (2008:13) states that the criticism of the old training system was that it was ‘provider-driven’ or ‘supply-led’. That was because the training provided highlighted a disconnection between provisions in particular fields on the one hand, and employment opportunities in those fields on the other. According to the writer, ‘Learnerships’ were envisaged as a solution to undo the problems linked with supply-side provision. It was argued that Learnerships would comprise learning programmes closely linked to employers’ actual skill needs. In practice learnership trainings gave preference to unemployed youth over employed youth. The outcome was a diversion to the origins of the NSDS which sought to develop a demand-led training sensitive to employer skill needs in the workplace. In addition, Grawitzky, (2006) cited in Kraak (2008) suggests that the bulk of Learnerships offered have been at NQF Levels 1 and 2 (entry-level skills), and most of these beneficiaries have not found sustainable employment. The situation that is described by both Kraak and Grawitzky fits the Learnership under review in that all of its participants were 18(2) Learners and the training was in NQF Level 2.

Even though the NSDS is a national skills development plan, some local authorities have developed their own skills development programs. This study will explore the eThekweni Municipality Skills Development Plan because the area of study (Amaoti) falls within the jurisdiction of eThekweni municipality. The eThekweni Municipality has a Skills Development Unit operating to fulfil the mandate to promote social and economic development of the Metro. In its IDP, the Municipality identifies three areas of focus, which include amongst others skills development, in order to improve people’s quality of life. Skills Development operates within two components: Internal Skills Development

(ISD) and External and Outreach Skills Development (EOSD). It is through the EOSD that the Municipality works with external bodies to maximize the value of skills development programmes such as learnerships (eThekweni Municipality, Skill Development Unit's pamphlet). The following discussion focuses on the policy that guides the implementation of the NSDS.

### **2.3.2.2 Policy underpinning NSDS**

#### **a) The South African Qualifications Authority Act (1995)**

In order to ascertain quality control of skills development programmes, the government formulated an overarching structure known as the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). This South African Qualifications Authority Act (1995) makes provision for the South African Authority (SAQA). SAQA's responsibility is to oversee reconstructed and re-developed education and training which reflects the objectives of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (DoL, 2001:3). To guarantee the supervision of the implementation of the NQF, SAQA undertakes the registration or accreditation of bodies responsible for moderating and auditing achievements and assignments of functions to them; the registration of national standards and qualifications; ensure compliance with accreditation and ensuring international comparability of registered standards and registered qualifications. (EDUTEL: 2005:11-13). To ensure that the implementation of the NSDS is effective, the DoL published two sets of regulations under the SAQA Act. These regulations are; the National Standards Bodies Regulations (1998) and the Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies Regulations (1998). Kraak (2008:14) argues that creating these bodies has contributed to governance problems as 23 SETAs had to cooperate with all these bodies in order to execute all of their functions and capacity problems emerged as a stumbling-block. There are other pieces of legislation that contribute to the skills programs in SA but for the purpose of this study the researcher is going to examine the Skills Development Act which discusses the learnership framework.

#### **(b) The Skills Development Act (SDA) (No. 97 of 1998)**

The Skills Development Act (1998) directs the implementation of skills development training programs. It was enacted to regulate the NSDS by developing and improving the skills of the South African workforce. Its ultimate aim is to improve their quality of life; increase prospects of work and labour mobility; improve productivity in the workplace;

and to promote self-employment. In essence the Act aims to contribute towards developing the human capital so that people can become self reliant.

How does the Skills Development Act intend to achieve all these objectives?

In order to achieve the objectives of the NSDS and SDA, the DoL established the following institutions and programmes: the National Skills Authority, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), Learnerships, Skills Programmes, The Skills Developing Planning Unit (and labour centres), the National Skills Fund, the levy/grant system, and encouraging partnerships between workers, employers and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (DoL, Understanding the Laws: 2001:5).

To ensure uniformity and control, there are two agencies responsible for the implementation of skills development and identification of priority areas thereof. The agencies are the Department of Labour- through its provincial offices and local labour centres; and all the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). With regard to this study the Primary Agriculture Education and Training Authority (PAETA), which later changed to Agri- SETA in 2006, approved the implementation of the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership. The SETAs are also controlled structures in that their functions are stated in the SDA (1998).

For the purposes of this study attention is drawn to, the learnerships programme, because the research is on an agricultural learnership, known as the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership.

### **2.3.3 Learnerships**

#### **What is a learnership?**

As introduced on page six, according to the Skills Development Act (SDA) (1998) a learnership is a structured learning program which combines theory and practice leading to an occupational qualification. The theory based training is done at a college or training centre with on-the-job training executed in industry-the workplace. Learnerships are based on a learnership agreement signed by three parties who are an employer (s), a learner (s) and a training provider. The formalized learning is to be provided by an accredited Education and Training (ET) provider (for example, university of technology, a college, or

private provider). Learnership agreements are to be drawn up to specify conditions of employment and practical work experience, and when the learner would be released to attend training classes. And finally, all of this training and practical work experience is to culminate in a nationally recognized qualification (Kraak, 2008).

The concept of a learnership is basically the same as that of an apprenticeship or internship, as both concepts incorporate theoretical and practical trainings. The difference is that the apprenticeship is applied to a few selected trades and professions such as boiler making and chartered accounting which are mostly professional and experts' jobs. Learnership can be established for any type of vocation (EDUTEL, 2005: 55)

The SDA categorized learnerships into two categories: Section (18.1) refers to learnerships for employed workers and Section (18.2) refers to learnerships for unemployed people. Learnerships were categorized in this manner with the aim of keeping record of the unemployed people enrolled in the programs. The evaluation reports of the current stock of learnerships within the period 2001-2005 indicate that there has been a significant increase in the enrolment of unemployed people in learnerships. According to Kraak (2008) this target was exceeded as 88 410 unemployed people entered learnerships and another 21 327 had become apprentices. However, Kraak (2008) argues that there is little evidence of how these Learnerships have been in terms of successes for learners to acquire sustainable employment.

With regard to equity targets the success indicator aimed to ensure that 85% of learnerships entrants are Black, 45% are women and 4% are people with disabilities. As for the period in question the success rate for learnerships in this objective was Blacks 82%, women 43% and disabled people 2% (Kraak, 2008: 302). The results attained are below the minimum requirement of the NSDS intended objective

After having put the legislation and policy underpinning implementation of the skills development in perspective, it is equally important to examine legislation and policy framework that mandate the bigger partner in a learnership, who is the Local Government, to promote social and economic development, before analyzing the theoretical framework thereof.

## **2.4 The Theoretical Framework for Skills Development**

### **2.4.1 The Local Economic Development (LED)**

According to Shragge (1993) community economic development is a response to the failure of our advanced capitalist system to meet the basic needs of people. Furthermore the writer asserts that, the current economic system is failing people, as it is characterized by job losses with high and persistent levels of unemployment as well as few jobs created. If ever there are new jobs created, they are in the service sector where wages are very low. This leads to a proportionate increase in low-wage workers. The context described above has compelled the community to turn to the local economy as a sector to develop them and the State has chosen community organizations as partners in finding solutions to people's problems.

In order to address the challenges mentioned above, the South Africa government introduced the Local Economic Development programme to respond to the economic needs of local communities. Local economic development (LED) is a process of responding to the defined needs and problems of a community by the community following their joint recognition of those. It is often initiated by local actors with or without the support or intervention of external agents. In attempting to identify what LED is, Nel (1999) quotes the definition advanced by Zaaijer and Sara (1993:129) which says,

"LED is essentially a process in which local government and /or community groups manage their existing resources and enter into partnership arrangements with the private sector, or with each other, to create new jobs and stimulate economic activity in an economic era".

In South Africa LED is receiving attention from both the national and provincial governments as a response to the apartheid policy which was centrally driven and ignored the needs of local communities. LED programs allow local communities to initiate projects that address their needs. Nel (1999) argues that LED should not be perceived as an "alternative to regional development but rather a strategy which is currently enjoying greater acceptability in SA." LED in the South African context is characterized by the following features: A package of local interventions; economic development which is a

catalyst impacting on broader development worked out in consultation with the affected communities; participatory management and empowerment, and the need to integrate policy and poverty interventions (Nel, 1999:5-6).

Nel's own analysis of the application of LED by South Africans, advances two different approaches which are reflected in the country, namely "the authority based" and the "community based" LED approaches. The Authority Based application is where, "local authorities, in consultation with key stakeholders and sometimes with the host community unilaterally decide on development options for their locality" (Nel, 1999:8). The Community Based approach generally, "develops from within the community under the leadership of a local, non-governmental organization or community group. However, calling on external agencies for support is not uncommon (Nel, 1999:9) as the LED initiatives frequently involve public-private partnerships." He extends his argument about the LED by referring to it as a "top-down approach" because it implies a direct control by the local authority (Nel, 1999:9). Shragge (1993) also argues that partnerships in an LED, especially between local community and the external agents, particularly the State, are not innocent as they threaten the autonomy of the community in decision making.

Although many regions in SA are undergoing economic changes and restructuring, the situation is still compounded by the desperate legacy of apartheid. The apartheid regime enforced disparities and inequalities which are still in existence after fifteen years of democracy. The current government's emphasis on community-driven development contained in its Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (African National Congress (ANC), 2004) opened up the opportunity for local actors and development agencies to attempt site-specific, appropriate LED strategies (RSA, 1995 a). Local authorities are mandated by the Constitution to drive the LED.

Also of importance is that skills development strategy links to the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) through human capital advancement. The link is engendered because skills development enhances people's capabilities in order to improve their functioning and pursue livelihoods strategies. Nefjes (2000) contends that skills as well as knowledge, ability and potential to labour, good health all together enable people to pursue different



livelihoods strategy. The following section further examines and discusses the sustainable livelihoods framework to support the above contention.

#### **2.4.2 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework**

According to the United Kingdom's (UK) Department of Foreign and International Development (DFID), "a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base."(Chambers&Cornwell:1992). According to Nefjes (2000), the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework is a concept developed to help understand and analyze the livelihoods of the poor, by assessing the effectiveness of existing efforts to reduce poverty. The livelihoods approach is guided by the following principles: people-centeredness, holistic, dynamic, and building on strengths, macro-micro links and sustainability.

The livelihoods approach is people-centered because it puts people in the center of development when dealing with poverty issues. It starts with an analysis of people's livelihoods, ensuring to involve people in the process and respecting their views. According to Nefjes (2000), the sustainable livelihoods framework which comprises of the human, social, natural and physical and financial capitals is the right approach to development. All five capitals play an important role in improving the quality of life of people. People in different communities pursue multiple livelihoods strategies based on their level of vulnerability and poverty and the available assets at their disposal. Nefjes (2000) argues however that a systematized relation between people and nature is necessary to balance social and economic factors. Nefjes (2000) further puts it that natural assets cannot be substituted or created; hence it is essential to employ strategies that to protect them if sustainability is to be achieved.

The sustainable livelihood framework views people as operating in a context of vulnerability. Within that context, people have access to certain assets or poverty reducing factors. These factors gain their meaning and value through the prevailing social, institutional and organizational environment. Those transforming structures and processes influence the livelihood strategies that are open to people in pursuit of beneficial livelihood

outcomes that meet their own livelihood objectives. (Adapted from Chambers and Conway, G. (1992).

With regard to the AVFL, the informal settlement character of Amaoti presents a context of vulnerability for the community which is brought about by numerous factors including, population density, high levels of unemployment, unplanned development, trends in resource use and degradation. However, the availability of land is an important asset on which people can unleash their potential, build, advance and entrench their social and economic freedoms to sustain their life. According to the Constitution (1996), it is fundamental for every citizen to have access to land. However, in the context of this study the central livelihood capital is the human capital as discussed in paragraph one of page 12 above. Therefore, the theories discussed provide contextual basis for the study by placing the AVFL in perspective and then assist in clarifying the important indicators of the project which are; skills attainment, employment opportunities, and economic growth of Amaoti and ultimately, poverty reduction.

#### **2.4.3 Sustainable development**

According to the Brundtland report (1987), sustainable development is ‘development that meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ The definition focuses on the natural resource base to cope with development. Oelofse (2000) puts it that sustainable development is the right approach to adopt if a greater balance between social, economic and ecological factors is to be realized. The writer further argues that resources on which people depend for their survival are limited and that the population increase leads to a rapid consumption of resources at an unsustainable rate which leads to the degradation of environment and depletion of natural resources, hence posing serious challenges for community and sustainable development.

Arguably, the scarcity of resources is becoming a threat to the needs of both the present and future generations. To meet this challenge, local government has to focus on its constitutional mandates by committing itself to working closely with people. Local Government (LG) can also exploit the opportunity it has of playing other critical roles in terms of facilitating the process of ensuring local economic development. The additional

roles that the LG can fulfil include policymaker, entrepreneur/developer, promoter, catalyst/stimulator and lobbyist (Harrison et al, 2003). Oelofse (2000) argues that ‘it is very difficult if not impossible’ to achieve sustainable development, however, this writer puts it that it is important to be guided by ‘the goals and the principles of sustainable development to achieve a better quality of life while at the same time protecting the integrity of ecosystems.’

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The chapter on the literature review indicates how the South African government sought to equip South Africans with skills in order to improve the quality of their lives by addressing the skills problem in the country. Changes included establishment of institutions, strategy, and means of financing programmes and legislation thereof. Lastly, the chapter also explores theories that perceive skills development as contributing to self-reliance because training ensures human capital development, thus alleviating poverty. Concluding from the literature discussed, it appears that that the skills development issue is more complex than it was originally envisaged. Consequently, new strategies are continually being developed and introduced, such as AsGISA. This study focuses on the learnership though. The following chapter discusses the Learnership under review, the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership in details, in order to contextualize this study.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The Contextualization of the Study**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter pertains to the contextualization of the study, focusing on the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership (AVFL) as it is central to this study. The skills development revolution in SA provides the background to the study but the understanding of the AVFL implementation situates the research design appropriately. A detailed description of the implementation of the AVFL is presented in this chapter leading to the research design suitable to evaluate the scheme. The chapter begins by describing the project site as the project implementation is influenced by that context; the background to the AVFL follows to give a bigger picture of the influences on the learnership in Amaoti and lastly an exploration of the learnership implementation.

The implementation of this Learnership in the area of Amaoti originated from the gardens of The Association for The Aged (TAFTA). TAFTA is a non-governmental organization (NGO) with a branch located in Ward 53, Amaoti. The success of TAFTA gardens motivated a group of persons who were involved in informal gardening at the “buffer strip” to approach TAFTA for guidance. A detailed description of how the scheme was introduced is provided in section 3.3 of this chapter.

#### **3.2 Location of the Project Site**

The AVFL site is located in Amaoti. Amaoti is situated 27kilometres North Central Durban, in the Inanda District. The better part of Amaoti is an informal settlement with population estimates of 53,000 (Census, 1996). The character of Amaoti and its peripheral location to the city of Durban place it in a disadvantageous position. The resource allocation of Amaoti follows behind that of the city, which is a progression of the effects of the laws during the apartheid era. Hughes (1985) reports that the 1936 Land Act declared the district of Inanda a ‘Released Area 33’ which meant the area was isolated from the White S A. Such areas were excluded from the central government and KwaZulu Government plans. Effectively, meaning no government was responsible for resource allocation of the area.

