

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

Learning and development via network participation: A case study of a  
peace educator network

By

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degree of

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# Declaration

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Education, in the Graduate Programme in School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I, Shireen Rowena Barnabas declare that:

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2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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# Abstract

The recent increase in the number of reported incidents of political, domestic and criminal violence in the media, attests to the escalating violence in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), one of the nine provinces in South Africa. This situation highlights the desperate and urgent need for some sort of peace educational intervention which exposes people to alternative ways and methods of dealing with conflict, in socially acceptable, non-violent ways in an attempt to curb this cycle of violence.

The training and development of peace educators is now more critical than ever. However, a review of relevant literature reveals that the field of peace education and peace educator development in the KZN and the broader South African context is marginal and seriously under-researched. This study focuses on the learning and development of peace educators, with a specific interest in how their participation in a network contributes to their learning and development as peace educators.

This study is framed by Lave and Wenger's theory of Communities of Practice. It involves different data collection methods, namely document analysis, observation of network activities and in-depth interviews with six facilitators from the Alternatives to Violence Project-KwaZulu-Natal (AVP-KZN). The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) network, which is the unit of analysis for this study, emerged as a space which facilitated opportunities for collaborative social learning where facilitators were able to share information, best practices, experiences, resources as well as the AVP's 'organisational culture'. This research explores the underlying motivations for participation in the AVP-KZN network, experiences encountered through participation in the network and the role of the network in terms of the learning and development of peace educators.

In this study, the AVP-KZN network emerges as a rich site for the learning and development of both novice and experienced facilitators and a major contributor to acquisition of effective facilitation skills and techniques. The informal learning in the network appears to have concentrated on the pedagogy (facilitation styles, planning, flexibility, teamwork), self-development and identity development of the peace educator. The findings reveal the network as being a conducive environment for informal, social, experiential and transformative learning which involves the acquisition of increased knowledge and skills, changed practices, opportunities to observe, to be observed, plan, implement, review and write reports. The extent to which the peace educators were actively involved in their learning through their increased participation in a variety of network activities, was also evident in this study. Six distinct components of learning emerged from the analysis of the data: 1) learning from diversity; 2) learning through changes in community; 3) learning through changes in meaning; 4) learning through practice; 5) developing an identity as a peace educator; and 6) learning through the development of self.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the existing knowledge of peace education with a focus on the learning and development of peace educators in a community of practice.

# Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to

**Kevin, Durell and Derryn Barnabas**

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# Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Dedication.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Acronyms .....	xii
List of tables.....	xiii
List of figures.....	xiii
 Chapter 1:	
Introduction.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Purpose and Rationale for this research study.....	4
1.3 Research Methodology .....	5
1.4 Research Questions.....	5
1.5 Positionality.....	6
1.6 Ethical considerations.....	6
1.7 Limitations of the study.....	6
1.8 Structure of dissertation.....	7
1.9 Conclusion.....	8
 Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	 9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP).....	9
2.2.1 The background to AVP.....	9

2.2.2	The AVP-KZN Network.....	11
2.2.3	Peace Education .....	11
2.4	The need for Peace Education.....	12
2.5	Research in the field of peace education.....	14
2.6	Training and development of peace educators (adult educators).....	14
2.7	Peace Pedagogy.....	16
2.8	Education, Learning and Development.....	17
2.9	The nature of Adult Learning.....	19
2.10	Types of Adult Learning.....	20
2.10.1	Formal, Non-formal and Informal Learning.....	21
2.10.2	Experiential Learning.....	23
2.10.3	Transformative Learning.....	24
2.11	Theoretical Framework.....	25
2.11.1	The Communities of Practice Theory.....	26
2.11.2	Characteristics of a Community of Practice.....	27
2.11.3	Key concepts in Communities of Practice Theory.....	27
2.11.3.1	Legitimate Peripheral Participation.....	28
2.11.3.2	The “Learning Curriculum”.....	29
2.11.3.3	Access to participation.....	29
2.11.3.4	Adult Educator Identity.....	31
2.11.4	Critique of Communities of Practice Theory.....	31
2.11.5	The social nature of learning within a Community of Practice.....	32
2.11.6	The AVP-KZN network – A Community of (Peace) Practice.....	37
2.12	Conclusion.....	39
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....		40
3.1	Introduction.....	40
3.2	Research Methodology, Design and Process.....	40



3.2.1	Research Methodology.....	40
3.2.2	Research Design.....	41
3.2.3	Location of study.....	43
3.2.4	Positionality.....	43
3.2.5	Research Participants.....	44
3.3	Methods of Data Collection.....	44
3.4	Data Analysis.....	45
3.5	Trustworthiness of Data.....	46
3.6	Ethical Issues.....	47
3.7	Limitations of the study.....	48
3.8	Conclusion.....	48

## Chapter 4: Findings - The AVP-KZN Network as a site for learning.....49

4.1	Introduction.....	49
4.2	The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP).....	49
4.3	The history of the AVP-KZN Network.....	50
4.4	Structure of AVP-KZN Network.....	52
4.5	The AVP activities within the AVP-KZN Network.....	53
4.5.1	The AVP Workshops.....	55
4.5.2	The AVP Workshop Preparation Sessions.....	56
4.5.3	The Gatherings and Annual General Meetings.....	56
4.5.4	Management Committee and Board of Trustee Meetings.....	58
4.6	The supportive nature of the AVP-KZN Network.....	59

4.7	Merits of participating in the AVP-KZN Network.....	62
4.8	The AVP-KZN Network as a site of learning and development.....	64
4.9	The AVP-KZN Network as a Community of Practice.....	66
4.10	Motivation for participation in the AVP-KZN Network.....	74
4.11	Conclusion.....	77

## Chapter 5: Findings – A Journey of Informal Social Learning in the AVP-KZN Network.....78

5.1	Introduction.....	78
5.2	Collaborative and Social Learning.....	78
5.3	Types of learning in the AVP-KZN Network.....	79
5.3.1	Formal and Non-formal learning of peace educators.....	79
5.3.2	Informal learning acquired by peace educators.....	80
5.3.2.1	Incidental learning.....	81
5.3.2.2	Transformative learning.....	81
5.3.2.3	Experiential learning.....	84
5.4	Transfer of knowledge amongst AVP facilitators.....	85
5.5	Learning through increased participation.....	86
5.5.1	Access to participation.....	87
5.5.2	Learning the AVP pedagogy through participation .....	89
5.6	Six inter-related learning components of AVP-KZN Network participation.....	90
5.6.1	Learning through changes in the community.....	91
5.6.2	Learning through changes in meaning.....	93

5.6.3	Learning through diversity in the network.....	94
5.6.4	Learning through practice.....	98
5.6.5	Development of confidence through network participation.....	106
5.6.6	Developing a peace educator identity through network participation.....	110
5.7	Conclusion.....	116
 Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations .....		117
6.1	Introduction.....	117
6.2	Limitations.....	116
6.3	Research questions.....	117
6.3.1	Response to research question 1: What are the underlying motivations for participating in the AVP-KZN Network? .....	119
6.3.2	Response to research question 2: How do members participate in and experience the network?.....	120
6.3.3	Response to research question 3: What role does the network serve in terms of learning and development of peace educators? .....	120
6.4	Summary of key findings.....	121
6.5	Recommendations for further research.....	123
6.6	Conclusion.....	124
References.....		125
Annexure 1: Consent forms.....		134
Annexure 2: Interview Schedule.....		136
Annexure 3: Ethical Clearance Certificate.....		138

# List of Acronyms

AVP	Alternatives to Violence Project
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
AVP-KZN	Alternatives to Violence Project-KwaZulu-Natal
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
ANC	African National Congress
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
NFP	National Freedom Party
GEDF	Greater Edendale Development Forum
CEPD	Certificate in Education: Participatory Development
USA	United States of America
T4F	Training for Facilitators
CAE	Centre for Adult Education
CACE	Centre for Adult and Continuing Education
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Committee

# List of Tables and Figures

## List of Tables

Table 1	History of the AVP-KZN Network.....	49
Table 2	Description of levels of participation.....	71

## List of Figures

Figure 1	Organogram of AVP-KZN Network structure.....	51
Figure 2	Activities within the AVP-KZN Network.....	52
Figure 3	The 6 inter-related learning components of AVP-KZN network participation.....	89

## **Chapter One - Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

As South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 led the country into a post-apartheid era, the country waited in anticipation hoping that this historical milestone would signal an end to the country's political violence. Much to the relief of all hopeful South Africans the political violence had declined to negligible levels in the rest of the country (Johnston, 1996), however, as predicted by many critics, the violence in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) remained unabated. Johnston (1996, p.78) posits that this posed "the most serious threat to the integrity and stability of the post-apartheid settlement in South Africa." The on-going violence in KZN, which stemmed from the apartheid era, between the different political parties: the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the African National Congress (ANC) and National Freedom Party (NFP), grew in intensity as parties struggled for territorial control and fought against constitutional disagreements (Johnston, 1996).

