

**The transformative potential of visual language with special  
reference to DWEBA's use of drawing as a participatory  
training methodology in the development facilitation context in  
KwaZulu-Natal.**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that, unless otherwise stated, this dissertation comprises my own original work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and curves, positioned above a horizontal dotted line.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Working within the rural craftswomen sector in KwaZulu-Natal, a non-government organisation (NGO), known as The Development of Dynamic Women's Enterprise in Business and Art (DWEBA), adopted an unusual, holistic and creative approach to income generation. DWEBA sought to address the divergent and broad goals of economic empowerment whilst engendering creative, personal and organisational development. To this end, DWEBA developed a participatory training methodology with visual language, namely drawing, at its core. By using the metaphorical and expressive potential of visual language together with a participatory approach to facilitation, DWEBA sought to concurrently address the technical and social dimensions of generating income. The word "dweba" also means, "to draw" in *isiZulu*, which is apt given the centrality of drawing in the methodology.

There will be three main areas in my examination of the capacity of visual language to effect change at an individual and group level within the development facilitation context. The first will be a selective reference to the context, research and participatory methodology of DWEBA. The second will comprise an evaluation of the transformative potential of visual language with specific reference to DWEBA's methodology. This will include a critical discussion of the nature of visual language as a right-brain hemisphere function and its potential to be a highly charged medium of expression that allows reflection to take place. It is important to note that the premise of this evaluation rests on the assumption that DWEBA's methodology is one among many other different methodologies and processes aimed at

reflection and transformation, although none appear to use visual language in the way in which DWEBA did. And thirdly, although the context of DWEBA's work was the craft development facilitation sector, the concluding section will contain a brief discussion of the main considerations and challenges involved in using a visual language-based methodology as complementary learning tool in other learning contexts.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **Introduction**

As stated in the introduction, this first chapter will provide the context and history of DWEBA's work, which comprises the bulk of the primary research for this dissertation. This background will include the following: firstly, the origins of the organisation including an outline of the external environment within which DWEBA worked, detailing problems and needs that DWEBA identified within its target groups; secondly, statistics which indicate a critical need for sustainable small to medium business enterprises involving women; thirdly, government policy that suggested support for work of this kind; and lastly, DWEBA's project objectives and a brief history of the groups of craftswomen with whom DWEBA worked. The theoretical framework for both DWEBA's work and for this dissertation will also be discussed.

#### **Who was DWEBA?**

Three women, with shared values and complementary expertise, founded and worked for DWEBA on a part-time basis between 1998 and 2001. They were the late Victoria Biyela-Makhaye, Theresa Giorza and me, Louise Hall. Prior to starting DWEBA, this team had worked together for two years, between January 1996 and November 1997, on a similar project, The Gannahoek Women's Project (GWP). GWP was initiated through and managed by the Pietermaritzburg-based non-governmental organisation, The Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA). GWP and DWEBA had similar objectives and the same methodology. DWEBA evolved on the basis of the strengths of GWP and in response to the further challenges of the work. Given the similarity of the two projects, the collective research and



achievements of these projects has become known as DWEBA's work. Although not strictly correct, it does however make reference to this collective research simpler.

### **Theoretical framework**

The premise on which DWEBA's work as well as this dissertation is based, is twofold: on the one hand, it encompasses the issue of sustainability, and on the other, that of learning.

Underpinning DWEBA's work as well as this dissertation is the belief that visual language used as a participatory learning tool can contribute in a small way to some of the challenges facing South Africans. Extremely high unemployment rates and the scourge of HIV/AIDS place a critical premium on successful and sustainable income-generating projects involving women.<sup>1</sup> A participatory training methodology is essential if these challenges are to be addressed and some measure of sustainability achieved.

Briefly, sustainable development or sustainability takes into account the inextricable links between economy, environment and society to enable people to meet their current needs and future generations to meet theirs (Duncan 2006:1). A participatory development approach assumes that increasing the capacity of individuals and groups to improve their own lives and take control of their own development can lead to sustainable development (DWEBA 2001:12). Chambers defines a Sustainable Livelihoods approach as one that acknowledges the 'local, complex, diverse, dynamic and unpredictable' realities of the rural poor and their accompanying complex and diverse livelihood strategies (Chambers 1997:162). DWEBA both acknowledged and endeavoured to work with these realities.

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1 Statistics on pages 6, 7 and 8 of this chapter demonstrate this point.

Further, DWEBA's holistic approach to income-generation, its participatory methodology, as well as this dissertation might offer useful lessons in the complex technical and social challenges involved in working towards sustainability.

Although the concepts of empowerment and participation are implicit in this notion of sustainability, I have chosen to discuss them in Chapter 3 where I believe they serve to strengthen the evaluative discussion of the dissertation.

While still pertinent to sustainability, the second factor as stated above, in this theoretical framework, concerns learning, and has relevance both in the development facilitation context and in learning contexts more broadly. A discussion and evaluation of the transformative potential of DWEBA's use of visual language as a participatory methodology might provide a cohesive argument for including visual methodologies in a more holistic approach to facilitation and to learning, generally.

## **External Environment**

### **Government Policy**

When DWEBA conducted its research during the late 1990's, President Thabo Mbeki repeatedly stated the government's commitment to respond to the challenges of poverty in South Africa during his term of office (Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad 1999:6). This was endorsed by the policy of national government to promote small-to-medium and medium enterprises (SMMEs) as a critical element in its job creation strategy. In addition, state and non-state resources were being directed at job creation. In particular, poverty alleviation funding from the national budget was R500 000 000 for 1999/2000. This money was intended for water, community-based public works and the poverty relief programme

of the Department of Welfare. In KwaZulu-Natal, during this financial year, about R100 000 000 was to be drawn from this budget allocation and most of this money was earmarked for groups in rural areas to assist with income-generating activities. In the Department of Welfare programme, there were 360 poverty-alleviating, income-generating projects that were to receive R20 000 000's worth of state assistance. Similar amounts of money were projected to be spent in the following two financial years. DWEBA considered its work to be part of a network of support for small and micro enterprises (Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad 1999:6).

### **Statistics**

The following current statistics on unemployment levels and HIV/AIDS in South Africa bear testimony to the need for successful and sustainable income-generating programmes involving women.

The 2005 mid-year South African population was estimated at approximately 46, 9 million of which 51% (approximately 23, 8 million) were female. The unemployment rate in March 2005 was estimated to be 11, 9 million. Irrespective of population group, female unemployment rates were higher than male unemployment rates ("Stats SA Key Findings at mid-2005" 2005:1).

According to UNAIDS, Sub-Saharan Africa has just over 10% of the world's population. Within this population group there are more than 60% of all people living with HIV – some 25, 4 million. Southern Africa therefore remains the worst affected sub region in the world, with South Africa having the highest number of people living with HIV in the world. An estimated 5, 3 million people were living with HIV end-2003 in South Africa – 2, 9 million

of them women. As yet there is no sign of a decline in the epidemic (“HIV/AIDS Statistics” 2005:3).

The SA National Department of Health conducts an annual survey among pregnant women attending antenatal care at selected sites in all nine provinces of the country (“HIV/AIDS statistics” 2005:4). Although this survey may be unrepresentative of the entire population, it does give a good indication of the trend of the epidemic:

According to the National HIV and Syphilis Antenatal Sero-Prevalence Survey in South Africa 2004:

- HIV prevalence among pregnant women was 29,5% in 2004, up from 27,9% in 2003 and 26,5% in 2002.
- HIV prevalence was highest among pregnant women in KwaZulu-Natal (40,7%) followed by Gauteng (33,1%) and Mpumalanga (30,8%) (“HIV/AIDS Statistics” 2005:4).

The following statistics taken in May 1997 provided DWEBA with a broad indicator of trends in KwaZulu-Natal: The unemployment rate in KwaZulu-Natal stood at 39,1%. KwaZulu-Natal with its large population and thus its large number of households, large average household size and high unemployment rate ranked second among the provinces in terms of its development requirements to improve life circumstances of households. KwaZulu-Natal ranked third as a province most in need of infrastructural development (Hirschowitz, Orkin & Alberts 1997:27).

Very poor and poor households were defined as having monthly expenditures of less than R600, 00 and R1000, 00 respectively. In KwaZulu-Natal, of the first category, that is, very poor, 13, 9% were headed by women and 12, 5% headed by men. Of those defined as poor, 35, 8% were headed by women and 21, 6% by men respectively (Hirschowitz, Orkin & Alberts 1997:8).

In a table showing the unemployment rate in South Africa by province, gender, urban and non-urban areas in October 1994, the total unemployment rate in KwaZulu-Natal in urban areas was 33, 4%, in non-urban areas it was 44, 6%. Of the non-urban figure, 53, 4% were women and 35, 8% were men (Hirschowitz, Orkin & Alberts 1997:6).

Given the above statistics it is not surprising that when DWEBA started its work there was, and still is, a proliferation of craft groups, particularly in rural areas, that are trying to generate cash income through craft production. Many of these crafters are poor, marginalized women who have had few formal or informal education opportunities. These factors have diminished their capacity to generate an income.

### **Problems and needs**

When DWEBA conducted its research, starting in 1996, and which was corroborated by the NGO, Olive Organisation Development and Training's (Olive) evaluation of DWEBA's work in 1999, the products made by the above-mentioned craft groups often lacked originality, were of poor quality, and seldom reached or were suitable for the appropriate markets (Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad 1999:6). Among these groups, there were resource needs such as communication infrastructure, buildings to work from, and equipment like sewing

machines (Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad 1999:6). Such groups had a range of support needs, which included:

- Personal and group development;
- Organisation and institutional development;
- Product development;
- Design skills;
- Production of artefacts;
- Quality control and quality improvement;
- Costing of products;
- Marketing skills;
- Procuring material at best cost; and
- Financial management (Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad 1999:6).

Management of craft production and marketing of craft was often assumed by outside agents, managers or entrepreneurs. In such instances craft groups or producers rarely received fair payment for their highly skilled and labour intensive work (DWEBA 1998:1).

Some of the main examples of support needs that DWEBA noted amongst the craftswomen with whom it worked were confidence, experience and/or training related. These included:

- That the craftswomen reported or referred decisions related to GWP to the men in their households (who had nothing to do with the project). This may have been a consequence of the patriarchal context within which the craftswomen lived and worked, and which resulted in the craftswomen's lack of self-confidence and/or their lack of confidence or trust in the group of craftswomen involved in the project.

An example of this occurred in 1997, when the project purchased five sewing machines for the GWP. In discussing the sharing and storing of the machines, some women initially suggested that the Gannahoek Trust should own the machines. The Gannahoek Trust was established as a vehicle through which the community of largely labour tenants could acquire and own the land that had been the subject of a protracted dispute. There was no GWP representative on the Gannahoek Trust and it consisted entirely of men. Ultimately, the issue was resolved on the basis that the GWP managed the machines.

- Rather than create designs themselves through drawing, DWEBA noted the craftswomen's tendency to take images or motifs from books or magazines which were then used for the designs in their work. This was perhaps a consequence of several related factors to do with confidence and experience: that is, it was possibly a result of the craftswomen's lack of confidence in their own abilities, and of their not valuing their life experience as source material for their work. It may also have been an outcome of the craftswomen's lack of experience and confidence in drawing, and in translating ideas into drawing and design.
- The craftswomen's need for conflict resolution and decision making skills. For example, in Gannahoek there were issues like group membership, entitlement to training and the sharing of sewing machines that became extremely divisive.
- The craftswomen's inability to define and access the skills required for achieving success in micro enterprise.
- The craftswomen's inexperience with the slippery issue of market taste; the difficulty in anticipating consumer needs and choices, especially for markets outside of their community.

- Problems with timeous production and delivery of craft. This was a direct result of inexperience, as well as a consequence of living in remote rural areas where there is no reliable or regular transport (Hall 2000:6).

### **DWEBA's objectives**

DWEBA sought to respond to these problems and needs: In the first phase of the programme DWEBA offered non-formal, workshop based, participatory training. The starting point of this work was the participants' existing skills. DWEBA's approach was holistic and took into account the range of skills necessary for micro enterprise to function effectively (DWEBA 1998:1).

At the core of this initiative was the belief that the process of "drawing one's life" can be a powerful tool of self-development and affirmation. Drawing was the basis of DWEBA's methodology and operated on a number of levels – the most functional of which was generating subject matter and designs for products. Drawing was also used consistently as a means of developing discussion, reaching decisions and solving problems. It was a way of rooting all phases of the project in the participants' experience and guarded against assumptions and easy choices being made by the DWEBA facilitators (DWEBA 1998:1).

The second phase of the programme was aimed at training a smaller group of women identified through participation in the first phase to work as resource people<sup>2</sup>/trainers and to offer training in their areas/communities (DWEBA 2000:1).

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2 A resource person is understood in this context as someone who has valuable expertise, leadership and facilitation skills.



DWEBA also aimed to assist these and other groups of craftswomen establish appropriate and useful networks with other craft producers and with the wide range of craft outlets locally, nationally and internationally. Where craft producers elected to delegate responsibility for some aspects of their micro enterprise, for example, marketing, DWEBA endeavoured to assist these craft producers to form associations with service organisations specialising in these aspects (DWEBA 2000:1).

The project objectives as defined in DWEBA's constitution were thus summarised as follows:

- To establish craft production micro enterprise, which involves and benefits women from underdeveloped communities in KwaZulu-Natal who are currently involved in craft production or who are looking for a means of generating an income.
- To develop the craft productive, management and marketing skills of these women.
- To achieve personal and economic empowerment of these women by using a dynamically creative and gender sensitive participatory methodology.
- To provide training that integrates the social, organisational and technical aspects of skills development.
- To facilitate networking between such groups to enable them to:
  1. Share experiences and skills:
  2. Co-ordinate activities like bulk buying, transport and marketing.
- To identify and train resource people so that the opportunities and skills generated by the project are sustainable and beneficial across communities.
- To ensure that the gathering of materials and the process of production are sustainable and do not damage the environment (DWEBA 2000:1).

### **A brief history of the groups of craftswomen**

DWEBA worked primarily with three groups of craftswomen: in Gannahoek, an area near Colenso; *Esithumba*, in the Valley of a Thousand Hills, near Durban; and lastly, Muden, one of Tembaletu's<sup>3</sup> satellite centres and part of the government land redistribution pilot project. Common amongst these groups of craftswomen whose ages ranged between approximately 30 and 60 years, was that they all lived in remote rural areas where access to water, electricity, schools and clinics was limited. Further, as stated earlier, most of the craftswomen had had little formal education; none was employed in the formal sector; many had multiple dependents, and their involvement with DWEBA was motivated by the need to improve their lives through generating or supplementing an income (DWEBA 1998:4).

Starting with their existing skills, DWEBA sought to integrate technical and social skills with its goal of economic and personal empowerment (DWEBA 2000:5). DWEBA worked most intensively with Gannahoek and the foundation of DWEBA's objectives and methodology were established in its work with Gannahoek on GWP (DWEBA 1998:2).

GWP's main objectives were to provide assistance to the craftswomen involved in the group, with creative product development, production, market assessment and marketing. The project produced mostly sewn items using predominantly German print or *isishweshwe* cloth. The intention was to produce a distinctive style of work that was saleable, local and autobiographical. Some of the project work necessarily involved organisational issues, for example, entitlement to training, sharing of resources and conflict resolution.

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3 Tembaletu is a skills training centre for adults, in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal.



Figure 1. Detail of one of the first quilts made by the Gannahoek women in 1995.  
Artist unknown, polycotton, detail approx. 30cm x 30cm.

GWP workshops were held once or twice a month, usually over weekends, in one of the classrooms of the local school in Gannahoek (GWP 1996:5).

The motivation to generate cash income by making and selling sewn products had been initiated earlier by Emmerentia Mazibuko, known as MaNdlovu. MaNdlovu was the wife of the headmaster of the school at Gannahoek, and lived in Thabemhlope, also known as White Mountain, outside Estcourt. She had taught the women to make soap, a vapourising ointment like Vicks, polish and fabric softener as well as simple quilting techniques (Giorza 2000:2).

The group made several quilts and brought them to sell while attending an AFRA women's workshop in December 1995 in Pietermaritzburg. It seemed that the intended market for these quilts was an affluent, tourist market, so Biyela-Makhaye displayed them in the African Art Centre after none sold at the workshop, hoping that exposure to a wider audience might help. However, the quilts still did not sell. On the whole the quilts were well sewn, but had been made from inexpensive, polyester fabric sold by weight, which the women had purchased locally in Colenso and Estcourt. The quality of this cloth and the arbitrary selection and combination of colour and pattern seemed to be the main reasons the quilts did not sell (GWP 1996:1). (Figure 1).

With little experience of selling to buyers outside of their local community and without the means to conduct a market survey, the craftswomen were making and marketing their products on a costly trial and error basis. In this instance, there also seemed to be a disjuncture between the craftswomen's choices regarding style and quality of the product and those of the

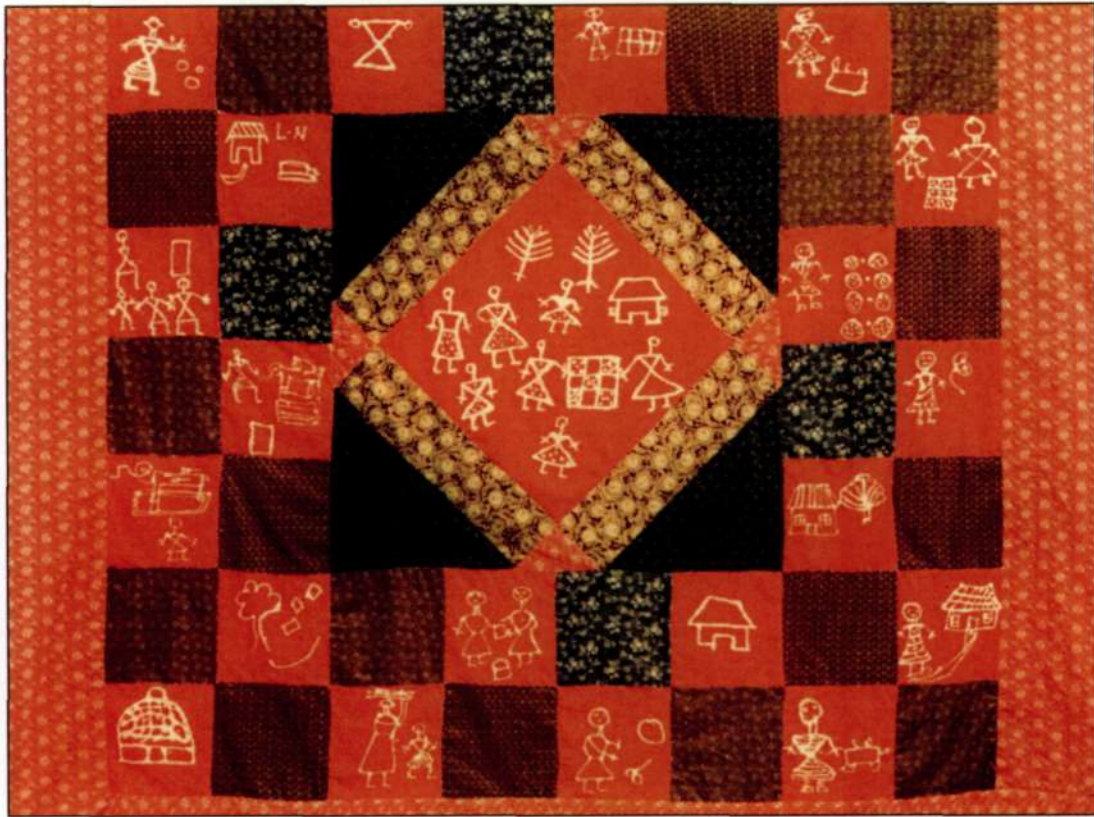


Figure 2. Details of GWP quilts showing the combination of *isishweshwe* and starch resist. Gannahoek craftswomen, 100% cotton, each quilt approx. 2m x 3m, 1997.

tourist market (GWP 1996:1). Consequently, one of the main objectives of the GWP was to assist the craftswomen develop a product that affirmed their experience and choices, as well as one that simultaneously appealed to an outside more affluent market (GWP 1996:6).

The decision to use 100% cotton *isishweshwe* for the Gannahoek sewn products was intended to achieve both of these goals. On the one hand, DWEBA was optimistic that this cloth was likely to appeal to the target market, and on the other, since most of the Gannahoek women wore, and still wear garments sewn from *isishweshwe*, the use of this cloth was also likely to draw on the Gannahoek craftswomen's personal appreciation and choice of material. The quilts that DWEBA subsequently helped the craftswomen produce were made of squares of a variety of 100% cotton *isishweshwe* combined with white 100% cotton squares painted with starch resist<sup>4</sup> designs derived from autobiographical drawings made by the craftswomen (GWP 1996:4). These quilts proved to be very saleable and the combination of *isishweshwe* and starch resist designs became characteristic of the sewn work made by the Gannahoek craftswomen during this period (Figure 2).