Additionally, the population growth increased substantially as a result of the apartheid policy on settlement from 1946 to 1985. As a reinforcement to the segregated structure of the South African cities, the Native Amendment Act of 1952 introduced influx control measures which restricted the movement of people to the urban areas such as Durban. Those restrictions were followed by the establishment of ‘townships’ such as Chatsworth, exclusively for the occupation of Indians, and Umlazi and KwaMashu for Africans, purposefully developed to accommodate people who would be displaced by the government policies. For example, when the Cato Manor evictions in the early 1960s occurred, the population growth in Inanda increased substantially because residents of Cato Manor who were unwilling to move to KwaMashu, or who did not qualify for houses there found settlement in Inanda to be a viable option. Even the by-laws of the City were not enforced. The lawlessness of the area promoted Amaoti to serve as a reception area for the people from other areas that were unwanted in other areas, for the influx control measures did not apply.

Since Amaoti is an informal settlement area, the social ills like crime, substance abuse, violence which are associated with poverty and unemployment, are evident daily. Inanda as a district is one of the five areas that former President Thabo Mbeki cited in his 1999 Presidential Address as characterized by the highest crime rate in SA. Community members resort to different livelihood strategies, both negative like theft and positive, which may be farming in this case. However, the method of farming Amaoti people are accustomed to is having individual family plots that are used for subsistence. Even at the AVFL site before the advent of the learnership in question, people ‘owned’ private allotments to produce food for their families. The only form of collective farming that they practice is “ilima” where they come together to assist a family that does not have means, by using their labour force. This practice does not happen in urban areas for agricultural purposes; that is, collective production, instead they engage in collective saving through credit unions, for instance.

These strategies did not reduce Amaoti people’s vulnerability, but they had access to livelihoods capitals namely land and human resource. In order to improve their food security and increase their well being, Amaoti small farmers sought farming skills in order training to engage in commercial farming.

### **3.3 Motivation and background to the AVFL**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2000, the Ilungelo Labadala/TAFTA Development Project (ILTDP), commonly known as TAFTA by local community, was formalized and started operations in the area of Amaoti. The Association for The Aged (TAFTA) is a Durban based non-governmental organization (NGO), with a branch situated in Amaoti. This branch is called Ilungelo Labadala/TAFTA Development Project. From the period of its establishment in the area, the local residents, the TB patients and personnel form the Amaoti Clinic (a government institution officially opened in 1998 which is a satellite of Mahatma Gandhi Hospital) approached TAFTA for food parcels. However, the TAFTA food parcel system was unsatisfactory in the long run. If TAFTA were to issue food parcels based on the poverty levels of the area, its donations would in the long run have been unsustainable, given the large numbers of needy people.

TAFTA therefore, developed criteria for food reception which excluded the young, fit and employable community members. The issuing of food parcels by TAFTA served as a crisis intervention for families where breadwinners had died. Such families were eligible for a limited period, except in the cases of child headed families or families in which grandparents were caring for orphaned grandchildren. In order to render aid, which might be effective in the long term, TAFTA decided to respond to people's need by establishing vegetable garden programmes in year 2003. These programmes included fundraising, land demarcation, training, recruitment of personnel and gardening.

TAFTA applied for and secured funding from a number of donors financing different areas of the gardening programmes, like training, purchasing of implements and seeds and stipends for gardeners.

*Training Programmes in 2003:* In May 2003 TAFTA sent two volunteers to Valley Trust to do a two-day training in organic farming skills. On their return those volunteers helped to clear land for gardening, which was not easy. They were elderly people a male and a female.

In August 2003 the newly cleared land was demarcated for the project garden and the upper portion was designated to be used by residents of TAFTA village who had expressed

interest in vegetable farming. The intention was that they were going to supplement their pensions and keep themselves busy.

In October 2003 TAFTA invited the Department of Agriculture Extension Officer to mentor the gardeners of both sections of the garden area. That Officer saved the project money. She provided a capacity-building programme free of charge. Hers was a training course in commercial vegetable farming. She trained three new volunteers and eleven TAFTA Village residents.

*Training Results:* A vegetable garden measuring 1600 square metres was established for the ILTDP which produced spinach, cabbage, brinjal, beetroots and carrots. (2) The trained residents were given individual allotments to do their own gardening. Lastly, (3) the project garden produced enough seedlings to be grown in the gardens and the surplus sold to the greater community.

### **3.3.1 The Garden Project Extension**

The outcomes of the initial gardening exercise influenced the Project Team to expand the garden project by adding a one hectare piece of land and to decide on what possible routes to take in order to help the Amaoti community. The TAFTA team proposed two ideas to pursue in the bigger piece of land, to either develop a communal garden or to use that land to develop a nursery, as had been proposed by the Department of Agriculture. The idea of a nursery was extensively researched to establish its viability. Finally, a decision was taken that the ILTDP did not have capacity to undertake a seedlings production project and it also lacked the technical expertise in that regard. An agreement was reached to pursue the vegetable garden route again for the second time, but with a person responsible for managing the garden project. In 2005 the ILTDP Garden Project Manager (GPM) was contracted on a fixed contract, renewable at six monthly intervals.

### **3.3.2 The ILTDP Garden Project Manager**

The GPM's first task was to produce a business plan outlining proposed development of gardens. In the plan that he developed he proposed organic farming method of gardening arguing that it was suitable for the Amaoti community because the method utilized natural methods for all the farming processes. It is a system which does not require large initial

capital investment. Another reason he advanced was that organic farming was environmentally friendly given the land degradation levels of the Amaoti area. He facilitated the training of 15 unemployed men and women in basic organic farming at Newlands Mashu Permaculture learning Centre, (NMPLC) which is part of the greater Durban.

Those trained people worked in the gardens and received stipends monthly. They were also allowed to sell their crops to residents in the area. The expansion of the gardens, in which vegetables were organically produced, attracted the attention of the community members in Amaoti. In 2005 a considerable number of people who were growing crops or vegetables in an area popularly known as “buffer strip” by local people (that is land separating Amaoti from the residential area of Phoenix and it received its present name in the days of apartheid) approached the GPM for guidance. Their aim was to obtain formal agricultural skills. The goal was to eventually form a legal entity that would allow them to lease land, the buffer strip for commercial purposes. There were 135 applications in all made to the GPM by men and women who wished to be trained.

However, TAFTA could not afford to fund training for 135 people and solicited external funding to address the training needs of the 135 listed candidates. Ekhaya Business Systems Company, a private company which was owned by the Late ANC Representative Councillor of Durban North, was commissioned by TAFTA to develop a business plan, which was submitted to Saga Trust, the British funder, in order to obtain project funding. That funding was secured but was only sufficient to fund training, implements, seeds and stipends for twenty people, fifteen of whom were already learners in the TAFTA scheme.

In view of the large numbers of applicants, 135, who applied for training, the TAFTA GPM entered into negotiations with the eThekweni Municipality for an agriculture learnership programme for the Amaoti group. The Municipality secured funding for the learnership through Primary Agriculture Education Training Authority (PAETA). The formation of a partnership between AVFL and eThekweni Municipality in order to implement the Learnership is critical in the study. It influences the outcomes of the programme. A partnership of this nature is defined by Nel (1999) as an “Authority-based Local Economic Development) strategy”. He extends his argument about this type of LED



as a “top-down approach” because it implies a direct control by the Local Authority, (Nel, 1999:9). Shragge (1993) also argues that partnerships in an LED, especially between local community and the external agents, particularly the State, are not innocent as they threaten the autonomy of the community in decision making. The writer cautions that receiving funds from the state and entering into partnership with it is not a neutral process. “It is a relationship of struggle and conflict. The State not only provides resources but does so in a state that shapes in very clear terms the form of local organizations” Shragge (1993:10). The struggle and conflict quoted above result when the State puts conditions in exchange for funds. With regard to the AVFL the condition advanced by eThekweni Municipality was that the recruitment of learners should incorporate those from Ntuzuma and KwaMashu.

In consideration of reality in SA, Shragge (1993) acknowledges that the formation of partnership can not be easily avoided given the power relations between the poor communities and the State. Even those communities operating from a radical perspective do fall in the trap by demanding reforms from the State and then allowing the Government to control the means through which reform is implemented.

### **3.4 The Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership (AVFL)**

In March 2005 an application for the learnership was approved, promising 125 learnerships. Learner selection and supervision was undertaken by Durban University of Technology (DUT), which subcontracted the Rainman Landcare Foundation (RLF) as Service Provider. The Service Provider offered the National Certificate in Mixed Farming Systems, a registered learnership and hired the facilities of NMPLC for theoretical learning. The formal screening process recommended 105 applicants to be taken on for the learnership, (80 farmers and 25 mentors). The selection of personnel for this learnership was based on the following criteria. It was required that applicants should: be between 18 and 35 years, both males and females; be without income; have an existing vegetable garden and have passed at least standard 8 (for learners) and matric (for mentors).

#### **3.4.1 AVFL Implementation**

The conditions of work stipulated a seven-and-a-half hour day, five days a week, and a monthly stipend of R1050 for farmers and R1200 for mentors. Each learner was allocated a

20x20 metre plot at buffer strip on which to undertake practical work. The buffer strip is an open piece of land measuring 50 ha, but the learnership utilized 11 ha only. The 80 farmers were divided into three groups after the second week, once the selection had been completed, and each group attended one week per month at NMPLC. They were then supervised for the rest of the month by the 25 mentors, who ensured that they attended their field regularly, and carried out the practical work assigned. In the AVFL the TAFTA GPM continued the leadership role of mentoring learners, keeping and submitting attendance registers and performing liaison function amongst project stakeholders.

### 3.4.2 AVFL Learners Assessment

Regular Formative Assessment was carried out, both at NMPLC and in the field, by Rainman staff. Assessments took various forms including assignments, a test halfway through the learnership, a final examination, a Business Plan which learners had to complete and three field assessments of practical work.

Reporting on the learnership progress, RLF reports that after re-assessment, the following situation prevailed:

<b>Summary of Farmer Performance</b>	<b>National Certificate in Mixed Farming Systems</b>
-Total number of farmers who started AVFL	80
-One passed away, one dropped out	-2
-Those who demonstrated practical Experience	78
 <i>Total of 36 Unit Standards were needed for qualification</i>	
<i>Of these 25 were practical Unit Standards, 11 were fundamentals</i>	
-So, learners who passed the 25 Unit Standards	78
-Learners who passed the 11 Fundamental Unit Standards	74
-Candidates who had not shown evidence of fundamental competence At the time of this assessment	4

### **3.4.3 AVFL Learners Graduation Ceremony**

The AVFL was officially completed in March 2006. On the 25 October 2006 the eThekweni Municipality hosted a graduation ceremony of 74 Learners who had passed NQF Level 2 training on perma-culture. At this occasion the Skills Development Unit of eThekweni Municipality pledged to the gardens at buffer strip the sum of R200 000 for the provision of implements and toilets, the worm trenches and additional organic compost.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter on the contextualization of the AVFL, some interesting observations are made. The AVFL was aimed at training the youth of Amaoti only. The AVFL was implemented on an open piece of land with no farmer who was an employer, the mentors worked as supervisors on site. All one hundred and five Learnership participants were, according to the SDA (1998), 18(2) employees. Seventy-four of the eighty farmers passed their 25 practical Unit Standards.

After having presented the Learnership under review in detail, the chapter that follows pertains to the research methodology design leading the study to evaluating the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter covers all the relevant research methodology design aspects which were employed to evaluate the vegetable farming learnership under review. These aspects include target population design, sampling frame, sampling size, sample selection questionnaire design, data collection methods, interviewing procedures, how data will be analyzed and any limitations. In selecting methods to be used, the ultimate objectives of the study had to be taken into consideration, and the reasons for those choices explained.

##### **4.1.1 Research Design**

This research uses the researcher intended to utilize a qualitative data collection analysis techniques method to evaluate this study because it seeks to establish people's opinions, attitudes, ideas and preferences which they had concerning the Learnership. However, the quantitative method was applied to the section dealing with the demographic profiling of the subjects. It was relevant because from that profile a better description of the background of the respondents was understood. According to Bowling (1997:27) quantitative research deals with quantities and relationships between the attributes, it involves the collection and analysis of highly structured data. (Dlamini, N. C., 2004:4).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) qualitative research is appropriate to the study of those attitudes and behaviours best understood within their natural setting, as opposed to somewhat artificial settings of experiments and surveys. The writers also assert that in order to attain a better understanding of the subjects investigated, researchers have to make deliberate efforts to be part of the investigation. In this way they enter into the shoes of the people they are observing and studying and understand their actions, decisions, behaviours, rituals, and practices from their point of view. Babbie and Mouton (2001) maintain that one can only claim to understand events if their understanding is against the background of the whole context and how such a context confers meaning to the events concerned.

In this way qualitative research provides a greater depth of understanding of a phenomenon. These writers continue to argue that the main goal of the qualitative research method is to depict and comprehend instead of explaining human behavior. In this study the quantitative method was equally important as it provided a better understanding of the background of the AVFL participants.

### **Key Questions to be Asked**

1. What changes occur to a vegetable farming learnership if it is implemented on open land, in a residential area with no farmer who is an employer?
2. What procedures were followed to have the AVFL implemented at the buffer strip? ( A piece of land that separated the Phoenix area from the Amaoti area. It attained its present name during the apartheid era). And
3. How was the AVFL of any benefit to the participants?

Possible indicators could be skills development of participants, food security in families and increased household income levels.

The researcher chose this vegetable farming learnership because it was implemented in Amaoti where she works. It was going to be feasible to conduct this study as the project site is within easy reach. She would save extensive travelling costs to reach the respondents. Another advantage to conduct the study in the area was that she understands the political dynamics of the area. The understanding of the background of the place enables the researcher to gain insight about this particular phenomenon. The phenomenon under investigation in this study was the *learnership concept*. In South Africa the learnership concept is still evolving. Therefore, the continued research programmes of implemented learnerships would contribute to this growing knowledge by providing the practical outcomes of the learnership concept.

This research was based on the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership which was implemented in Ward 53, North Central Durban in 2005/2006 focusing on the key research questions above. The research findings will be used to sketch out an evaluation of the South African policy on learnerships, known as the Skills Development Policy, in the specific area of agriculture learnership.

In order to assess the situation and explore the feasibility of conducting the main study, the researcher conducted a pilot study. The pilot study subjected learners to focus groups and mentors to individual interviews. Five interviews and three focus groups were conducted during the pilot study. The key objective of the pilot study was to investigate what attracted learners to the learnership. The pilot study discovered that most learners were attracted by the material benefits such as employment and monetary income. It also recommended that the final study should focus on the evaluation of the implementation process of the AVFL.

#### **4.1.2 Target Population**

In order to get the answer to the research questions, explained on page 2, that the researcher had formulated about the AVFL, she engaged the Learnership population in the investigation, that is, the farmers and the mentors. Informal consultations with AVFL Project Leaders were also done continually to verify some facts. These consultations were helpful to the researcher because the project leaders kept files to store important information. In research, population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate (Sekeran, 1998:266). Regarding the AVFL, the target population was a total of 105 people, that is, 80 farmers and 25 mentors.

#### **4.2 Sampling Method**

The researcher used a non-probability sampling procedure because after the learnership was completed, it was not possible to trace some would-be respondents. According to Mouton (1996:100) non-probability sampling refers to the case where the probability of including each element of the population in a sample is unknown. Non-probability sampling was the convenient method for this particular study. The researcher approached whoever participated in the Learnership and was available to participate.

Although, the target population of the AVFL was 105, not all those participants were engaged in the study. Mouton (1996) argues that the aim of research is often to study a representative number of events or people with a view to generalizing the results of the study in a defined population or universe. There are advantages in sampling for research. According to Fink, (1995) the advantages include amongst others (a) it saves time as research is done on a few units, (b) is cheaper. It allows researcher to save money which

would otherwise be spent on travelling for example, and (c) is a practical way to collect data if the population is large.