An article in the Mail and Guardian on 19 October 2012, attests to the sad reality that, 18 years into the country's democracy, the province of KwaZulu-Natal is still plagued by extreme violence:

It is trite but disturbingly true that the political murders have returned KwaZulu-Natal to its bloody past ... violent political horror continued unabated in KwaZulu-Natal this week (Tolsi, 2012, p.1).

This violence in KZN is exacerbated by various other factors such as "socio-economic deprivation, urban-rural tensions, conflict between traditional and modern forms of

governance ...” (Carver, 1996). We awaken every morning to ‘screaming’ headlines reporting violence in homes, work and communities, both locally and internationally.

The extreme violence that plagues the province of KwaZulu-Natal highlights the need for some sort of peace education intervention which is critical in alleviating this destructive pattern of violence which is filtering down through the generations. Tchombe (2006) posits that global concerns about education, violence and conflict have stimulated research for peace in Africa. Mohamedbhai (cited in Tchombe, 2006), illustrates how the teaching of values can help create a culture of peace. Hicks (1990), Tchombe (2006) and Waldorf (2007), acknowledge the key role of education in building peace, promoting a peaceful future, security, stability and healthy living. Tchombe (2006) aptly states that:

The new orientation is to help victims of violence ... outgrow conflict. There is the need to look at the role of education in crises situations. To obtain evaluation and reflective material available about educational intervention is vitally important, yet as evident, research efforts at this level are at the budding stage (Tchombe, 2006, p.8).

While research into educational interventions may be at the ‘budding stage’, the promotion of peaceful co-existence and alternatives to violent behaviour can be supported through educational interventions that focus on helping victims of violence talk about their experiences in a safe environment. Education that promotes self-discovery through the process of reflection, affirmation and knowledge about alternative ways of dealing with conflict, memories and recollections, is a means to break the trend of seeing violence as “a way of life” (Foxton, 2012, p.15).

In response to the call for education as a means of curbing the cycle of violence in our society, we need educators who are trained to promote non-violent behaviour and peace education. The Centre for Adult Education (CAE) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN) Pietermaritzburg campus responded favourably to this desperate call by embarking on a project in 1998 which offered peace education programmes to UKZN students and community members. The project involved the provision of formal and non-formal peace education programmes to UKZN students and local communities as well as training and supporting peace educators (CAE Report, 2009-2010).

In 2005, UKZN introduced the Certificate in Education: Participatory Development programme (CEPD) which targeted people involved in various kinds of development work in communities. Built into its curriculum, as an elective module, is the internationally acclaimed, Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP). This programme introduces the learners to non-violent methods of conflict resolution. CAE works in close collaboration with various stakeholders including: local, national and international non-governmental organizations that are also engaged in Alternatives to Violence (AVP) workshops. This programme has become an integral part to the training and support of peace workers (CAE Report, 2008-2009).

The AVP programme's unique pedagogy aligns to Foxton's (2012) idea of an appropriate adult education peace intervention programme. It provides a safe environment where participants can share their experiences of violence and learn through the process of reflection, affirmation and knowledge about transformative conflict resolution techniques. As the number of certified AVP facilitators in KZN grew, this support system developed into a fully-fledged network which is now referred to as the AVP-KZN network. The AVP program is coordinated via a network office which is located on the UKZN's Pietermaritzburg Campus.



## **1.2 Purpose and Rationale for this study**

The purpose of this research is to explore the learning and development of peace educators within the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) network in KZN. My research aims to explore the experiences of novice and experienced peace educators and their learning and development through a peace network that facilitates continuous learning and support for educators. Using Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of communities of practice, I intend to explore the underlying motivations for participation in the AVP network, experiences encountered through participation in the network and the role of the network in terms of the learning and development of peace educators.

My rationale and motivation for undertaking this research is threefold and relates to: 1) the need for peace education, 2) the diversity of the AVP membership; and 3) my personal interest and experience as an adult educator. Factors such as poverty, racism, break-down of the family and inadequate societal support systems for working parents have contributed to the violence that is prevalent in our daily lives (Miedzian, 1995). Today's society is desperately in need of "Education *for* Peace" (Hicks, 1990, p.93). There is a desperate need for further research into educator development in the field of peace education. In relation to this need, the field of peace education and peace educator development in the KwaZulu-Natal and the broader South African context is marginal and seriously under-researched (John, 2013).

The second part of my rationale relates to the diversity of members participating in the AVP network at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am interested in how such diversity shapes participation and how it influences learning and development of educators. I intend to explore how informal learning acquired from educators' interaction and participation in this project contributes to their learning and development. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the existing knowledge of peace education with a focus on the learning and development of peace educators in a community of practice.

The final part of my rationale and motivation for this research relates to my personal interest and experience as an adult educator and parent living and working in a society that is marred by extreme violence and conflict. I am interested in exploring and understanding how peace educators learn and develop within a peace educator network. Such a study could help with the growth and refinement of such work and thereby contribute to building a more peaceful world.

### **1.3 Research Methodology**

For my study, I have chosen a case study approach with the AVP network being the unit of analysis. This methodology facilitated an understanding of “a real-life phenomenon in depth” (Yin, 2009, p.18) and enabled me to “retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (p.4) which included individual life stories and small group behaviour (Yin, 2009). This enabled me to generate a thick description of the lives and work experiences of peace educators.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.227) describe research questions as “an integral and driving feature” of qualitative research. This study is framed by the following research questions:

1. What are the underlying motivations for participation in the AVP network?
2. How do members participate in and experience the network?
3. What role does the network serve in terms of the learning and development of peace educators?

## **1.5 Positionality**

I am not a member of the AVP network, and therefore conducted this research study as an outsider. I have however attended an AVP Basic Workshop as a way of orientating myself to this process of peace education.

## **1.6 Ethical considerations**

Written consent was obtained from each participant (Annexure 1). This study also complied with the University of KwaZulu-Natal's ethical requirements for research (Annexure 3).

## **1.7 Limitations of the study**

One of the limitations of my research is that it was a small scale case study. My chosen methodology posed a limitation in that it involved a single case study (community engagement project at UKZN) which prevents the findings of this study to be generalized.

The time available to collect data also created some limitations. Scheduling two in-depth interviews at a time and place that was convenient for me and for the participants posed a challenge and also influenced the type and number of workshops that I was able to observe. I was restricted to observing workshops that were conducted within a reasonable distance from my place of employment and within the time frames I had scheduled to complete my data collection process.

## **1.8 Structure of dissertation**

This research document is divided into six chapters:

Chapter one introduces this study, the rationale of this study and how it was conducted.

Chapter two comprises of two sections. The first section pertains to a literature review relating to learning and development of peace educators within a network. This section of the chapter includes a discussion of aspects such as peace education, types of adult learning and the AVP network. The second section of the chapter focuses on the theoretical framework. Key concepts of Lave and Wenger's (1991) Communities of Practice Theory are identified and explained.

Chapter three focuses on the research methodology utilized in this study and includes a discussion of research design, methodology and data collection methods.

The findings of this study are presented in two chapters, namely Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Chapter 4 focuses on the AVP-KZN Network as a site for learning and development for peace educators while Chapter 5 focuses on the journey of self-discovery and informal social learning through the network. Chapter 4 is divided into three sections. The first section aims to provide a thick description and detailed understanding of the AVP philosophy, and the structure and activities of the AVP-KZN network, which emerged as rich sources of learning and development of the peace educators. An analysis of the AVP documents obtained from the AVP-KZN network enabled me to trace the history of the AVP-KZN network. Using this knowledge in conjunction with my observation of the network activities enabled me to provide a thick description of the network. The second section of this chapter focuses on the AVP-KZN network as experienced by the AVP members who participated in this study. The chapter concludes

with a section on a perspective of the AVP-KZN network, as viewed through the lens of Lave and Wenger's (1991) Communities of Practice Theory.

Chapter 5 focuses on the Learning and Development of peace educators in the AVP-KZN network. Chapter 5 discusses the informal learning and development which emerged from my observation notes of AVP activities and interview data.

Chapter six provides the key findings which emerged in this study and responds to the three research questions. The chapter concludes with recommendations, implications for future studies and concluding remarks.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an overview of my study. The purpose, rationale, methodology, ethical considerations, limitations and my positionality were explained. The structure and layout of this dissertation were also presented.

In the next chapter of this study, I discuss the literature pertaining to the learning and development of peace educators in the AVP-KZN network as well as the theoretical framework of the study.

## **Chapter Two - Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter two presents a literature review for this study and comprises of two sections. The first section pertains to literature relating to the learning and development of peace educators within a network and includes a discussion of aspects such as the Alternatives to Violence Network, peace education and types of adult learning. The second section of the chapter focuses on literature reviewed on the theoretical framework, namely Lave and Wenger's (1991) Communities of Practice Theory. This section discusses the development of the Communities of Practice Theory, key concepts and learning within a community of practice.