Although each group had similar needs, the stage of development of each group was different. For example, *Esithumba* had been successfully making and selling beadwork since 1987 and simply needed input on product development (DWEBA 1998:2).

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4 Starch resist refers to a fabric painting process where a design is created using a resist, consisting of starch, that is, flour and water. The resist is applied to the fabric which is then dyed or painted once the resist has dried. "Resist" literally refers to a medium which prevents dye or paint from penetrating those areas with resist. Wax and tightly sewn cotton or raffia are other commonly used resists. In the work of the women, the craftswomen each made a design on white cotton cloth using a mixture of flour and water. They used plastic bottles with nozzles to apply or squeeze the starch onto the fabric. This "resist" of starch was allowed to dry before the craftswomen applied fabric paint to the cloth. Once the fabric paint was dry, the starch was removed. The squares of cloth were then ironed or left in the sun to fix the fabric paint or make it fast, before the cloth was washed and then sewn as part of a quilt.



Figure 3. Examples of the beaded bras made by *Esithumba*.  
*Esithumba* beadwork craftswomen, approx. 30cm x 25cm, 1998.

*Esithumba* had benefited from earlier training and mentorship. In 1987, Biyela-Makhaye had been funded by an NGO called (the) Self Help Association for Development Economics (SHADE) to provide training for *Esithumba* on working co-operatively as a group, market assessment and product costing. The late Jo Thorpe, who was based at the African Art Centre in Durban during this period, also mentored members of the group, specifically with regard to the creative and expressive dimension of their work (Thorpe & Preston-Whyte 1988:5). A combination of the training and mentorship the group received, as well as the entrepreneurial spirit of some of the members of this group, meant that *Esithumba* became known for its beaded animals, as well as more autobiographical beaded sculptures, often constructed on a tableaux organised "...to tell a story" (Thorpe & Preston-Whyte 1988:3).

The *Esithumba* craftswomen generated a steady income from the sale of these works for over a decade. They sold their work mainly to the African Art Centre in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, to tourists on the beachfront in Durban and to buyers who came to their homes in the Valley of a Thousand Hills (Thorpe & Preston-Whyte 1988:5). With an interest in diversifying their products and as a consequence of their contact with Biyela-Makhaye, *Esithumba* asked DWEBA in 1998 to provide assistance with product development, in the form of ideas and finance (DWEBA 1998:1). The product that DWEBA helped *Esithumba* develop and market was the beaded sports bra (Figure 3).

Muden, on the other hand, was a new and less cohesive group with a varying membership of between 30 and 80 women (DWEBA 1998:2). A Tembaletu board member, Elsa Shreiner, initiated DWEBA's involvement with this group of craftswomen at Tembaletu's satellite centre in Muden after she saw the exhibition of GWP's work at the Tatham art Gallery in 1997 (DWEBA 1998:2). As with Gannahoek, this group's needs spanned technical and





Figure 4. Examples of umbrellas showing designs generated during DWEBA workshops. Muden and Gannahoek craftswomen; silkscreened waterproof synthetic material, bamboo and metal; diameter approx. 120cm; 1998, 1999.

social expertise. However, the work was dependent on both Tembaletu and DWEBA securing funding. With an initial shortage of funding, DWEBA and the Muden group of craftswomen agreed to start with product development and when further funding was secured to then widen the scope of training (DWEBA 1998:1). As it happened, DWEBA spent less on each workshop in Muden and was thus able to broaden its training to encompass more technical and social areas of expertise (DWEBA 1998:1).

The decorated umbrella emerged as the Muden group's most distinctive product during this period. These were commercially manufactured umbrellas with commercially silk-screened designs on each panel taken directly from drawings the women had made (Figure 4).

DWEBA therefore made considerable effort to offer appropriate and holistic participatory training for the varying needs of each group of craftswomen. The flexibility of its methodology allowed this. DWEBA's approach to income-generation seemed to be unusual with its stamp of creativity and its methodology which allowed DWEBA to concurrently address the practical and economic aspects of micro enterprise as well as its social dimensions, that is, personal and organisational development.

By using a holistic and participatory approach an intervention of this kind is more likely to be sustainable. However, in sub Saharan Africa, given the rising number of people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS ("HIV/AIDS Statistics" 2005:3,4.), many people will be faced with a growing need for income-generation but will be constrained by their resulting diminished capacity.

In some small measure this diminished capacity was evidenced towards the end of DWEBA's work where, particularly, in Gannahoek, it became more difficult to set dates for workshops. As stated earlier, DWEBA workshops occurred over weekends which coincided with the increasing number of funerals taking place.

During a workshop with Gannahoek in June 2001 when the group reported that one of its members, Bekiwe Mbhele had died from appendicitis, DWEBA asked whether the craftswomen were noticing lots of people dying, as was happening elsewhere. They said not so much on the farm but certainly in the townships and in the cities (DWEBA 2001:1). None of the craftswomen with whom DWEBA worked, however, discussed how they were affected by HIV/AIDS during workshops; neither did this issue emerge in the drawing processes, and neither did the craftswomen request DWEBA's input on HIV/AIDS or consequent gender related issues (DWEBA 2000:4).

Conceivably, given the statistics cited earlier, few groups of craftswomen will be spared the devastating effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and their capacity to generate an income accordingly challenged. Arguably therefore development projects seeking to make a valuable contribution to this sector will need to rigorously debate the issue of sustainability and its application in this context.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **DWEBA'S METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

The notion of sustainability, as discussed in the previous chapter, was central to the development of DWEBA's methodology. This chapter will cover the origins and development of the methodology and an outline of the methodology itself with particular reference to the nature of visual language. In addition, relevant examples will be included in a discussion of how DWEBA used the methodology and which processes it sought to facilitate.

#### **The development of the methodology**

DWEBA's methodology has its origins in development research that I was involved in from 1989-1991 at the Institute of Natural Resources (INR), University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. The main objective of my research during this period was to develop a training methodology that was gender sensitive and participatory, and that integrated technical and social aspects of group organisation and development.

This work was a consequence of research conducted by Michelle Friedman and Alistair McIntosh at the INR who asserted the need for NGOs " ... to draw out the values of the client community and build these values into structures as part of the development process" (Friedman & McIntosh 1989:509). They recognised that many projects involving marginalised community groups, for example, the poor and women, collapse or are unsustainable where service organisations unquestioningly accept the credentials of existing leadership within those communities (Friedman & McIntosh 1989:509). The target group therefore for my training methodology was rural development-orientated non-governmental organisations.

During this research I worked with groups of rural craftswomen in KwaZulu-Natal at St Faiths, Nhlanguwini and Table Mountain (Hall 1990:1). Here I experimented with visual language, in particular drawing, as a methodological tool. Two main reasons informed this choice. Firstly, as many of the women were illiterate and non-numerate, I chose visual language for inclusive and participatory potential. This was based on my assessment that most of the craftswomen would be able to draw to the extent that was necessary for the workshop processes. Secondly, faced with challenging research, I had to use whatever skills I had, and my interest and expertise lay with visual language.

One of the outcomes of this research was the recognition of the potential of using drawing as a methodological tool in the development facilitation context. I argued that, if practised with a participatory approach and with other participatory methods, a metaphorical and exploratory use of drawing could become a pivotal process in group organisation and development (Hall 1991:1). DWEBA applied and developed this key aspect through its practice and research for it to become a central component in the methodology.

### **Why the need for a metaphorical and exploratory interpretation of drawing?**

The need to argue for this particular approach to visual language used as a methodological tool arose because its use in the development facilitation context appears to be limited to a relatively literal and diagrammatic interpretation.

Participatory methodologies that include visual language and drawing in particular commonly confine its use to diagrams or maps. For example, participants are often asked to draw or “map” plans or changes that they envisage for a project, for themselves or another group of people. Alternatively, participants are simply asked to make a map of their village or

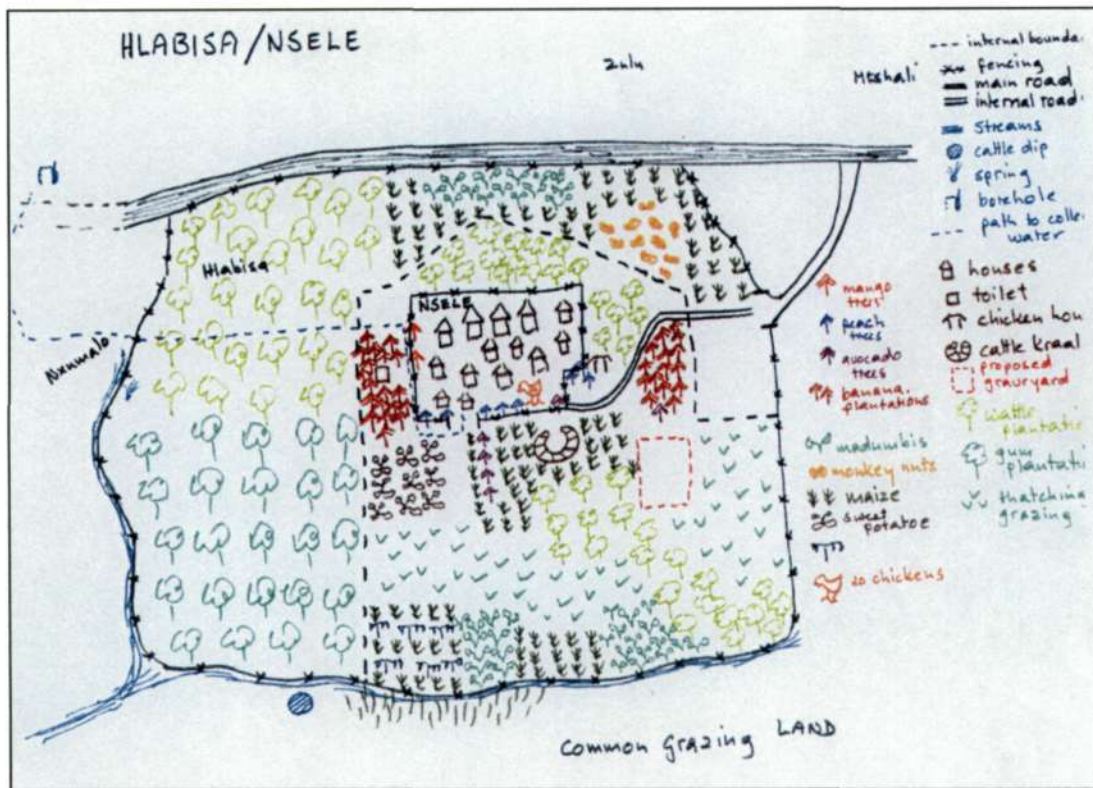


Figure 5. This map of Hlabisa/Nsele demonstrates a diagrammatic use of visual language. Artists unknown, khaki pens on paper, approx. 70cm x 90cm, 2005.

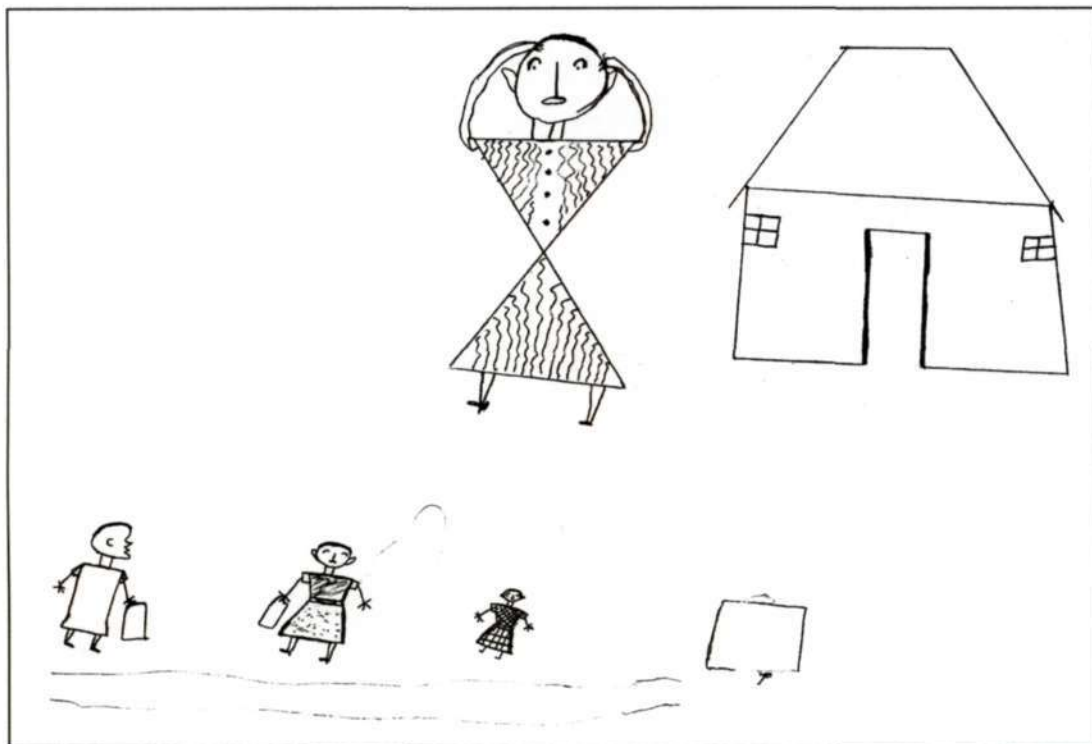


Figure 6. This drawing by Lizzy Miya (Gannahoek) exemplifies a more expressive and metaphorical use of drawing used with a participatory approach. Pencil on paper, approx. 35cm x 50cm, 1999.

land. Materials used for these processes include coloured chalks, pens and paper, but also local materials that some rural people feel more comfortable using, for example, sticks, stones, grasses, wood, coloured sands and soils (Chambers et al 1991:12). In these mapping processes, drawing is often combined with verbal or written language and each map is seldom constructed or drawn by only one person, that is, a map is often collectively made (Figure 5). This map of Hlabisa/Nsele, KwaZulu-Natal showing common grazing land, was part of process attempting to provide an affordable, accessible and sustainable land management system for people living under a common property regime (Hornby 2005:1). While this map reveals important details about where and how people live and farm, the drawing is nonetheless factual and general.

On the other hand, a metaphorical and exploratory use of drawing used with a participatory approach infers a more complex, interpretive and expressive understanding of drawing. This is demonstrated in a drawing by Lizzy Miya (Gannahoek) in Figure 6. Miya says of the main figure in her drawing, "This is me holding my head. I am thinking, "What happens if we withdraw our money? What will we do with it?" (DWEBA 2001:26). In addition to the expressive and autobiographical nature of the drawing, it also provides detail about the artist's context and contains a narrative element. That is, the drawing includes an image of Miya's home and a narrative detail showing women from GWP walking to the school to meet with other members of GWP to sew (DWEBA 2001:26). In addition, during DWEBA's workshops, each participant was asked to draw. In other words, drawings were not collectively made. The process was thus intended to heighten the potential for individual expression and reflection.

The limits of using drawing diagrammatically or as a mapping process are further exemplified in a workshop in South India when a group of women were asked to draw changes that they would like to see to their map (Johnson & Mayoux 1998:157). Their reply was: "We can't draw changes on this map, because the kind of changes we need can't be drawn." The unmappable changes they were concerned about were overwork, breakdown in co-wife support and beatings from their husbands (Johnson & Mayoux 1998:157).

In the above example it is true that these complex emotional issues could not, or could not easily, be mapped. Although a mapping process is participatory and partially employs visual language, it is largely, as inferred above, left brain hemisphere orientated, that is, linear, literal, logical and rational. These complex experiences, however, can be drawn using a different approach, as exemplified in Miya's drawing, where drawing is understood as a complex, expressive and metaphorical language. This research will attempt to show that in understanding visual language in this way and by using it with a participatory approach, these experiences can be recorded and explored within the development facilitation context.

### **Why visual language?**

As a right brain hemisphere function, visual language can access thinking skills that have the potential to assist with reflection (DWEBA 2001:10). Moreover, this is enhanced by its capacity to tap into emotional and subconscious experience more readily than left brain hemisphere, linear, logical, objective verbal processes (Edwards 2001:32). This research will attempt to demonstrate that the potential for transformation at a personal and group level is maximised when visual language, applied with a participatory approach, is used on its own, as well as in careful combination with verbal language. When applied this way, the asymmetrical and complementary brain functions have the potential for complex thinking,





<b>L</b> -mode		<i>P</i> -mode	
Verbal	<i>Using words to name, describe, define.</i>	Nonverbal	<i>Using non-verbal cognition to process perceptions.</i>
Analytic	<i>Figuring things out step-by-step and part-by-part.</i>	Synthetic	<i>Putting things together to form wholes.</i>
Symbolic	<i>Using a symbol to stand for something. For example, the drawn form  stands for eye, the sign  stands for the process of addition.</i>	Actual, real	<i>Relating to things as they are, at the present moment.</i>
Abstract	<i>Taking out a small bit of information and using it to represent the whole thing.</i>	Analogic	<i>Seeing likenesses among things; understanding metaphoric relationships.</i>
Temporal	<i>Keeping track of time, sequencing one thing after another: Doing first things first, second things second, etc.</i>	Nontemporal	<i>Without a sense of time.</i>
Rational	<i>Drawing conclusions based on reason and facts.</i>	Nonrational	<i>Not requiring a basis of reason or facts; willingness to suspend judgment.</i>
Digital	<i>Using numbers as in counting.</i>	Spatial	<i>Seeing where things are in relation to other things and how parts go together to form a whole.</i>
Logical	<i>Drawing conclusions based on logic: one thing following another in logical order—for example, a mathematical theorem or a well-stated argument.</i>	Intuitive	<i>Making leaps of insight, often based on incomplete patterns, hunches, feelings, or visual images.</i>
Linear	<i>Thinking in terms of linked ideas, one thought directly following another, often leading to a convergent conclusion.</i>	Holistic	<i>(meaning "wholistic") Seeing whole things all at once; perceiving the overall patterns and structures, often leading to divergent conclusions.</i>

Figure 7. This table shows the left and right brain hemisphere modes of thinking (Edwards 2001:44).

extrapolation of meaning and problem solving (Edwards 2001:xiii). This section will therefore include a brief discussion of some differences between visual and verbal language as well as the structure and functions of the human brain.

Verbal and visual languages are functions of the left and right hemispheres respectively (Edwards 2001:32). A consequence of what has become known as the “split-brain” research at the California Institute of Technology in the 1960’s, conducted by Roger W. Sperry and his students Michael Gazzangia, Jerre Levy, Colwyn Trevarthen, Robert Nebes and others, is that we have understood that the human brain consists of two halves, the left and right hemispheres, the functions of which are different but complementary, and both involve thinking, reasoning and complex mental functioning (Edwards 2001:31, 33).

Briefly, as indicated above, the left hemisphere is responsible for logical, analytic, sequential, symbolic, objective and verbal functions. The non-verbal right hemisphere is responsible for intuitive, subjective, relational, holistic, spatial and time free functions (Edwards 2001:39). (Figure 7). “In the visual mode, that is, using the right hemisphere, we see how things exist in space and how the parts go together to make up the whole ... we understand metaphors, we dream, we create new combinations of ideas ... we are able to draw pictures of our perceptions” (Edwards 2001:38).

Each brain hemisphere responds to the same sensory information in different ways; each hemisphere thus provides a parallel way of knowing or perceiving. In a sense, each of us has two minds, two consciousnesses mediated and integrated by the connecting cable of nerve fibres between the two hemispheres, known as the *corpus callosum* (Edwards 2001:34).

Ideally, the left and right brain hemispheres should be equally developed for their functions to complement each other (Hall 1991:4).

The *corpus callosum* is key to the complementary capacity of the two hemispheres. Prior research to the “split-brain” research at the California Institute of Technology in the 1950’s conducted by Roger W. Sperry, and his students, Ronald Myers, Colwyn Trevarthen and others, established the two brain hemispheres are connected by a cable of nerve fibres, the *corpus callosum*. The main function of the *corpus callosum* is to provide communication and allow transmission of memory and learning between the two hemispheres (Edwards 2001:31).