Sampling for the final study took into consideration the sampling procedure which was employed in the pilot study. For the pilot study, which was conducted whilst the Learnership was in progress, Learners were utilized for focus groups and mentors for individual interviews. Three focus group discussions and five interviews were conducted then. During those interviews the researcher realized that learners did not feel free to articulate themselves in focus groups and most of them were shy to express themselves in a group. In order to avoid this situation and maximise research benefits in the final study, the researcher changed the sampling procedure and mentors formed the focus groups method while learners were used for individual interviews. As the AVFL learners were categorized into two broad categories, farmers and mentors, the sampling also followed these categories to ensure uniformity of responses.

*Sampling for interviews:* Of the 80 farmers, 10 farmers, (constituting 12.5%) were selected from the attendance register which the researcher used as the sampling frame. The attendance register was developed on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2006 meeting of the farmers which the GPM had organized. From the Learners whose names appeared on the meeting attendance register, the researcher selected ten names by choosing every fourth name. Identified Learnership participants were then approached individually and asked if they would be willing to engage in the research exercise. The actual number of Learners that were reached was six, which was not sufficient to represent the views of the learnership population. However, the six participants provided essential information about their own experience and opinions regarding the learnership.

*Sampling for focus groups:* Of the 25 mentors, two focus groups were formed, one with three mentors and the other six respondents. The researcher obtained more information from focus groups. In discussions, focus groups participants tend to engage themselves fully, that is, physically and emotionally as opposed to individual interviews, provided the topic for discussion is not dealing with confidential issues. Folch-Lyon and Trost (1981) assert that a group situation encourages participants to disclose behaviour and attitudes they might not consciously reveal in an individual interview.

It is important to note here that those who participated in the pilot project were not selected to participate in the final study. This enabled the researcher to gain a broad spectrum of views and to avoid prejudice to the study.

The pilot study investigated benefits of participants in the AVFL learnership. Research results indicated that learnership participants were satisfied with the material benefits provided by the scheme, such as employment and monetary income. However, the study did not evaluate the impact of the learnership to participants and the Amaoti community, because it was still in progress. The final study focused on the impact of the AVFL project and evaluated its effectiveness.

One of the reasons why it became difficult to reach out to all targeted respondents for the research was mainly because Amaoti is an informal settlement and there are no proper addresses to trace people. Local people use landmarks such as “spaza” shops to give directions. In addition the researcher is not from the area of Amaoti and not familiar with the area.

### **4.3 Research Methods**

The study used individual interviews, focus groups and observation as methods for data collection for both the pilot and the current studies. Interviews allowed individuals to express themselves freely without the influence of others especially if the question involved a sensitive issue such as political related issues. Interviews were also advantageous to the researcher in that they allowed her to control the session through making sure all questions were answered.

Two focus groups comprising of mentors were conducted in the current study. For the pilot study of the AVFL focus groups comprised learners. The reason why “swapping” of participants was done, it was to allow both groups (interviewees and focus groups) to experience individual interviewing and focus group discussions. The outcome of exposing participants to both methods enriches the study with information.



During the pilot study, the researcher also applied the observation method. On the 13<sup>th</sup> August 2007 the researcher visited the AVFL site with purpose to observe what was happening there. The researcher wanted to establish if original AVFL trainees were still engaged in vegetable farming learnership after the completion of the AVFL and whether they were adhering in organic farming principles. The visit afforded the researcher the experiential data as argued by Maxwell (1996) that it should form part of the study. What the researcher experience from pilot study was;

- Of the 80 plots belonging to original AVFL trainees, 13 plots were still owned by those individuals and were functioning.
- All of the 13 functioning plots belonged to the females
- 9 separate plots belonged to the group that was not registered for the AVFL. Those had undergone a two weeks training in vegetable farming at Newlands Mashu Permaculture Training Centre because they did not meet the selection criteria for AVFL.
- 12 separate plots belonged to the new comers who were neither learners in the AVFL nor part of the two weeks short course training mentioned above..
- Of a total of 34 functioning plots, 2 belonged to the youths and all 32 were adult farmers.
- Contrary to the initial condition of the AVFL contract of allocating a 20x20 plot to each learner for practical learning, some of the remaining farmers joined adjacent plots to increase the size of their plots.

The picture painted by the experiential data evoked interest in conducting this research as it would give AVFL participants a chance to present their side of the story.

#### **4.4 Research Instruments /Data Collection Techniques**

The research instrument used in the study is a questionnaire for both the pilot and current studies. According to Sekeran (1998:233) a questionnaire is a pre-formulated set of written questions to which respondents record their answers. In April/May 2006, the initial questionnaire was piloted to the AVFL target population. There are benefits from piloting a study. According to Maxwell (1992) pilot studies assist researchers to test their ideas or methods and explore their implication or inductively develop grounded theory. For this study the purpose of the pilot study was to help the researcher understand the new

experience of a learnership. From the pilot study the questionnaire was fine-tuned and standardized.

To implement the pilot study the sampling of the respondents placed farmers in focus groups and mentors for individual interviews. However, for the current study the farmers were selected for individual interviews and mentors for focus group discussions. Interviewees have been afforded a chance to discuss personal issues in interviews and sensitive issues especially those that pertain community leaders, in group discussions.

In the pilot study the questionnaire focused on three important areas.

First the researcher was interested in knowing what attracted learners to the learnership in the first place. She needed to be convinced otherwise from the thinking that the stipends were the attraction to the programme, given the unemployment levels in Amaoti. The empirical findings revealed that the majority of participants, especially the youth, were only interested in the stipends that were offered by the project. It emerged that most participants in the youth category (18-25), left the project after the stipends were terminated.

Second, with regard to the administration of the learnership, the researcher needed to understand it because, from the preliminary literature she had read, learnerships are workplace programmes, where in a normal circumstance the employer is directly involved in the administration of the project. However, the pilot study discovered that the AVFL was implemented in the community setting, on a piece of open land and the employer (Ethekwini municipality) outsourced the administrative responsibilities to DUT. The main study investigated the implementation procedures of such a learnership.

Third, since the skills development is an intended outcome of any learnership, the researcher was interested to know if the AVFL achieved that outcome. Responses to these questions helped to clarify the researcher's understanding of learnerships. It was that understanding which influenced the researcher to fine-tune the current research instrument.

Additionally, Denscombe (2003) argues that interviews are different from a conversation. The agenda for the discussion is set by the researcher. This is precisely what a

questionnaire does, that is, setting the agenda for a discussion and allowing the researcher to exercise a degree of control and consistency of the proceeding during the interview.

The researcher administered the questionnaire personally to the respondents, to ensure uniformity. Furthermore, the researcher had an advantage of getting first hand quality information spoken and non-verbal because she speaks the language of the participants and shares the culture as well (Skota-Deyile, 2004: 355). Where the questionnaire might have elicited some interesting lines of enquiry, the researcher pursued these in greater detail and depth. Denscombe (2003) argues that the interview data do complement the questionnaire data.

Similarly, the research instrument used in the current study is a questionnaire with semi-structured questions as implemented in the pilot study. The questionnaire was utilized to guide one on one interview in particular. Semi-structured questions allowed new questions to be raised during the interview. They also allowed for flexibility to probe and discuss issues. The researcher used a questionnaire for individual interviews because it was perceived as an efficient data collection tool for the respondents. The questionnaire also allows for measuring variables of interest thereof.

With regard to the AVFL the new questionnaire was in English, but translated into Zulu, and was administered by the researcher to the sample. The questionnaire comprised the following sections:

- Demographical Profiles

The demographic details of each subject were completed in order to present a clearer picture as to the background of the respondents. This information is useful to the researcher as it provides a contextual perspective of the living conditions of the studied population. The demographic details include age, gender, and household income before and after the AVFL and education level. Other questions focused on the following areas:

- Exploration of the beginning stages of the AVFL: that is, recruitment and project documentation.
- Workplace procedures.
- Benefits gained from the AVFL, and
- Changes in people's lives

With regard to the focus groups three open-ended questions were prepared to allow the participants to express their ideas and attitudes they had about the Learnership in detail. The role of the researcher was that of moderator as she personally conducted the group discussions. The use of a tape recorder for recording discussions was discontinued for the second group because it broke. The discussions were not stopped though since it was not going to be easy to regroup the respondents.

One of the advantages of open-ended questions is that they allow respondents to give answers even for the questions not asked. This is advantageous for the researcher who is gathering information for a particular phenomenon as it provides enough options to pursue for their study. In a focus group discussion, open-ended questions tended to arouse interaction amongst participants. That usually brings out attitudes and feelings about a phenomenon investigated as people become emotionally involved in the discussion. Furthermore focus group discussions remind people of some facts and also correct misrepresented information. The researcher got more information from the focus groups and deeper understanding of some issues that were raised during the individual interviews. In order for the study to be clearly understood some operational definitions are presented. As the study is on a learnership, it included an employer, a learner and a training provider in signing agreements. In the above sentence the word learner refers to either a mentor or a farmer. However, in the text of the study the words *learner and farmer* are used interchangeably meaning learners who tilled the soil.

#### **4.5 Data Analysis Process**

Qualitative data analysis was utilized in this study. It takes into account the consistency of the primary and secondary data sources utilized in the study. The primary data sources comprised interviews and focus groups while the secondary data sources consisted of literature such as published books, journals, training materials and legislation. Preliminary data analysis process began with secondary data sources.

Documents are a valuable source of data for analyzing theoretical frameworks and the policy process because they constitute a record of ‘the development and implementation of decisions and activities that are central to functions’ (Hakim, 2000, p.46). The vast

majority of documents analyzed in this thesis were official state documents such as the Skills Development Act, the Skills Development Levies Act and the South African Qualifications Authority Act. During this stage, the researcher read, sorted and sifted textual materials acquired during the secondary data collection stage. This process involved examining the effectiveness of the legislation supporting the skills development strategy.

Secondary data analysis allowed the researcher to become familiar with the subject and to identify relevant data for the study. It also enabled her to prepare for the main data collection and analysis stage by formulating well informed questions. This stage of analysis guided further and more focused data collection, leading to further conceptualisation and refinement of the coding system.

The next stage of data analysis focused on the primary data sources which included interviews and focus groups. This stage employed the Constant Comparative Method (CCM) of analysis developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), and incorporated Lincoln and Guba's (1985) procedural details involved in analyzing data when using the CCM (Maykut & Morehouse: 1994:126). The CCM method is a systematic qualitative methodology that provides a researcher with an explicit way for engaging in analysis of data in a manner that is challenging and enlightening (Maykut & Morehouse:, 1994:127).

The CCM method covered the following stages:

- 1) *Preparation of data for analysis*

This process involved organizing accumulated data into a clearly readable form for data analysis. Here, the researcher compiled all the field notes; transcribed audio-taped interviews and focus group discussions; translated all the IsiZulu written documents and audio-taped interviews into English and produced photocopies of these materials. All audio taped interviews and focus groups discussions were transcribed into word processing utilizing Microsoft Word Software in English. The researcher had to re-listen to the interviews in order to make sure that she has captured the conversation as it happened. Sometimes interviewees used gestures to express themselves and the researcher had to recollect the context of those gestures.

After transcribing the researcher arranged all her data materials and prepared them for coding. Here, the researcher began to code all typed data systematically. First, the researcher created two folders for interviews and focus groups, and in each folder she allocated individual files using file dividers. Each interviewee or focus group was allocated an individual file which contained transcripts and field notes related to them. The individual files were coded using the type of data, the source of data and the page number of the particular data set, system. For instance, a third page of an audio transcript which belongs to an interview with John would be coded like this: T/J-3. Coding the data enabled the researcher to identify and retrieve data easily.

After coding, the researcher made four copies of each page in each file. Photocopies were used for unitizing data and subsequent data analysis.

## *2) Unitizing the data*

The data unitizing process entails identifying units of meaning in the collected data. Units of meaning are identified by carefully reading through transcripts, field notes and documents (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:129). At this stage the researcher joined and worked with two fellow masters' students as a research team. The advantage of working in a research team can, according to Maykut and Morehouse (1994), boost energy, foster insight and add to the credibility of the study.

During this process, the researcher began to formulate broad themes based on the research questions. The themes were hand-written on flip charts, and the research team began to cut related text units and pasted them on those charts. All text units were assigned to themes based on their relevance to those themes. The data analysis process enabled the researcher to generate themes, sub-themes and further research questions which the researcher considered significant to the study.

When the data analysis process was completed the researcher prepared a preliminary research report. This report was copied and handed over to research participants for data verification purposes. The researcher intended to ensure that the report reflects the meanings of the views and opinions of research participants. In some instances, the researcher had to cross check the data between participants for consistency and

confirmation. After the verification process was concluded, the researcher began to prepare the main presentation and research findings report.

#### **4.6 The Validity, Reliability and Impartiality of Study.**

In order to ensure that the resulting interpretations of the study are valid, reliable and impartial, the measurement instrument used and its content are analysed. The nature of the instrument is better described by the “type of information it seeks, the population to which it is administered and lastly its criterion referenced validity” (Maxwell, J.A.:1996:90). The validity of the AVFL study was ensured through its content of the instrument.

In order to validate the study, the researcher made sure that the conclusions of the study have done justice to the complexity of the phenomenon being investigated. The process of validity occurred throughout the study, starting from the selection of respondents to the preparation of the final report. The researcher ensured that all selected respondents were relevant to the study and that the selection process was representative by including all relevant stakeholders. The research sample was representative because it incorporated learners from different age groups, educational levels, sexes and household incomes. Content validity indicates how well the material included in the instrument represents all possible material that could have been included. Therefore, the questions of the measurement instrument covered all important aspects of the phenomenon under investigation (Maxwell,1996).

The researcher also triangulated the data sources to increase the validity of the study, by testing the findings of interviews with those of focus groups and vice versa. The triangulation method allowed for cross checking information to make sure that they were consistent and to resolve any conflict that may have arose. For instance, one respondent claimed that even though she was a mentor she did farming at the project site. However, the visit of observation to the project site proved otherwise. She was not amongst the farmers who were continuing with farming.

The researcher also fed back the research findings to informants to get their opinion on the proposed explanation. This allowed respondents to identify with the research account and feel that it accords with their feelings.

Equally important is the reliability of the study which is measured by the consistency of information acquired by the measurement instrument (Maxwell, 1996:92). Reliability is an important aspect of doing a dissertation project and the goal of reliability is to minimize bias and errors in the research study (Dlamini, 2007:75). This study investigated the implementation of a legislated programme of learnerships. It examined whether that legislation was applicable and effective in equipping project participants with agricultural skills. The study concluded that the AVFL has equipped participants with agricultural skills, but failed to guarantee them with employment opportunities. The research results were based on respondents' views and opinions regarding the effectiveness of the project. This conclusion implies that if any other researcher conducted the same study s/he would have gotten the same results and arrived at the same conclusion.

#### **4.7 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher also observed ethical considerations for data collection by acknowledging the rights of the participants regarding data collection. Even though the consent forms had participants name written, the researcher assured the interviewees that the information given will be kept confidential (Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2000:100) In the study ethical issues surrounded the fact the researcher is a colleague of the AVFL Project Leader who is the TAFTA GPM. Assuring respondents of their rights was important as that would help to allay fears if there were any. The relationship between the researcher and the GPM might have blocked free expression of opinions especially if they pertained to him and were negative. However, those who availed themselves for research co-operated well, arrived to set venues on time and did not expect to be paid for their participation. For instance, one respondent was free to divulge that the GPM retrenched learners. Retrenchment was not the GPM's responsibility because if the Municipality knew that some learners did not finish the programme the Training Provider would not be paid.