### **2.2 Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP)**

#### **2.2.1 Background to AVP**

The Alternatives to Violence Project is a training programme that enables participants to share their experiences, and learn ways of responding to 'conflict situations in a non-violent manner' (John, 2012, p.5). AVP was first introduced in the United States of America (USA) in 1975 and is intended to encourage tolerance and appreciation of diversity by encouraging respect for each other, team work, effective communication and learning from experience. The AVP programme was designed in response to a request from a group of inmates, from Green Haven Prison in New York, who approached the Quakers (a religious group) for guidance on conflict resolutions to reduce the physical violence in their prison. Although started by the Quakers, the Alternatives to Violence Project is non-sectarian. The project was initially conducted only in prisons. The success of the AVP project, led to interest in the AVP program being introduced to the community at large, and was then facilitated in schools, universities,

government and non-government organizations as well as community centres (Halfman & Couzij, 2008). The AVP programme involves a “*process that allows people to experience the way of non-violence*” (AVP Basic Manual, 2002, p.A-6). AVP is voluntary for both facilitators and participants and is run by trained facilitators who neutralize power relations by participating and interacting with the group rather than dominating it (Kreitzer & Jou, 2010; Hicks, 1990). AVP resists anything that encourages hierarchy and focuses on “working together by agreement and without coercion” (AVP Basic Manual, 2002, p.A-5).

The three-day experiential AVP workshops, which were designed by the Quakers in New York in 1975 (AVP Basic Manual, 2002), are currently offered internationally in 58 countries and have been “customized for different contexts” (John, 2012, p.5). The programme is also run in South Africa, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) as customised two-day experiential workshops. Participants have the option of participating in three levels of AVP workshops: Basic, Advanced, and Training for Facilitators’ Workshops. On completion of the Basic Workshop, participants can choose to go on to the Advanced Workshop, followed by the Training for Facilitators (T4F) Workshop. The workshops are designed to enable the participants to acknowledge and recognize the importance of transformative, non-violent conflict resolution in addressing all forms of violence and are progressive, in that they build on each other (AVP Basic Manual, 2002).

According to Stuart (cited in Kreitzer & Jou, 2010), once participants have completed the Training for Facilitators, they are considered to be apprentices and are allowed to co-facilitate workshops with more experienced facilitators, until they are granted independent facilitator status. These facilitators operate in a dynamic environment and are therefore in need of continuous support from other co-facilitators and lead facilitators.

### 2.2.2 The AVP-KZN Network

In KZN, the need for continuous support to facilitators is provided by the AVP-KZN Facilitator Network, which started in 2007. It is coordinated from the AVP network office located within the Centre for Adult Education on the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Pietermaritzburg Campus. The network is a vital link between all members of the network. The membership of the AVP network is diverse and multi-cultural, comprising of UKZN students, academic staff, non-academic staff and non-UKZN community-based educators (CAE Report, 2008-2009, CAE Report, 2009-2010, John, 2012). The AVP network's main purpose is to provide continuous support to novice and experienced facilitators, to facilitate the development of personal skills, knowledge, attitudes and an identity as a Peace Educator. This study intends to explore how the network supports facilitators and facilitates the learning and development of peace educators as they endeavour to promote peace education. The following sections review literature on peace education, the need for peace education in our society and research undertaken in the field of peace education.

## 2.3 Peace Education

Hicks (1990, p. 88) posits that the main aim of Peace Education, is to “develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to resolve conflict peacefully in order to work towards a more just, sustainable and less violent world”. He formulates the aim of Peace Education as follows:

to explore *concepts of peace* ... to enquire into the *obstacles of peace* and the causes of peacelessness ... to resolve conflicts in ways that lead to less violence and a more just world ... to study ways of constructing



different *alternate futures*, in particular those which embody a more just and sustainable world society (Hicks, 1990, p.88).

The reported escalation of conflict and violence in KwaZulu-Natal highlights the need for 'Education *for* Peace' (Hicks, 1990, p.93) and some sort of community adult education intervention that focuses on addressing violence. One of the means of achieving this is by instilling a sense of awareness of alternatives to violent behaviour and promoting peace education. A discussion of the necessity of peace education in KwaZulu-Natal follows.

## **2.4 The need for Peace Education**

The extreme violence that has plagued the province of KwaZulu-Natal over the past decades (as discussed in Chapter 1), highlights the need for some sort of peace education intervention. Conflict and violence are so rife in today's society that people appear to have accepted it as a 'normal' way of life. We live in a violent society where people seem to perceive aggression against vulnerable people, as an accepted way of life (Sudermann, Jaffe & Hasting, 1995; Peled, Jaffe & Edelson, 1995, Foxon, 2012). One of the contributing factors seems to emanate from the societal lack of patience, tolerance and knowledge of non-violent conflict resolution techniques, thus resulting in people resorting to violence as a quicker way to deal with conflict. Eighteen years into democracy, the vision of a crime-free, violence-free society for South Africans still remains elusive as the on-going political violence, domestic violence, brutal murders, sexual violations and violence in schools continue to escalate and destroy the lives of innocent citizens on a daily basis (Johnston, 1996; Carver, 1996; Tolsi, 2012). The violence in KZN is exacerbated by various factors including socio-economic and political factors, which are all inescapable realities of our present society in KwaZulu-Natal (Tolsi, 2012).

According to Sudermann, Jaffe and Hasting (1995, p.239), successful peace education programmes need to “raise awareness and gain support” from a broad spectrum of participants which includes the education system and the community. This is also illustrated in the following newspaper article which appeals to various stakeholders to work together to curb the violence in KZN:

The province of KwaZulu-Natal is very important to South Africa; if we sneeze, the entire country catches a cold. Because of this it is very important for the House of Traditional Leaders, politicians, religious leaders, business and the general public to behave in a manner that would not put the country in trouble, said [King] Zwelithini. We cannot allow the province to go back to that past of violence (Ngqulunga, 2012, p.1).

The above extract, from an article entitled “King wants to end violence” (Ngqulunga, 2012) highlights the need for peace education, acknowledges the importance of addressing the issue of violence in KwaZulu-Natal and calls upon religious, political and business leaders as stakeholders to work collaboratively in restoring and maintaining peace.

When we see, hear, experience or read about the immense violence that engulfs our society, we cannot help but dream of what a peaceful world would be like. Houseman (cited in Dufour, 1990, p.84) posits that a “peaceful world is not necessarily a world without conflict. It is a world which solves these conflicts without recourse to violence”. This view aligns to the AVP philosophy. AVP acknowledges the high level of violence in our society and focuses on reducing interpersonal violence through exposure to non-violent techniques during experiential workshops (AVP Basic Manual, 2002). The following section provides a review of the literature on research that has been

undertaken in the field of peace education, including AVP, which is the central focus of this study.

## **2.5 Research in the field of peace education**

The global escalation in conflict and violence has highlighted the need for some sort of intervention in promoting peace awareness and has been the topic of several empirical studies. The growing interest in the field of peace education is evident in the increasing number of studies undertaken in this field in recent years. Recent literature on peace education and AVP, focus on various aspects such as: the impact evaluation of AVP in a medium-security prison (Walrath, 2001), the need for peace education in high schools (Waldorf, 2007), the design and evaluation model of AVP (Halfman & Couzij, 2008), the role of AVP in the reconciliation process (Kreitzer & Jou, 2010), and the focus on the curriculum and teaching and learning experiences of peace educators in a UKZN programme (John, 2013). The article by Kreitzer and Jou (2010) focuses on the role of AVP in the reconciliation process and highlights the need for training of peace educators and their participation in AVP, which the authors consider to be crucial to teach people about alternatives to violent behaviour. The training of peace educators will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

## **2.6 Training and development of peace educators (adult educators)**

Despite the desperate need for peace education and peace educator training in South Africa, peace education is a marginal and under-researched sub-field of education since no provision has ever been made to systematically incorporate peace education into the formal school system (John, 2013). Kreitzer and Jou (2010) and John (2013) express their concern regarding the lack of focus on training and development of peace educators. According to John (2013) the training of peace educators is rare and Kreitzer

and Jou (2010, p.83) acknowledge that “[t]raining professionals ... in AVP is now more crucial than ever, so people have alternatives to violent behaviour, thus changing the way people respond to violence”.

In addition to exploring the learning acquired by peace educators within the AVP-KZN network, this study also intends exploring how participation in the network contributes to the development of peace educators.

‘Development’ implies a positive movement i.e. a ‘definite movement *from* a latent or hidden state *to* a state that is more visible, more explicit, more elaborate’ (Bennaars, 1993, p.75) and is a product of both maturation (physical growth) and learning i.e. the ‘external influences on development, notably socio-cultural experiences’ (Bennaars, 1993, p.77). The need for both maturation and learning is highlighted as Carlsen (2003) posits that a person engaged in the teaching of adults has to fulfil various roles these days. These roles include being a “guide, facilitator, teacher and coach” (p.56) which necessitates a simultaneous focus on adult learning programmes for professional and personal development of adult educators.