The “split-brain” research was seminal in showing that the two hemispheres can work together in a number of ways. Sometimes each hemisphere cooperates with the other, each contributing and therefore complementing the other with its peculiar mode of thinking and processing information. At other times, the hemispheres can work singly when the functions of one hemisphere are best suited to the task at hand. It also appears that sometimes the hemispheres conflict, with one hemisphere attempting to do what the other half “knows” it can do better (Edwards 2001:34). The verbal half of the brain – the left half – dominates most of the time in individuals with intact brains as well as in split-brain patients (Edwards 2001 32). It is usually the left hemisphere that inhibits the right and “takes over” (Edwards 2001:35). Most artists have experienced this in attempting observation drawing. Where attempts at observation drawing have not been successful, in my experience, this is often a result of the left hemisphere attempting to dominate and carry out a task for which the right hemisphere is best suited. In these instances, usually the left hemisphere constantly verbally instructs us (or our right hemisphere) to, for example, make whatever we are drawing “look

as though it curves into space” or “hollows in the centre and looks deep”. I have found that it is not possible to draw accurately from observation unless I am able to quieten that verbal or linguistic dominance and attempt to draw what I see whether it seems logical or not.

Visual artistic forms, in particular, those that are more metaphorical and expressive than diagrammatic and literal, are distinct from linguistic forms in that, not only do they emanate from different brain hemispheres, but also they more directly represent or resemble what they signify. The relationship of verbal language to its meaning is largely conventional and conceptual (Hall 1991:7). With the exception of onomatopoeia, which is perhaps the last vestige of a process where verbal language did have a direct resemblance to its meaning, linguistic forms or words largely denote meaning rather than directly resemble or represent meaning (Hall 1991:7). The emotional intensity of visual language, therefore, is a result of, on the one hand, the direct resemblance to meaning, and on the other, the ready access of visual language to emotional and subconscious experience. These factors, in addition to the complementary functions of the brain hemispheres, indicate the potential power of visual language in a participatory methodology (Hall 1991:7).

Recognising this, DWEBA used visual language to achieve a complexity of objectives: In response to the external environment, DWEBA was motivated to promote sustainable economic empowerment amongst rural craftswomen. Equally important was the motivation to use a process that affirmed and enabled reflection on personal and group experience. Informing these two objectives were the individual expertise, experience and shared values of the DWEBA staff.

Having grown up in rural KwaZulu-Natal, Biyela-Makhaye, one of the DWEBA staff, envisaged helping “women work with their hands” to generate an income. She believed that craft production was a more viable way of making money than, for example, growing vegetables on a small scale. Biyela-Makhaye had never witnessed many people involved in growing vegetables making much money, even though they were able to provide subsistence for their families. It was therefore Biyela-Makhaye’s belief in craft as a means to generate substantial income that motivated her involvement in DWEBA and the development of its methodology.

I was interested in developing some of the methodological ideas I had researched in 1989, while Giorza was researching the issue of reflective appraisal as a formal academic project for her Masters Degree in Ceramics. Both Giorza and I are artists and were motivated to share our creative experience with others. Our expertise and confidence in using visual language enhanced the application of drawing in the methodology. Thus, a blend of DWEBA members’ interests and expertise as well as the recognition of the transformative potential of visual language meant that drawing became a key methodological tool to achieve DWEBA’s objectives.

#### **How did DWEBA use its methodology?**

In common with many such projects, DWEBA had little time and capacity to spare, and the expressed needs of the groups of craftswomen, although similar, were varied. DWEBA therefore had to use its methodology flexibly and experimentally to achieve its objectives.

In addition, as DWEBA worked, particularly in Gannahoek, unexpected disagreements and conflicts emerged.<sup>5</sup> These had to be confronted and processed before this work could continue. Working with these issues had not explicitly formed part of DWEBA's original output, but these along with DWEBA's corrections and afterthoughts, provided essential material for how DWEBA used the methodology.

As outlined in chapter 1, DWEBA used its methodology to address the divergent and broad goals of economic empowerment whilst engendering creative, personal and organisational development. A summary of the key aspects of the methodology will help focus the discussion of DWEBA's use of the methodology:

The methodology is workshop based, participatory, gender-sensitive and flexible. It is holistic in the sense that DWEBA asserted that meaningful and sustainable intervention must take account of all aspects of income generation and group development. While drawing is not used to the exclusion of other participatory methodologies, visual language, specifically drawing, forms the methodological core.

### **The centrality of visual language to the methodology**

Drawing served broadly two functions in the methodology. The first was a practical one of generating images for subject matter and designs for the craftswomen's products. The second involved assisting with the more reflective personal and organisational aspects of DWEBA's work. Drawing was used to assist participants recognise and reflect on their own conscious and subconscious thoughts, emotions and motives as a starting point for personal

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<sup>5</sup> One of the main issues that emerged had to do with entitlement to training. This example is further discussed in chapter 2 and 3.

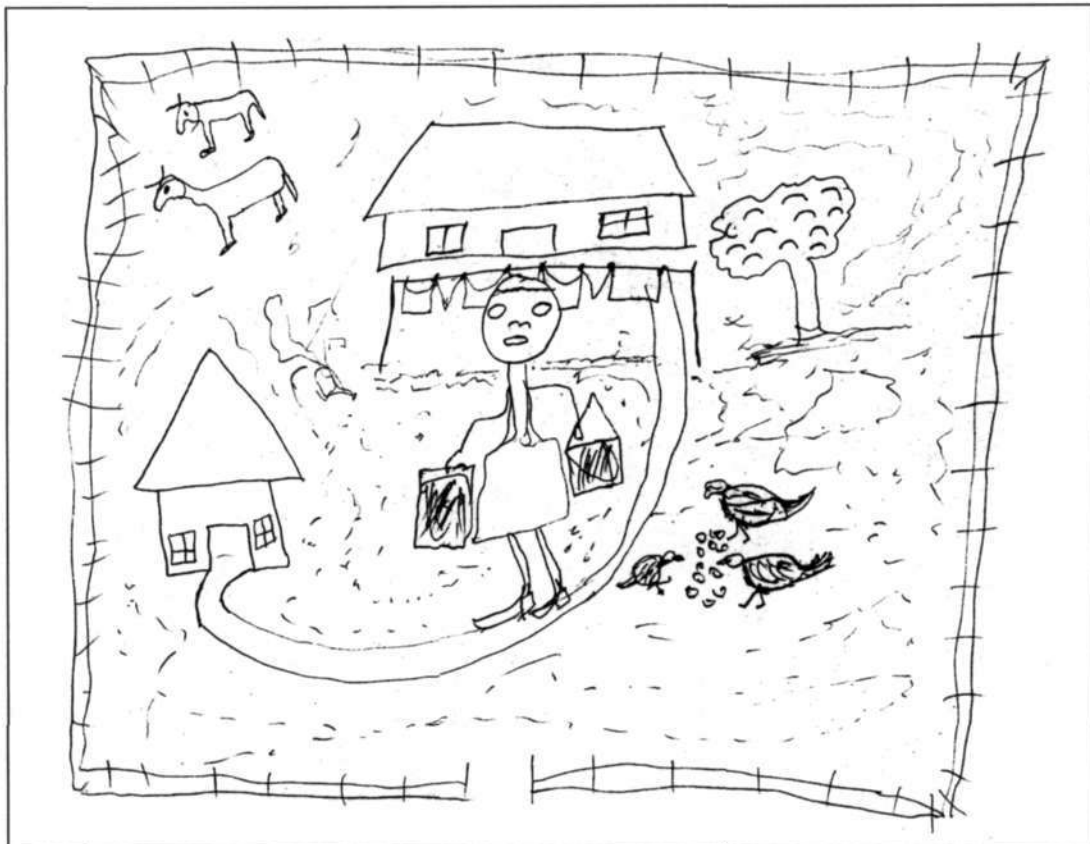


Figure 8. This drawing may be regarded as narrative and autobiographical.  
Artist unknown, pencil on paper, approx. 35cm x 50cm, 1998.

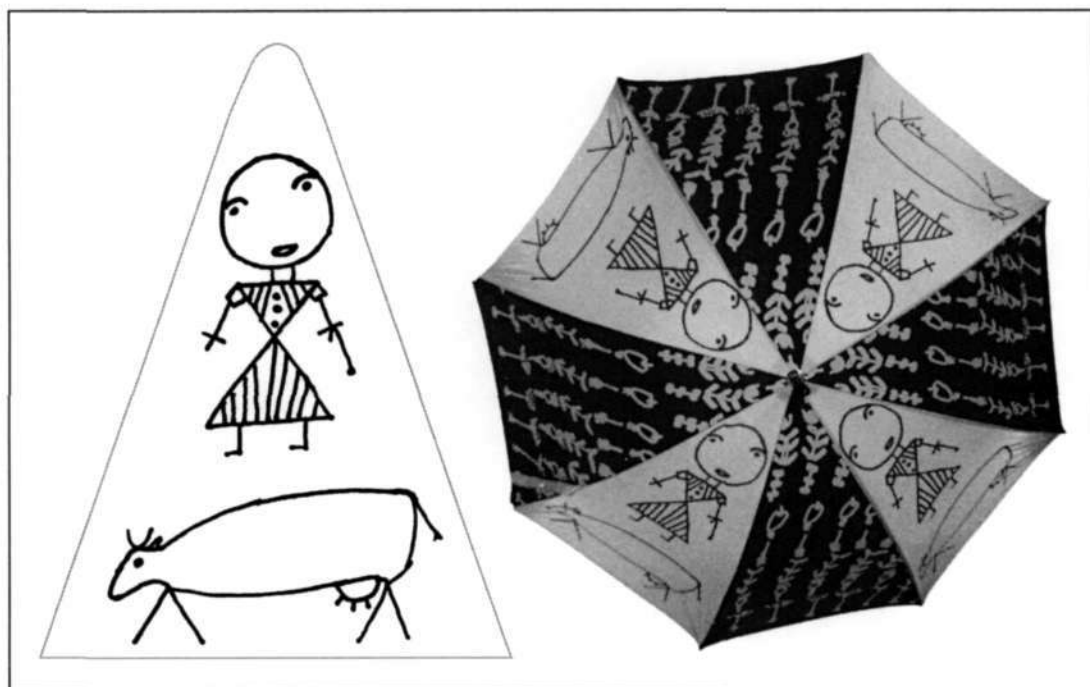


Figure 9. This figure shows an example of a drawing which may be termed a design.  
Gannahoek craftswomen, khaki on paper (left), silkscreened waterproof synthetic material (right), approx. 40cm x 60cm, 1999.

and group change and development. Here DWEBA used drawing to help develop discussion, make decisions and resolve conflict. These two functions of drawing contributed to a third function, which was not really separate in terms of what the participants did. By providing a comprehensive picture of each person's experience and perspectives, drawing assisted DWEBA to offer more appropriate intervention based on the craftswomen's needs and experience rather than on assumptions DWEBA staff might otherwise have made. Drawing in this sense was thus used to enhance the efficacy of DWEBA's facilitation.

Different kinds of drawing resulted as a consequence of the different functions of drawing in the methodology. These included: non-figurative or abstract expressions of feelings using only colour; narrative and autobiographical drawings; and drawings which may be termed designs characterised by being simpler and/or more decorative than, for example, the narrative or autobiographical drawings (Figures 8 & 9).

#### **DWEBA's approach to drawing**

The way DWEBA phrased the question or instruction for participants to make a drawing was important. This was equally relevant to drawing for design and subject matter as for personal and organisational purposes. There were two main considerations in phrasing and in language choice. Firstly, the questions or instructions were open-ended and broad, but at the same time provided adequate boundaries for interpretation. The questions provided enough information to stimulate and focus participants' thinking but not so much that their thoughts were pre-empted (DWEBA 2001:26).

Examples of such instructions for drawing are: "Make a drawing which shows how you came to be at this workshop" or "Make a drawing which shows all the changes that have occurred



in your life over the past year”, or “Make a drawing about ...” or “Make a drawing of ...”

The second important detail was that DWEBA used language which was sympathetic to right hemisphere functions and that appealed to non-verbal, and non-rational thinking, that is, not requiring a basis of reason or facts, as well as a willingness to suspend judgement. The key words in the above examples are “shows”, “about” and “of”. Note that DWEBA would not articulate questions or instructions by saying: “Make a drawing that “describes”, or “Make a drawing that tells the story of your life over the past year ...” The verb “describes”, and the phrase “tells the story” are evocative of verbal language. The other reason for this careful choice of non-verbally biased language is the tendency of the left hemisphere to dominate the right. Thus a question or instruction that evokes visual, right hemisphere functions also tricks the left hemisphere into not dominating and liberates the right hemisphere to carry out the task.

When using drawing for reflective or evaluative purposes, DWEBA was careful to ask participants not to write anything while they were drawing, other than perhaps their names afterwards. By using drawing exclusively and for these purposes, DWEBA was encouraging participants to think in another language, to think using right brain functions. In addition, asking participants not to write anything while they were drawing was a way of avoiding left brain hemisphere dominance. At certain critical points in the methodology and for reflective purposes, therefore, DWEBA endeavoured not to mix verbal and visual language.

#### **The participatory and inclusive nature of drawing in the methodology**

DWEBA’s use of drawing was intended to be an inclusive process where everyone had a voice. The only skill requirements for participants were their existing visual literacy and ability to draw. DWEBA’s encouragement therefore of all participants to draw was based

on the assumption that no prior visual language tuition is necessary for participants “with average eyesight and average hand-eye co ordination” (Edwards 2001:3), to participate fully in DWEBA’s use of drawing.

### **Resistance to drawing**

A quality in participants that makes the methodology easier to use is their openness or willingness to draw. DWEBA always anticipated that participants – irrespective of their levels of formal or informal education, or lack thereof – would initially be resistant to drawing. On being asked to make a drawing for the first time, many participants in DWEBA’s workshops were usually alarmed and said that they could not draw. Most adults in the Western world do not progress in drawing skills much beyond the level of development they reached at age nine or ten (Edwards 2001:68). It is not surprising that most adults become self conscious, embarrassed and anxious when asked to draw (Edwards 2001:68). Almost without exception DWEBA experienced this response in workshops both with craftswomen and with facilitators. DWEBA’s approach was therefore to anticipate some resistance to drawing but to gently and firmly encourage participants to draw, or at least to try.

### **Drawing used to generate product designs and subject matter**

The umbrella designs, and starch resist squares used in the quilts are examples of drawing in the methodology serving a practical function (Figures 10 &11). DWEBA would always ask the women to draw from their own experience, that is, of seen and remembered images and ideas. The purpose of emphasising visual expression of individual experience was to help the craftswomen develop products with an authentic, autobiographical aesthetic code. At the same time, these drawings, and others made without products in mind, were intended to validate the craftswomen’s life experiences.

This is exemplified at a workshop in Gannahoek in March 1997, where DWEBA introduced the idea of notebooks for each member of the group. Each craftswoman was given a pencil and a notebook. These A5 notebooks had blank and lined pages and were intended for the craftswomen to draw and write in, at home between workshops. The practice was aimed at two main areas of skill: that of drawing and that of building up a resource of stories and ideas that could be used in designs. The diary element could not be ignored, and the process was intended to function on a number of levels and in different ways for different people. During this workshop in March 1997, DWEBA asked each craftswoman to draw at home in her notebook, an incident from her childhood or from the period of growing up (GWP 1997:1).

The report back on this process at the next workshop in April 1997 showed that some women had filled over five pages of their notebooks. There were images of themselves as children, as brides and as mothers. There were stories and memories of homes and lives before marriage. Common subjects were their lives as married women and the struggle in the early years of marriage with parents-in-law (GWP 1997:1).

#### **Drawing used for personal and organisational development**

Typically, depending on the workshop objectives, DWEBA would ask each participant to make a drawing in response to a question or instruction from the facilitator. All participants were then encouraged during the report back session to each show their drawing to the group and speak about it. The process would usually involve further discussion about the images, concerns and problems that emerged from the drawing process.

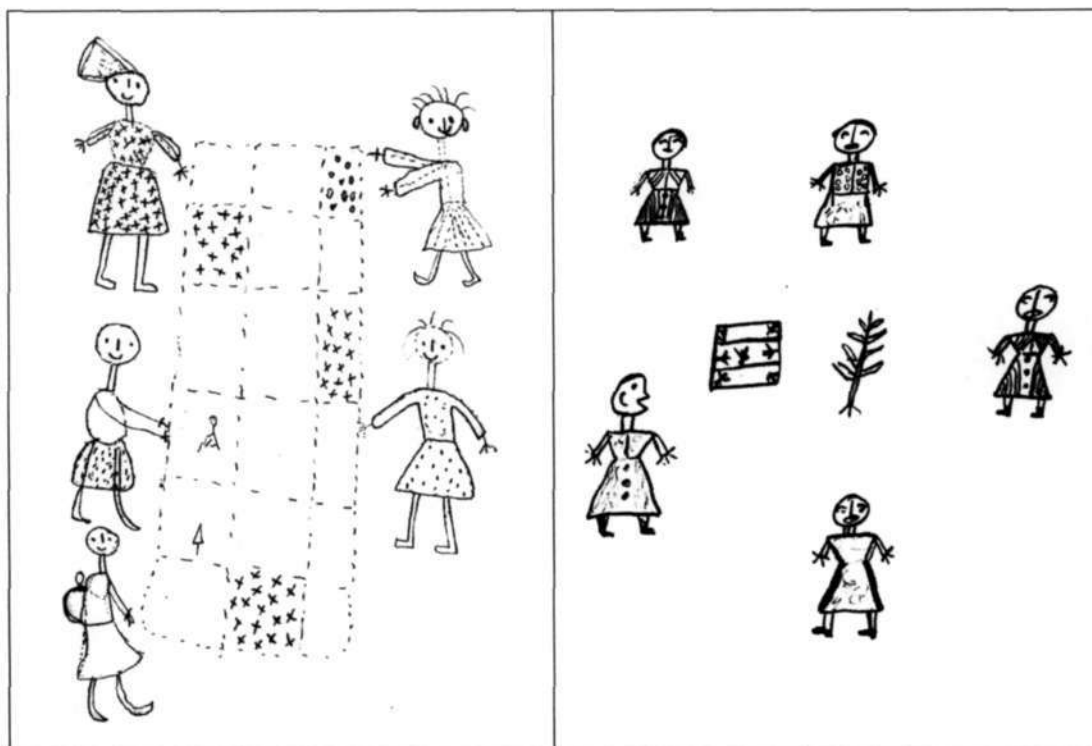


Figure 12. These drawings by MaNdlovu (left) and Lizzy Miya (right) show a group that works well together. Pencil on paper, each drawing approx. 20cm x 35cm, 1996.

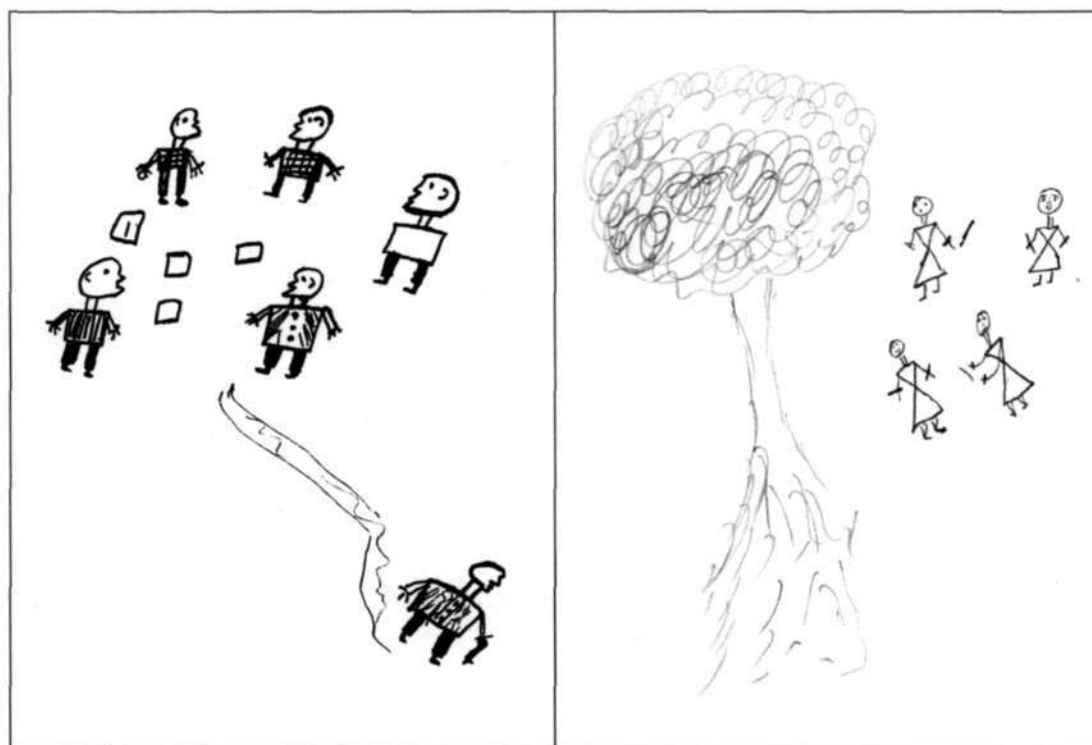


Figure 13. These drawings by Lizzy Miya (left) and Nakiwe Mbatha (right) show a group that does not work well together. Pencil on paper, each drawing approx. 20cm x 35cm, 1996.