#### **4.8 Limitations of Study**

First the study was conducted on a single vegetable farming learnership, that is, the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership. In 2007 there were no other similar completed learnerships registered with the Department of Labour in Durban which would help to compare this study. The absence of such a learnership gives this study a pioneering status. However, its outcomes cannot be generalized to other vegetable production learnerships.



Secondly, from the population of 80 learners and 25 mentors, the anticipated number of respondents was eight learners and three focus groups with each comprising seven to eight participants. The actual respondents reached during the research exercise were six learners and two focus groups of mentors with one comprising six participant and other three respondents. Therefore the representation of research subjects was not satisfactory. However the study is still reliable because the reached number of participants in interviews is six out of eight. Six people can represent a view of the majority better than two people who were not reached. The same applies to focus groups, more group discussions were conducted.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the development of the data collection methods including the design of the questionnaire and processes that were followed to do research thereof. The methods used were able to throw light on the certain areas of the legislation underpinning the implementation of learnerships.

The piloting of the study contributed to the content of the measurement instrument by shaping the views that needed to be and making it relevant for utilization in data collection. This input enabled significant changes and improvements to be added on to the questionnaire.

## **Chapter Five**

### **The Presentation and discussion of the results**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter four presented the research methodology, to address the problem areas summarized from the legislation underpinning the skills development strategy in SA and the literature review. Chapter five leads the study towards identifying the changes that occur to a vegetable farming learnership if it is implemented in a residential area with no farmer who is an employer. The data gathered from both the individual interviews and focus groups are presented in summary measures of associated tables and followed by discussions.

The structure of this chapter is based on sections. Under each section starts an introduction, followed by the presentation of the findings/results which incorporate information from interviews as well as focus groups, if it is relevant, in both the text and table. Discussions and analysis follow, ending with highlights of key issues or theme (s) for each section.

The interview schedule was divided into five sections. The first section was demographic data including age, gender, level of education, household income before the AVFL, household income after AVFL, and the source of income. This descriptive statistics assists the study in painting a clear picture of the background of the respondents. The second section deals with the beginning stages of the AVFL, which is the recruitment process. Third section is about the workplace procedures, some of which are sick leave and injury on duty. The fourth one dealing with skills gained from the AVFL and the respondents' perceptions thereof. The fifth section is about the changes realized in families and at community level, respectively. For the focus groups, that is, the mentor respondents, the schedule included demographic data as well and two statements for discussion. The first statement investigated respondents' views on the implementation of AVFL as a response to their request for formal training in agricultural skills. The second statement explored respondents' views on the Learnership as it was implemented in a residential area with no farmer who is an employer.

These statements allow respondents to critique the total picture of the scheme in question. Additionally, they assist the researcher to cross-check data from other sources, the interviews and the documents. In the presentation and discussion of results the mentor respondents' perspective is also incorporated where necessary. Lastly, the presentation and discussion of results will follow the designs of the interview and focus groups schedules.

## **5.2 Demographic Details**

Demographic details are incorporated in this chapter because the researcher intended to get views and perceptions of respondents from different age groups, different genders and different levels of education. In addition the selection criteria for the AVFL participants were based on, age gender, level of education as well as the income and garden possession criterion. Demographic profiles assisted in bringing a better understanding of the background of the project participants.

### **5.2 a) Age**

With regard to age, the researcher aimed to understand the relationship between the learners and the mentors as the majority of learners fell between the 36-59 age group and the majority of mentors belonged to the youth category. Effectively, old learners took instructions from young supervisors. Of the six learners who participated in the final study, two were of the age group 18-35. The remaining four participants belonged to the 36-59 age group. All nine mentors who participated belonged to the 18-35 age bracket.

Mentoring of learners by young mentors was not well accepted by learners both old and young. Younger learners did not accept to be mentored by their age mates either because they believed that they had similar levels of agricultural skills. Young mentors demonstrated resentfulness towards mentors; by becoming disrespectful to mentors and forming resisting cliques amongst themselves. This resulted in non-productive supervision.

Older learners perceived their supervision as demeaning because mentors had no knowledge of farming.

One older learner said,

*Mentors were young children supervising us. Some of us were angry because mentors could not even hold a hoe.*

The researcher believes that the above statement is influenced by a traditional belief that adults are knowledgeable in agricultural farming because traditionally, the knowledge of farming is passed down the generations by parents or older members of a family. However, the AVFL depicted a different picture of agricultural farming by employing young people to supervise older people. The following is a discussion of emerging themes.

*1) Relationship between mentors and learners:* Given the age disparity presented above, this theme discusses the strained relationship between mentors and learners that developed during the AVFL scheme. The concurrent training of mentors and learners caused mentors to lose recognition as supervisors in the eyes of the learners. Even though mentors' training was different from that of learners, learners thought that they should have been in charge of discharging agricultural skills because of their experience.

The outcome of the negative relationship between mentors and learners on the scheme was *the ineffectiveness of the mentoring function* by the mentors. In learnerships mentors play a critical role in assisting unemployed learners. According to Hattingh (2006) mentors are particularly important for assisting 18(2) learners (unemployed learners in a learnership) or learners at a lower National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels as they are likely to require more assistance than employed learners.

*2) Cultural factor:* Culturally, mentoring of older learners by young mentors is also not acceptable. In some cultures it is old people who can give instructions because they possess wisdom through experience. Old people are not expected to take instructions from young people. Therefore, the researcher assumes that, for learners to share a positive relationship with mentors, it would have been better if mentors had attained at theoretical and practical skills in agriculture, prior to the commencement of AVFL.

Showing disrespectful attitudes towards supervisors in a workplace situation affects the mentoring function and retards progress of the scheme, because it interferes with the quality of workplace learning. Negative attitudes discourage supervisors from committing

themselves to teaching learners. This leads to a communication breakdown which largely affects the quality of workplace learning. Hattingh (2006) further claims that the success of learnerships largely depends on the quality of workplace learning as a major part of a learnership.

3) *Involvement of Youth in Farming*: This theme has been identified to investigate the youth's involvement in farming generally and in AVFL in particular. The investigation flows from the above discussion and also emanates from the researcher's visit of observation to the project site. From the visit it was revealed that all of the twenty five learners (18-35) who participated in the AVFL from the beginning quit farming after the AVFL was completed. Empirical findings revealed that most respondents reported that the youth withdrew from farming as soon as the stipend provision was terminated. This shows the importance of receiving some income regularly upon the quality of life. This youth quitting implies that they were only attracted to the scheme because it offered stipends as opposed to interest in farming. Professor Hendricks cited by Comins (2009) argues that young people in South Africa are not attracted to agricultural careers. Skota-Deyile (2004) also states that the lack of interest in agriculture and farming is a reality which can not be ignored. It is, however, important for Amaoti youth to participate in vegetable farming programmes for two reasons:

First, in Amaoti the youth constitutes a majority of the population. According to Statistics SA 2001 Census, the youth of Amaoti constituted 53,397 as against adults who were only 39,285. The participation of the youth in agricultural farming would largely contribute to food security in the area.

Second, in SA the involvement of youth in farming is significant as their participation would guarantee the community fresh nutritious food. Nutritious food, especially vegetables, is an important component of the youth's diet. Vegetables are claimed by medical experts, to prolong the lifespan of HIV infected people and the youth fall within the group in which there is said to be a high incidence of HIV/AIDS. Former Minister of Health Dr. M. Shabalala-Msimang is known for promoting vegetables to HIV infected people.

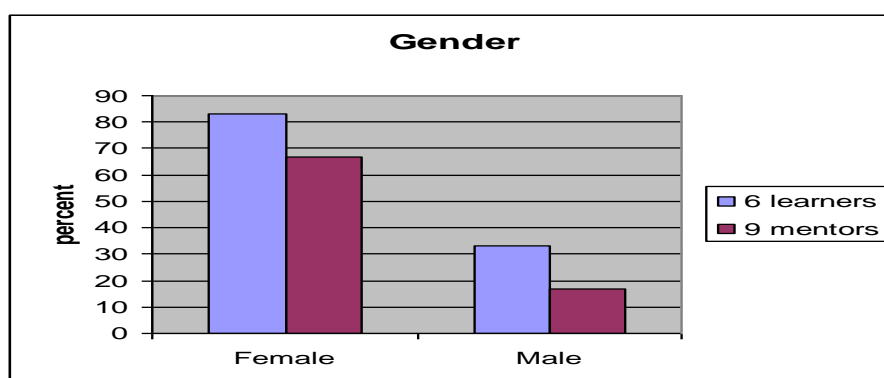
To conclude, the discussion on the age related issues generates the following key revelations:

1. *The concurrent training of mentors and learners together retarded the progress of the AVFL scheme.*
2. *The idea of having young mentors supervising elderly or age mate learners affected the relationship between the two groups.*
3. *Youth do not have interest in agricultural farming and the AVFL failed to change that perception.*

## 5.2 (b) Gender

The discussion on gender aimed to highlight the representation of both sexes in the scheme given the unemployment levels of both males and females in the Amaoti area. The outcomes of the investigation are presented below.

**Figure 1: Gender**



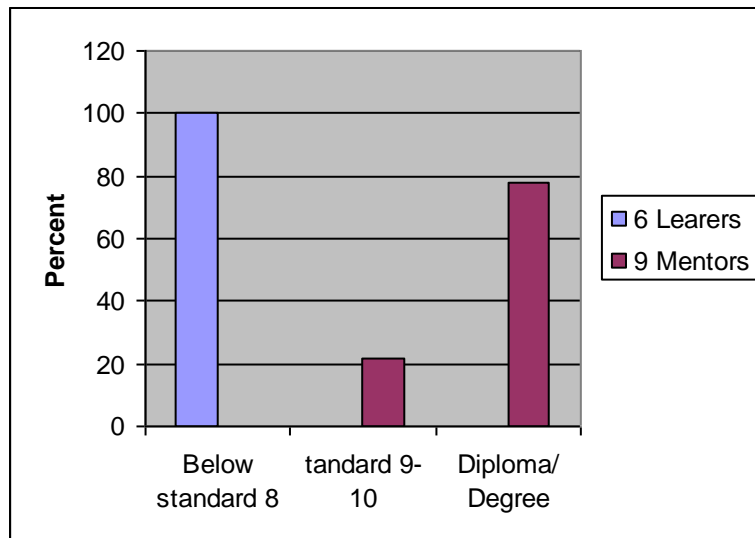
The investigation on the gender of the AVFL participants indicates a higher percentage of females who engaged in the scheme as both learners and mentors, as compared to males. There were 83% female learners and 67% female mentors to 33% male learners and 17% male mentors.

Generally, the tendency for more women than men to become involved in vegetable farming seems consistent. In explaining this consistent ratio of more women than men being attracted to vegetable farming, it is likely that the poverty level ratings of all South African race groups and genders are significant. Black women in KwaZulu-Natal are by ratings at the bottom of the economic ladder. With regard to gender representation in the project the study confirmed known ratios of gender participation in farming.

## 5.2(c) Education levels of respondents and farming

The above section was employed in the study because the selection of the AVFL included education levels of participants... The AVFL planners preferred people with higher educational level to be mentors implying that their schooling achievement would render them better supervisors. In the study the researcher intended to find out whether there was any particular relationship between the educational level and the farming knowledge.

**Figure 2: Education levels of AVFL participants**



In terms of the education level of the AVFL participants, the Figure3 reading indicates that the learners' highest levels of education was standard 8 (100%), mentors within the standards 9-10 (22%) and some with a degree or diploma (78%). The screening for the learnership required learners to have passed, at least, standard 8 and mentors to have matriculated. The requirement was justified because learners were to be trained at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 2 and mentors, NQF Level 4, which entitled them to a diploma if they passed the practical (which was continuous throughout the learnership) and examinations (which consisted of a paper on theory and the compilation of a business plan). These groups were expected on admission to be able to read, write English and IsiZulu and count. At the time of the AVFL was only Rainman Landcare Foundation which was accredited to offer training in Mixed Farming Methods. The training sessions were conducted in both IsiZulu and English. The examinations were written in both languages. The discussion of the theme that emerges from the presentation follows:

*Efficacy of education in the AVFL:* In the AVFL the level of education criterion was responsible for placing project participants in either mentor or learner categories depending

on the educational standard attained. The criterion excluded illiterate people in spite of their farming experience. That exclusion deprived the project of the experienced workmanship, which would have helped enhance the quality of the produce. The categorization of educational levels was not accepted by older learners because they felt it was irrelevant in farming.

One older learner said,

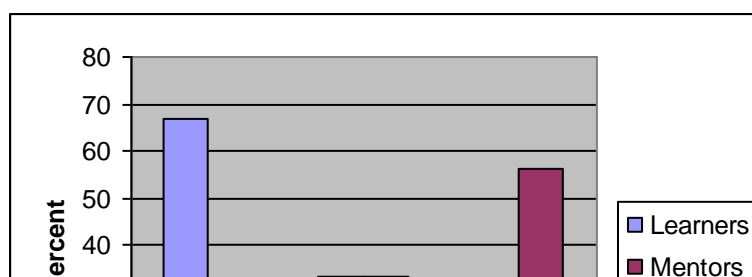
*My plot produced better vegetables than those of young educated learners*

From this comment a conclusion is reached that knowledge of farming does not require education only, as people can learn it from experience. Therefore the exclusion of people with farming experience is counterproductive in the farming programmes if they are meant for subsistence. The AVFL was not only meant for subsistence but for employability as well. It had specific requirements and educational level was one of them.

#### **5.2(d) Household Income of respondents before AVFL**

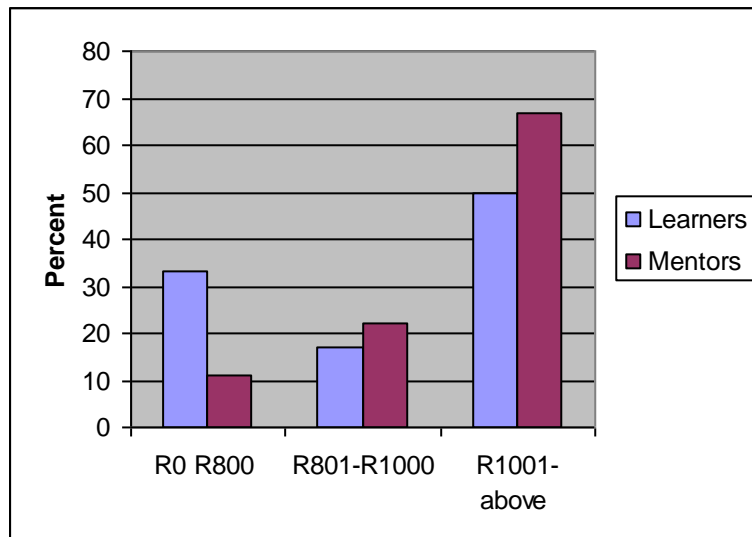
The project component was important in the study because the selection criteria of AVFL participants incorporated the ‘no-income’ term, implying that the scheme intended to provide income through stipends. The researcher intended to investigate how the AVFL would influence the income levels of participants after the completion of the project.

**Figure 3: Household income of respondents before AVFL**





**Figure 4: Household Income of respondents after AVFL**



**5.2 (e) Household Income of respondents after AVFL**

The analysis indicated in Figure 4 above which is on household income before the AVFL, most learner respondents (67%) fell within the R0-R800 bracket, compared to only 11% for mentors. There was equal representation of 33% of both groups in the R801-R1000 parenthesis. Regarding the R1001-R3000 bracket, there is 56% mentor respondents represented. This figure reading implies a correlation with the Degree/Diploma level of education in Figure 3 above as only mentors were represented there.