According to Carlsen (2003, p.57), the role of an adult educator as: 1) a *guide*: means acquainting “others with new opportunities and development”; 2) a *teacher*: means being “a mediator of knowledge” whose main task is to “create a positive learning environment [and] supporting the development of self-directed learners”; 3) a *facilitator*: means managing group dynamics and helping learners “find their role in the network of relationships” within the group; 4) a *coach*: means the ability to “influence the shaping of a learner’s personality [and] empowering the learner with skills needed for self-actualization”. It would be interesting to explore how AVP network participation facilitates the development of peace educators to play these multiple roles of an “adult educator”, namely: a guide, teacher, facilitator and a coach.

Mpofu (2003) identifies three principal models for training adult educators in Africa: 1) *Traditional semi-distance education programmes* for practicing adult educators; 2) *Distance education* which seeks to develop skills and formalize the skills of adult educators; and 3) *Full-time programmes* such as degrees and diplomas, which takes the practitioner away from the field of practice for long periods of time thus preventing the immediate application of newly acquired knowledge and skills. The Advanced Diploma offered by the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE) at the University of Western Cape is an example of this full-time programme.

The Centre for Adult Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal also offers adult education programmes aimed at developing the skills of adult educators. The University of KwaZulu-Natal has incorporated Peace Education programmes into their formal curriculum. Peace Education is offered in both undergraduate and post graduate programmes (CAE Report, 2008-2009; CAE Report, 2010-2011). Some of these programmes promote transformational non-violent conflict resolution techniques through its community engagement projects such as the Alternatives to Violence Project and also offers support to peace educators within a peace educator network namely the AVP-KZN network (CAE Report, 2008-2009; CAE Report, 2010-2011; John, 2012).

## **2.7 Peace Pedagogy**

Peace education has its own unique pedagogy which necessitates the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills. Whitaker (1988) identifies the following skills and qualities, as essential for peace educators: being empathetic, being good listeners, being able to acknowledge learners' personal experiences, respecting the uniqueness of each individual, and being secure enough to be honest and open with the learners. This study aims to explore how participation in the AVP-KZN network impacts on the training and development of peace educators and facilitates the acquisition of these and

other essential skills. To facilitate an understanding of the motivations, experiences and learning and development of peace educators through network participation (which is the aim of this study), it is necessary to also understand the nature and characteristics of adult learning. In reviewing the characteristics of adult learners (which is discussed in the following section), it is evident that for an adult education programme to be meaningful, the programme has to focus on the needs of the adult learner, and the facilitator has to be “supportive of the process of learning chosen by the learner” (Dighe, 2003, p.41). Peace educators are involved with educating and promoting conflict resolution skills in adult learners. They need to develop a good teacher-student relationship “and to evolve a pedagogy which places the learner’s personal experience rather than the teacher’s subject pre-occupation, at the forefront” (Whitaker, 1988, p.32). Since the intention of this study is to explore the learning and development of peace educators within the AVP network, it would be interesting to analyse the following concepts: education, learning, development and training to determine the similarities, differences and extent to which each relates to the other.

## **2.8 Education, Learning and Development**

A review of literature relating to “education”, “learning” and “development” has indicated that all involve the transfer of new information, knowledge and/or skills, however the focus on the roles and responsibility of the learner and educator varies in these concepts. The term “education” focuses on the roles and responsibilities of the educator, the educational institutions and the provision thereof, while the term “learning” draws attention to the roles and responsibilities of the learner. Marsick (1988, p.88) describes education and training as “delivery systems” that provide a knowledge base that underpins other activities that an adult may engage in at a later stage. Rogers (2003) agrees, but posits that education is not simply a system but a process designed to help others learn. According to Mezirow (1981), learning involves two processes, namely the

learner's perception and, learner's contribution to the situation. The process of learning is therefore determined by what the learner takes in, what is construed as taking place, and what the learner does to change the situation in order to understand it better. Learning involves reflection, which enables one to assess the effectiveness of the experience associated with this learning. Learning is therefore far more than the mere shifting of knowledge or information from educator/trainer to the learner. Learning is the way in which a person interprets, reorganizes, changes or assimilates "a related cluster of information, skills and feelings" (Marsick, 1988, p.88) and is also the primary way in which people construct meaning in their personal and shared organizational lives. Training, which is more specific, tends to concentrate on skills development.

Development" encompasses both activities, namely education and training, which facilitates the enhancement and growth of an individual's skills and abilities through both conscious and unconscious learning. Development, therefore includes education and training as well as a range of other activities such as coaching, looking, listening and mentoring. Taylor, Marienau, and Fiddler (2000) define development as an adult experiential process which results in a qualitative change in attitudes, values, and understandings. They posit that the following four aspects of adult development have emerged in various models and theories of adult learning : 1) Developing through social environmental interaction; 2) developing through differentiation and integration; 3) developing through a variable process; 4) developing by reframing experiences. Adults develop in a social context and how they experience this interaction is influenced by how they perceive and make sense of the events that make up that experience. This experience is shaped by various individual factors including their cultural practices, racial identity and social standing. Adults also develop through a cycle of differentiation and integration as they encounter experiences that cannot be adequately assimilated into or interpreted through their existing frames of reference. The process of differentiation involves the disintegration of existing frames of reference, such as previously conceived knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and integrating these new

experiences with a larger, more complex frame of reference. An individual's development is therefore a variable process (not uniform) as it is not restricted to time and age. Adults develop as they interact with others who operate from a set of beliefs which differ from their own. This encounter has the potential to change one or both sets of ideas, and through the process of reflection, analysis, people are exposed to and begin to see, feel, and understand things differently. Adult development is also determined by the ability to reframe experience. (Taylor, Marienau & Fiddler, 2000). The following section explores the nature of adult learning in greater detail.

## **2.9 The nature of Adult Learning**

Knowles (cited by Ota, DiCarlo, Burts, Laird & Gioe, 2006) provided basic assumptions about adult learning, which can be summarized as: 1) every person has a 'self-concept' which enables a person to move from a dependant state to an independent state through the process of maturity; 2) Adult learners accumulate a wealth of life experiences which forms a resource for their learning; 3) Adult learning is meaningful if it relates to real life problems; and 4) Adult learning must be immediately applicable to their real life situations/challenges.

Dighe (2003, p.41) builds on Knowles assumptions and highlights the following principles of adult learning: 1) Adults decide on their own what they need to learn; 2) Adults consider new learning experiences to be useful if it is immediately useful, is convenient and interesting; 3) Adults link their learning to their personal lives, their work situations, their past experiences and its ability to solve their immediate problems; 4) Adult learners use their past experiences as a benchmark to measure new learning; and 5) Learning that is not linked to the life of the learner is of little value. A distinguishing feature of adult learning is the central role of the learner's experience (Kolb, 1984; Kolb,



Boyatzis & Mainemelis, 1999; Dighe, 2003; Jost, 2004). These assumptions of adult learning are evident in the AVP principles and philosophy: AVP participation is voluntary (adults decide what they need to learn); learning is experiential (based on past experiences) and learning is relevant and linked to learners' personal lives. Since peace educators are adult learners, this study intends to analyse the extent to which these basic assumptions of adult learning are applicable to the learning acquired through participation in the AVP network.

In view of these assumptions of adult learning, Dighe (2003) posits that besides formal institutions supporting adult learning programmes, “the challenge is to identify all learning spaces that are available for non-formal and informal learning” (p.42) which could include: community centres, organizations and gatherings of people with a common interest which create a learning environment. This study explores the AVP-KZN network as a learning space for informal learning. The following section provides a brief discussion of the various types of adult learning that are relevant to this study.

## **2.10 Types of Adult Learning**

The dynamic nature of society and the focus on lifelong learning necessitates the continuous development of adult educators. I agree with Kolb et al., (1999) that learning does occur through all life-stages, as we make the transition from childhood to old age. When we perceive learning to be a holistic adaptive process, it provides conceptual bridges across all life situations; at home, at school, at work and during social events thus highlighting the continuous, lifelong process of learning. The following sections discuss the different types of adult learning that are relevant to this study.

### 2.10.1 Formal, Non-formal and Informal Learning

Bennaars (1993) identifies Phillip Coombs as the first educationalist to distinguish between formal, non-formal and informal education.

**Formal Learning:** Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007) describe formal learning as learning that occurs in a formal setting, “is highly institutionalized, bureaucratic, curriculum driven” (p.29) and is formally recognized with certificates, diplomas and degrees. Included in the curriculum of one of the University of KwaZulu-Natal’s formal programmes, the “Certificate in Education: Participatory Development”, is a module on peace education. This would be an example of formal learning for peace educators.