An example of this process may be seen in a workshop at Gannahoek in July 1996. The objectives of the workshop were to resolve conflict about membership of the group, entitlement to DWEBA's training, and to reach agreement on group values and ways of working together. The following drawing exercises were part of this two-day workshop (Figure 12 and 13).

The first exercise involved each person making two drawings:

- a) of a group that works well together.
- b) of a group that does not work well together.

The common characteristics that emerged from the first drawings were:

- they would reach agreement on issues;
- they would work in peace;
- they would work co-operatively;
- they would trust one another;
- they would listen to one another;
- they would respect one another;
- they would be open with one another and share opinions.

And conversely, the common characteristics evident in the second drawings were:

- they would fight physically and verbally;
- they would talk behind one another's backs;
- they would not work at all or together;
- they would lack knowledge;
- they would be arrogant (Hall 2000:9).

In the discussion following this exercise, the women identified the importance of speaking openly within a group and being able to confront somebody if there was a problem. However, most of the women agreed that they found it very difficult to do this (Hall 2000:9).

Another process which was intended to assist with reflection and evaluation, and which was used in the same Gannahoek workshop, makes use of the emotive value of colour. Colour was used to convey and reflect on how each participant was feeling at the beginning and the end of the first day of the workshop (Hall 2000:10).

As an introductory exercise at the beginning of the first day, we asked the women to draw a colour on their name tag signifying how they each felt. We asked each person to say why she had chosen that particular colour and what feeling it represented. We developed this use of colour in a subsequent exercise during the workshop: each person had to draw a self-portrait as part of a process of building a picture of what was happening in the group. We asked each person to add a colour to their self-portrait, which conveyed how they each were feeling at that stage. Again, each participant was asked to say why they had chosen a particular colour and what it represented for them (Hall 2000:10).

### **Drawing reflecting the craftswomen's reality**

DWEBA consistently endeavoured to base its intervention on the craftswomen's needs and experience rather than on DWEBA staff's own life experience, choices and assumptions. DWEBA thus made considerable effort to set up a reciprocal relationship between themselves as facilitators and the craftswomen as participants. "The craftswomen were encouraged to share their expert knowledge of their own communities; their ways of working and co-operating; their values and priorities" (GWP 1998:2). The complex and versatile nature of

visual language lent itself to DWEBA's extensive exploration of its adaptability and aptness to the ongoing technical and social challenges of its work, and in particular, to basing solutions to these challenges on the women's experience and aspirations.

The following two examples show this exploration of firstly, DWEBA attempting to plan and base workshops primarily on the craftswomen's needs and experience and secondly, helping the craftswomen find solutions to conflict using their own experience and values.

### **Drawing used to plan workshops**

An example of this mode of drawing can be seen during a workshop with the Muden women in April 1999: at a prior workshop with this group of craftswomen in November 1998, the craftswomen agreed to arrange and facilitate a meeting with all the members of the group. The main objective would be to discuss how they should organise themselves to manage and share income from the sale of umbrellas and starch resist cloths which would be sold at the Ngezandla Zethu Exhibition at the Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg during December 1998 (Hall 2000:10).

At the April workshop, DWEBA asked the women to each make a drawing showing what they had decided. The drawings should depict the details of how the women would organise themselves. It was clear from the drawings that the women had not in fact held the meeting and there was therefore no consensus on this issue. Further, the drawings revealed that there were newcomers to the group who had not been party to any of the processes or decisions taken at previous workshops (Hall 2000:11).

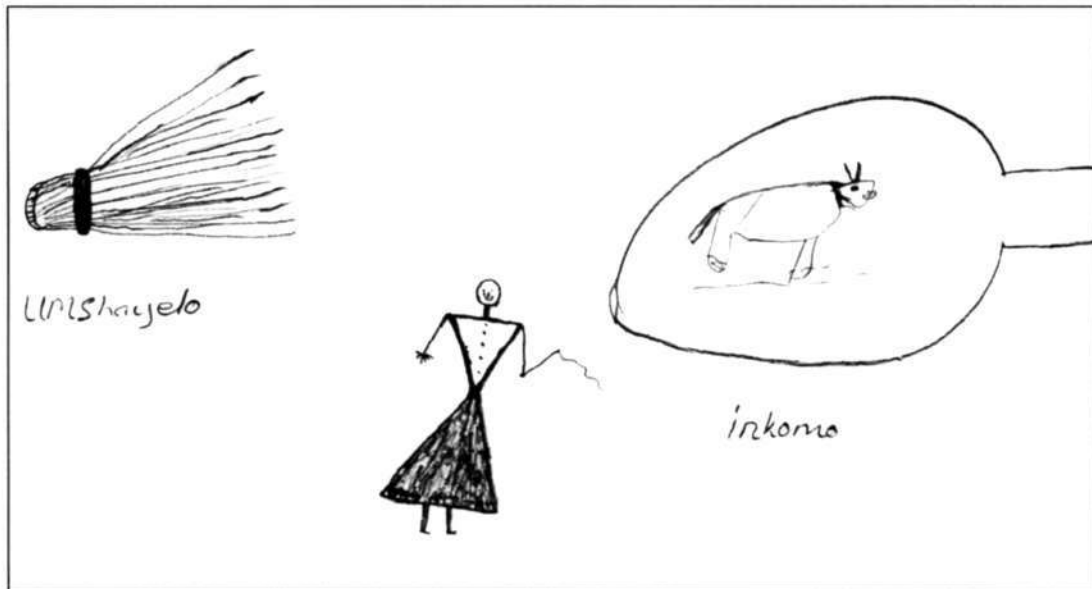


Figure 14. This drawing by Duduzile Mlele shows a broom and a cattle dip as commonly shared items. Pencil on paper, approx. 40cm x 60cm, 1997.



### **Drawing used to apply the craftswomen's experience to conflict resolution**

DWEBA's endeavour to facilitate the craftswomen finding solutions to conflict in their own experience and values is evidenced in an example at a workshop in Gannahoek in 1997. There was conflict within the group about how the limited number of sewing machines that had been donated to the project should be shared. DWEBA asked the women to draw all the things that they already shared. Brooms, the road, water (a dam) and the cattle dip were some of the things depicted (Figure 14). Brooms were identified as most commonly shared items. DWEBA asked the women if they could apply the way in which they shared these to the problem of sharing the sewing machines. The women's response was, "Let one person use it then pass it around" (Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad 1999:10).

### **DWEBA's holistic approach**

DWEBA recognised that meaningful and sustainable intervention must take account of the interdependence of all aspects of income generation and group development. Seeing these components as linked thus recognises that their differing strengths and weaknesses affect the overall success of the enterprise. DWEBA therefore used its methodology to draw attention to, and work with the interdependence of, all social and technical aspects of its work.

During a workshop at Mudén in 1998 DWEBA endeavoured to show the links between the production process and individual and group values and commitment. The craftswomen needed to complete some cushion covers at home that had been started during the workshop. DWEBA asked that, when they worked together in the same groups outside of the workshop situation, the craftswomen take note of the way in which group members worked with each other. In other words, they try to be aware of, for example, whether everyone took equal responsibility for the work, whether there were some people who did not arrive to complete

the work, and whether there were some who were more dedicated to finishing on time and with the necessary quality. During the subsequent workshop, DWEBA spent some time discussing these issues. It is worth noting that DWEBA did not use drawing in this particular example but rather relied on individual and group discussion (Hall 2000:13).

### **DWEBA's approach to gender**

DWEBA was aware that its methodology had the potential to facilitate rigorous examination and reflection on gender issues. However, it was never DWEBA's brief to address gender issues directly with the groups of craftswomen with whom it worked. Gender conscious approaches are concerned with the manner in which the relationships between men and women and the subordinate position of women are socially constructed. Men and women play different roles in society, their gender differences being shaped by ideological, historical, religious, ethical, economic and cultural factors.

DWEBA understood how sensitive this issue was in the context of its work. While its position on gender was evidenced by certain choices, like its choice to work with groups primarily of women, DWEBA did however endeavour not to impose its values or its interpretation of gender on the women. For example, two women who were part of the group of craftswomen in Gannahoeck were in a polygamous relationship, that is, they were married to the same man. They did not ever jointly attend workshops during DWEBA's work in Gannahoeck from 1996 – 2000. They would alternate: while one attended a workshop, the other would take responsibility for household and agricultural work. DWEBA did not discuss this situation with the group or interfere with this arrangement. DWEBA therefore did not challenge existing power relations outside of the group of craftswomen.

DWEBA thus sought to take account of gender issues in its work by being aware of the craftswomen's socialisation and subordination and addressing this issue in a limited way. While DWEBA endeavoured, through its methodology, to build the craftswomen's confidence, affirm their experience and assist with improving their capacity to generate an income, because of its brief, on the other hand, DWEBA also chose not to challenge or workshop power relations outside of the group of craftswomen.

### **Conclusion**

As can be seen in this chapter, drawing in DWEBA's methodology aimed to serve two broad functions. On the one hand, with its emphasis on practical and technical skills development, the first function was that of enhancing the saleability and the unique autobiographical quality of the products. The second function, on the other hand, was to develop personal and organisational development skills to address the ongoing, complex, technical and social challenges of the work. These different functions demanded a different emphasis in the drawing process and resulted in different kinds of drawing. On the one hand, the practical function of drawing to produce images for designs and subject matter for the craftswomen's products occasionally demanded that DWEBA sensitively facilitate the craftswomen's drawing and creative skills, bearing in mind that the saleability of the craftswomen's work required some degree of creative and technical proficiency. On the other hand, the function of using drawing to assist with the reflective, personal and organisational aspects of DWEBA's work required of participants no more than their willingness to use visual language with their existing drawing skills. The emphasis in this latter mode of drawing was therefore never on participants' competence: it was rather on their openness to using another language.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **EVALUATION**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter provides an evaluation of the methodology in relation to DWEBA's objectives. With reference to the examples and processes referred to in chapter two, this chapter will involve a critical examination and discussion of DWEBA's use of drawing as a methodological tool. Clarity on key terms will be useful in establishing the parameters of the evaluation.

#### **Key terms**

The key terms referred to are to be found in DWEBA's overall goal of using its participatory methodology to address the divergent and broad goals of economic empowerment whilst engendering creative, personal and organisational development.

The terms "empowerment" and "participatory" have been widely used in a range of contexts for varying purposes. "The language of participation and empowerment is used differently by different people and has been appropriated by organisations with different ideologies and intentions" (Johnson & Mayoux 1998:148). As the same authors have pointed out, "... labelling a process 'participatory' does not mean it will automatically lead to empowerment" (Johnson & Mayoux 1998:148). Clarity, therefore, on DWEBA's understanding of these terms and their inherent values is necessary for this evaluative discussion.

#### **Economic empowerment**

DWEBA interpreted its first goal of addressing the craftswomen's need for economic empowerment as assisting the craftswomen improve their material conditions by increasing

their capacity to generate or supplement their income. At the start of its work with Gannahoek in 1996, DWEBA envisaged that the craftswomen would, once they were skilled and confident enough, assume full-time commitment to this enterprise. DWEBA soon understood that the women had other important household and livelihood responsibilities, which meant their involvement in generating income, remained part-time. DWEBA noted this as a factor with the two other groups with whom it worked, in Muden and *Esithumba* (DWEBA 1999:5).

DWEBA worked towards making itself redundant (Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad 1999:11) so that by the end of the process the women would independently

- Sell their products
- Supply the market timeously and as agreed
- Manage their finances
- Keep financial records
- Benefit financially

And, in terms of assessing the markets, the craftswomen would

- Differentiate between markets
- Include all their costs in pricing their goods
- Understand art versus craft (GWP 1996:3).

### **Empowerment at a personal and organisational level**

DWEBA's understanding of "empowerment" in this sense was to engender creative, personal and organisational development skills, which are the social dimensions of successful micro enterprise. As with the above, DWEBA endeavoured to work against having the women dependent on them (Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad 1999:11). The listed indicators with



Figure 10. Gannahoek craftswomen, starch resist on 100% cotton, detail approx. 20cm x 20cm, 1997.



Figure 11. Muden craftswomen, silkscreened waterproof synthetic material, each panel approx. 40cm x 60cm, 1998.

Figures 10 and 11 show the practical function of drawing as design.

reference to creative product development, personal empowerment and organisational skills development as set out at the beginning of its work in 1996 were:

#### **Creative product development**

- **Improvement in design and use of colour**
- **Originality and individuality**
- **Personal involvement, self-discovery**
- **Generation of new ideas**
- **Trusting own judgement**
- **Self-assessment, response to feedback and criticism**
- **Independent decision-making**

#### **Personal empowerment**

- **Increased self confidence**
- **Skills developed**
- **Independent decision making**
- **Increased self respect/ self worth**
- **Participation in group decision-making and management and in other structures**
- **Sharing skills and experience beyond group**
- **Understanding of financial processes**

#### **Organisational skills development**

- **Group functions effectively**
- **Group plans and works independently**
- **Identify own skill needs**

- Adapt to change and opportunities
- Group decision making
- Conflict resolution
- Record-keeping (GWP 1996:3).

Although DWEBA's work with the three groups of craftswomen was not research per se, but a funded development project with specific objectives, DWEBA's way of working with each group and its notion of empowerment falls within a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) paradigm. PRA developed from the late 1970's philosophy, method and approaches of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). Robert Chambers, an important developer and exponent of PRA has described PRA as "a growing family of approaches and methods to enable local 'rural or urban' people to express, enhance, share and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions to plan and to act" (Johnson & Mayoux 1998:151). DWEBA sought to assist mainly three groups of craftswomen to take control of their own lives and to find solutions for the ongoing challenges of working together in partnerships and generating an income. Thus DWEBA's notion of empowerment was that it "... is an ongoing process, not an end state" (Johnson & Mayoux 1998:150). Further, DWEBA hoped that its holistic approach, that is, by drawing attention to and working with the interdependence of these complex social and technical factors, would enhance the likelihood of sustainability and success.

#### **DWEBA's understanding and application of the notion of "participatory"**

In a general sense, participatory research can be defined as a three-pronged process involving social investigation with the full and active participation of all participants in the entire process, an educational process of mobilisation for development and a means of taking action for development (van Vlaenderen 1995:162).



Some of the ways in which DWEBA's work was participatory are as follows: firstly, DWEBA's aimed to work in a people-centred manner where DWEBA consulted with the women at each stage of its development, and asked of them their full and active participation in the development of the project (van Vlaenderen 1995:162).

Secondly, DWEBA assumed that each community had well-established systems and strategies for survival and sought to build on these indigenous systems of knowledge and resources. The example cited in the previous chapter on finding solutions for sharing sewing machines, demonstrates this. DWEBA assumed that by doing so it would reduce the likelihood that DWEBA's work would de-skill the craftswomen and increase their dependency on DWEBA or other external NGO's or service organisations (van Vlaenderen 1995:163).

And thirdly, DWEBA's methodology was workshop-based, innovative and participatory, drawing on Paulo Freire<sup>6</sup>'s notion that learning takes place through reflection on experience (Hall 1991:4). DWEBA's inclusive, visual language dominated methodology was intended to equip the groups of craftswomen with the necessary tools for identifying, analysing and solving their own issues (van Vlaenderen 1995:163).

Participatory processes require a high level of awareness in the researcher of the purpose of the research and therefore the power relations between researcher/facilitators and participants, so that power is not exploited in the research process. DWEBA made considerable effort not to misuse its role in the participatory process (Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad 1999:10).

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6 Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a profoundly influential Brazilian educationalist. He was particularly popular in the informal education sector with his emphasis on dialogue, his thinking on educational practice and liberation and his concern for the oppressed. His *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is one of the most quoted educational texts, especially in Latin America, Africa and Asia (Smith 2005:1).

DWEBA's use of drawing in its methodology had the potential to make participants vulnerable because of its capacity to access emotional and subconscious thought directly and without censorship<sup>7</sup>. This was added reason for DWEBA to caution against any exploitation of its role and power.

### **Evaluation of the transformative potential of drawing in DWEBA's methodology**

The focus in this section is on the extent and nature of the impact of drawing in effecting change within DWEBA's work. For the purpose of clarity I will first discuss drawing in relation to its practical and economic function, and then its more reflective, personal and organisational skills development role.

### **Evaluation of the use of drawing with respect to economic empowerment**

Within this practical function lay several tasks: The first was to build on the skills the women already had, that is, to offer training. The second was to produce quality, saleable products with a distinctive, local and autobiographical character, which had to be completed timeously and sold.

Workshops with each group were held approximately once a month. Limited time, therefore, as well as the multiplicity of tasks, that is, the combination of training and production in workshops, meant that the total output of products between 1996 and 2000 was moderate. The total sales of products from all the groups of craftsmen, however, were largely successful providing a net profit over the same period of R13,457.55 (DWEBA Financial statements 1996–2000). This sum does not include the cost of the materials which the project bore

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7 See page 61 of this chapter for further discussion on this issue.

during training. It also does not include sales some craftswomen made independently and outside of workshops using the skills gained from DWEBA workshops.

The project achieved its goal of assisting the craftswomen to sell their work to a more affluent tourist market where the returns on craft were greater than those gained from a local market. The main outlets in Pietermaritzburg for the craftswomen's work were the African Art Centre, and the annual Ngezanhla Zethu Craft exhibition at the Tatham Art Gallery.<sup>8</sup> In addition to these KwaZulu-Natal outlets, the umbrellas designed by Muden and Gannahoek, were marketed through the Bat Centre and Killie Campbell Museum shop in Durban, the National Gallery shop in Cape Town and Kim Sacks Gallery in Johannesburg. In addition to the Killie Campbell Museum shop, *Esithumba* continued to supply their established markets, namely, the African Art Centre in Durban, the Durban beachfront, and tourists who came into the valley to buy craft. The Muden group also sold their work occasionally to tourists who came to their area (DWEBA 1999:4).

The work, which was taken largely on a consignment basis, was sold through the above outlets, and included mainly quilts, cushion covers, umbrellas, and beaded bras. Other items which were not developed in workshops to the same extent included *icansis* (woven reed mats traditionally used for sleeping) with figurative designs and smaller sweet paper mats which were made by adapting a quilting technique to found sweet papers. The quilts, cushion covers and umbrellas sold quickly and it seems that the element of the craftswomen's drawing

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8 In November 1997 the Director of the Tatham Art Gallery, Brendan Bell, offered the Gannahoek women exhibition space in the West Wing of the gallery, to run concurrently with the Ngezanhla Zethu craft exhibition. Here, the women sold most of their work and received a commission for a quilt. An article in The Natal Witness written by Margaret von Klemperer about this exhibition enhanced publicity and interest in the Gannahoek women's work (von Klemperer 1997:26G)

was a key factor in their distinctive aesthetic appeal (DWEBA 1999:4).

In spite of the initial, anticipated resistance to DWEBA's unusual methodological medium, as well as a measure of expected difficulty in the creative process, most of the craftswomen found drawing useful as a means to generate designs and subject matter for their products. The participants' comments presented below highlight some of the lessons learnt from the process.

At a workshop in Gannahoek in November 1997, MaNdlovu, who was the resource person for this group, said, "What I experienced was that it was difficult to take pencil and paper and to draw. Our work improved all the time. You can see when we started to draw" (Hall 2000:11).

Sizani Sithole (reed mat – "*icansi*" weaver): "I would personally like to thank the Pietermaritzburg team for the encouragement to vary our products to compete with others making the same thing. You taught us how to use the books<sup>9</sup> and to transfer the drawings in to our work."

In Muden in July 2000, on being queried what it was like to be asked to draw, the women's response was "Good!" for the following reasons:

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9 We introduced a journal/sketch book into the programme, described on page 30 and 31 of Chapter 2. DWEBA encouraged the women to use these books between workshops to reflect on the project process and to tell their own stories. They were a rich source of imagery from which some women developed designs for their products; they also provided individual feedback to DWEBA. These books were especially appreciated by women who had never had a chance to attend school (Giorza 2000:3).

Olvinah Sithole: "... we had seen our drawing become popular through products for example, the umbrellas."

Nomusa Buthelezi: "... Drawing helps. It is helpful because you don't have to look into books for ideas. It comes from our own brains" (Hall 2000:12)

Although MaNdlovu's comment highlights the challenge of the creative drawing process, she articulates a recognition of the improvement of the craftswomen's drawing skills. Sizani Sithole's comment shows an awareness of the advantage gained by being able to translate autobiographical drawings from one format to another and thus make their work more competitive. Finally, observations from the Muden women reiterate similar points: Olvinah Sithole and Nomusa Buthelezi note the value of their personal experience and perception, as well as their skill of being able to access these through drawing to become important design and saleability components in the products.