However, the analysis of Figure 5 indicates significant shifts in the household income after the AVFL for both learners and mentors. Regarding learners this notable move is from the R0-R800 income bracket to the R1001-above parenthesis. The R0-R800 category was reduced from 67% before AVFL down to 33% after AVFL, and the R1001-above group increased from 0% before AVFL to 50% after AVFL. Regarding mentors the changes in income occurred between the R801-R1000 and R1001-R3000 categories. Before the AVFL mentors who fell in the R801-R1000 bracket constituted 33%, and after the Learnership this group shifted to the R1001-R3000 category and increasing it from 56% before the scheme and to 67% after the AVFL. The theme that emerges from the above presentation follows:

*The link of AVFL to increased income:* The inferences drawn from Figures 4 and 5 readings indicate income levels of participants after the AVFL changed. The Changes that occurred were increases in income levels for a significant number of project participants. On investigating factors which could justify increases in household incomes, an important discovery was made. Empirical findings revealed that increases were not brought about by either employment as a result of skills attained from the Learnership or by involvement in farming business. For instance, the following respondents confirmed that the AVFL did not have any effect on their household income after the learnership was completed.

*I am not involved in gardening anymore. I am now doing home based care. They pay for this work*

*My husband is employed and I collect Child Support Grant for my child.*

*I collect Old Age Pension.*

*I am employed by Umngeni Water.*

Since 67% learner respondents' ages ranged between 36 and 59 in 2006, of those 10% reached pension age in 2009. The social pension is R1050 person in 2009. The younger participants reverted to their initial no-income status after the stipends provision was terminated. *An important revelation by the study is that the significance of the income level shifts and the AVFL were not related.*

The outcome of this theme indicates that the AVFL did not have any link to the household income of project participants. The researcher assumes that even though the learnership has achieved its intended purpose of providing participants with agricultural skills, it did not ensure that participants find employment in agricultural labour market. This would

have enabled participants to implement the skills they acquired in order to earn a living. There is also no evidence of learners using their skills to promote self-employment.

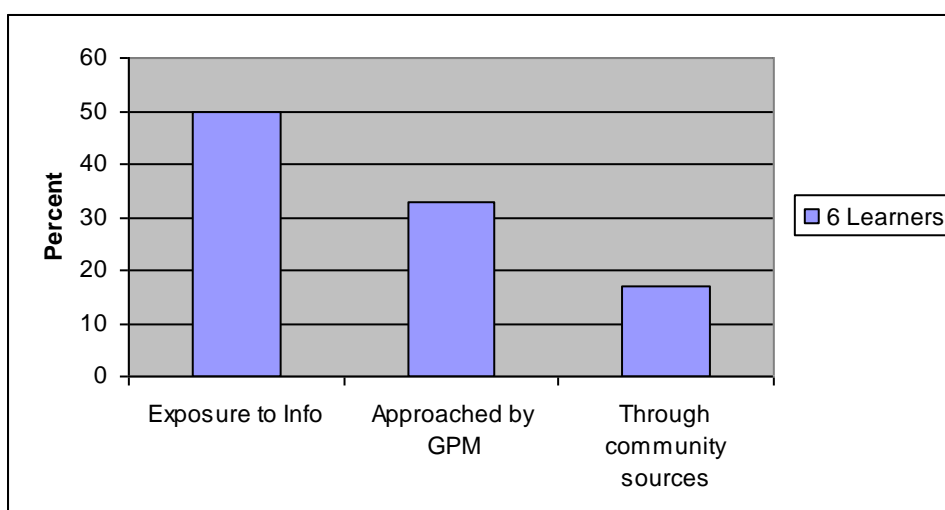
### 5.3 Beginning stages of the AVFL

The section was designed to investigate the procedures followed at the beginning stages of the AVFL, whether the scheme conformed or contradicted the learnerships legislations' specifications regarding the implementation of a learnership. The researcher was interested in establishing how the introduction of AVFL influenced the objective of the project, of providing skills.

#### 5.3.1 How respondents knew about the AVFL

To establish how the AVFL was introduced is important because the learnership policy is specific about the introduction of a learnership. First, according to the SA Skills Development Policy it is employers who offer learnerships to either their employees or non-employed learners. Secondly, unemployed learners are recruited from Labour Centres where unemployed people are registered as work seekers. When the respondents were asked to state how they knew about the AVFL, an interesting finding emanated. For this question the graphical presentation is illustrated in Figure 6, below.

**Figure 5: Knowledge about AVFL**



The study revealed that (50%) respondents were exposed to information about the AVFL through TAFTA volunteer programmes. This groups' involvement with TAFTA afforded them an opportunity to access information before everybody else. Second in the list are

respondents constituting (33%) and were approached by the GPM with information about the Learnership. The GPM's advantage was that he was instrumental in the establishment of the AVFL and therefore knew the schemes' requirements which enabled him to search for 'eligible' candidates. The last group of respondents (17%) was invited through different community source.

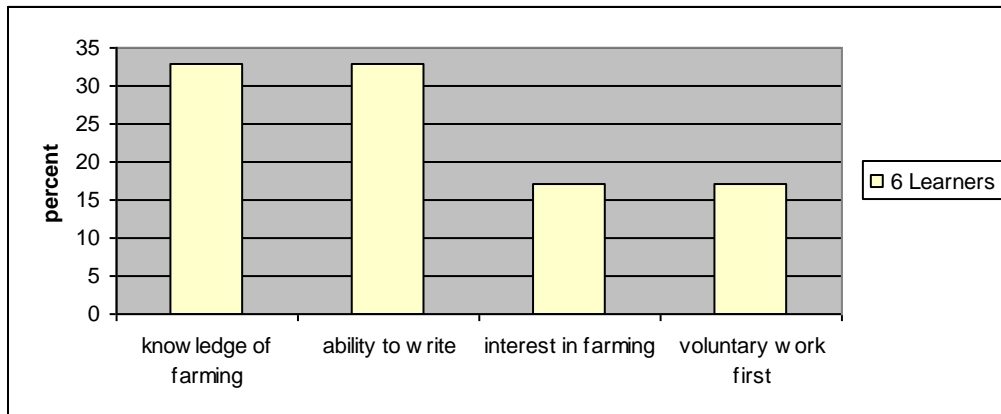
The results of the AVFL indicated that the participants were all recruited from the residential area and not from a Labour Centre as would be the case if the project was offered by an employer. The theme that emerges from these results follows:

*Information dissemination in AVFL:* The above revelations indicate that the dissemination process of information about AVFL was not standardized. The findings revealed that the respondents learnt about the AVFL from different information sources, of which some were not correct. This created a misinterpretation of some elements of the project as indicated by the findings above. Such a misinterpretation results in the recruitment of unqualified candidates. Therefore, it is important for project employers to use the appropriate channels when advertising for learnerships as proper channels enable the employer to recruit qualified candidates for the learnership.

### **5.3.2 Perceived AVFL selection criteria**

This section examines participants' perceptions of what constituted the AVFL selection criteria. The actual eligibility criteria for the AVFL is discussed in Chapter three and it includes criteria such as the age group (18-35), financial status (No income), in possession of a food garden and the level of education. Here the researcher intended to establish whether participants conformed to the actual selection criteria. The results are presented in Figure 7 below: When the respondents were asked to state who they thought was invited to participate in the AVFL, their responses differed as follows. Knowledge of farming, and ability to write responses obtained equal ratings of 33%. Interest in farming and engaging in volunteer work first at TAFTA were also highlighted (17%). The results are presented in figure, below.

**Figure 6: Perceived AVFL Selection Criteria**



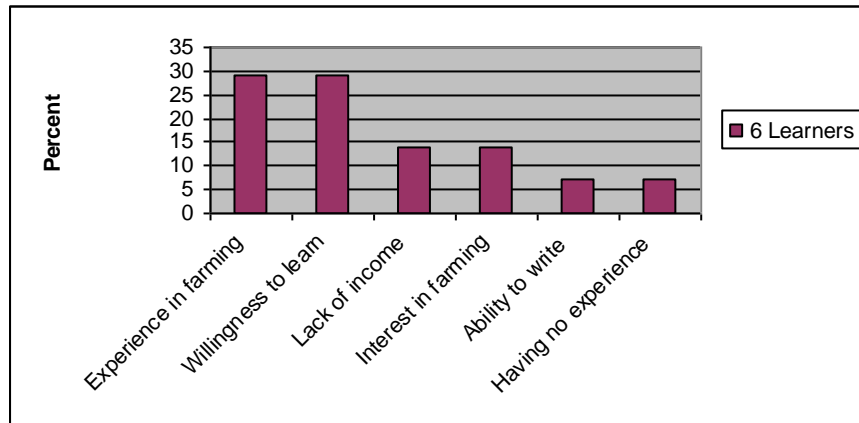
When the respondents were asked to state who they thought was invited to participate in the AVFL, their responses differed as follows. Knowledge of farming, and ability to write responses obtained equal ratings of 33%. Interest in farming and engaging in volunteer work first at TAFTA were also highlighted (17%). The results are presented in figure 7 above.

The above findings show that respondents' perceptions of the AVFL selection criteria are contrary to the actual selection criteria of learnerships. The researcher believes that such wrong perceptions are largely attributed to the informal processes of information dissemination of AVFL. It would appear that most of the information about the eligibility criteria was disseminated through the same informal channels that circulated information about the AVFL programmes. The DUT was responsible for ensuring that the criteria were met but failed. Setting eligibility criteria and conforming to it is critical to learnerships because it enables participants to have proper understanding of the learnership and its requirements.

### **5.3.3 Perceived qualification for AVFL**

When the respondents were asked to state what made them qualify for AVFL, the results differed and are illustrated below. A total of six factors were singled out as being contributory to the participant's enrolment to the AVFL. Experience in farming and willingness to learn new knowledge responses obtained equal scores of 29% respectively. Both these responses are perceived as most contributory to their enrolment for the AVFL. Second on the list were the lack of income and the interest in farming which also scored equal (14%) values. The ability to write one's name and having no experience in farming scored a matching (7%). The graphical presentation is illustrated below.

**Figure 7: Perceived qualification for the AVFL**



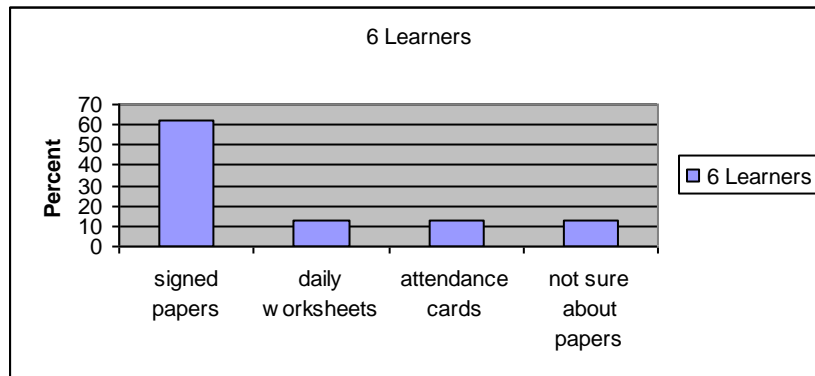
The central idea emerged from the divergence of responses.

*Information dissemination process in AVFL:* On examining the categories in the figure above, respondents understood the qualifying factors differently because information roll out about the AVFL advanced from different sources and some of which not correct. The GPM confirmed that there was no written information which was distributed in the area or meeting to talk about who qualified for the scheme. Since the AVFL was the community driven project it may be replicated elsewhere if similar circumstances present themselves. To ensure that the qualified candidates are recruited information dissemination about who qualifies for the programme must be guaranteed and the selection process must adhere stringently to the require criteria.

#### 5.3.4 Documentation required on entry

The section is critical in learnerships because they are based on signed contracts between three parties, as stated in Chapter Two. The eThekweni Municipality, as the lead employer for the AVFL, outsourced the administrative function to DUT. The researcher sought to establish if the policy was adhered to or not. When the respondents were asked to state what documents they signed on joining the AVFL, their responses differed. The majority of the respondents (62.5%) affirmed signing documents at Durban Institute of Technology (DIT). Other responses that were highlighted included daily worksheets to record attendance; cards with Math questions which were used to vet eligibility of learners and uncertainty about the documents. All these responses produced equal scores of 12.5% respectively. The graphical presentation of these findings is shown in Figure 9 below.

**Figure 8: Documentation signed on AVFL entry**



On examining the results presented in figure nine, the study revealed that the Administrator produced numerous forms that the participants were required to sign throughout the learnership. Further, the study revealed that some learners had only attained primary education and could not read English even though the minimum education standard required was standard eight.

*Constitutional rights of learners:* The oversight in ensuring the availability of IsiZulu written documents deprived people of information and transgressed their constitutional right of access to information, The Constitution (1996). The significance in accessing information enhances understanding of the scheme. To be well informed about the project also boosts confidence to talk about that scheme to others.

### **5.3.5 The Learnership Agreement and Employment Contract**

Since the learnership policy is specific about which documents need to be signed and by whom, the researcher was keen to know which documents were utilized in the AVFL. As specified in the Skills Development Act (1998) all learners are expected to sign the Learnership Agreement when joining a learnership. Learners who are not employed by the employer offering a learnership sign an Employment Contract as well with that employer. The question on these documents was formulated to check if they were utilized in the AVFL since its implementation was unusual.

When the respondents were asked to state if they signed the Learnership Agreements and Employment Contracts and with whom they signed them, their responses were divided into two groups. A total of (87.5%) respondents remembered signing forms at DUT but with no clue of what those documents were. In attempting to share their understanding of the documents they signed some descriptions of those forms were given, as follows,

*We signed papers to form a co-operative*

*We went to DIT to sign papers*

*We signed papers to be used for paying money at end of the month*

The remaining (12.5%) were not certain if they signed those forms or not. All these responses described the action that they engaged in order to sign the forms. They did not refer to the names of the forms, for instance, or the content thereof. Following is a discussion of a central idea that came to light.

*Relationship between Learners and eThekweni Municipality:* From the results of the study described above, the researcher identifies a distant relationship between the learners and their employer who was eThekweni Municipality, yet the agreements were signed by the learners, the employer and the training provider (Skills Development Act, 1998). A conclusion could be drawn that these Learners did not know who their employer was. The research findings revealed that the Municipality was the lead employer for the AVFL because they paid out stipends for the Learners and the Mentors. The Municipality also paid Rainman Landcare Foundation; the training provider. What seemed to cause confusion was that the agreement documents were not signed with the Municipality.

Since the eThekweni Municipality is affiliated with the Local Government, Water and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (LGWSETA), they could not sign the Learnership Agreement directly with the project participants. Signing the agreement directly was going to complicate the relationship between learners and the employer because at that time agriculture learnerships fell under the Primary Agriculture Education and Training Authority (PAETA) before Agri-SETA took over in 2006. Therefore, the Municipality outsourced the project administrator who was DUT to also handle vetting the eligibility of the learners. That is why the Learnership Agreement and the Employment Contract were signed with DUT and not with the Municipality. Following is the theme coming to light about this documentation process.