**Non-Formal Learning:** According to Eraut (2004) non-formal learning is learning which is not provided by an education or training institution and does not result in formal certification. It is however intentional from the learners’ perspective and is structured, in terms of duration, learning outcomes and learner support. Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007) describe non-formal learning as organized learning opportunities which occurs *outside* the formal educational system and which is short-term, voluntary and has few, if any, prerequisites. The learning acquired through participation in the AVP workshops is an example of the non-formal learning of peace educators. The participants make a conscious decision to join the programme and learn about alternatives to violence and conflict resolution techniques. The AVP programme is structured with set learning objectives, a set timeframe and receives the necessary support from the facilitators and the AVP network.

**Informal Learning:** Coombs (cited by Bennaars, 1993) describes informal learning as unorganized, unsystematic, life-long acquisition of attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from “daily experiences and from the educative influences of their environment” (p.51) and as “spontaneous, unstructured learning” (Merriam et al., 2007, p.35). This informal learning is embedded in our daily lives as we go about our everyday activities at home, at work, by reading the papers, watching television and includes socialization, while formal education is more hierarchical and structured. Informal learning happens without the learner consciously realizing it. Socialization or tacit learning is neither intentional nor conscious, however a person can become aware of this learning through “retrospective recognition” (Merriam et al., 2007, p.36). Kennedy (2011) acknowledges the added value which “is to be found in the informal element of working with other people” (p.25). Fraser, Kennedy and McKinney (cited in Kennedy, 2011) posit that the importance of informal learning should be acknowledged along with formal learning and Eraut (as cited in Kennedy 2011) highlights the fact that for informal learning to occur a conducive “group climate for learning has to be created, sustained and recreated” (p.29). Eraut also posits that if mutual learning is low or relationships are dominated by suspicion then it must be managed properly. In determining the learning and development acquired through network participation, this study intends exploring the extent to which socialization or tacit learning (informal learning) within the network enriches the peace educator’s knowledge and skills; the conduciveness of the network environment for learning and development, as well as how relationships within the network either enhance or hinder the learning and development of peace educators.

Knight (2002, p.230) argues that formal or initial teacher training programmes do not contain the “‘how to’ knowledge which grows in practice”. Knight (2002) therefore emphasizes the need for continuing professional development which supports the educator and helps them deal with real-life situations. Such continuous professional development may occur through non-formal and informal learning. Bahar, ÜtünlÜoğlu and Yurekli (2010, p.2) concur with Knight (2002) that “irrespective of the quality of

teacher training courses, the real ‘learning to teach’ process starts in the classroom” where the teacher makes the big transition from “the learner” to the “teacher”. Here, the emphasis is on the value of informal learning within the context and practice.

This view of informal learning is also evident in recent research in teacher learning and professional development where focus is placed on the informal learning that is acquired through collaboration, social interaction and collegiality (Barab, Barnett & Squire, 2002; Viskovic, 2006; Gómez and Rico, 2007; Servage, 2009; Pella 2011; Kohlmeier, Saye, Mitchell & Brush, 2011; lisahunter, Rossi, Tinning, Flanagan & Macdonald, 2011) and it would be interesting to explore the extent to which informal learning, acquired through collaboration, social interaction and collegiality within the AVP-KZN network, contributes to the learning and development of peace educators and supports their formal learning.

When we consider the discussion of the above-mentioned types of adult learning, we can classify the Peace Education programmes at the University of KwaZulu-Natal as formal learning, the learning acquired in the AVP workshops as non-formal learning and the learning acquired in the AVP-KZN network where peace facilitators interact, share knowledge, experiences and learn from each other, as informal learning. In addition to the formal, non-formal and informal learning, two other types of learning which are also relevant to this study are Experiential Learning and Transformative Learning as they are pivotal concepts on which the AVP philosophy is aligned to.

### **2.10.2 Experiential Learning**

The AVP program is taught through “experiential learning with a minimum of lecture” (AVP Basic Manual, 2002, p. A-2) which involves “a process of seeking and sharing,

and not of teaching” (p.A-4). Dighe (2003) views experiential learning theory as a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition and behaviour. According to Fenwick (2000, p.243), much adult learning is understood to be “located in everyday workplace tasks ..., home and family activities, community involvement and other sites of non-formal education”. Fenwick (2000) describes experiential learning as a term used to distinguish this on-going meaning-making of experiences from theoretical knowledge as well as distinguishing non-directed informal life experience from formal education. The numerous life experiences that the adult learner has accumulated, provides a resource to draw upon when learning (Ota, DiCarlo, Burts, Laird and Gioe, 2006). Experiential learning therefore includes all informal learning experiences: self-directed, incidental and tacit learning. Adults learn through everyday situations and challenges and constantly learn and re-learn as they adapt to new circumstances. It is hoped that this study will shed some light on the extent to which everyday situations, experiences and challenges within the AVP-KZN network have impacted on, or contributed to, the learning and development of the AVP facilitators.

### **2.10.3 Transformative Learning**

Transformative learning requires us to “open up our frame of reference, discard a habit of mind, see alternatives, and thereby act differently in the world” (Mezirow, 2000). Transformative learning about teaching occurs when educators start to critically assess their own practice giving them a different perspective of understanding what they do (Cranton & King, 2003). This type of learning is central to the AVP philosophy.

According to the AVP Basic Manual (2002, p.A-6), the “principle of *Transforming Power* is the bedrock upon which AVP rests”. Every person is believed to have the potential “to

transform violent and destructive situations and behaviour into liberating and constructive experiences” (AVP Basic Manual, 2002, p.B-2) and the AVP facilitators are encouraged, mentored and supported in being able to use their personal transformative experiences to facilitate an understanding of this “hardest to describe” (p.B2) AVP concept of transforming power. Literature on adult educators also highlights the importance of transformative learning for educators. Cranton and King (2003, p.31) posit that educators’ of adults need more than merely learning “*how to*” teach since “[k]nowledge about teaching is also emancipatory. It is about critically questioning and reflecting on ‘what we do’” (Cranton & King, 2003, p.31). In exploring the learning and development of the peace educators within the AVP-KZN network, it would be interesting to see if network participation has enabled the members to critically assess their own facilitation styles and other practices resulting in a different perspective of their practices.

The preceding section focused on a discussion on AVP, peace education and adult learning. The next section of this chapter will focus on literature relevant to the theoretical framework for this study, namely, the Communities of Practice Theory.

## **2.11 Theoretical Framework**

This study is framed by Lave and Wengers’ (1991) Communities of Practice Theory which was developed as a theory of learning from their study of apprenticeship as a learning model. The concept ‘Communities of Practice’ initially referred to the community which was perceived to be a ‘living curriculum’ for the apprentice (Wenger, 1998), however it has since then, taken on a broader connotation, and is not restricted to apprenticeship or novices since a community of practice is acknowledged as being dynamic, and learning is acquired by both novice and experts.

### **2.11.1 The Communities of Practice Theory**

Communities of Practice Theory was developed, by Lave and Wenger (1991), as the basis of a social theory of learning. Lave and Wenger's (1991) work focused on the interactions between novice and experts, where most of the learning occurred informally as "professionals interacted with each other and shared stories about their experience, and where novices consulted openly with experts" (Li, Grimshaw, Nielsen, Judd, Coyte, Graham, 2009, p.6). This process of learning through participation and interaction with others, enabled gaps in the practice to be identified and solutions developed. This facilitated the improvement of the practice and generated new ways of doing things. Wenger's (1998) work focused on socialization, social theory and the development of identity (Li et al., 2009). Wenger, McDermott, and Synders' (2002) focus was on using Communities of Practice as a managerial tool for organizations to enhance competitiveness of workers.

A review of definitions of "communities of practice" includes the following common descriptors: 1) 'voluntary', 2) 'informal', and 3) 'sharing'. Wenger et al. (2002) posit that a community of practice is voluntary and its prolonged success is dependent on "its ability to generate enough excitement, relevance, and value to attract and engage members" (p.1). Sharp (1997, p.1) describes a community of practice as an informal network of people who have a "common sense of purpose and a desire to share work-related knowledge and experience"; Wenger (1998) refers to it as groups of people who share a common concern or passion for something and learn more about it through regular interaction, while Huang, Yang, Huang and Hsiao (2010, p.80) describe it as "spontaneous informal groups formed by sharing specialized knowledge and emotions". Communities of practice are therefore spaces where people with a common purpose or passion, can interact regularly and share knowledge, experience and emotions. These communities of practice can be referred to by various names, such as "learning

networks, thematic groups, or tech clubs” (Wenger, 2007, p.1) and could be small or large with a core group and many peripheral members. Some of these communities of practice “are formally recognized, often supported with a budget; and some are completely informal and even invisible” (Wenger, 2007, p.1).

### **2.11.2 Characteristics of a Community of Practice**

Wenger (1998) highlights three dimensions that characterize communities of practice, namely: *mutual engagement* (interaction towards shared meaning that binds members together), *joint enterprise* (working towards a common goal); and *shared repertoire* (common resources and jargon unique to that community). These three characteristics were later revised and referred to as a “domain”; “community” and “practice” (Li, et al., 2009). The *domain* creates a common ground and outlines boundaries for members; the *community* refers to the social structure that facilitates learning by interacting with each other; and the *practice* refers to shared repertoire of resources (Li et al., 2009). The following section examines the key concepts around which the Communities of Practice theory evolves.