### **Findings on the transformative potential of drawing with respect to economic empowerment**

The value of drawing in increasing the craftswomen's capacity to generate or supplement income seems to be most significant where drawing formed an integral part of the particular character or brand of the product. This is best exemplified in the umbrellas, and the sewn and quilted items which combined starch resist and *isishweshwe*, produced by Gannahoek and Muden. Whereas for *Esithumba*, the beadwork group which made a range of the beaded bras, drawing played a negligible role in enhancing or affecting their capacity to generate an income. In fact DWEBA used its methodology least with *Esithumba* where the women were

well organised and simply needed input on product development in the form of ideas and finance to test the market with new products.

### **Evaluation of drawing in personal and group development**

As described in the previous chapter, DWEBA used drawing beyond its more obvious practical function, to affirm the craftswomen's experience and build their confidence; to assist reflection on personal and group development and to enhance dialogue between facilitators and participants, and between participants themselves. This process became central in assisting facilitators with planning workshops more appropriately; it was used to assist the craftswomen make decisions; to resolve conflict and to enable personal and group development and change. The only prerequisite for participants to use drawing in this way was their willingness to explore issues in visual language with their existing visual language proficiency.

### **Feedback from the craftswomen**

The comments presented and discussed below were made by the Gannahoek women during a workshop in November 1997. They indicate some measure of the accomplishment of several of the above personal and organisational development skills.

The main objectives of the workshop were to collect and price the women's work for the exhibition at the Tatham Art Gallery, and to finalise the number of women requiring accommodation on the night of the exhibition opening. The women had spread their work out and everyone was struck by how wonderful it looked. DWEBA asked them how they felt when they saw their work like this (GWP 1998: appendix 2)

Lizzy Miya said, “We feel proud. It has put us in a high position.”

Delisile Sithole said that when her husband had seen her work a few days before, he had said. “It is impossible. You could not have made such a beautiful thing. You are trying to impress us by showing us this work.”

Jubile Miya: “I’m so proud. We can walk tall now. When we saw the work at Kwazamokuhle (1996 market assessment trip<sup>10</sup>) we thought that they (Kwazamokuhle) could not make the things that we saw there, but we have come together and done this and now we believe these things are possible.”

DWEBA then asked the women what they saw as some of the “building blocks” that enabled them to produce such wonderful work.

MaNdllovu said, “To work with enthusiasm. When looking at the work we made I became encouraged to work further.”

Lizzy Miya: “To trust each other and to listen (to one another) ... all of us trusted one another and worked together. We listened and tried.”

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10 In May 1996, DWEBA took 10 representatives from GWP to visit a sample of arts and crafts outlets and galleries in and around Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The purpose was not to research the market as such but rather to enable the women to gauge consumer taste and preference, and to see the variety, style and quality of arts and crafts available in the region. It was also intended as an opportunity for the women to speak to shop owners, co-ordinators and curators on the issue of product development and marketing.

Nora Xaba and Bongiwe Miya both said that they needed to be tolerant because they always had to walk a long way (to the school where the workshops occurred) to learn something.

Jubile Miya: "We worked together with trust."

Dudzile Mlele: "To think, using your own common sense about getting trained ... to come forward and take control of our future."

Thembisile Miya: "Cooperation and courage. We walked a long way and were never afraid."

Nelisiwe Mvelase: "Love of the work you are doing."

Anna Madondo: "People were tolerant of us coming to the group late and people did not shout at us. (Madondo was among a group of women who joined the project in April 1997.)"

Sebenzile Ziqubu: "I never thought that I would be able to make a figure."

Nora Xaba: "Tolerant of each other and the courage to try again."

Lizzy Miya: "What I am saying is that we must take one step back and thank the Gannahoek women. There was conflict and misunderstanding and look what we managed. I do not think that even AFRA thought we could produce this" (GWP 1998: appendix 2).



### **Observations on these comments**

These comments reflect an overall sense of the craftswomen's surprise and pride in their achievements as a group of having, on the one hand, produced distinctive, quality products, and on the other, managed the social dimensions and challenges involved in working together. By reflecting the accomplishment of both technical and social skills, these comments evidence DWEBA's holistic approach.

Significantly, there is a lack of reference to the craftswomen's indebtedness to DWEBA. This may be interpreted as DWEBA's methodology having engendered some measure of the craftswomen's independence and confidence in themselves, and their belief in their ability to "come forward and take control of our (their) future" (Duduzilie Mlele).

Other comments which suggest this independence and confidence include Lizzy Miya's last comment. Here she draws attention to the group's capacity to work through conflict and misunderstanding. She says the group should "take a step back", perhaps here infers that the group should pause to gain perspective or reflect, and "... thank the Gannahoek women". It is worth noting that she suggests that they thank themselves. Their gratitude therefore is to themselves, and not to DWEBA or AFRA, or anyone else, for example, their husbands or family or community members.

Jubile Miya and Sebenzile Ziqubu remark on the discovery and development of their latent skill. This, as well as Jubile and Lizzy Miya's articulation of pride, and their feeling that "We can walk tall now" (Jubile Miya), further reinforces that the process helped craftswomen develop skills that were important to them as well as their sense of self worth.

Dudzile Mlele cites the importance of “thinking” and “... using your own common sense about getting trained”. This demonstrates that the methodology affirmed the craftswomen’s experience by emphasising the value of their own thinking and “common sense” as essential ingredients in the solutions to the ongoing challenges of self empowerment. Comments by MaNdlovu and Nelisiwe Mvelase provide another aspect to this process. They speak about the importance of working “... with enthusiasm” and “... love of the work you are doing”. DWEBA’s intention to acknowledge and develop the craftswomen’s own choices and priorities, is evidenced in these remarks.

In addition to the above, other “building blocks” mentioned include tolerance, the skill of listening to one another, co-operation, trust and courage. These are all essential in personal and group development.

### **Inclusive and participatory use of drawing**

As referred to above, in her first quotation, Lizzy Miya mentions the importance of the skill of listening. This suggests the significance of the inclusive nature of DWEBA’s methodology where each participant was asked to draw and in plenary each person was asked to speak about her drawing.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the inclusive and participatory nature of the methodology is based on the premise that no prior visual language tuition is necessary for participants “with average eyesight and average hand-eye co ordination” (Edwards 2001:3), to participate fully in DWEBA’s use of drawing. The only skill requirements for participants are their existing visual literacy and ability to draw. Each person in DWEBA’s workshops therefore had equal and legitimate space to express her opinion and be heard, thus providing “an equality of

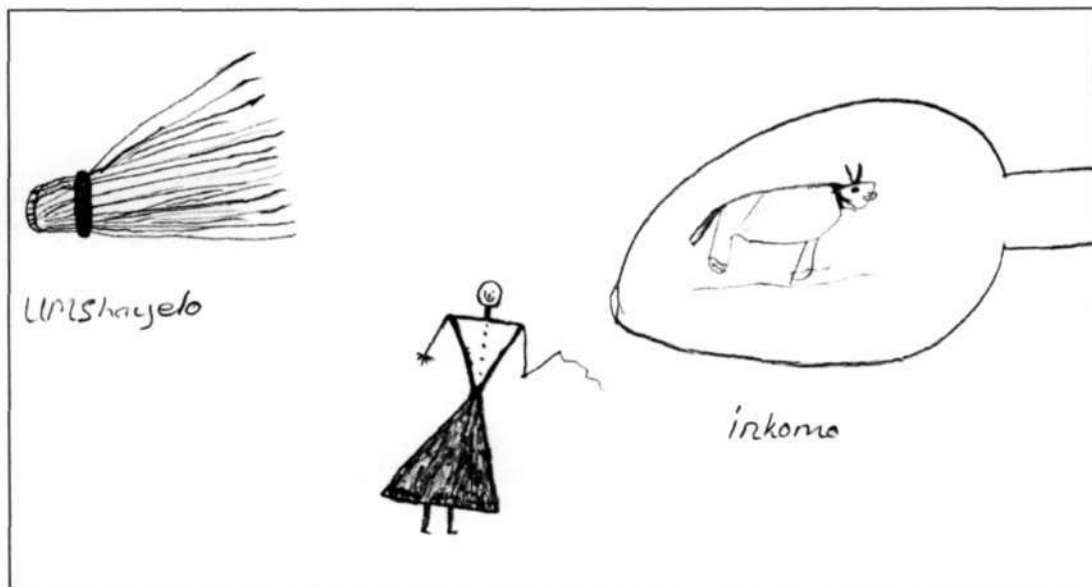


Figure 15.

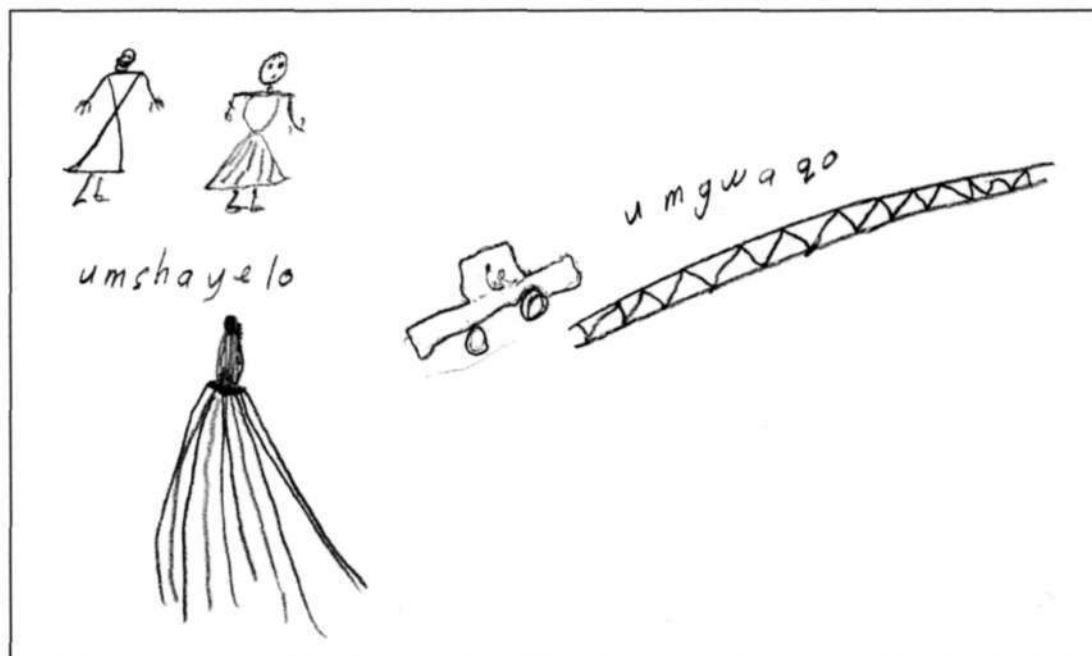


Figure 16.

These two drawings of commonly shared items by artists Duduzile Mlele (top) and Jubile Miya (bottom) show a distinctive iconography and subtle variation of detail and viewpoint. Pencil on paper, each drawing approx. 40cm x 60cm, 1997.

discursive opportunity between participants” (Kelly & van Vlaenderen 1995:373). This inclusive, participatory drawing process therefore also largely precludes domination of dialogue by one or a few of the participants (Kelly & van Vlaenderen 1995:372).

Drawing used in this way often highlights similarities as well as differences in individual experience at both a conscious and subconscious level (DWEBA 2001:18). Each drawing is unique and, although the craftswomen often held similar views, every drawing conveyed a distinctive iconography and subtle variation of detail and viewpoint (Figures 15 and 16). In spite of the potential monotony of the process, this select combination of visual and verbal language seemed to hold the groups’ concentration and energy during DWEBA workshops. On the other hand, in discursive-only report backs and where all participants are each asked to say what they think and where many hold similar views, the process, in my experience, tends to be tedious. Thus, in addition to enriching discussion by harnessing the complementary visual and verbal language thinking skills, a careful combination of the two has the potential to inform and energise the dynamics of the process, and make the ‘listening’ that Lizzy Miya referred to easier.

As can be seen from the above, participatory methodologies such as DWEBA’s use of drawing can be lengthy processes. Yet the power and paradox of DWEBA’s use of drawing lies in the potential of this relatively time consuming methodology to instantly and clearly reveal complex individual perception.

### **Drawing used to plan and facilitate workshops**

DWEBA applied this to the task of planning and facilitating workshops based on participants’ needs and experience. An example in Muden in April 1999 was cited in the previous chapter.

There is no knowing how differently DWEBA might have facilitated the rest of the workshop had DWEBA simply discussed the issue, that is, of how the women had decided to organise themselves to manage and share income for the sale of their craft.

In verbal discussion, often key issues are not articulated even when ostensibly participatory or democratic processes are applied. Some of the challenges to the disclosure of key issues are: time constraints; the need to reach consensus and the need to address immediate and overt problems (Kelly & van Vlaenderen 1995:373). In the Muden example the key issues that emerged immediately through the drawing process were firstly, that participants had not held a meeting to arrive at a decision, and secondly, that there were newcomers to the workshop. Arguably the complex and revelatory character of drawing lessens the likelihood of key issues being overlooked.

Furthermore, as a visual language which has the potential to transcend differing verbal language barriers, drawing has the capacity to assist dialogue and understanding between all workshop participants. Two of the three DWEBA staff did not share the same mother tongue as the participants, that is, the two staff had English as their mother tongue while the third DWEBA staff member, as well as the participants, were *isiZulu* speakers. Again with reference to the Muden example, DWEBA valued the instant clarity and complexity of thinking that drawing provided which helped obviate mother tongue differences as well as to prepare workshops, to gauge their aptness and vary the plan accordingly (Hall 2000:11).

Although intended as part of a personal and group reflective and evaluative process, the emotive use of colour as cited in the previous chapter, with its direct reflection of the emotional state of participants and subsequent changes of these during the workshop, also

helped DWEBA determine the appropriateness of the workshop plan and processes, and as a result to make changes where necessary (Hall 2000:10). These examples thus demonstrate that the complexity of visual language enhanced DWEBA's intervention at both a practical and social level.

### **Reflection and evaluation**

Exploiting the more expressive and metaphorical nature of visual language, DWEBA extensively explored and applied this visual medium to the broader process of personal and group development. By being an external, physical expression of internal thoughts and experiences, and as a function of the right brain hemisphere, drawing can provide an incisive starting point for two highly prized objectives in PRA: individual and group reflection and evaluation.

### **Etic and emic perspective in distanciation**

By viewing an experience from a distance (distanciation) we can say things about it that we could not say from within the situation (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 2002:400). Reflection and evaluation, therefore, necessarily involve an etic perspective (view from without) as well as an emic perspective (a view from within) (Kelly & van Vlaenderen 1995:379). Kelly refers to Ricoeur's (1979) view that distanciation provides a way of interpreting an empathic perspective of experience or context (Durrheim & Terre Blanche 2002:400).

Distanciation adds to meaning not by imposition, but by pointing to the subjective and contextual *limits* of understanding. No matter how thoroughly we understand a context from within, there are certain things about the context that are only going to become evident when we look at it from the outside" (Durrheim & Terre Blanche 2002:400).

### **Drawing as etic perspective**

With the above quotations in mind, there are arguably two interpretations of drawing in DWEBA's methodology as providing etic perspective to emic perspective, thus facilitating distanciation and reflection. These two interpretations of drawing as providing the distance and therefore disclosure of further insights and questions to an emically known experience and context also infer different interpretations of what constitutes emic perspective.

The first interpretation of drawing in DWEBA's methodology as etic perspective can be seen as any drawing which is an outside, tangible expression of inner, subjective or empathic ways of knowing or emic perspective.

The second interpretation takes this definition further by concentrating on the distinctive, complementary thinking skills of visual and verbal language. As a principal language of discourse and learning in the Western world, (Edwards 2001:30) and the tendency of the left, verbal hemisphere to dominate most of the time in individuals with intact brains as well as in split-brain patients (Edwards 2001 32), verbal language is most likely to constitute emic perspective. Visual language can therefore provide etic perspective and distanciation by complementing and extending the limits of understanding of this emically known, verbally defined and debated perspective. Drawing can give us the outside view to what has become by nature of its predominance the inside view.

Examples cited in the previous chapter which demonstrate the first interpretation can be seen firstly, in DWEBA's use of drawing for personal and organisational development generally, and specifically, in the example where the Gannahoek craftswomen were each asked to make a drawing of a group that worked well and one that did not. In this example the

women depicted their experiences of working in groups in a tangible and objective form. Each drawing provided an alternative or outside view to each person's previously known view on these experiences. The drawings thus helped the women "stand back", "observe" and reflect (distanciate) on these two perspectives.

The second example of the first interpretation of drawing providing etic perspective can be seen in DWEBA's use of the emotive and symbolic value of colour which was used successively in the same Gannahoek workshop. Here, each person was able to talk about how they were feeling by referring to something outside of themselves, that is, the colour they had each chosen to convey how they were feeling and which they each had added to their name tag and later to their self-portrait. The illustration of feeling with one colour helped focus, clarify and make more objective their emic perspectives.

In addition to providing focus, clarity and objectivity to the intensity of the craftswomen's collective and individual emotion, this use of colour was also helpful in showing how each person played a part in the group dynamics. The successive use of this colour exercise during the workshop helped gauge changes in individual feelings and perceptions as well as changes in group dynamics. It also assisted DWEBA evaluate the workshop (GWP 1996:2).

The power of this relatively simple exercise may be attributed to its possible link to what is sometimes regarded as a quirky phenomenon of the creativity of the human brain called synesthesia. The word synesthesia comes from the Greek roots *syn* (together) and *aesthesia* (perception). Almost any two senses can be combined. Sights can have sounds, sounds can have tastes and, more commonly, black-and-white numbers and letters can appear coloured. Synesthesia is related to creativity and it has been suggested that metaphor, abstract thought



and synesthesia all have a similar neural basis (Underwood 2003:3). It is perhaps the metaphorical and non-rational ingredient in this colour exercise that enriches perception and understanding of emic perspective.

The second interpretation of drawing providing the outside view or etic perspective can be seen in the same process referred to earlier where DWEBA asked the Gannahoek women to each make a drawing of a group that works well and of one that does not (Hall 2000:9). DWEBA extended the distanciation process by exploiting the complementary ways of knowing peculiar to visual and verbal language, functions of the right and left hemispheres respectively. DWEBA used drawing and discussion circumspectly by separating and combining them in the process where appropriate.

To avoid the tendency of the left hemisphere to dominate the right and to enable the women to “think” in visual language, DWEBA asked the women not to write anything on their drawings while they were drawing. This was key to facilitating distanciation where the thinking skills of the right hemisphere provided a complementary interpretation to issues that were verbally and emically known. Once the drawings were complete, the process involved discussion of the drawings as well as issues that the drawings and the discussion elicited.

The judicious use of visual and verbal language, and the scrutiny and discussion of the drawings, brought to light new questions and new concerns; it disclosed new insights and allowed for interpretation (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 2002:400). These were that the women identified the importance of speaking openly within a group and being able to confront someone if there was a problem. Most of the women agreed that they found confrontation difficult (Hall 2000:9).

While this discussion has concentrated on drawing providing etic perspective in distanciation, Edwards, author of "Drawing on the Right side of the Brain" describes the same use of the complementary skills of visual and verbal language another way. With her tertiary teaching experience at California State University, she recognised that drawing can be "a potent problem solving aid for both children and adults" (Edwards 1982:67). She elaborates by saying, "A drawing can let you see how you feel. ... the right brain, by means of drawing can show the left brain what the trouble is. The left brain, in turn, can use its own powerful skills – language and logical thought – to solve the problem" (Edwards 1982:67). DWEBA's methodology allowed the craftswomen to see things in two ways: abstractedly, verbally, logically – but also holistically, wordlessly and intuitively (Edwards 2001:38). DWEBA usually used discussion (verbal language) and consensus (intuition and logic) to solve the problem (GWP 1996:4).

During the Olive evaluation in 1999 the Gannahoek women reported being able to solve their problems on their own. In the interview, Olive reported tangible tension in the group, which was verbalised. When asked whether they would need an external facilitator to assist in resolving the tension, they were quite firm that they could do it themselves (Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad 1999:13). They said: "Because of patience we are still together. We raise issues and that keeps us together. We can now try to work on our own. We are confident" (Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad 1999:13). Arguably, DWEBA's approach and the strategic use of the drawing contributed to engendering a confident sense of independence amongst the Gannahoek craftswomen.

### **The emotional and subconscious element in drawing**

As demonstrated in the above examples and discussion, by virtue of being a right brain hemisphere function with its ready access to emotional and subconscious intelligence, the insights gained through a visual language methodology are likely to be emotional and subconscious in nature. This factor accounts for the value of DWEBA's use of drawing in individual and group development, that is, personal and partnership (in its broad sense) development where the impact of individual and collective emotional and subconscious states of being is significant.