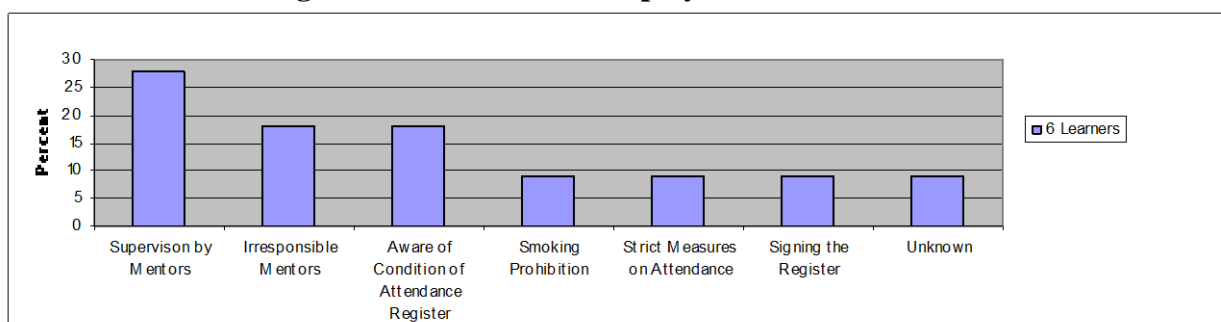
*Adaptation of policy processes in AVFL:* The formalization process of the AVFL adhered to the Skills Development Policy as all documents pertaining to the process were signed. What differed was that the eThekweni Municipality, the employer, was represented by DUT in the signing of the documents.



### 5.3.6 Conditions of employment contract.

The AVFL Learners signed the Employment Contract as stated above. The respondents were asked to state what they thought were the conditions of employment contract of the AVFL and their responses differed. The majority (28%) of the respondents remembered that the mentors were the workplace supervisors. Followed by (18%) respondents who complained that mentors were supervisors but ignorant of farming knowledge. Another group constituting (18%) remembered the starting and finishing times of work. The signing of attendance register, prohibited smoking at workplace, loose controlling procedures at buffer strip and those who did not remember employment contract conditions all scored equal (9%) responses. Employment conditions stipulated a seven-and-a-half hour day, five days a week, and a monthly stipend of R1200 for mentors and R1050 for learners. Each learner was to be allocated a 20x20 metre plot on which practical work would be undertaken. Vegetables produced on these plots belonged to the learner in charge, who was free to consume or sell them. The respondents' answers are graphically illustrated in Figure10, below.

**Figure 9: Conditions of Employment Contract**



Following is a discussion of the theme that emerged from these results.

The divergence of answers regarding the conditions of the employment contract indicates a difficulty in communicating and monitoring employment conditions to the AVFL. Conditions of employment are rules guiding workers at the workplace even when the employer is absent. The danger of not knowing conditions of an employment contract may result to infringement of procedures at the workplace.

The key issues identified in this section are:

- 1) *Establishment of the AVFL in Amaoti conformed to the Skills Development Policy because relevant documents were signed.*

- 2) *Communicating conditions of the Employment Contract was not effective. That led to dissemination of wrong information about the AVFL to the Learners.*
- 3) *The relationship between the Learners and eThekweni Municipality was physically and metaphorically distant. The Municipality did not play a direct role. Learners were unaware of their accountability to the Municipality.*

#### 5.4 AVFL Workplace Procedures

The section was incorporated in the investigation because it is important in this study. Since the AVFL was implemented on an open piece of land and not in an established farm, understanding how workplace procedures were practiced, may contribute in making recommendations for future similar agriculture learnerships.

##### 5.4.1 Procedure to be away from work

When respondents were asked to respond on the procedure which guided their intention to be away from work, most respondents (66.6%) singled out verbal reporting to their mentors as an important procedure to report their absence from work. Another group of respondents (33.3%) cited documentary evidence, in the form of leave forms or medical reports if learner was sick, as a requirement. This split in the responses is illustrated graphically in figure 11 below.

**Figure 10: What happened if learners wanted to be away from work?**



The research established that older learners were not satisfied with reporting their intention to be away from work. One older learner said;

*If a person is young but they are in authority you must respect them*

The lack of uniformity in reporting intentions to be absent from work indicates ineffective communication of procedures. The research also uncovered that some degree of ill-discipline in the project and led to disciplinary measures employed to curb unnecessary absenteeism. For instance, for each day absent a sum of R50 was deducted from stipend by the paying agent.

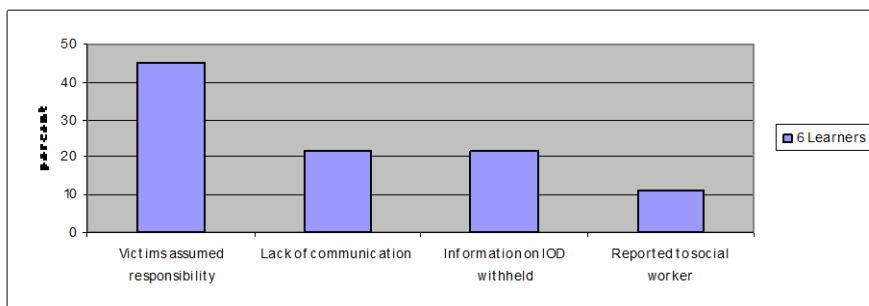
#### 5.4.2 Procedure for Injury on Duty

The protection of project participants against injury on duty (IOD) at workplace was significant in the AVFL because the project was implemented on a piece of land in an open place which exposed them to a range of on-duty accidents such as, snake bites and heat stroke. The researcher was interested in establishing how the IOD incidences were dealt with.

When respondents were asked to state what happened or would happen if they were injured whilst on duty, their responses differed significantly. A total of (45%) of respondents claimed that the victims assumed responsibility for the injury. They paid for their transport expenses and hospital fees if they wanted to go to the clinic or hospital. A 22% of respondents stated they did not have any information on IOD. Another 22% percent of respondents claimed that there was lack of communication on IOD procedures between them and mentors. Lastly (11%) of respondents said they would report to the social worker if they got injured while on duty.

The responses are graphically presented in figure12, below.

**Figure 11: Procedure for Injury on Duty**



The following is a discussion of emerging themes.

The responses regarding victims assuming responsibility for expenses on injuries sustained on site implied that there were incidences of IOD that occurred during the process of the AVFL. For instance, one older learner was bitten by a snake. She was transported to the hospital free of charge, by one of the project leaders who happened to be present on the day of the incidence, but the victim paid for hospital fee. Respondents claimed that there were no provisions made to cater for injured participants as would be found at formalized workplaces. Provisions for IOD such as in-house clinics, First Aid kits, and protective clothing, which may be gumboots, gloves and overalls were not provided for on site as required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act (85 of 1993) whose scope is to ‘provide for the health and safety of persons at work’.

*The key issue in this section is that the application of labour laws protecting workers at workplaces may not be practical if the learnership is implemented on an open piece of land. Therefore, the protection of participants under such a condition is not guaranteed.*

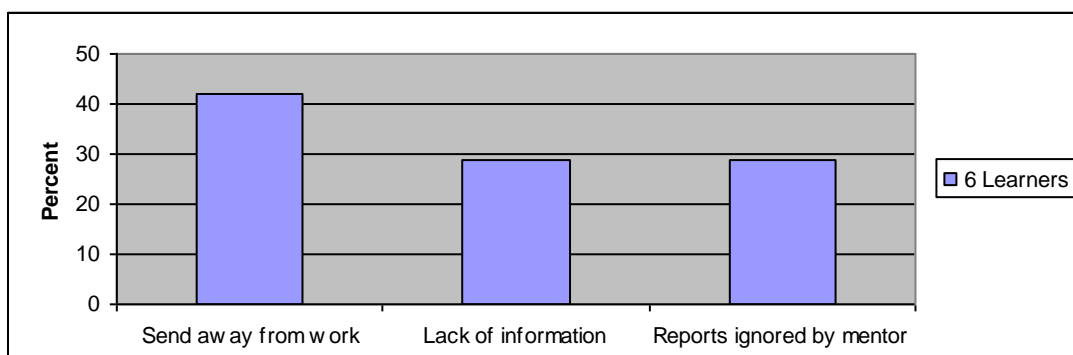
#### 5.4.2.1 Sick learners at workplace

When learners were asked to state what happened or would happen if they fell ill at the workplace, their responses indicated a divergence of views. A total 42% of respondents claimed that sick participants were sent home. A 29% mentioned that there was no information on what to do when they fell ill at work. Another 29% responded that their reports were ignored and that discouraged them to report their illness. One respondent asserted

*What GPM said was that nobody gets sick here because people are eating healthily*

The responses are graphically presented in Figure 13, below.

**Figure 12: Sick Learners at Workplace**



The inferences drawn from these results are as follows.

First there were cases of learners who fell ill on site and the attention provided was not consistent. One angry respondent shared an incident of a learner who fell ill at buffer strip.

*The sick learner remained unattended to medically until we carried her home after work.*

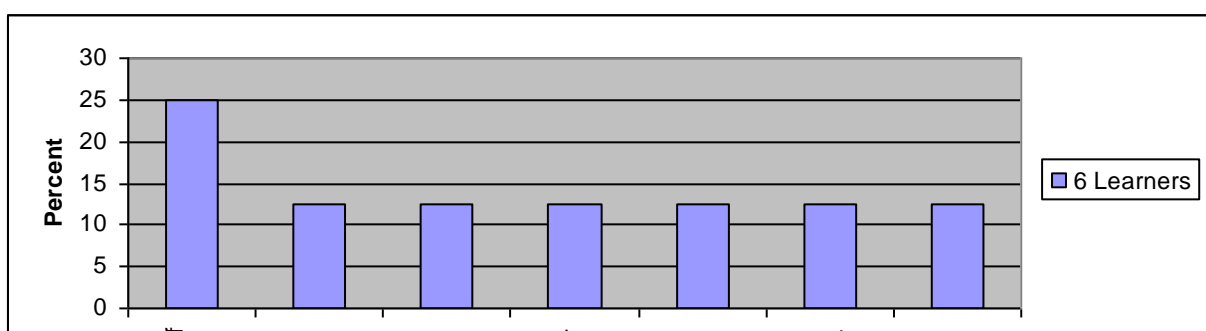
Second, there were no resources provided for sick learners or procedures put in place in case a participant fell ill at the workplace. The researcher acknowledges that building a sickbay on site was impractical because the safety of the structure would not be guaranteed. There is high rate of vandalism and crime in informal settlements. However, the provision of First-Aid Kits could have been a better option for the Learnership.

*The key issue here is that implementing an agriculture learnership on an open piece of land presents with limitations in providing all required resources.*

### 5.4.3 Intention to resign from the learnership

When the respondents were asked to state what happened or would happen if they wanted to resign from the AVFL whilst it was in progress, the answers differed. The results are illustrated in the figure, below. Absence of written procedure (25%) is singled out as the main reason why respondents did as they pleased if they wanted to discontinue with the project,. Inform ones mentor; people withdrew and brought relatives to stand for them; inform DUT; retrenchments occurred; and no knowledge what to do, all receive equal (12.5%) responses. The responses are graphically presented in Figure14, below.

**Figure 13: Resigning from the Learnership**



The divergence of responses to the question on resignation could be indicating absence of a formal communication procedure, be it verbal in the form of a meeting or a written document to project participants. Following is a discussion of an emerging theme.

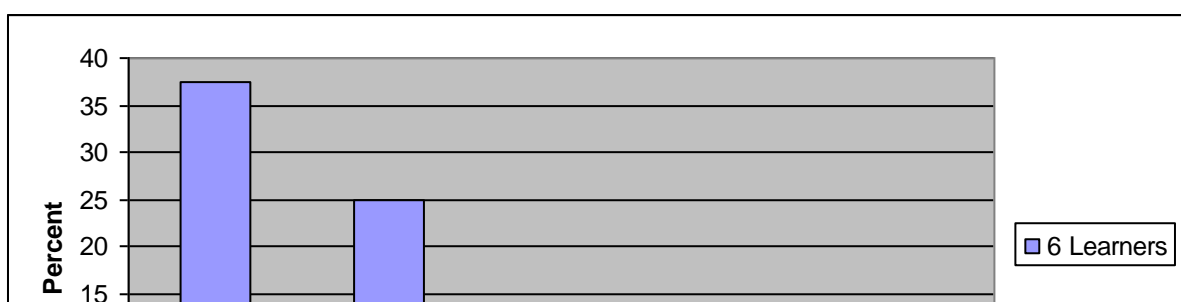
*Workplace procedures for outreach programmes:* Since the lead employer of the AVFL was eThekweni Municipality; the resignation procedures exist for its in-house employees. However, the researcher thought what constituted a problem in the AVFL was the difficulty to transfer or enforce procedures to an outreach programme. It would seem communicating company rules was not prioritized, given the status of the scheme. First, a learnership is a programme with stipulated time frames which might cause the company to easily forget to address such issues. Second, the 18(2) learners are temporary employees as the employer is not obliged to employ them after the learnership.

*It may appear that it is the nature of the scheme, limited in terms of time, which contributes to loose communication of company rules.*

#### 5.4.4 Disputes among the participants at workplace

In responding to the question enquiring what happened or would happen if disputes erupted amongst the project participants at work place, the responses differed. Mediation by capable learners (37.5%) is high on the list, followed by mediation by the Amaoti Co-operative Executive Committee (25%). Mediation by facilitators, threats against quarrelling at work place and no rules pertaining to disputes at work; all receive equal (12.5%) responses.

**Figure 14: Conflict resolution procedures**



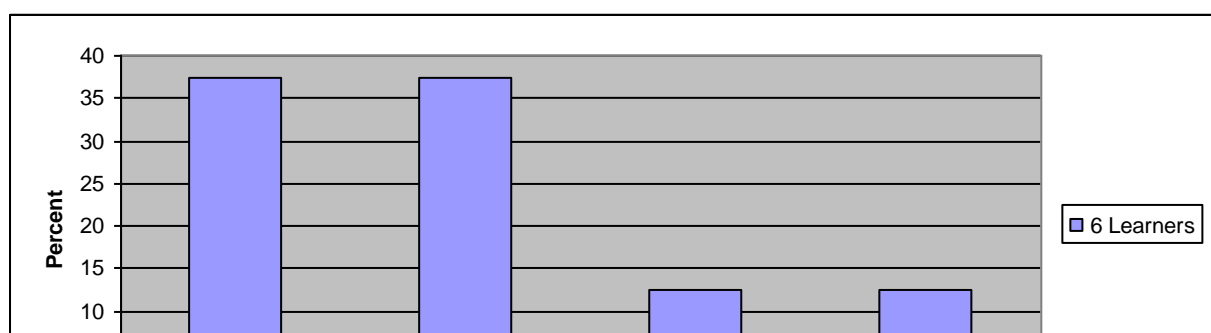
The inferences drawn from these results suggest that there was no structure that was put in place to address disputes in the work place. Absence of such machinery may easily result in the developments of creative ideas by the participants to deal with disputes.

*Code of conduct for outreach programme workers:* This research reveals an imbalance in applying work place procedures for workers of a company and those of an outreach programme. It appears that employers may encounter a difficulty in applying company rules for an outreach programme. Regarding the AVFL for instance, The eThekweni Municipality's Code of Conduct and conflict resolution procedures would easily be applied if the scheme was implemented inside the Municipality's premises.

#### 5.4.5 AVFL and a trade union

Since learnerships' learners have employee status, it was interesting to understand how labour laws protected them. When the learners were asked what happened / would happen if they wanted services of a trade union, the responses diverged. High on the list of responses were lack of communicated information about trade unionism and instruction not to join a trade union answers sharing equal (37.5%) scores. Following in the list of responses were the absence of a trade union role in learnerships and non-eligibility of learners to join trade union scoring equal (12.5%) responses. The graphical presentation is illustrated in Figure 16, below.

**Figure 15: AVFL and trade union**



Following is a discussion of an emerging theme.

Trade unionism in AVFL: The respondents made following comments about learners' involvement in trade union movement.