### **2.11.3 Key concepts in Communities of Practice Theory**

The following key concepts in Communities of Practice Theory have been identified and will be briefly discussed in relation to this study: legitimate peripheral participation, learning curriculum, access to participation, reflection and identity. Literature on each of these concepts will be reviewed and the concepts briefly discussed in relation to the AVP-KZN network and this study of it.



### 2.11.3.1 Legitimate Peripheral Participation

According to Lave and Wenger (1991, p.14), "*legitimate peripheral participation*" is the central characteristic of communities of practice. It explains how novices become full community members. Li et al. (2009) posit that the concept of legitimate peripheral participation captures the journey of a newcomer becoming an expert. The 'new-comer' to the community of practice embarks on a learning journey from the outskirts or periphery of the practice, starting as an observer, progressing to limited participation in the community activities and eventually moving to the centre of the practice as a full participant (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In any given community of practice, newcomers enter the community as legitimate peripheral participants. They remain on the outskirts of the community, observing and internalizing the norms, values and behaviours of the members of the community. Newcomers are given an opportunity to learn by engaging in simple tasks and then progressing to more advanced tasks as their knowledge and skills improve. In the context of this study, I intend exploring the extent to which legitimate peripheral participation provides the opportunity for newcomers (novice AVP facilitators) to learn through observation and interaction with existing members (experienced AVP facilitators) and how this interaction and engagement in various network activities (AVP workshops, training, meetings and gatherings) facilitates the development of an identity (AVP facilitator/peace educator) and the acquisition of knowledge about artefacts (i.e. AVP materials, pedagogy, philosophy).

A study conducted by Merriam, Courtney and Baumgartner (2003), which focused on how witches learn within a Community of practice, revealed that new members do move from the periphery to the centre, are engaged in experiential learning and that there is an identifiable process of identity development. It would be interesting to observe if such learning and identity development takes place in the AVP network.

According to this theory, learning therefore becomes a process distributed across person, time, place, and activity rather than an “individual event” (O’Donnell & Tobbell, 2007, p.315). Through experience and continued, increased participation, the peripheral participants become full participants and once they become experts they then assume responsibility for mentoring new comers. Gray (2004) identifies the enculturation of newcomers into the practice as a key characteristic of a community of practice where the more experienced educators help the newcomers to understand and learn the various aspects of the practice. This is done through the social process of sharing stories, experiences and ideas.

It is hoped that this study of members’ participation in the AVP-KZN network will bring to the fore such opportunities or practices that promote or hinder the transition from peripheral participation to full participation, or expose alternative processes and movements of participants.

#### **2.11.3.2 The “Learning curriculum”**

In the Communities of Practice theory, focus is placed on the “learning curriculum” which refers to the range of self or organized activities in which a learner is engaged, as opposed to a “teaching curriculum”(O’Donnell & Tobbell, 2007, p.315). This study intends exploring the degree to which the AVP-KZN network activities act as the “learning curriculum” and extent to which these activities can be seen as informal sites of learning where members learn new knowledge and skills and also develop new identities.

#### **2.11.3.3 Access to participation**

Graven (2004), in reviewing the work of Lave and Wenger, posits that learning is acquired through the increased access and co-participation of members, in the

practices of a specific community in which they are engaged. This increased participation enables them to learn new knowledge and skills and develop new identities within that role. According to Graven (2004), access is central in relation to communities of practice, since the degree and level of access to participation determines the level of participation. To become a full member of the community of practice requires the member to move from the periphery to the centre and this can only be achieved through increased opportunities to participate in activities and practices of the community. Increased access to “old-timers; and other members of the community; and to information, resources and opportunities for participation” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.101) are also key to the learning process. This implies that to facilitate learning within a community of practice, access to the practices, resources, information and knowledgeable members are crucial.

O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007, p.326) posit that full participation is “neither immediate nor inevitable” and suggest that some opportunities or practices may “deny participation by maintaining a peripheral identity”:

Legitimate peripherality entails complex power relations. When peripherality is a position from which an individual can move forwards toward fuller participation, it is an empowered position. When peripherality is a position from which an individual is prevented from fuller participation, it is disempowering (O'Donnell & Tobbell, 2007, p.326).

According to O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007), when opportunities to journey from peripherality to fuller participation are prevented or if there are barriers being experienced, it is disempowering and can result in conflict situations if not handled appropriately. The importance of trajectories through the different levels of participation and tensions of individuals belonging to multiple groups is also highlighted in Wenger's (1998) work.

#### **2.11.3.4 Adult Educator Identity**

Mpofu (2003) posits that, although many of the adult educators are specialists in their specific fields, most have not received formal learning in the ‘theory of adult learning’. Mpofu therefore argues that this can have an impact on their professional identity as they do not identify themselves as adult educators. The multiplicity of terms used to describe adult educators also “reflect[s] the fact that many who engage in adult education and development do not perceive themselves explicitly as adult educators” (Mpofu, 2003, p.45). Some of the terms used include “community development officer”, “community educator”, “health officer” (Mpofu, 2003, p.45). To this list of terms we can add ‘peace educators’ and ‘AVP facilitators’. Jogi and Gross (2009, p.238), argue that learning, professional identity and professional development take place through the “educators’ work and life experience, partly by reflecting on their personal experience and professional practice.” In Communities of Practice Theory, learning is a function of identity. Wenger (1998, p. 154), defines identities in relation to “the interaction of multiple convergent and divergent trajectories”, and in this study I explore the development of the identities, of peace educators, as they may move from the periphery towards the centre of the network and make the journey from novice to experienced AVP facilitator.

#### **2.11.4 Critique of Communities of Practice Theory**

A review of literature on Communities of Practice Theory brings to the fore some of the critique of Lave and Wenger’s work. Graven (2004) criticizes Wenger’s (1998) work as it “undermines the value of teaching” and also does not engage with the notion of “mastery” especially since the mastery of professional knowledge contributes to confidence as an educator. Graven (2004) therefore challenges Lave and Wenger’s

(1991) concept of communities of practice for not acknowledging the role of teaching and the role of confidence in learning.

Li et al. (2009) criticizes Lave and Wenger's (1991) work for not providing insight into the issue of potential conflict between expert and novice, despite the hierarchy of power between the expert and novice being relatively clear. They also criticize Wenger (1998) for lack of clarity in defining the term "community" which they posit raised controversies prone to a variety of interpretations and is also challenging to apply. Li et al. (2009) identify the following key merits of communities of practice, namely: Communities of practice provide support for formal and informal interaction between novices and experts; they place emphasis on learning and sharing of knowledge and foster the sense of belonging among members. The following section explores the social learning that is acquired through interaction and participation within the communities of practice.

### **2.11.5 The social nature of learning within a Community of Practice**

Communities of practice are perceived to be social sites of learning (Lave, 1996; Wenger, 1998; Morrell, 2003; Eckert, 2006) where people participate in the activities of a specific community, become certain "kinds of persons" (Morrell, 2003, p.91), acquire new knowledge, develop new skills and identities (Wenger, 1998), and learn in varying degrees and in various ways (Lave, 1996). Learning in a community of practice involves individuals learning from groups, and groups learning from individuals (Knight, 2002).

The trend emerging in recent literature on educator learning and development is a paradigm shift from individualized educator learning and development, where focus was solely on cognitive processes, to a focus on social interaction and collaborative learning.

A review of literature on educator learning and development highlights the growing interest in collaborative teacher learning and development which highlights the informal, social learning that takes place within communities of practice. Recent research explored the merits and pitfalls of collaborative learning and social interactive processes in terms of its impact on teacher learning and development (Putnam & Boroko, 2000; Graven, 2003; Viskovic, 2006; Gómez & Rico, 2007; Servage, 2009; Pella, 2011; Kohlmeier, et al., 2011; lisahunter, et al., 2011). Many of these studies have focused on various disciplines of educator learning, such as Mathematics (Graven, 2003); Music (Blair, 2008); Reading (Lambson, 2007); computer technology (Fischer, 1997), however, there is no literature available on the learning and development of peace educators in communities of practice. This research attempts to fill this gap by exploring the learning and development of peace educators via a peace network.

Gómez and Rico (2007, p. 17) posit that “[t]eachers neither work, nor learn alone. Teaching and learning to teach are social practices and collaborative enterprises”. They agree that learning in adulthood is often informal and social in nature and takes place in social groups which is often characteristic of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lave, 1996; Sharp, 1997; Wenger, 1998; Putnam & Boroko, 2000; Merriam, Courtenay & Baumgartner, 2003; John, 2012). Lave and Wenger (1991) advocate situated learning, where learning occurs as people interact and participate in a community of practice. The social context in which people find themselves can enrich or hinder the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Huang, Yang, Huang, and Hsiao (2010) also comment on the informal learning that is acquired within communities of practice:

Through social interactions and exchanges in this group, members could learn social skills, share knowledge and the process of problem-solving, and even develop innovative thinking (Huang et al., 2010, p.80).