### **Drawing as emic perspective**

The potential of visual language to access emotional and subconscious insight lends another interpretation of the role of DWEBA's use of drawing in the process of distancing, discussed earlier. One could argue that the emotional and subconscious perspective that visual language readily reflects may be interpreted as the inner, empathic and therefore emic perspective. This is perhaps best demonstrated by the symbolic and emotive use of colour in the Gannahoek workshop cited earlier. Using this interpretation of drawing as emic perspective, each colour in this exercise thus reflected each participant's emotional state during the workshop. Each colour therefore reflected each participant's inner, empathic, emic perspective. And arguably the subsequent verbal discussion about this exercise and how each person was feeling provided the etic, more objective view. Perhaps the interpretations in this chapter of drawing as either emic or etic perspective depend on where the process of distancing begins and whether it is an iterative or cyclical process. Whether or not DWEBA's use of drawing constituted etic or emic perspective defies precision. Either way, DWEBA's use of drawing provided an alternative perspective, "... a parallel way of knowing" (Edwards 2001:34) that brought to light new questions and new concerns; it disclosed new

insights and allowed for interpretation (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 2002:400).

To add to the difficulty of precision, it is important to note that emotional and subconscious states are never finite. Psychoanalytic approaches stress that these states are “precarious and unfixed” and emphasise that they are always in process (Rose 2001:104). “Never fully achieved, subjectivity must constantly be reiterated through its engagements with various structures of meaning, including visual images” (Rose 2001:104). Hence the value of, for example, the successive use of the colour process cited in the Gannahoek workshop is evident. Here, individual emotional and subconscious states were reiterated through colour and differences in each reiteration were important for the process of reflection.

Furthermore, bearing in mind this particular notion of the precariousness of emotional and subconscious states, psychoanalysis understands the process of audiencing in a specific way, where the viewer and the image are also not eternally fixed (Rose 2001:104). Viewer and image can be seen as being “mutually constitutive” (Rose 2001:105) in the total meaning exacted through the encounter of viewer and image. That is, how a viewer “sees” or how their “field of vision” is constructed, (Rose 2001:105) varies from person to person. Each viewer brings their own desires and capacities to the process of seeing which informs their position of identification in relation to its meaning. Similarly, what is seen – the image and its meaning – is relative to and implicated in the positions and schemas of interpretation which are brought to bear upon it (Rose 2001:105). In DWEBA’s workshops, the craftswomen were each both viewer and creator of their image, and DWEBA relied on each craftswoman’s particular interpretation of her drawing for its data.

### **Some further considerations about drawing**

There are several additional factors which pertain to the emotional and subconscious nature of visual language. These factors can also contribute to making drawing an uncompromisingly powerful medium in the process of distancing, reflection, evaluation and change. The first is that, whereas in verbal language the relationship between meaning and words is conventional and conceptual, in visual language there is often a direct correspondence between meaning and image, or as seen in the earlier Gannahoek example, meaning and colour.

The second factor, which was alluded to earlier, and which can be useful or destructive in a methodology, depending on how it is facilitated, is that the process often produces unexpected, revelatory material.<sup>11</sup> This can make participants feel understandably vulnerable. However, if facilitators manage it responsibly and respectfully, this process can benefit participants and facilitators alike.

### **The contribution of drawing to a holistic and integrated methodology**

The emotional and subconscious insights notwithstanding, drawing can also offer complex, spatial and holistic perception. This factor makes visual language, and in particular, drawing suitable to address the interrelated aspects of income generation. In DWEBA's work these aspects included working together, shared values, commitment and the production process (DWEBA 1998:2).

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<sup>11</sup> At an Oxfam partners' conference in Caledon 2000, DWEBA was asked to use its methodology with conference participants to show how it could be used in working with gender. We asked participants to make a drawing showing a personal experience of gender subordination. One participant made a drawing of her experience of sexual abuse which had happened many years previously. She spoke about having almost "forgotten" about it and was shocked that this experience emerged in her drawing as she had not planned to draw it.

### **The gender challenge**

A challenge that remains a conundrum for DWEBA is its work regarding gender. The conundrum exists not so much in relation to its use of drawing but more in relation to DWEBA's brief as a project.

Gender, as discussed in chapter two, was never articulated by the women as a specific issue to be addressed, whereas the women clearly indicated that DWEBA should assist them with income generation. However, given its holistic approach, DWEBA recognised that all the social and technical aspects of income generation needed to be addressed if their enterprise was to be successful and sustainable. DWEBA therefore sought to build the craftswomen's confidence and affirm their experience, both of which would impact positively on their capacity to generate an income. One could also say that the lack of these qualities is often a consequence of gender subordination, and that DWEBA attempted legitimately but obliquely to address gender issues within its limited brief. With the benefit of hindsight, however, there was an obvious tension between the achievement of these objectives and having the craftswomen go back to a patriarchal context that does not necessarily approve of an increase in confidence amongst women as well as their enhanced capacity to generate income (Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad 1999:15).

Further, it is important to question whether it is possible to address material inequalities without also changing underlying values of participants (Johnson & Mayoux 1998:149). And even if the craftswomen had specifically requested that gender issues be addressed, a further question arises which is whether it is possible to challenge power relations among individuals, households and communities without also making changes in national and international structures and processes (Johnson & Mayoux 1998:149).

DWEBA's work on gender was limited and flawed, and its capacity was inadequate to embrace the above larger interpretation of challenging power relations at a national and international level. However, it may be argued that given the power of visual language used as a participatory methodology and in tandem with verbal language as evidenced in DWEBA's work, that DWEBA's use of drawing does have the potential to rigorously address gender issues at a local and community level within learning contexts that require or value participatory methodologies.

### **Conclusion**

The versatility and complexity of visual language enabled DWEBA to research an expressive and metaphorical interpretation of drawing as a participatory, transformative tool. The methodology's potential to effect change at an economic and personal and group level lies both in its exclusive use as well as in conjunction with verbal language, an equally complex, but left brain hemisphere function.

The shortcomings of this uncompromisingly powerful methodology are firstly that, in common with many participatory methodologies, drawing is a relatively time-consuming process. This is a problem only in contexts where the pressure to produce outcomes with minimum time and resources is pervasive. However, in learning contexts where participatory modes of learning and sustainable outcomes are valued, varying tempos of working are a given. Secondly, the potential of visual language to access emotional and subconscious thought and experience directly and without censorship can become a factor in the exploitation of participants where facilitators are unscrupulous and misuse their position and power in the research process. The last drawback pertains to the accessibility of the methodology by other facilitators in different learning contexts. Whereas the expertise requirements for

participants to benefit fully from the process are their existing drawing ability and visual literacy, coupled with an openness to use visual language, facilitators, on the other hand, need a fairly advanced level of visual literacy as well as sound experience in facilitating visual language processes.



## **CONCLUSION**

This concluding chapter will summarize the main findings of this research which examined the transformative potential of visual language used with a participatory approach in the development facilitation context. While the research made specific reference to the methodology used by DWEBA with groups of craftswomen in KwaZulu-Natal between 1996 and 2001, this discussion will include a brief outline of the main challenges and considerations of a visual language based methodology being used and developed more widely as a complementary learning tool.

### **Summary of the main findings of this research**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the potential of visual language used with a participatory approach to enrich learning and perception, and to effect change at an individual and group level, lies both in its exclusive use, as well as its selective conjunctive use with verbal language. While a visual language based methodology highlights right brain hemisphere functions and aims to make the use of these modes of perception through visual language more accessible, the methodology's quintessential transformative strength lies in its capacity to access both left and right brain hemisphere functions thus facilitating complex, complementary thinking and reflection.

The versatility and complexity of visual language enabled DWEBA to exploit firstly its practical application of generating subject matter and designs for products, and secondly, with a broader, more expressive and metaphorical interpretation of visual language, DWEBA was able to rigorously address personal and group development issues. That is, by understanding visual language in a particular way, DWEBA was able to address in an

integrated manner, the ongoing technical and social challenges of generating income with the groups of craftswomen. The methodology thus embraced the practical or technical aspects of economic empowerment as well as its more obdurate and varied dimension of personal and group development. Moreover, the holistic and participatory nature of the methodology increased the likelihood of the sustainability of the project outcomes.

### **Economic empowerment**

The capacity of DWEBA's use of drawing to effect change in its largely practical or technical function of economic empowerment, that is, in increasing the craftswomen's capacity to generate or supplement income, was most notable where drawing formed an integral part of the particular character or brand of the product. This is best exemplified by the umbrellas, and the sewn and quilted items produced by the Gannahoek and Muden craftswomen.

### **Personal and group development**

While the above practical application of drawing demanded some degree of technical proficiency, the second application of drawing to personal and group development, required of each craftswoman only a willingness to draw as a means of thinking and reflecting in a non-verbal language.

The craftswomen's openness to such processes may be attributed to several factors in DWEBA's approach and which would be as pertinent when using the methodology in other contexts. Firstly, DWEBA made considerable effort to develop a reciprocal relationship with the craftswomen, and was careful not to exploit its power in the role of *facilitator/researcher*. By being a right brain hemisphere function, visual language accesses emotional and subconscious material directly and without censorship. This can make participants or learners

vulnerable where facilitators or teachers are unscrupulous in their use of the methodology. Secondly, in articulating instructions for these drawing processes, DWEBA used language that evoked right hemisphere thinking rather than linear, verbal and descriptive responses. And lastly, DWEBA anticipated but gently and firmly worked with the craftswomen's initial resistance to the drawing process. This resistance, which DWEBA experienced in a variety of contexts, and which most people using the methodology elsewhere are likely to encounter, is mainly a result of most learners being more skilled and familiar with spoken and written left brain methodologies.

DWEBA's methodology evolved from the combined motivation of both DWEBA and the craftswomen with whom it worked. The craftswomen's incentive to find solutions for the various economic, personal and group development challenges that they were faced with and their willingness to use drawing as a methodological tool, lent DWEBA the opportunity to explore the expressive and metaphorical possibilities of drawing used with a participatory approach.

In summary, DWEBA's use of drawing helped build the craftswomen's confidence and affirm their experience. It enabled DWEBA to plan workshops based on the craftswomen's needs rather than on assumptions DWEBA might otherwise have made. Drawing helped the craftswomen ground solutions to various ongoing technical and social challenges "... in their expert knowledge of their own communities; their ways of working and co-operating; their values and priorities" (GWP 1998:2). The methodology thus assisted in developing the craftswomen's independence in continuing to manage the responsibilities, risks and intricacies of income generation. Furthermore, drawing was central to promoting rigorous discussion, effective decision making and conflict resolution.

DWEBA's work with gender issues was limited and flawed. However, considering the effective application of the methodology to difficult personal and group development issues, this methodological tool conceivably has the potential to meaningfully contribute to working with the complexity of gender issues.

### **What can the methodology offer in other learning contexts?**

Arguably the main value of a broader use of the methodology lies in its capacity to enrich learning and perception by accessing both left and right brain hemisphere functions, thus facilitating complex, complementary thinking and reflection. Bearing in mind Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, the methodology can also offer processes that access spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.<sup>12</sup>

### **The challenge of the left hemisphere bias**

Although a visual language based methodology has the potential to facilitate such transformative processes, one of the main challenges to its broader use and development is the left hemisphere orientation in most Western mainstream learning institutions, that is, the prominent value placed on verbal and local-mathematical skills. As Roger W. Sperry, who was key researcher in the split brain research, aptly states:

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<sup>12</sup> In 1979 Howard Gardner was a junior member of a small team involved in research into "The Nature and Realization of Human Potential" at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Howard Gardner's 1983 publication of *Frames of Mind* marked the culmination of his part in this research. One of Gardner's goals was to develop a broader and more comprehensive view of human thought than was then accepted in cognitive studies. In particular, Gardner sought an alternative to the influential theories of Jean Piaget who viewed all of human thought "... as striving towards the ideal of scientific thinking; and the prevalent conception of intelligence that tied it to the ability to provide succinct answers in speedy fashion to problems entailing linguistic and logical skills" (Gardner 1993:xi). This research helped develop Gardner's "theory of multiple intelligences", which recognizes many different and discrete facets of cognition, acknowledging that people have different cognitive strengths and contrasting cognitive styles (Gardner 1993). The seven intelligences that Gardner identified were: Linguistic; logical-mathematical; spatial; musical; bodily-kinesthetic; interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.

The main theme to emerge ... is that there appear to be two modes of thinking, verbal and nonverbal, represented separately in left and right hemispheres respectively, and that our educational system, as well as science in general tends to neglect the nonverbal form of intellect. What it comes down to is that modern society discriminates against the right hemisphere (Edwards 2001:32).

This is evidenced in visual language being relatively undervalued in mainstream learning contexts as a vehicle for complex thinking, and, for example, the principal importance placed on verbal and mathematical skills in widely used IQ tests and SATs<sup>13</sup> (Gardner 1993:8). “Generally people are still inclined to attribute greater intellectual complexity to words than to pictures” (Schneider Adams 1993:41).

Beryl Lourens, who established and runs the Centre for Lifelong Learning in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, goes further by saying that not only do most primary, secondary and tertiary learning institutions in the West rely largely on auditory, written text and analytic skills which is to say, that teaching methods are suited to left brain hemisphere orientated learners, but the learning environment and structure of timetables are almost exclusively geared to the left hemisphere or analytic learners (personal communication, February 14, 2006).

The irony, however, is that most people are right hemisphere or global learners. “Among adults, 55% tend to be global, 28% are analytic, and the remainder are referred to as integrated learners who can learn anything when they are interested in what they are learning.

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13 These are commonly used intelligence and learning tests. The Parisian, Alfred Binet developed the IQ in 1900 (Gardner 1993:5). SATs is an acronym for Scholastic Aptitude Test.

When not interested in what they are learning, integrated learners learn very little” (Dunn 2000:34).

Perceptual strengths or learning orientations are biologically imposed in the same way that hair and eye colour are, and they are equally unchangeable (personal communication February 14, 2006). Moreover, learners learn more effectively and retain what they learn longer when taught through their perceptual strengths and in instructional environments responsive to how they learn (Dunn 2000:4).

The low percentage of left brain learners (28%), on the one hand, and the predominance of left brain teaching methods, on the other, throw into question the extent of real learning that actually occurs at mainstream learning institutions. There is therefore a need for greater accommodation of differing learner perceptual strengths in learning institutions, and therefore room for methodologies such as DWEBA's.<sup>14</sup>

The task, therefore, of integrating methodologies and structures that access and develop both brain hemisphere skills, and which acknowledge multiple intelligences, involves challenging accepted left hemisphere oriented notions of intelligence. It may also demand challenging current teaching methodologies, structures and processes at a national and international level. The examination and discussion of such an undertaking could easily provide the subject for further research. However, the nub of the argument for a broader use and development of methodologies that access complex, complementary thinking and reflection is that if we

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<sup>14</sup> DWEBA published *Drawing Our Lives* in 2001, which is a practical resource guide on its methodology. Outlined in this booklet are approaches and processes that could be used in a workshop or training situation. This publication could provide a valuable starting point for anyone interested in adapting a visual language based methodology to other learning contexts.

do so, thus enhancing “ ... critical-thinking skills, extrapolation of meaning and problems solving” (Edwards 2001:xiii), we have a better chance of dealing appropriately with or finding solutions to the many problems that we face in the world. As Gardner aptly states:

... If we can mobilise the spectrum of human abilities, not only will people feel better about themselves and more competent; it is even possible that they will also feel more engaged and better able to join the rest of the world community in working for the broader good. Perhaps if we can mobilize the full range of human intelligences and ally them to an ethical sense, we can help to increase the likelihood of our survival on this planet, and perhaps even contribute to our thriving (Gardner 1993:12).

This quotation infers an understanding of sustainability where global social, economic and environmental concerns are inextricably linked and mutually influential. In the light of this, it is interesting to note that DWEBA’s integrated and unusual approach to income generation – where it sought to straddle both its economic and social dimensions – began in a sense, in the single task of DWEBA assisting the Gannahoek craftswomen to make their sewn products more saleable and autobiographical. For this intervention to have integrity and to be sustainable, DWEBA’s methodology thus embraced a much broader spectrum of social and economic challenges.

The overall purpose of this dissertation was to evaluate DWEBA’s visual language based methodology as a transformative methodological tool, and therefore to examine its validity. Terre Blanche and Durrheim assert that the goal of research is not only “how we can be more accurate in our findings but also how we can produce findings that have an impact on the social ecology of knowledge” (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999:13). It was thus further intended that that this dissertation should give weight to the methodology’s use and development primarily within the development facilitation context, where participatory methodologies

are more commonly used, but also for its adaptation to other learning contexts. While such a study might add in a small way to the body of other work being done in the development facilitation arena to promote successful and sustainable income-generating programmes, it may also provide substantial argument for including visual methodologies in a more holistic approach to facilitation and to learning, generally.

The premise on which this visual language based methodology is founded is that visual and verbal languages are equally complex but complementary. The historical left hemisphere bias in learning contexts has contributed to a limited and literal application of visual language as a methodological tool. An understanding therefore of the complexity of visual language is central to accessing its transformative potential.



## **Names of the craftswomen who participated in DWEBA's workshops**

### **Gannahoek**

Makhosa Dubazane	Do Nqxongo
MaMbatha Dubazane	Fasani Sibisi
Zebona Khumalo	Bhekile Sithole
Thembi Langa	Delisile Sithole
Anna Madondo	Elizabeth Sithole
Sabani Madondo	Gabsilie Sithole
Thoko Madondo	Hlamukile Sithole
Bongeni Mbatha	Hleziphi Sithole
Nakiwe Mbatha	Nonhlanhla Sithole
Bekiwe Mbhele	Ntombi Sithole
Vumeleni Mbhele	Thobile Sithole
Zatombi Mdladla	Sizani Sithole
Bongiwe Miya	Toto Sithole
Hlonisile Miya	Anastasia Xaba
Jubile Miya	Dlelaphi Xaba
Kholi Miya	KaMadondo Xaba
Lizzy Miya	Lamlile Xaba
Poni Miya	Nomathilomu Xaba
Qamndile Miya	Nora Xaba
Qondeni Miya	Sheshisile Xaba
Swazi Miya	Tshengisile Xaba
Thembisile Miya	Sebenzile Ziqubu

**Tombi Miya**

**Elizabeth Mlangeni**

**Sidudla Mlele**

**Zodwa Mthethewa**

**Thandwambani Mtshali**

**Fikile Mvelase**

**Hleziphi Mvelase**

**Meivis Mvelase**

**Nelisiwe Mvelase**

**Thebeni Mvelase**

**Wema Mvelase**

### **Muden**

**Magreth Bhengu**

**Bongi Gumede**

**Sizwe Gumede**

**Princess Luswazi**

**Nomvula Mduli**

**Agrineth Mnyaka**

**Phikeleni Myaka**

**Beatrice Ndlovu**

**Joyce Njoko**

**Anna Sithole**

**Lungile Sithole**

**Qelile Sithole**

**Mkhilo Zwane**

**Duduzile Mlele**

**Lindi Mthethwa**

**Malo Mtshali**

**Esther Mvelase**

**Hazel Mvelase**

**Mahadebe Mvelase**

**Ntombikhona Mvelase**

**Phangisile Mvelase**

**Tsitsho Mvelase**

**Nomusa Buthelezi**

**Khumbuzile Gumede**

**Thobeka Gumede**

**Sarafina Mchunu**

**Jabulile Mkize**

**Nesta Mtshali**

**Celani Ndawonde**

**Silvinah Ndlovu**

**Thembi Shange**

**Beatrice Sithole**

**Olvinah Sithole**

**Zamathole Sithole**

Zodwa Sithole

Khombisile Ximba

Bonakele Zakwe

Hlekisiwe Zakwe

Phumelele Zakwe

***Esithumba***

Mashawaly Bhengu

Nonhlanhla Duma

Fikile Hadebe

Ntombana Hadebe

Thembeni Hadebe

Khaladi Mchunu

Mashozi Mchunu

Mimiya Mchunu

Rejoice Mchunu

Thembi Mchunu

Ntombicane Swazi

Zodeni Ximba

Buselaphi Zakwe

Lungile Zakwe

Tholani Mchunu

Bona Ngwane

Bongeni Ngwane

Thembize Ngwane

Tholakile Ngwane

Sbongile Mkize

Rejoice Shange

Feleni Shelembe

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**APPENDIX 1**

**NAME:** Louise Hall

**STUDENT NUMBER:** 202520134

**PAPER:** Research Methodology Paper

**SUPERVISORS:** Juliette Leeb-du Toit and Peter Rule

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Research methodology is the “how to” of research; it is the process by which research should be “... planned, structured and executed to comply with the criteria of science” (Mouton and Marais 1993:15). It has become accepted that scientists and non-scientists variously, but not exclusively, use social science research methodologies. These methodologies require the observance of a set of rules and define what is acceptable knowledge. Although flawed, social science research methodologies are the best means to date that help us systematically broaden our field of knowledge.