*We did not join a trade union because we were receiving stipends not salaries.*

*"They" told us that trade union had no role in learnerships*

*I wish we joined a trade union because we needed it at the end.*

The comment that learners could not join a trade union because they were receiving stipends not salaries is accepted though learnership participants are also employees according to law. Services of a trade union are not free. Affiliated members contribute percentages from their salaries towards their union. The AVFL learners' stipends had no deductions. The learners received their R1050 and the mentors R1200 in full per month.

Additionally signing the employment contract with DUT but accountable to the Municipality complicates the status of learners to the employer. If the learners were eligible to join a trade union it would present a complication for them regarding which trade union to join, the one serving the Municipality or the DUT workers. Therefore, the role of trade unions in learnerships is not clear.

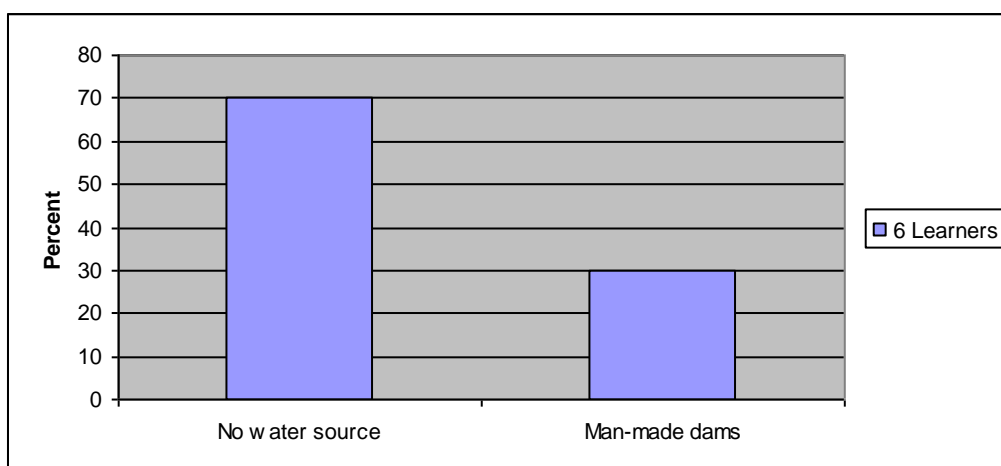
#### **5.4.6 Water sources at workplace**



For a vegetable garden to produce quality crops, the supply of adequate water is pivotal. Besides the plants, the project personnel also need water for drinking, and for hygiene purposes, the researcher was keen to establish the source of water for the AVFL.

When respondents were asked to state the project’s source of water, the responses diverged. A total of 70% of the respondents asserted that there was no source of water on AVFL’s site and 30% claimed that participants created man-made dams to harvest rain water implying that there was no source of water on site.. The responses are graphically illustrated in figure17, below.

**Figure 16: Water sources for AVFL gardens**



The responses in Figure 17 above revealed that the AVFL faced the challenge, to farm without a reliable water source

Following is a discussion of emerging themes:

1) Sources of water in the AVFL: To ensure plants were watered daily, participants installed man-made dams to harvest rain water. Others collected water from the rivulet below the garden site. One respondent asserted;

*We fetched water from the river using buckets*

Another respondent contended;

*We then dug and created man-made dams to harvest rain water. Harvested rain water was flowing from the Phoenix area. We decided that such water from our man-made dams was not good. Even those dams seemed dangerous, so we abandoned the idea.*

2) *Lack of infrastructure and effects of climate change*: The water problem was not solved by the provision of man-made dams as it persisted throughout the project. There were no water taps which could bring water to the gardens. The AVFL also experienced droughts which were attributed to climate change. Even the project outcomes are linked to the drought problem. The following comments by project participants highlight their perception regarding inadequate water supply for gardening;

*The scarcity of water made us unable to produce large yields.*

*With large produce we could supply Pick 'n Pay or Woolworths.*

*If another learnership is done, they must ensure a reliable water supply in place.*

Regarding plants, participants attempted to address the water problem by applying their creative thinking to install man-made dams to harvest rain water. Others collected water from the rivulet below the garden site. One respondent asserted, “We fetched water from the river using buckets”. Another respondent contended, “We then dug and created man-made dams to harvest rain water. Harvested rain water was flowing from the Phoenix residential area. We decided that, such water from our man-made dams were not good. Even those dams seemed dangerous, so we abandoned that idea”. The water problem was not solved by the provision of those solutions because it persisted throughout the project. Even the project outcomes are leaned to that problem. The following comments by project participants highlight their perception regarding inadequate water supply for gardening.

*The scarcity of water made us unable to produce large yields*

*With large produce we could supply Pick 'n Pay or Woolworths*

*If another learnership is done, they must first ensure a reliable water supply in place*

The important issues arising from these comments are that,

- *Plants grow well with a reliable water supply.*
- *AVFL planning had limitations in supplying water sources.*
- *Implementing a vegetable farming learnership without an adequate supply of water is not acceptable.*
- *A reliable water source is a critical requirement concerning the choice of site for an agricultural programme.*

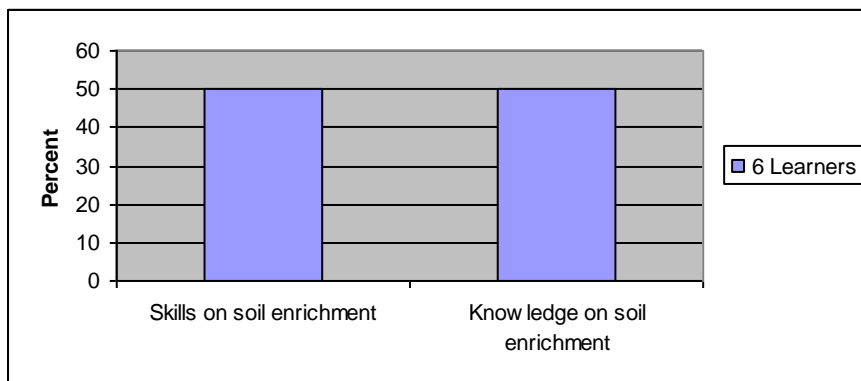
As much as the shortage of water impacted negatively on plants, it equally affects the participants. Water was needed for drinking and for washing of hands. The participants had no other option but to their water on site.

### 5.5 Skills Development from the AVFL

The section pertaining skills development is central in a learnership because the learnerships' purpose is to capacitate learners with skills. In the study the researcher sought to establish two outcomes. 1) What skills the learners attained from the scheme. And, 2) if by their involvement in the project changed their familiar way of farming.

The respondents were asked to list the most important to things to them about the Mixed Farming Systems method, their responses separated into two equal answers. The split of the respondents was on the skills (50%) gained and knowledge (50%) acquired regarding soil enrichment. It is noted that the responses were all on soil enrichment. The graphical presentation is illustrated in Figure 18, b

**Figure 17: Skills development in the AVFL**



The respondents made the following comments,

*I can now change the soil structure by using compost and kitchen waste*

*I learnt to grow vegetables using worm trenches for compost.*

*I learnt to mulch (that is to cover the soil with grass or leaves in order to reduce evaporation rate).*

The soil enrichment skills gained and knowledge attained by learners ranged from first, recycling organic kitchen waste to mixing old papers and cardboards with soil. Secondly, it was the soil acidity testing skill that respondents perceived as essential because it guides

the choice of plants suitable for a particular area. However, this skill seems to take a long time to master. Farmers use their sense of taste to determine if the soil is acidic or alkaline because they do not utilize litmus paper to perform tests. Following is a discussion of an emerging theme.

*Skills development in AVFL older learners:* Older learners possessed experience of some important aspects of farming before joining AVFL. However, they could not give scientific explanations for their actions. For instance, they could not explain why planting meliies and beans together were beneficial to beans. Therefore, the AVFL can not claim total credit for; originally from experience and was later increased by the AVFL.

Regarding the soil enrichment knowledge, the researcher acknowledges that separating the skill from knowledge is not easy because knowledge can be gained through acquiring the skill, reading, being told something through word of mouth or through observation. In the study respondents who described a farming activity, were regarded to have gained a skill. Those who stated what they knew without giving a description were taken as having gained knowledge. The wealth of knowledge that was shared by respondents affirms the pronouncement by Zulu, P M (undated) that “the reality of agriculture as the principal component in rural livelihood generation is a reality”. The key issues are that;

- 1) *The AVFL did capacitate people with agricultural skills. And*
- 2) *Older learners gained additional knowledge to supplement what they already knew.*

## **5.6 Changes brought by AVFL for Families of participants and Community of Amaoti**

The section is incorporated in the study in order to examine the effectiveness of the AVFL. The researcher was interested in establishing the changes brought about by a localized vegetable farming Learnership to the families of participants and then to the community.

5.6.1 Regarding the changes in their families, some respondents made the following comments;

- With the money I managed to pay school fees for my children*  
*I bought clothes for my family and we ate out with children in December*

*I was shy to let people in my bedroom because I was sleeping on a 'boat' but with the stipend I bought myself a double bed. I now sleep with my grandchildren and I am not afraid to be seen in my room*

*At the end of the month I brought groceries for my family.*

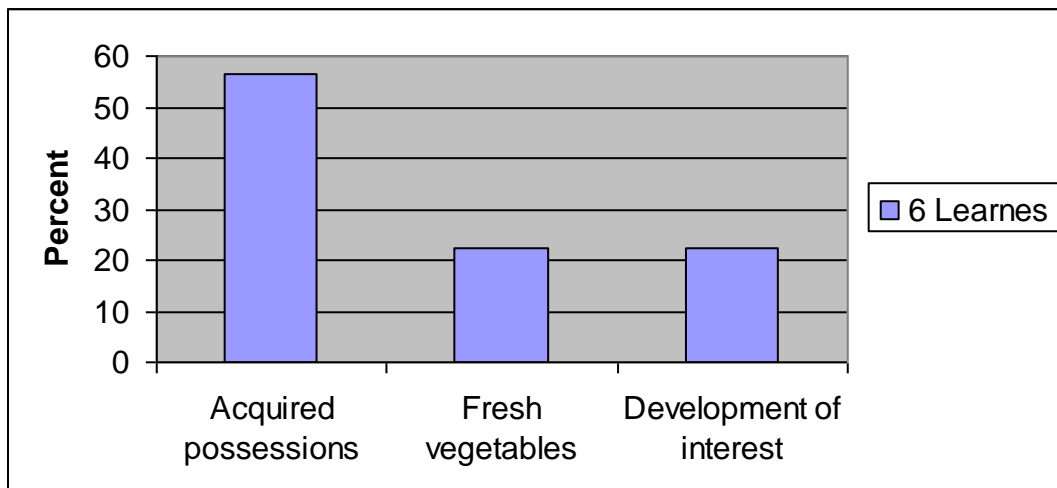
*I bought fridge cash. I also bought an electric iron, and a TV set*

*My family ate fresh vegetables cheaply*

*My son is now interested in farming. He collects trees and plants them at home*

Regarding these responses the graphical presentation is illustrated in figure 19, below.

**Figure 18: AVFL impact on families of participants**



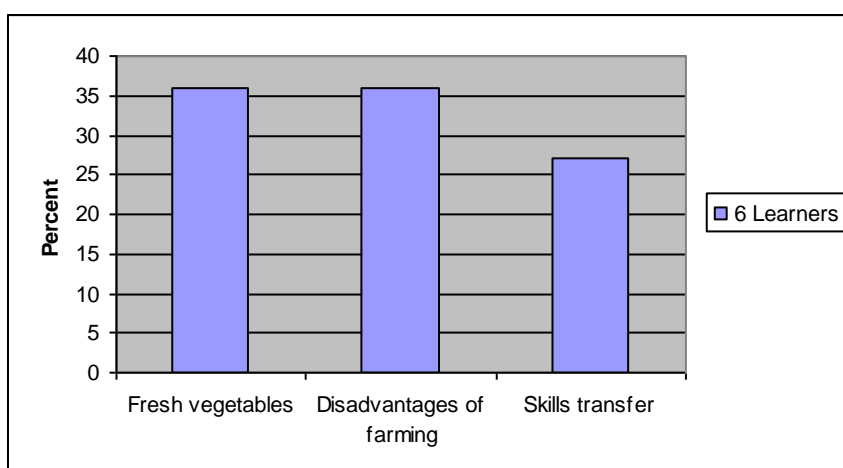
The acquired-possessions responses emerge as a major achievement perceived by the learner respondents. The AVFL afforded the previously unemployed people access to regular cash income, the stipends, for the duration of the scheme. Regular cash enabled participants to acquire material possessions something they were not familiar with.

The acquisition of material goods, the tangible resources, by respondents should not be taken for granted because learners claimed that it enhanced their dignity and pride. For instance, buying a bed is taken for granted for poor people it is an achievement. This realization demonstrates the position of some Amaoti people in the Maslow's pyramid of needs. A conclusion can be drawn from the respondent's comment, who bought a double bed that development is also about tangible resources. Lastly, it is noted from this figure

that the majority respondents do not perceive eating vegetables (22.2%) as priority in the list of changes brought about by the AVFL.

5.6.2 Regarding the changes brought by AVFL at the community level of Amaoti, the study revealed the following results. A total of 36% of the respondents asserted that the AVFL afforded the community accessibility to fresh vegetables cheaply. Community members saved taxi fare which they would otherwise spend to get to big markets to purchase vegetables. Another (36%) respondents were of the opinion that changes occurred to the farming community's perceptions about farming in a residential area. They realized that farming in Amaoti with a view to attaining profits was disadvantageous. Disadvantages listed were shortage of water supply, unavailability of a designated market place and that sales to individuals were not profitable. Lastly, (27%) respondents claimed that some community members learnt to do gardening from project learners. The graphical presentation is illustrated below.

**Figure 19: Changes brought by AVFL to the Amaoti community**



*A vegetable farming learnership in a residential area:* They asserted that the acceptance of the development agents by the recipient community first is critical for its success otherwise apathy results. Therefore, the involvement of the community in decision-making processes should be prioritized. If people are made to feel that they own the scheme, incidences such as vandalism and theft can be minimized. One mentor respondent opposed the implementation of a learnership in a residential area. She maintained the following opinion,

*Local people have no respect for the site besides those involved in the project. They steal easily, litter, walk through the gardens and even let their stock graze in the gardens.*

Such a state of affairs is discouraging to those who are doing the work and may even result in the collapse of the scheme, consequently killing the “positive cohesion” amongst group members. (Hogan,:2002:16)

### **5.7 Mentors’ additional views on the AVFL implementation.**

The section was designed to assess the effect of implementing a learnership programme in a residential area where there is no farmer who is an employer. In this section the researcher intended to solicit mentors’ views on the things they learnt and observed through focus groups discussions. Following is a discussion on emerging themes.

*1) Authority on project site:* First, mentor groups highlighted the importance of having a learnership employer, that is, from eThekweni Municipality, on site as critical in a learnership programme. Employer presence would enable the project to run smoothly, enhance accountability in both learners and mentors and improve the quality of work. Delegating supervisory function to mentors alone lead to tensions between the two groups especially if learners had no confidence in mentors. One mentor claimed;

*Where is no employer learners do as please.*

Regarding the AVFL, the disrespectful behaviour by learners could also be attributed to the leasing arrangement of workplace as discussed in Chapter three. Although Learners leased the land, they had no authority over the project as this was vested in the mentors.