This notion of a social learning network as a Community of Practice is relevant to this study and it would be interesting to see if the AVP-KZN network constitutes such a social learning network and if participation in the AVP-KZN network facilitates the learning of skills, sharing of knowledge and the development of problem-solving and innovative thinking as described above.

An interesting and consistent feature in the various studies which have focused on a diverse range of topics on teacher learning and development, is the use of 'communities of practice' as the theoretical framework (Barab, Barnett & Squire, 2002; Viskovic, 2006; Gómez & Rico, 2007; Lambson, 2007; Servage, 2009; Pella, 2011; Stanley, 2011; Kohlmeier, et al., 2011; lisahunter, et al., 2011). Barab, Barnett and Squire (2002) researched the potential of a "learning-as-a-part-of-a-community approach" (p.489) on a Community of Teachers (CoT) which involves a cohort of pre-service teachers of varying expertise who work together to develop their identity and skills as teachers. Viskovic's (2006) study focused on informal teacher learning and professional development in a community of practice. Gómez and Rico's (2007) study focused on pre-service teachers learning in a community of practice. Servage (2009) studied Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) which emphasizes the social nature of teacher learning. Pella (2011, p.109) focused on the "situated nature of teacher learning" and the professional development acquired in professional learning communities (PLCs). Stanley (2011) studied the merits and pitfalls of collaborative teacher learning. Kohlmeier, Saye, Mitchell and Brush's (2011) study reveals that collaboration motivates and supports novice teachers. lisahunter et al. (2011) posit that the staffroom is a place where professional informal learning for novice teachers occurs to develop professional identity and build capacity. Kennedy (2011) focuses on aspirations, opportunities and barriers of collaborative professional development of teachers.

Research undertaken by Lambson (2007) explored the life experiences of three novice educators who participated in a teacher study group and the impact of this participation on their learning and development. Using Lave and Wenger's (1991) framework of legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice, the study illustrates the movement of novices from the peripheral to central modes of participation. While Lambson (2007) focused on development of teachers in a community of practice, my study will focus on the development of adult educators namely, peace educators, in a community of practice which is the AVP Network.

The above-mentioned studies emphasize the vital role of social interaction, collaboration and sharing of knowledge in adult educators' learning and development (Putnam & Boroko, 2000; Barab, Barnett & Squire, 2002; Gómez & Rico, 2007). Secondly, the context in which learning is acquired also has an influential effect on what and how learning occurs. According to Barab et al. (2002, p.533), the community provides "a rich "context" for situating "content"" and highlights the merits and the learning that is acquired as novice teachers interact with expert teachers. Putnam and Boroko (2000) highlight the importance of context and social interaction in enriching and contributing to the learning and development of teachers which I believe is also critical for the learning and development of peace educators. They posit that learning is influenced by the manner in which a person learns, and the situation in which they learn. They view knowledge as socially constructed and argue that in order for teachers to be successful they need to participate in a 'professional community' (p. 8) where they can discuss and share resources and strategies. The diversity experienced in these communities in terms of knowledge, experience, personalities and behaviour serves as rich sources of social learning and development of educators, as reflected by Putnam and Boroko (2000, p.8):



when diverse groups of teachers with different types of knowledge and expertise come together in discourse communities, community members can draw upon and incorporate each other's expertise to create rich conversations and new insights into teaching and learning.

The study by Barab et al. (2002, p.489) also addresses the impact of diversity and tensions in the community of practice. Members of the Community of Teachers (a learning community) "consists of members of various ages, representing multiple disciplines ... have varying expertise" (p.491) and positively impact the learning and development in the community of practice. The article also addresses the issue of tensions within the community of practice as well as the "dynamics of negotiating these tensions" (p.491). The article is relevant to my study in that it would be interesting to explore: 1) the AVP-KZN network as a "learning community" 2) the learning that is acquired through co-participation in the AVP-KZN network; 3) how diversity of membership influences the learning in the AVP-KZN network; 4) the dynamics, possible tension and negotiations arising from network participation and diversity of the AVP-KZN membership.

I am aware that the literature reviewed in this chapter relates mostly to teacher education and that adult education is different. There is, however, much relevance of this literature, on teacher education, to my study of peace educators. Both teachers and adult educators (of which peace educators are an example) are categorized as adult learners. Teachers and adult educators are both engaged in various communities of practice, within their educational fields, and the intention of this study is to explore the extent to which this participation in a community of practice contributes to the educators' learning and development. While teachers and adult educators, are similar in that they are both adult learners, the training and development of adult educators, differs from that of school teachers, in that there is often little or no formal pedagogical training (Mpofu, 2003; Cranton & King, 2003; Jogi & Gross, 2009) for adult educators.

Research reveals that adult educators are in a unique position as they are specialists in their field of study “but often lack formal preparation and initial training to teach adults” (Jogi & Gross, 2009, p.234). Cranton and King (2003) concur that adult educators do not have much formal training in teaching adults but “they learn their craft through experience, modelling ... and reflecting on their practice” (p.31). There are also few formal professional associations for adult educators. This makes informal learning an important focus of study in Adult Education.

Having reviewed literature on communities of practice, its use in research into teacher education, and its critique, I will now discuss its relevance to this study and how the Communities of Practice Theory serves as a lens for this study of the AVP network as a community of (peace) practice.

#### **2.11.6 The AVP-KZN network - A Community of (Peace) Practice**

I have chosen to use the theory of Communities of Practice as my theoretical framework, because the AVP network is conceived of as a community of practice for peace educators (John, 2013). Wenger (2007, p.1), describes communities of practice as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly”. The AVP-KZN network is a group of AVP facilitators who share a passion for peace education and the promotion of alternative ways of dealing with potentially violent situations. The AVP- KZN network aims to provide support to both novice and experienced peace educators. Some of the professional practices identified by Knight (2002) include “[b]uilding a collective pedagogical repertoire, which is about sharing teaching stories” (p.238), familiarizing colleagues with new techniques, good resources and coping with new and difficult

situations. Through this study, I hope to uncover how this network participation contributes to the learning and development of peace educators.

Wenger (2007) identifies the following three characteristics which clearly distinguish a community of practice from any other group or community:

***The domain:*** A community of practice can be identified by its shared domain of interest. Members in a community of practice share a commitment and competence that is specific to that practice which distinguishes members from non-members (Wenger, 2007). The AVP network has its own identity. It is an organization of certified AVP facilitators who have a passion for promoting peace education through non-violent conflict resolution and transformative ways. This shared competence distinguishes the AVP members from other people. All members have completed the three levels of AVP workshops, namely the AVP Basic Workshop, the AVP Advanced Workshop and the AVP Training for Facilitator workshop which AVP members refer to as the “T4F”. All network members share a common goal, namely empowering people with knowledge and skills to deal with potentially violent situations and behaviour in a non-violent manner.

***The community:*** Members in a community of practice engage in joint activities and discussions. They build relationships, interact, help each other, share information and learn from each other (Wenger, 2007). In order to achieve their objectives of promoting peaceful co-existence through alternatives to violence, the AVP facilitators participate in “joint activities” such as network gatherings and meetings (discussed in Chapter 4), where they help and support each other, discuss and share information and build relationships.

***The practice:*** Members of a community of practice develop a shared practice and a shared repertoire of resources which includes experiences, stories, tools, words, gestures and solutions to address recurring problems (Wenger, 1998). A distinguishing

characteristic of the AVP-KZN network is the development of its own “shared repertoire” (Wenger, 1998, p.82). AVP has its own routines, symbols, words, tools and ways of doing things that are unique to its practice, which have been developed and adopted over time and which has now become part of its regular practice (discussed in Chapter 4). AVP members share stories and experiences during AVP gatherings.

## **2.12 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a review of literature relevant to this study and included a discussion on peace education, adult learning, AVP and Communities of Practice Theory. The next chapter presents a detailed discussion of the research methodology utilized in this study and includes a discussion of the design, methodology and data collection methods.

## **Chapter Three – Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology employed in this study. The chapter provides details about the paradigm, overall research process, research approach, research participants, data collection methods and analysis of collected data. It also discusses the ethical requirements of this study and how quality was ensured.

### **3.2 Research Design, Methodology and Process**

#### **3.2.1 Research Methodology**

Research methodology refers to how evidence is gathered and how meaning is derived from it. There are many ways of knowing and there are various sources from which knowledge is derived. Personal experience is one of the most common ways in which we come to know the world (Anderson & Burns, 1989). In this study, I explored the motivations, experiences, learning and development of peace educators within the AVP network. Working in the interpretive paradigm, I employed a qualitative design which enabled me to explore the phenomena in its natural setting and use multiple methods to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning to the data collected (Anderson & Arsenault, 1999; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). A qualitative study was appropriate for my study because it strived for insight and focused on understanding the individual's perceptions of the world (Bell, 1999).