### **Overview of Research**

Before further discussing research methodology and in particular those methodologies that pertain to my research, a broad view of research itself is necessary. The main goal of research is to formulate questions about the world, and as stated above, to systematically find answers to those questions. The philosophical debate about the reasons for our search for such answers is ongoing. However, many attribute this search for knowledge to the notion that knowledge empowers. Bacon wrote, “There is a most intimate connection and almost an identity between ways of human power and human knowledge ...” (Melville and Goddard 1996:119).

In the quest for knowledge, twentieth century approaches to research usually consist of a combination of various methodologies that must be rigorously conducted. Some overlap between the methodologies is common, but a combination of methodologies is most likely to generate comprehensive and valid research.

Broadly, research is valid if the research conclusions are sound. The notion of validity in social science research is based on the assumption that all research seeks the truth – the notion

of truth being a complex and “regulative ideal” (Dane 1990:31). Researchers thus need to plan and conduct their research with minimal sociological, ontological and methodological constraint as possible to ensure results that closely approximate this ideal. Such results are regarded as valid (Dane 1990:33).

Choice of methodologies for valid research depends on the clarity of purpose of the research. The purpose or goals of research help researchers articulate key questions and thus choose appropriate methodologies. Some key questions must relate to the types of conclusions researchers wish to draw. All research methodologies have particular sequential steps in common. These are: recognition and definition of a problem or question; the formulation of the hypotheses; the execution of research procedures/collection of data, the analysis of data and the conclusion – which must be based on the data analysis results. The conclusion should refer to the original hypothesis or question and should indicate how, if at all, the research hypothesis was supported.

Based on the purpose of research, I will consider three different ways in which types of research have been distinguished. The first is exploratory, descriptive and explanatory; the second, applied and basic research, and the third, quantitative and qualitative research. The researcher must specify how his/her research draws from any one or all of these types of interrelated research.

Furthermore, Terre Blanche and Durrheim assert that research is temporary and perspectival, and that “... The final aim of all research is persuasiveness” (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:37). Hence the importance of recognising the inherent values and paradigm/s within any research.

Khun (1962) was the first to use the term paradigm to describe groups of related theories. Paradigms act as perspectives or frameworks, and are pivotal in determining the nature of the research question or hypotheses, and the research methodology.

Paradigms are systems of interrelated ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions and thus cannot be proved right or wrong. Ontology is the branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature of being, thus in this context it indicates what constitutes the reality that is to be studied, and what can be known about it. Epistemology has to do with the theory of knowledge and thus in this context it specifies the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known. Methodology identifies the process by which the researcher seeks answers to questions about whatever he/she believes can be known (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:6). Depending on the nature of the research, it is possible for researchers to draw on more than one paradigm, although many researchers conduct most of their research within one paradigm. Researchers should therefore identify the paradigm inherent in their research and ensure the principle of coherence. To do this, the research question or hypothesis, and research methodology must fit logically within the paradigm.

Broadly, paradigms commonly used in current research are positivist, interpretive and constructionist paradigms. Most social scientists in the twentieth century operated within a positivist paradigm with interpretive research becoming more prominent in the latter half of the century and constructionism being developed and used most recently. However, positivist ideas still inform most social science research (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:7).

A positivist paradigm assumes that the ontology or, what is to be studied, is a stable external reality. This researcher would assume an objective epistemological view, and an appropriate

methodology is likely to be quantitative and allows the control and manipulation of reality (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:6). An interpretive paradigm would indicate an ontology of subjective experience, an empathic, interactional epistemological researcher stance and a qualitative, explanatory methodology examining reasons and meanings behind social action (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:6). With a constructionist paradigm, the researcher is likely to view reality as a fluid and variable set of social constructions (ontology), he/she would probably subscribe to a sceptical and politicised epistemological position and would choose methodologies that enabled textual and discourse analysis to deconstruct versions of reality. (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:6) A constructionist paradigm, as can be seen, is rooted in Poststructuralist deconstruction in which notions of objectivity, fixed and constructed, are explored.

Although they are neither paradigms nor methodologies per se, critical theory, that is, Marxism, Feminism and Black scholarship perspectives have recently become accepted as standpoint methodologies. Although the historical origins and intended outcomes of each are different, these positions all challenge the value-free assumptions of social science research (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:438, 439). "Standpoint methodologies argue that no research study can be value-free, and that research always carries vested power interests and serves to perpetuate dominant frameworks of thinking" (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:439). Since neither positivist nor interpretive approaches seek to change the status quo, critical theory therefore demands a more overtly political approach to research. "... for critical theorists, positivist approaches are viewed as largely conservative, and interpretive approaches as not going far enough in incorporating a commitment to a set of emancipatory values in undertaking research" (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999:439).

## **Research goals**

The title of my dissertation is:

*The transformative potential of visual language with special reference to DWEBA's use of drawing as a participatory training methodology in the development facilitation context in KwaZulu-Natal.*

The goal of my research will be to evaluate DWEBA's methodology as a medium for change within the development facilitation context. I will also briefly discuss the challenges and considerations of a visual language based methodology being applied to other learning contexts.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim assert that the goal of research is not only "how we can be more accurate in our findings but also how we can produce findings that have an impact on the social ecology of knowledge" (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:13). Given the goals of my research, this quote is pertinent. On the one hand, through evaluating DWEBA's use of visual language as a participatory methodology I am seeking to objectively examine the accuracy and validity of DWEBA's findings. On the other hand, I anticipate concluding that DWEBA's metaphorical use of visual language has the potential to constructively impact on the social ecology of knowledge. That is, with visual language's current limited use and credibility as a learning tool, DWEBA's approach has arguably both practical and powerful application as a participatory methodology in most learning contexts. I also expect to offer some reasons for the current preference of verbal language over visual language as a learning tool.

### **Research methodologies**

In common with most research questions, I intend using a combination of research methodologies for this research, which include: participatory action research (PAR), participatory methodologies, mostly qualitative but some quantitative methodologies, empirical, historical, inductive and deductive research methodologies and interviews.

Much of the primary research for my dissertation draws on research that I collaboratively conducted as a member and founder of DWEBA between 1996 and 2001. Two combinations of research methodologies used for my dissertation thus need to be noted. Firstly, that used by DWEBA in the phase of developing what constitutes much of the primary research for my dissertation, and secondly, a combination of research methodologies I intend to use in the process of examining this primary research and in writing this dissertation.

To clarify the complexity of the two combinations of research methodology for my dissertation, I will describe them in terms of the broad categories of the interrelated types of research mentioned earlier. That is, firstly, exploratory, explanatory and descriptive, secondly, applied or basic, and thirdly, qualitative and quantitative research.

DWEBA's research was mainly exploratory, applied and qualitative, whereas my current research will be mainly exploratory and some aspects will be descriptive; it will be applied and mostly qualitative although some aspects of quantitative data analysis might be beneficial.

DWEBA conducted its research with the intention of achieving specific project objectives. This research was conducted within the development facilitation context, that is, with mainly three groups of crafts women in KwaZulu-Natal. DWEBA's central objective was to concurrently address the technical and social challenges of working towards successful and sustainable

micro enterprise. To this end, DWEBA used and developed a training methodology with visual language at its core to address as inferred above, the need for economic empowerment whilst engendering creative, personal and organisational development (Hall 2000:1).

DWEBA's research was exploratory in that within the parameters of the project's objectives, DWEBA's approach was open and flexible, and sought new insights into the challenge of simultaneously addressing empowerment at a personal and at an economic level. DWEBA's research was applied in that it sought practical solutions for assisting with income generation as well as the more general challenge of successful communication and facilitation in the development facilitation context. DWEBA's methodological research also fell within the definition of basic research in that it intended that the methodology would be apposite and adaptable across a wide range of contexts.

Within the above broad types of research, DWEBA used PAR extensively. Its research was also empirical, mainly inductive and it overlapped with interview methodology. These will be expanded on in the body of this paper.

In searching for new insights, applications and shortcomings of DWEBA's methodology, my current research will be exploratory. In so far as I will need to accurately and objectively describe this primary research, this research will be descriptive. Both this research and DWEBA's research is applied since its inherent value lies in the practical application of the methodology as a powerful learning tool in community development and possibly more broadly. Within the above types of research, my current research will also include historical, mostly qualitative and some quantitative research methodologies; inductive and deductive research methodologies. These will be further discussed in the body of this paper, as will the

research methodologies for DWEBA's research.

### **Paradigms and standpoint methodologies**

Given the ontological, epistemological and methodological guiding nature of paradigms on research, it is important to specify the paradigm/s inherent in my research: DWEBA's research falls within an interpretive paradigm. The ontology is the craftwomen's subjective experience derived from a metaphorical use of visual language used as a participatory methodology; DWEBA's epistemological position was empathic and interactional. The methodology was mainly qualitative in that DWEBA's data consisted of written recorded proceedings and drawings made by the craftswomen. DWEBA also relied on the craftswomen's interpretation of their drawing for its data.

DWEBA's approach showed an allegiance albeit to a limited degree, to Feminism. DWEBA chose to work with one of the most marginalised groups, that is, poor, rural women. Although these craftswomen did not request that the project address gender issues and it was therefore not the project's brief to do so, DWEBA sought to affirm the craftswomen's experience and build their confidence through its approach and methodology.

Since DWEBA used PAR extensively, the challenges of PAR to an interpretive research paradigm must be noted. Although both PAR and interpretive research emphasise intersubjective engagement and egalitarian research relationships, PAR locates all aspects of its cyclical process in a community rather than in an individual context, and places greater weight on the action consequences of research rather than the assumption of value free truths



of research (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:228)<sup>1</sup>.

The research for my dissertation, on the other hand, largely reflects an interpretive paradigm, although the rigour and objectivity required to examine DWEBA's research will demand a more objective epistemological standpoint and more quantitative, hypothesis testing methodologies. Thus some aspects will indicate a more positivist paradigm.

### **Research methodologies pertaining to my research**

In using PAR, DWEBA sought new insights into the transformative potential of the metaphorical use of visual language used with a participatory approach. PAR emerged from the developing countries, most notably South America and has become commonly used in many developing countries. The work and writings of Paulo Freire have been particularly significant in establishing 'education for liberation' (Srinivasan 1983:12). PAR has been influential in education, agriculture, rural development and community health.

PAR broadly has three objectives: In keeping with most research models, the first objective is to advance or create knowledge. The second is to solve a social problem or improve in a sustainable way the social, material or educational conditions of those affected by the knowledge. The third objective, which is intricately linked to the sustainability of the

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1 DWEBA's research differs from these generalities in that its methodology enabled DWEBA to place equal weight on individual and group empowerment. However, bWCBA anticipated that that its research process was firmly grounded within the community or at least within the group, and the outcomes of its work in the long term would continue to show benefits for the collective rather than only for a few individuals. In the case of eannahoek for example, this did not happen. bWCBA expected that after it had exited, the craftswomen would continue to function as a monogamous and cohesive micro enterprise, managing disagreements, conflicts of interest, and differing levels of skill and commitment. What occurred was that a few women, individually or with a few others, depending on nature of the work, collaborated to generate cash income. Individual aspirations thus superseded concern for the group as a whole.

solution, is empowerment and reflection at a personal level amongst participants or those affected by the knowledge.

PAR is conducted in a participatory partnership with participants. This research process is similar to other social science and non-cyclical research and entails, firstly, the definition of the problem/s, secondly, the collection of data and its analysis, and thirdly, the use or implementation of the results. It however encourages egalitarian research relationships throughout the cyclical and collaborative research process. DWEBA observed this in its work: It produced knowledge in an active partnership with the craftswomen who participated in DWEBA's workshops between 1996 and 2001. DWEBA worked hard to establish a mutually beneficial research relationship and negotiated all key aspects of the cyclical research process with the craftswomen. Finally, in keeping with PAR data analysis, DWEBA relied on the participants' interpretation of their drawings for its data.

This collaborative and participatory nature of the research is based on the premise that those most directly affected by the problem/s are most likely to provide solutions to these problems. The goal therefore of PAR is structural transformation. The outcome of a successful PAR project is not merely a better understanding of a problem (creation of knowledge), nor even successful and sustainable action to solve a defined problem, but raised awareness in participants of their own abilities and resources to mobilise for social action and empowerment. PAR attempts to contribute to both the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the larger goals of contributing to social science research. There thus can be an inherent tension in PAR between practice and science. DWEBA aimed to straddle this tension. It sought on the one hand to contribute to the practical challenges articulated by the groups of craftswomen and sought some measure of

personal and economic empowerment within these groups. On the other hand, by developing its training methodology using visual language with a participatory approach, DWEBA had a broader goal of contributing to social science research.

Participatory methodologies are usually central to PAR. Key aspects of participatory methodologies are that they are learner centred, experiential and multi-sensory. The goal of participatory methodologies is to facilitate reflection on experience for the purpose of transformation. The starting point and focus of participatory training is the learners' needs, experience and goals; and the overall objective is to develop their capacity to "assess, choose, plan, create, organise and take initiative" (Srinivasan 1983:51). In keeping with PAR, DWEBA worked with a marginalized sector of South African women. In spite of the danger in PAR of individual needs being subsumed by those of the collective, DWEBA, in using its methodology, attempted to take account of both individual and group needs.

DWEBA's observation of individual and group dynamics in a workshop context as well as its experience and experimentation evidences the empirical nature of DWEBA's research. A second factor that demonstrates the empirical nature of DWEBA's research is that the research hypothesis directed DWEBA's research. DWEBA's hypothesis was, briefly, that the most sustainable approach to empowerment is a holistic and integrated one. DWEBA thus worked with the interdependence of, on the one hand, social and technical issues, and on the other, the numerous interrelated areas of work involved in micro enterprise, for example, marketing and production, or financial management and product development.

Given the similarity to DWEBA's carefully planned workshops, I will refer to the methodology of interviews referred to by Dane as "... a conversation with a purpose" (Dane 1924:128).

During DWEBA workshops DWEBA posed meticulously considered questions to assist with achieving specific objectives. Although thoroughly prepared, as with interviews, DWEBA's workshops did afford some degree of flexibility that allowed DWEBA to take account of unexpected issues or occurrences. For example, participants arriving late, conflict within the group, or in one instance, somebody had to remake her starch resist square as a cow had eaten hers when she had put it in the sun to dry. By having three facilitators during each workshop, DWEBA was able to record verbatim what the women said: Victoria Biyela-Makaye was the only person who spoke Zulu fluently and one of her primary roles was that of translator. Either Theresa Giorza or me, Louise Hall would facilitate with Biyela-Makaye. Whoever was not facilitating at the time, would record in writing what the participants said, including discussion of drawings produced during the workshop process.

The written, spoken and drawn data of DWEBA's research may be regarded as qualitative research. Most types of research fall within the parameters of qualitative and quantitative research. These two methodologies enable different ways of creating and examining knowledge. In the main, qualitative and quantitative research base their conclusions on different kinds of information and use different techniques of data analysis. Quantitative research data is usually numerical and statistical whereas qualitative research data is usually written or spoken language, or observation that is recorded. Statistical types are used in quantitative research data analysis while a process of identifying and categorising themes is used in qualitative data analysis.

Qualitative research methodologies enable a more open-ended and comprehensive research of issues. The categories of this information is identified and understood as it emerges from the data. Quantitative methods in contrast, are highly structured and begin with a series

of predetermined categories, usually embodied in standardised quantitative measures. Quantitative researchers use data to find averages, ranges and broad comparisons.

Although the research for my dissertation will be mostly qualitative, some aspects might be quantitative. Using the inductive, holistic and integrated methodology of qualitative research, I will further analyse my data which itself has been recorded in verbal and visual language by identifying and categorising themes, interrelationships and indicators for transformation. Given that DWEBA's research was conducted through workshops that were carefully planned and facilitated, aspects of the research will be more quantitative than qualitative. Thus in analysing my data, my research might benefit from the more exactly defined and highly formalised approach of quantitative data analysis.

The data analysis for my research will involve both inductive and deductive reasoning. Some discussion on these would be helpful. Both inductive and deductive arguments are inferences. In deductive arguments there is a correlation between the truth of the premise and the truth of the conclusion. On the other hand, in inductive arguments if the premise is true then the conclusion is probably but not necessarily true. In deductive arguments all of the information or factual content in the conclusion is covered at least implicitly in the premise whereas in inductive arguments the conclusion contains information not even implicit in the premise.

Inductive reasoning is a process of generalisation that entails applying specific information to a general situation or event. Its value is in assisting to construct theories from which new theories can be constructed when there is sufficient contrary evidence. In using inductive reasoning to analyse my research data I will however, bear in mind that its main flaw as a process of generalisation is that this reasoning leads to conclusions that are highly probable

rather than absolutely true. I aim to broaden the scope and applicability of my research findings, that is, to suggest a broader application of visual language used as a participatory tool.

Deductive reasoning works in the opposite way to inductive reasoning where researchers infer specific details or hypothesis from an original premise or theory; and unlike inductive reasoning, true premises necessarily lead to true conclusions. As mentioned above, the truth of the conclusion is already implicitly or explicitly contained in the truth of the premises. "The aim of deductive reasoning is to derive empirically testable hypothesis from existing theories" (Melville and Goddard 1996:79). My research will be deductive in that, to an extent, I am testing a theory, that the transformative potential of visual language used as a participatory methodology has application in other contexts and that it is a powerful and underestimated medium. I also anticipate that the factual content of the conclusion of my research will be contained at least implicitly in my original premise.

Finally, my research will draw on historical research methodology in two respects. Firstly, I will evaluate recorded sources, that is, written research on DWEBA. Secondly, I am not planning to collect new information but rather my intention is to reach a more thorough interpretation of the existing material. Having said this, however, to amplify and discuss the transformative potential of visual language further literature research may be necessary in the fields of Psychology, Fine Art and Adult Education which will include Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

## **Conclusion**

**In aiming to achieve comprehensive and valid research, I have discussed the combination of research methodologies that I intend using. However, as with any theory/practice dichotomy I expect in the process of my research some methodologies will prove to be more useful and appropriate than others. For example, the precisely defined and strictly formalised approach of quantitative data analysis might not provide further insights into DWEBA's research and thus a greater reliance on qualitative data analysis would be apposite. Further, in the process of rigorously applying the various methodologies to my research I hope to gain a more thorough appreciation of the complexities and value of research methodology.**

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**APPENDIX 2****NAME:** Louise Hall**STUDENT NUMBER:** 202520134**PAPER:** Literature Survey Paper**SUPERVISORS:** Juliette Leeb-du Toit and Peter Rule

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I have been directly involved in developing and experimenting with visual language used as a participatory methodology in the development facilitation context, that is, with several groups of rural craftswomen in KwaZulu-Natal between 1989 and 2001. Accordingly, I consider it important to rigorously assess the validity and effectiveness of this methodology as a transformative, participatory learning tool in this context.

The first research I was involved in, referred to above, between 1989 and 1991, was conducted through the Institute of Natural Resources (INR), University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, and the second, from 1996 to 2001, with a development project aimed at rural craftswomen known as The Dynamic Women's Enterprise in Business and Art (DWEBA). While the origins of the methodology lay in my research conducted through the INR, my work with DWEBA allowed a more substantial development of the methodology. It is important to note that the premise of this dissertation rests on the assumption that this visual language based methodology, is one among many other different methodologies and processes aimed at reflection and transformation, although none appear to use visual language as an expressive and metaphorical language in the way in which DWEBA did.

The purpose of this dissertation therefore is to examine and evaluate the transformative potential of visual language with special reference to DWEBA's use of drawing as a participatory training methodology in the development facilitation context in KwaZulu-Natal. Further, it may be valuable to briefly discuss the considerations and challenges of adapting and developing the methodology in other learning contexts.

In conducting a literature survey, there are a number of key and interdependent areas to consider. These include the following:

- Background and theoretical framework to DWEBA's work.
- DWEBA's methodology, how DWEBA used it and what processes DWEBA sought to facilitate.
- An evaluation of the methodology.
- Challenges and considerations of a visual language based methodology being used in other learning contexts.