*2) Political involvement in SA community projects:*

Second, the mentors maintained that the success of introducing development programmes in communities depends on people. In some areas like Amaoti there are different local leaders who all claim to be involved in development. In Amaoti those structures include the Landowners Association, Ward councillors, NGOs and Amaoti Development Forum. If there are tensions amongst these structures the effect extends to community members. For example people will support developments programmes if they are brought by the leader they support. However, in SA political involvement in programmes is not avoidable especially by Ward councillors because they are mandated by legislation to oversee development programmes in their constituencies. Nel (1999) argues that in SA the LED is receiving attention from the government because it is responding to the apartheid policy.

The study revealed that the Ward 53 Councillor appeared to operate as the project leader in the AVFL. Therefore their participation in community learnerships may not be viewed as involvement. Some respondents, however, viewed this involvement as interference.

3) *Commercial farming in AVFL*: Concerning the farmers initial request to be trained in agricultural skills in order to engage in commercial farming the mentors observed following outcomes. The time frame of the AVFL was not realistic to train people in commercial farming, as the Learnership took nine months only to be completed. Apart from the time allocation mentors again believed that “business mindedness” is essential in commercial farming, followed by training because selling is not easily achievable. Selling requires proper assessment of the demand for ones produce as a priority, and then identifying big markets to sell ones produce. All these business stages are time consuming to be adequately achieved in nine months. Supporting this assertion is the revelation that not a single project participant pursued their commercial farming endeavours after the AVFL was completed. Therefore, the AVFL implementation ignored the voice of the people to focus the training on business skills.

4) *Adequacy of organic farming produce*: Since the Learnership training was on organic farming with the module called Mixed Farming Systems, one respondent asserted *You can not feed the world with organic farming.*

The respondent argued that organic farming is time consuming because vegetables grow naturally depending on weather patterns only. In addition pest control is not easy to achieve in organic farming, especially for vegetables like cabbages yet commercial farmers simply apply chemicals and pests are controlled. It appears that organic farming present problems if people involved depend on their vegetables for their own consumption. The impatience with organic farming is expected especially if people are poor and are unable to purchase their own vegetables while waiting for the produce to be realized. However, organic farming has been practiced all over the world before the manufactured fertilizers were introduced and people were well fed. Nowadays organic products are encouraged because of their nutritional value in human bodies.

In viewing the essence of the AVFL there are two strengths that stand out from the study; the training component and the stipends. The training provider provided the Levels 2 and 4



programmes as per contract, awarded the learners with the certificates and held a graduation ceremony. The stipends provided participants with income which made a difference in their lives. The study also brings out areas that need focus for future agriculture learnerships in residential places. First, the importance of choice of area for the scheme as this would ensure provision of resources. Second, the appointment of a project manager who will be on site throughout the programme as that would ensure visibility of authority at all times and guarantee the explanation and enforcement of workplace procedures. Third, the consultation process needs to include project recipients in order to get a buy in for the scheme.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

This study examined and presented findings concerning the changes that occurred to AVFL as it was implemented in a residential area where there was farmer who was an employer. The study investigated areas that were incorporated in the AVFL introduction to Amaoti and the descriptions of all the stages thereof. Project commencement was followed by its realization procedures and lastly its effect on the people. The following chapter of this study will provide important focus areas which would enhance the future implementation of similar learnerships.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter five presented and discussed the empirical findings of the study. Chapter six specifically focuses on the conclusion and recommendations based on the lessons learnt from the first five chapters. The topic for the study addressed the implementation of the Skills Development Policy in the Amaoti area. To generate information on the topic, the study explored the following key research questions: (1) what changes occur to a vegetable production learnership if it is implemented on an open piece of land in a residential area with no farmer who is an employer? (2) What procedures were followed to have the AVFL implemented at the buffer strip? And (3) How was AVFL of any benefit to the Participants?

#### **6.2 Summary of chapters**

The study contained six chapters. Chapter one introduced the topic by discussing the problem statement, the background to the study, the overview of learnerships, the project site, the aims and objectives, the key question, the rationale of the study and the outline of the study. It also presented a brief discussion on the research methodology design.

Chapter two focused on the literature review. The discussion took place in three main parts including the human resource development strategy, the legislation and policy framework and the theoretical framework underpinning skills development.

The third chapter discussed the contextualization of the study. Here, the researcher presented the motivation and background to the AVFL, the location of the project site and the implementation process of the AVFL.

Chapter four deliberates on the research methodology employed by the study. It highlighted the research design, the data analysis process and the limitations of the study. Chapter five presented and discussed the findings of the empirical part of the study. Chapter six concluded the study by presenting the conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The key objective of the study was to evaluate the implementation of a skills development policy in the Amaoti area. The researcher intended to examine the changes that occurred to the AVFL project, which was implemented in a residential area with no farmer on site as an employer; to explore the procedures followed to have the AVFL implemented and to establish how the scheme benefited the participants.

First, the researcher examined the *recruitment process* of project participants and assessed whether it conformed to the Skills Development Act. The findings revealed that the recruitment process of the AVFL was not consistent with the legislation, which required learnership participants to be recruited from labour centres. Statistical analysis disclosed that, since the project was intended to benefit the Amaoti community, recruitment was conducted in the community. This is in line with the Local Government stipulation which mandates that local economic development projects should benefit local community members by creating employment opportunities for them in order to improve their standard of living. However, recruiting project learners locally may be flawed by corrupt recruitment practices such as nepotism. For instance, recruitment exercise of AVFL participants was not standardised and transparent because some respondents claimed that they were approached personally by an official to participate in the scheme.

Secondly, the study explored the implementation procedure of the AVFL. Here, the researcher intended to establish how the AVFL was implemented /administered, since the project site was not an officially designated farming land and the employer was not on site. The empirical findings revealed that the administrative functions of the project were delegated to DUT and the on-site supervisory duties were assigned to mentors. This created confusion and tensions among project participants. For instance, i) most respondents did not know who their employer was, because the project comprised various stakeholders whose responsibilities were not clearly defined to project participants, ii) most elderly respondents did not want to be supervised by young mentors, who they claimed were not capacitated in agricultural skills.

Finally, the study investigated how the AVFL benefited its project participants. The main purpose of a learnership is to provide participants with skills that will enable to find employment in the labour market or to establish their own small or medium enterprises. The AVFL was developed to provide its participants with theoretical and practical agricultural skills through the Mixed Farming Methods course. It emerged that seventy four out of the eighty learners who attended the course obtained NQF level two qualifications and the twenty five mentors obtained NQF level four qualifications. These qualifications provided a basis for further personal development. For instance, three mentors pursued their career in agricultural training and obtained NQF level five qualifications after the learnership.

The above discussion on the key research findings implies that the study achieved its research objectives successfully and it has answered the research questions. It indicated that an agricultural learnership does not require a formal farming land to be implemented. However, the absence of an employer or project manager on the production site may lead to infringement of implementation procedures and cause confusion and tensions among project participants as indicated above.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

This study is concerned with improving the quality of life through skills development. The researcher believes that for this to be achieved, the skills development legislation should encompass different implementation methods of learnerships. The study's goal was to evaluate a learnership that was implemented in an unusual manner where an employer or project manager was not involved in the day-to-day management of the project. Hence, the researcher recommends the following proposals for observation by policymakers, employer and other interested parties.

Firstly, the researcher discovered that the absence of an employer on the project site resulted in infringement of procedures; tension between learners and mentors; unclear terms of references; inappropriate dissemination of project information and lack of accountability. This may also lead to an abuse of power by some of the project participants. The researcher therefore recommends that employers of future similar learnerships should ensure that they are available on production site at all times.

Alternatively, the employer can appoint a project manager to oversee the day-to-day activities of the project.

Secondly, the findings revealed that the recruitment process was not properly conducted and could have been subjected to abuse. Information about the recruitment process was not circulated in the local media nor at community meetings. Therefore, the researcher recommends that future similar learnerships should be advertised properly and all interested community members should be given an equal opportunity to apply. This will allow recruiters to select appropriate applicants and help promote transparency.

Thirdly, the study discovered that the project site was not designated for agricultural purposes and it did not provide basic project requirements such as a reliable source of water, ablution facilities, sick bay and first aid kits. These are basic human needs which project planners should seriously consider before selecting a project site. The researcher suggests that future similar agricultural learnership projects should consider the provision of basic on site resources for project participants. Providing on site resources to project participants will motivate them to be energetic and more productive.

Finally, it emerged that mentors and learners attended the Mixed Farming Course concurrently. This resulted in learners disrespecting and disregarding mentors, because learners thought that they were all at the same level in terms of farming education. In addition, farming education in this community is traditionally transmitted from elderly members of the community, who have years of experience in farming, to younger generation. The researcher discovered that older learners considered being mentored by younger people who, according to them, had no experience in farming, as an insult. This type of relationship affected farming production on site, because elderly learners were not willing to work under the supervision of young mentors.

## **6.5 Recommendation for Future Studies**

The study has identified the following areas for further research. First, the study only focused on evaluating the implementation of an agricultural learnership on a piece of land where there is no employer/project manager on site. It did not converge on evaluating the implementation of a similar learnership on a piece of land where the employer is available

on site. The researcher suggests that future researchers conduct a comparative study evaluating the implementation process of similar agricultural learnerships, where on one the employer is on site and on the other there is no employer on site. This will prevent partiality and preconception about learnerships. It will also help in understanding the differences and challenges of two similar learnerships that are implemented differently and help improve legislation in this field.

It also emerged that even though the learnership under review achieved its objective of providing skills to participants, it failed to consider the sustainability of those skills. The researcher therefore proposes that future researchers investigate the sustainability of skills acquired through learnership programs similar to the AVFL. This will help in understanding whether skills development contributes to economic development.

To conclude, the objectives of the study comprised the following:

Main objective: To evaluate the AVFL, to ascertain if it contributed to skills development in order to enhance the quality of people's lives.

Sub-objective (a): To review the implementation of the AVFL in order to draw comparisons between what the policy prescribes about implementation of learnerships and what was implemented.

Sub-objective (b): To gather views, attitudes, perceptions and feelings of the AVFL participants about the outcomes of the AVFL on their welfare and livelihoods whilst the scheme was in progress. And

Sub-objective (c): To draw on the AVFL participants' views with regard to strategies, if any, that could be employed if a similar vegetable farming learnership was to be replicated elsewhere, for the betterment of the scheme.

The main objective was fulfilled. The AVFL produced skilful trainees who were awarded certificates at NQF Level 2 for learners and NQF Level 4 for mentors at the graduation ceremony on the 25 October 2006. The sub-objective (a) was covered in chapter two, literature review, where learnerships implementation is fully described to guide their execution. The sub-objective (b) was realized in chapter four by recognizing central factors of researched information. The sub-objective (c) was dealt with in chapter five through analysis and discussion of research findings from the AVFL participants. The conclusion

and recommendations were reached after an overall consideration and analysis of all the chapters of the dissertation.

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## Appendix 1

### **An Evaluation of the Implementation of the Skills Development Policy (SDP) in the Amaoti Area**

#### Structured - Interviews

##### Section 1. Demographic Details

###### 1.1 Age of respondents

18-35yrs

36-59yrs

###### 1.2 Sex

Female

Male

###### 1.3 Education level

Below standard 8

Standard 9-10

Degree/diploma

###### 1.4 Household income, before the AVFL

R0-R800

R801-R1000

R1001- Above

###### 1.5 Household income, after the AVFL

- R0-R800
- R801- R1000
- R1001-above

## Section 2: Beginning stages of the AVFL

2.1 How did you know about the Learnership?

2.2 Who were invited to participate in the Learnership?

2.3 What made you qualify to participate in the Learnership?

2.4 What documents did you sign, on joining the AVFL?

2.5 Indicate if you signed the documents below, and with whom you signed.

- The Learnership Agreement, and
- The Employment Contract.

2.7 What were the conditions of the 'Employment Contract?'

## Section 3: The AVFL Workplace Procedures

3.1 What happened/would happen if the learner wanted to be away from work?

3.2 What happened/would happen if the learner were injured at work?

3.2.1 What happened/would happen if the learner fell sick at workplace?

3.3 What happened/would happen if you wanted to resign from the learnership?

3.4 What happened if a dispute amongst the learners erupted?

3.5 What happened/would happen if you wanted the services of or join a trade union?

3.6 What was the water source for watering the AVFL gardens?

3.7 What type of toilets was accessible to the AVFL learners at workplace?

Section 4: What kind of skills do you think you gained from the AVFL?

4.1 List the most important things to you about the Mixed Farming Systems method.

4.2 What changes has this 'new' knowledge of vegetable production brought to your familiar way of farming?

Section 5: What changes did the AVFL bring to people's lives?

5.1 What changes did food production from a localized vegetable farming learnership do to your family?

5.2 What changes did food production from a localized vegetable farming learnership do to the Amaoti community?

5.3 Now that the AVFL was completed, are you still involved in vegetable farming? Yes/No

Why?

5.4 What is your source of income now?

5.5 If another learnership were to be done in Amaoti, what would you change so that it worked better?

Thank for your participation.

## Appendix 2

### **An Evaluation of the Implementation of the Skills Development Policy (SDP) in the Amaoti Area**

Open-ended questions for– Focus Group

1. You participated in this Learnership, discuss how it started. How did you become its participant? You joined the AVFL with the learners. How were you made mentors? Discuss the role of a mentor in the AVFL. What did you gain from the Learnership? What did you learn from the Learnership?

2. The reason that led the introduction of a learnership in the Amaoti area was that people who were engaged in informal farming wanted to undergo training in agricultural skills in order to practice commercial farming. Was the AVFL of any benefit to Amaoti people? Share your thoughts.

3. A learnership design favors an established industry where there is an employer and infrastructure to provide space and coaching for work. Do you agree or disagree with this view? Why?

Thank your for your participation.

Appendix 3

**Consent Form**

6054 Dlebelendlovu Place  
P.O.Lamontville  
Durban  
4027

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Letter of Consent re: An Evaluation of the Implementation of the South African Skills Development Policy (SDP) in the Amaoti Area.

I am a Masters Programme student from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Howard College) in the Social Work and Community Development faculty. I am writing to request your consent to take part in a research project I intend to conduct in the Amaoti area.

The aim of the study is to evaluate the implementation of the Amaoti Vegetable Farming Learnership (AVFL) which was done in 2005 and 2006, at buffer strip. In particular, the study seeks to understand the changes which occur to the vegetable farming learnership if the scheme is implemented in a residential area with no farmer who is an employer. The purpose of the interview or focus group is to gather your views regarding the AVFL for it was intended to equip you with skills.



As the participant of the learnership in question I wish to obtain your co-operation and to inform you that the estimated time of the research session will be one (1) hour. Reimbursement for travel expenses incurred will be ensured.

I wish to state that the material gathered will not be published or distributed without your permission and that your identity and that of the research samples will be protected through the use of alphabets and numbers instead of your name. Furthermore, the information or material gathered while conducting this study will strictly remain the University property, to benefit other students. On completion of the dissertation, all gathered data (documents and cassettes) in my possession will be shredded or incinerated. However, I wish to highlight that I am obliged to share this data with my Research Study Supervisor or Committee.

It is also critical to declare that your participation in this study is voluntary and that you are at liberty to withdraw from participating in the research at any given time.

My contact details are as follows:

Name: Theresa Mwandla

Telephone (w): (031) 3323721

Cell: 0845858426

The contact details of my Research Supervisor are:

Name: Dr. S. Kaye

Institution: University of KwaZulu Natal –Howard College Campus

Telephone: (031) 2603803

Thank you very much

Yours faithfully

---

Ms Theresa Mwandla

Research Student

**CONSENT**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (full names of participant)  
hereby declare that I understand the contents of this letter and the nature of the research  
project, and I do consent/ do not consent to participating in the scheme.

I understand that I am free to pull out from the project at any moment, should I so wish.

Signature of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_