### **1. Background and theoretical framework to DWEBA's work**

To provide the context and background to DWEBA's work I will refer to much of the primary research generated by DWEBA in the form of workshop and annual reports, and project proposals. In 1998 – 2001, DWEBA was founded and staffed on a part time basis by three women namely, Theresa Giorza, Victoria Biyela-Makaye and me, Louise Hall. Prior to starting DWEBA, this team had worked together for two years, between January 1996 and November 1997, on a similar project, The Gannahoek Women's Project (GWP). GWP and DWEBA had similar objectives and the same methodology, and DWEBA evolved on the strength of GWP's successes and further challenges of this work. Given the similarity of the two projects, the collective research and achievements of these projects have become known as DWEBA's work. Although not strictly correct, it does in chronological terms make reference to this collective research simpler. Thus the proposals and reports that I will refer to include *The Gannahoek Women's Project proposal 1996*, *The Gannahoek report in 1996*, *The Gannahoek Evaluation in 1997*, *DWEBA proposals from 1998, 2000 and 2001*, *DWEBA quarterly and final reports from 1998 and 1999* respectively, and *Gannahoek workshop reports from March and April 1997, and June 2001*. Pertinent to this section of the dissertation is that these sources detail DWEBA's objectives and plans for each year including details about each community that DWEBA worked with. Recorded here, as well,

are the project's activities and achievements. These documents provide a regular overview of the issues and challenges that DWEBA and the groups of craftswomen were grappling with in the process of working holistically with the ongoing technical and social challenges of income generation.

In discussing the background to DWEBA's work a key paper which informed both the holistic nature of DWEBA's methodology and my research at the INR was one written by Michelle Friedman and Alistair McIntosh entitled *Challenges and Perspectives of rural development-orientated non-government organisations in Natal/KwaZulu: Summary proceedings of a workshop (1989)*. Friedman and McIntosh identified and articulated the main objective of my research: to develop a training methodology that was gender sensitive and participatory, and that integrated technical and social aspects of group organisation and development. Friedman and McIntosh asserted the need for NGO's "... to draw out the values of the client community and build these values into structures as part of the development process" (Friedman & McIntosh 1989:509). They recognised that many projects involving marginalised community groups, for example, the poor and women, collapse or are unsustainable where service organisations unquestioningly accept the credentials of existing leadership within those communities (Friedman & McIntosh 1989:509). One of the main objectives, therefore, of developing a participatory, gender sensitive methodology, which embraced both technical and social issues, was sustainability. The target group for this methodology was rural development-orientated non-governmental organisations. DWEBA's work, as stated above, was also situated in the development facilitation context, and through its work sought to develop these concerns of a holistic and therefore sustainable approach to intervention by using and developing a metaphorical and exploratory use of drawing as a transformative methodological tool.

My research through the INR culminated in a paper I wrote entitled, *The Use of Drawing in the Development of a Gender sensitive participatory Training Methodology in the Natal/KwaZulu Area*, which was presented at the First Women and Gender in Southern Africa Conference, University of Natal, Durban in 1991. This paper will be relevant in providing the background to DWEBA's work and to the methodology, as well as to the evaluative section of this dissertation. In this paper, I argue for a metaphorical and exploratory use of visual language as a participatory methodology in the development facilitation context. Central to this argument is the recognition of the current limited use of visual language as a methodological tool, and the understanding that visual language has the potential to reveal emotional and subconscious experience which is essential for purposeful change at an individual and group level. This paper argues that, while drawing used as a methodological tool could be pivotal in group empowerment and it has the potential to integrate technical and social challenges and concerns, it should be used in combination with other participatory methodologies (Hall 1991:8, 9). DWEBA was able to ground these ideas in its research experience and develop a visual language based methodology in combination with other more verbal language oriented processes.

As stated above the background research to this dissertation that is, DWEBA's work and methodology as well as my research through the INR, reflected an integrated, holistic and therefore sustainable approach to intervention. Sustainability is a common thread in the theoretical framework of both the background research to this dissertation as well as the dissertation itself. Internet references namely, Herschowitz, R., Orkin, M., Alberts, P., *Key Baseline Statistics for Poverty Measurement, 1997; Stats SA Key Findings at mid-2005 and HIV/AIDS Statistics 2005* will provide statistical detail for a discussion of the external environment to which DWEBA responded. These will include statistics on the South African

population including unemployment levels, comparative unemployment levels between men and women, as well as between rural and urban people, and finally statistics on the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Sub-Saharan Africa. These figures will also provide the basis for supportive argument for participatory methodologies that can contribute in some small measure towards successful and sustainable income generating programmes involving women.

As a key exponent and developer of PRA and a Sustainable Livelihoods approach, Robert Chambers is an important author for further discussion on sustainability. His book, *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the first last* (1997) and his article entitled, *Us and them: Finding a new paradigm for professionals in Sustainable Development* (1998) will be helpful in substantiating methodological processes that endeavour to work towards a sustainability that not only acknowledges the inextricable link between the economy, the environment and society, but that also enables especially the rural poor to "... share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act" (Chambers 1998:134). As inferred above, a participatory development approach assumes that increasing the capacity of individuals and groups to improve their own lives and take control of their own development is more likely lead to sustainable development (DWEBBA 2001:12).

Besides sustainability, the other main concept in the theoretical framework for this dissertation is the argument for more holistic methodologies in all learning environments including the development facilitation context. This will be discussed more fully later in this paper as it pertains to the evaluative section in the dissertation as well as the final brief concluding discussion of the considerations and challenges of adapting a visual language based methodology more broadly to other learning contexts.

**2. The Methodology – how DWEBA used it and what processes DWEBA sought to facilitate.**

Again, both the paper culminating my research at the INR entitled *The Use of Drawing in the Development of a Gender sensitive participatory Training Methodology in the Natal/KwaZulu Area (1991)* and much of DWEBA's documentation will be useful for this section. While I will make reference to key workshop reports, namely, *The Gannahoek report in 1996*, *DWEBA quarterly and final reports from 1998 and 1999* respectively, and *The Gannahoek workshop reports* from March and April 1997 and June 2001, additionally useful will be the resource guide which DWEBA published in 2001 entitled, *Drawing our lives*, and a composite of three papers written by the DWEBA members, entitled *Sustaining The Human Spirit* for an Oxfam Gender and Development Conference, Caledon, Eastern Cape in 2000.

*Sustaining The Human Spirit* was intended to be a frank appraisal of DWEBA's work including how each DWEBA member defined the problem/s for its work, the assumptions they each made and an outline of future challenges of the work. My contributing paper to *Sustaining The Human Spirit* is entitled "*Drawing ones life*": *DWEBA's Methodology*, and as the title suggests, focuses on the use of visual language in DWEBA's methodology. Biyela-Makaye and Giorza's papers also contain some discussion of examples of DWEBA's methodology, although the main focus of Giorza's paper entitled, *A brief case study of an arts-based income generation project and a discussion of insights and ongoing issues*, is the element of self-reflection in the process of evaluation. This will be apposite in the evaluative section of my dissertation as well.

The resource guide mentioned above, *Drawing Our Lives* outlines DWEBA's methodology but goes further by offering practical guidelines for processes or activities using drawing with a

participatory approach, intended for use in most training or development facilitation contexts. In addition to citing important examples of DWEBA's methodology, these documents, that is *Drawing Our Lives* and *Sustaining The Human Spirit*, having been written and published towards the end of DWEBA's work, reveal a measure of reflective and evaluative insight on the methodology. However, lacking in these texts is a detailed and rigorous evaluation of the transformative potential of visual language used as a participatory methodology, that is, a probing examination of why visual language used this way has the potential to be a powerful methodological tool. Also lacking is any discussion of considerations and challenges regarding its adaptation to other learning contexts.

### **3. Evaluation of the methodology**

In addition to the above primary sources in the evaluative chapter of my dissertation reference will be made to Giorza's masters dissertation entitled *A participatory self-evaluation of work carried out by DWEBA with three groups of rural women in KwaZulu-Natal (2001)*. This text will be useful in offering insights on "self" as a legitimate element in experience and reflection. This issue of self-reflection in the process of evaluation is the focus of her contributing paper in *Sustaining the Human Spirit*, but Giorza develops this concern more rigorously in her dissertation. In this text Giorza discusses this practice in relation to both participants in DWEBA's workshops as well as in relation to DWEBA staff.

The external evaluation of DWEBA's work in 1999 by Hellberg-Philips & Suparsad on behalf of Olive Organisation Development and Training, entitled *DWEBA Review and Strategic Discussion* will be important in this evaluative section. In working with many NGOs in the South African development facilitation context, the authors bring perspective to DWEBA's work in this arena, and it brings perspective to DWEBA's methodology and capacity, and



highlights DWEBA's unusual creative approach.

In establishing the parameters of the evaluation, I will need to discuss how DWEBA understood key terms, namely, sustainability, participatory and empowerment. I made reference to Chambers earlier with regard to sustainability in the theoretical framework. His writing and work on this issue cited earlier in *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the first last* (1997) and his article entitled, *Us and them: Finding a new paradigm for professionals in Sustainable Development* (1998) will be valuable texts in discussing DWEBA's understanding of sustainability. Chambers defines a Sustainable Livelihoods approach as one that acknowledges the 'local, complex, diverse, dynamic and unpredictable' realities of the rural poor and their accompanying complex and diverse livelihood strategies (Chambers 1997:162). These key elements of acknowledging and working with the realities of DWEBA workshop participants will be salient in evaluating the role of DWEBA's methodology in its endeavours to work in a holistic and integrated way and to assist these craftswomen find solutions to the ongoing technical and social challenges of micro enterprise.

The ongoing nature of these challenges was a major consideration in DWEBA's understanding of sustainability. As an NGO, DWEBA's work with the groups of craftswomen was limited to a finite period of time (its work with Gannahoek being the longest, that is, from 1996 – 2001). Hence the importance for DWEBA to develop capacity within the groups of craftswomen in a holistic and integrated way which best ensured continuity. That is, through its methodology and approach, DWEBA endeavoured to facilitate the craftswomen's economic and personal capacity that had the potential to endure or be sustainable after DWEBA had exited from the groups of craftswomen.

Related to the notion of sustainability or sustainable development are the concepts empowerment and participatory. Social science references for example, Chapter 7 in the book, *Finding Out Fast (1998)* edited by Thomas, Chataway & Wayts, entitled *Investigation As Empowerment: Using Participatory Methods* written by Johnson and Mayoux provide uncompromising discussion and definitions of the terms empowerment and participatory, which are widely used by a variety of people and for different reasons. These authors argue that these terms are thus diversely interpreted and applied with accordingly differing inherent values and accordingly differing outcomes.

DWEBA's way of working with each group and its notion of empowerment fall within a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) paradigm. In this regard, Chambers is once again a useful text. As stated above, DWEBA understood the notion of empowerment as linked to the notion of sustainability. Broadly, through its methodology in working towards the empowerment of the craftswomen at a personal, group and economic level, DWEBA endeavoured to assist the craftswomen to take control of their own lives and to find solutions for the ongoing challenges of working together in partnerships and generating an income.

With a direct correlation between self esteem and, as stated above, the craftswomen being able to take control of their lives, DWEBA endeavoured through its methodology to build the craftswomen's confidence and affirm their experience. Empowerment in DWEBA's work thus involved both a practical dimension – learning particular skills and tools of analysis – as well as an affective dimension relating to self confidence, both within the individual and the group. The texts, *Drawing Our Lives* and *Sustaining The Human Spirit* will be useful in the evaluation of this aspect of DWEBA's work.

In addition to the aforementioned publication by Thomas, Chataway & Wayts, the paper written by Hilda van Vlaenderen entitled *Participatory research for Rural Development: The use of RRA and PRA (1995)* is useful in providing clarity on the term participatory. This paper was intended to address the concepts of (Rapid Rural Appraisal) RRA and PRA as research techniques, primarily for application in an agricultural setting.

It is important to note that van Vlaenderen is defining participatory research, rather than participatory development, although the same principles may apply. It is equally important to note that DWEBA was not conducting research with the women, but rather using a methodology to facilitate development. As with participatory research, DWEBA's approach to this participatory development assumed a bottom-up strategy where participants take ownership of the project by defining their realities, reflecting on them and acting to change at some level.

DWEBA's participatory way of working largely concurred with van Vlaenderen's assertion that in a general sense, participatory research can be defined as a three-pronged process involving social investigation with the full and active participation of all participants in the entire process, an educational process of mobilisation for development and a means of taking action for development (van Vlaenderen 1995:162). DWEBA understood there to be a close interrelationship between the key terms of sustainability, empowerment and participatory. My evaluation of the transformative potential of DWEBA's use of visual language will therefore refer directly to these linked terms.

Since DWEBA endeavoured to use visual language as a reflective medium, and therefore as a catalyst for change at a personal and organisational level, reference will need to be made to

several fields relating to issues of reflection, evaluation and change. The fields of fine art and craft, psychology and adult education, in particular, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) practices, are germane.

Betty Edwards' *Drawing on the right side of the brain (2001)* offers both artistic and neuroscientific argument for developing right brain hemisphere skills. Although intended primarily for teachers and students interested in acquiring and honing observational drawing skills, this book is invaluable in the clarity of discussion of the asymmetrical, complementary and complex thinking of both brain hemispheres and gives weight to the argument for the use of more holistic methodologies in all learning contexts.

Bearing in mind DWEBBA's efforts to work in an integrated and holistic manner, Jo Thorpe and Elenor Preston-Whyte's documentation of the beadwork of some members of *Esithumba* is helpful in their salient discussion of self-expression evidenced in beadwork form KwaZulu-Natal. Their jointly written paper in 1988, *From the language of Beads to the language of vision: Zulu Bead sculptures and their makers*, discusses how the traditional craft of beadwork was being transformed in response to on the one hand, the development of a lucrative market and on the other, the intervention of a culture broker, a term coined by Jules-Rosette (1984) to describe a mediator between traditional craftspeople and a new and largely commercially orientated buying public (Thorpe & Preston-Whyte 1988:2). In this instance, Thorpe was the culture broker, who was "... an unusually sensitive and artistically-orientated mediator" (Thorpe & Preston-Whyte 1988:2) and mentor to these beadwork craftswomen. This paper thus documents a significant local example of craft serving a dual function of generating income for the craftswomen as well as providing a vehicle for their self-expression and affirmation of their experience. In addition to the reflective potential of self expression, this

example's relevance to my dissertation is its similarity to one of DWEBA's main aims: to bridge the divergent and broad goals of economic empowerment with engendering creative, personal and organisational development.

DWEBA's development of a participatory training methodology with drawing at its core was, as stated above, intended to concurrently address these broad and divergent goals. Some discussion of current participatory methodologies that use visual language is therefore necessary for this evaluative section. An important source that provides both an overview of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and an outline of current participatory methodologies that make innovative use of visual language is, *Participatory Rural Appraisal: Proceedings of the February 1991 Bangalore PRA Trainers Workshop (1991)*, edited by Robert Chambers, John Devavaram, Aloysius Fernandez, Ravi Jayakaran, Sam Joseph, James Mascarenhas, Jules Pretty, Vidya Ramachandran, Pramesh Shah.

The identified knowledge gap for the paper I wrote through the INR, *The Use of Drawing in the Development of a Gender sensitive participatory Training Methodology in the Natal/KwaZulu Area (1991)* as well as for this dissertation is that visual language used as a participatory methodology currently seems to be restricted to modelling, mapping and diagrammatic processes. This factor was also borne out by my observation and practical experience of working in the development facilitation context since 1989. The above publication edited by Chambers et al provides rich detail of current participatory processes using visual language and includes three-dimensional clay modelling, as well as diagrams and maps using paper and pens, on the one hand, and on the other, materials some rural participants feel more comfortable with, namely, grass, seeds, sticks, stones, coloured sands and soils. These mapping and modelling processes, valuable for planning, implementation,

monitoring and evaluation of programmes, are well documented in this publication. While they help ground solutions to the ongoing challenges of sustainability in participants' knowledge and experience of their environment and social relationships, these processes are largely linear, objective and general. In addition, each map, diagram or model is also often constructed not by one person, but by a group of people. In evaluating DWEBA's methodology therefore, this publication will be useful in a comparative discussion between DWEBA's use of visual language and this more left hemisphere orientated use.

Other texts that I will refer to that informed the above identified knowledge gap are *Training for Transformation 1984*, by Anne Hope and Sally Timmel; *A New Weave: Popular Education In Canada and Central America (1985)*, R. Arnold, D. Barnt and B. Burke and *A Handbook on Gender and Popular Education Workshops (1992)* by Liz Mackenzie. The latter publication records some of the lessons and processes learned during a Talking Gender Workshop, which I attended in 1990 at the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education at the University of the Western Cape. Similar to the above Chambers et al text, this publication records innovative participatory processes using visual language, for example, collage, diagrams, maps, and visualization. These processes, however, are usually collectively done and reflect a combination of visual and verbal language.

In evaluating DWEBA's endeavours to access the exploratory, expressive and metaphorical dimensions of visual language, references from the field of psychology will be apposite. Of particular interest in *The Power of Human Imagination: New methods in psychotherapy (1978)* edited by Jerome Singer and Kenneth Pope is the aspect of a particular therapy procedure known as imagery and its role in psychotherapy of visualizing in self awareness and in creativity.

To further discuss and evaluate the reflective and transformative potential of visual language, another important reference will be Laurie Schneider Adams' book, *Art and Psychoanalysis* (1993). The book provides an overview of the interdisciplinary potential of art and psychoanalysis, exploring ways in which psychoanalytic insights can clarify creativity and interpretations of art works.

Another recent reference from the field of psychology that will help with the evaluation of qualitative data in DWEBBA's methodology, and in rigorously assessing the reflective and therefore transformative potential of visual language, is the social science research methodology reference book, *Research in Practice* (2002) edited by Terre Blanche and Durrheim. A chapter in this book written by Kevin Kelly entitled, *Hermeneutics in Action: empathy and interpretation in qualitative research*, is of particular interest in the discussion of "insider" and "outsider" or etic and emic perspectives in the process of distanciation.

In seeking insights on the role of visual language in the process of reflection, I will refer to Gillian Rose's book, *Visual Methodologies*. With current interest in visual literacy perhaps partly a consequence of information increasingly being imparted through visual images, for example, television, movies, play stations, advertisements and the Internet, Rose attempts in this book to offer insights and methods on the interpretation of the visual. Her discussion is insightful and apposite to my dissertation, with particular respect to the process of a viewer eliciting meaning from image, where both the viewer and the viewed, are not finite and therefore mutually constitutive (Rose 2001:104).

Further texts, which will inform my discussion of visual images and visual literacy, are *Reading Images* (2000) by Julia Thomas and *Visual studies: A sceptical Introduction* (2003)

by James Elkins.

**Challenges and considerations of a visual language based methodology being used in other learning contexts.**

Finally, in concluding this dissertation, and in addition to providing an overview of the main findings of this research, I intend to briefly discuss the challenges and considerations of a broader use of visual language as a methodological tool.

Betty Edwards' text, *Drawing On The Right Side Of The Brain (2001)* will be helpful in this section where I will argue for more holistic methodologies in both formal and informal learning environments. The nub of Edwards' argument for accessing and developing both left and right hemisphere functions in learning is that by accessing two parallel ways of knowing, our thinking and learning is enhanced and becomes more complex. Edwards asserts, that "... both thinking modes – one to comprehend the details and the other to "see" the whole picture ... are vital for critical-thinking thinking skills, extrapolation of meaning, and problem solving" (Edwards 2001:xiii).

Howard Gardner in his book *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice* goes further by arguing that, to work towards our survival on earth we need to realize the spectrum of human abilities. This spectrum of human abilities refers to Gardner's theory of "multiple intelligences" which recognises many different and discrete facets of cognition, acknowledging that people have different cognitive strengths and contrasting cognitive styles (Gardner 1993:6). The seven intelligences that Gardner identified were: Linguistic; logical-mathematical; spatial; musical; bodily-kinesthetic; interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.



Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences was one of the outcomes of research he was involved in 1979, into "The Nature and Realization of Human Potential" at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. One of Gardner's goals was to come up with a broader and more comprehensive view of human thought than was then accepted in cognitive studies. In particular, Gardner sought an alternative to the influential theories of Jean Piaget who viewed all of human thought "... as striving towards the ideal of scientific thinking; and the prevalent conception of intelligence that tied it to the ability to provide succinct answers in speedy fashion to problems entailing linguistic and logical skills" (Gardner 1993:xi)

Another reference on Multiple Intelligences, which offers practical application of these theories is, Kornhaber, Fierros and Veenema, book, *Multiple Intelligences: Best Ideas From Research And Practice (2004)*.

Finally to ground this discussion in local learning initiatives, I plan to interview Beryl Lourens, who established and runs The Centre for Lifelong Learning in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. In keeping with Gardner's notion of Multiple Intelligences, and in response to the limitations of a left hemisphere bias in most local primary, secondary and tertiary learning institutions, The Centre for Lifelong Learning aims to assist learners identify and develop their unique perceptual strengths in order to maximise their full potential.

Generally, the library holdings, interlibrary loan, Internet facilities, and journals on the use of visual language in the fields of fine art, craft, psychology, and the development facilitation context will be consulted.

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