Cohen et al. (2011, p.227) describe research questions as “an integral and driving feature” of qualitative research, which should be achievable and finite questions. My study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the underlying motivations for participation in the AVP network?
2. How do members participate in and experience the network?
3. What roles does the network serve in terms of the learning and development of peace educators?

### **3.2.2 Research Design**

Neale, Thapa and Boyce (2006, p.3) describe a case study as “a story about something unique, special, or interesting” that “gives the story behind the result by capturing what happened to bring it about”. I employed a case study approach with the AVP network being the unit of analysis. This methodology facilitated an understanding of “a real-life phenomenon in depth” (Yin, 2009, p.18) and enabled me to “retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” which included individual life stories and small group behaviour (Yin, 2009, p.4). This enabled me to provide a thick description of the experiences of peace educators within the network.

Stake and Yin (cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008 and Rule & John, 2011) have made key contributions which guide case study methodology. Both their approaches are based on the constructivist paradigm which claims that truth is relative and acknowledges the social construction of reality. Yin (2009) categorises case studies as *exploratory*, *explanatory* and *descriptive*, while Stake identifies case studies as *intrinsic*, *instrumental* or *collective* (Baxter & Jack, 2008). My case study falls into the exploratory category, as I intend exploring the learning and development of peace educators within the AVP-KZN network. Yin (2009, p.101), identifies the following as the most commonly used methods in case studies: “documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artefacts”. The opportunity to explore the researched phenomenon using a variety of these data collection methods is the most

commonly documented merit of using the case study approach (Neale, Thapa & Boyce, 2006; Davies & Beaumont, 2007; Zucker, 2009; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Rule & John, 2011). Literature reviews reveal other merits of using case studies. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis (Soy, 1997); involves 'detailed, holistic investigation' (Davies & Beaumont, 2007, p.2) which provides a complete story (Neale et al., 2006), utilizes a range of different measurement techniques, is contextual and allows data to be collected over a period of time (Davies & Beaumont, 2007); combines other research approaches such as life histories and action research and enables rich data to be collected which provides depth rather than breadth (Rule and John, 2011).

While the use of multiple data collection facilitates triangulation of data, the large amounts of data that are collected can also be viewed as a limitation to the use of case studies (Soy, 1997; Baxter & Jack, 2008). The "overwhelming amounts of data" can result in the researcher getting "lost" in the "mounds of interesting data that are superfluous to the research question" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p.554). The researcher needs to be able to identify relevant and meaningful data from the huge amount of collected data. Other limitations includes the restricted ability to generalize and apply findings to other case studies due to the small scale of the research (Neale et al., 2006; Davies & Beaumont, 2007; Zucker, 2009; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Rule & John, 2011); the choice of sites, sample, logistical circumstances and personal attributes can influence the data collected (Rule & John, 2011). Furthermore, the reporting on case studies can be very lengthy due to the thick descriptions and narrative form of reporting and the concern regarding lack of rigour resulting from unsystematic data collection or bias (Neale et al., 2006).

Researchers using the case study approach are encouraged to use more than one source and multiple data collection methods. Source refers to a "person, place or thing that provides something that you need or want" (Rundell, 2003, p.696). In research a

source provides data. Method refers to a “way of doing something” (p.453) and in the case of research it is a way of collecting data. The use of more than one source and multiple data collection methods facilitates triangulation of data which aims to corroborate the same finding or phenomenon from multiple sources and via multiple methods – processes that ensure quality and trustworthiness of data collected (Yin, 2009; Rule & John, 2011). I have used multiple data collection methods in this study namely in-depth interviews, document analysis and observation.

### **3.2.3 Location of the study**

AVP is an international project with numerous networks throughout South Africa. The focus of this study and the unit of analysis is the AVP network in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The AVP-KZN network office is located at the Centre of Adult Education at UKZN and its membership includes AVP facilitators from five different AVP wings (i.e. branches) located in various locations in KZN: the UKZN (University of KwaZulu-Natal) wing; the GEDF (Greater Edendale Development Forum) wing; the Durban wing; the Eshowe wing; and the Newcastle wing.

### **3.2.4 Positionality**

I am a tertiary educator and a parent living in KwaZulu-Natal. My interest in AVP was spurred by the reality that I live and work in a society that is marred by extreme violence. To become a member of the AVP Network, a member has to attend all 3 AVP workshops, namely: the Basic, Advanced and Training for Facilitator workshops (as discussed in chapter 2). Having only attended the Basic AVP workshop, I have conducted this research as an outsider in that I am not an AVP facilitator and therefore not a member of the network.



### **3.2.5 Research Participants**

I selected my participants using non-probability sampling which is used for small-scale research. The use of purposive sampling enabled me to select the participants for this and allowed me to access people who had an in-depth knowledge of the issue being researched (Anderson & Burns, 1989; Anderson & Arsenault, 1999; Cohen et.al., 2011). I was able to “hand-pick” (Cohen et al., 2011, p.156), the participants that fitted the characteristics and criterion relevant to my study. My sample included three experienced peace educators and three novice peace educators (2 males and 4 females) who participated in the AVP network at UKZN.

I used the following criteria to distinguish between novice and experienced peace educators: Peace educators were considered to be novice educators if they had attended all 3 levels of AVP workshops, attended one or two network meetings, and had run their first workshop as an apprentice. A peace educator who had completed all 3 levels of AVP workshops, attended several (4 or more) network gatherings, facilitated several workshops, and had been a lead facilitator for some of the workshops, was considered to be an experienced peace educator. My sample also included some peace educators who had completed the formal peace education programme at UKZN in addition to the 3 AVP workshops, and some who had not done the UKZN CEPD. I have also tried to reflect the diversity of the AVP-KZN network membership by including men and women from three different race groups. Being an outsider to the AVP network, I relied on the experience and knowledge of the Executive members of the AVP-KZN Management Committee in assisting me in identifying suitable participants who satisfied the above-mentioned criteria of novice and experienced peace educators.

### **3.3 Methods of Data Collection**

Data were collected using three methods: observation, interviews and document analysis. Interviewing selected participants enabled me to gather descriptions of their

life experiences and their interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena (Oppendakker, 2006). I conducted in-depth interviews with three novice peace educators and three experienced peace educators and interviewed each educator twice. The in-depth interviews were “guided conversations rather than structured queries” (Yin, 2009, p.106), as this enabled me to probe and obtain data that were intensive and had depth rather than breath. The first interview focused on the life experiences of the participant and the second focused on their experiences as a peace educator participating within the AVP network. Interviews, though considered “an essential source of case study research” (Yin, 2009, p.108), have limitations. Poor recall, poor or inaccurate articulation (Yin, 2009) could compromise the trustworthiness of the data. I therefore used observation and document analysis as additional methods of data collection.

I observed network meetings and AVP workshops as observational evidence was useful in providing additional data (Yin, 2009). It also enabled me to obtain ‘live-data’ as I captured the rich details of what was actually transpiring at the meetings and workshops. Yin (2009, p.103) posits that documents, which are an important source of data in case studies, are used to “corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (Yin, 2009, p.103). The review and analysis of relevant AVP documents from meetings, gatherings, funding proposals and network reports provided a rich source of data. This data enabled me to trace the history of the AVP network and gave me a better understanding of the operations of the network.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis involved making sense of data by organizing, accounting and explaining it in a meaningful and accurate manner (Cohen et al., 2011). According to Cohen et al. content analysis is a strict and systematic procedure that facilitates the rigorous analysis, examination and verification of written data. Content analysis was appropriate for this study as I was intent on exploring the motivations, experiences,

learning and development of peace educators within the interpretative paradigm. In order to determine the motivations and experiences it was necessary to focus on 'what' the participants said. I therefore focused on the content of the interviews and analysed it to understand "what" was said and to categorise these into themes. Content analysis involves coding, categorizing, comparing and deriving conclusions from text (Cohen et al., 2011). Once the data had been coded and categorized, I assessed the frequency of responses, looked for common patterns and identified emerging themes that could be used to interpret the data. Related themes were organized into categories which addressed my research questions about motivation, experiences, learning and development that occurred within the peace network.

Interviews were tape-recorded and observation notes were recorded. Tape recorded data were transcribed verbatim to avoid losing some essential and rich responses. These transcripts were verified for accuracy by participants before being analysed and coded. A major feature of qualitative data analysis is coding which involves identifying and categorizing similar information to facilitate easy retrieval and analysis of data (Cohen et al., 2011).

### **3.5 Trustworthiness of Data**

Rule and John (2011) and Zucker (2009) introduce Guba's concept of trustworthiness which Guba offered as an alternative to reliability. The concept of trustworthiness involves the following criteria: *transferability*, *credibility*, *dependability* and *confirmability*. These criteria help to determine the rigour of case study research.

*Transferability* refers to the degree to which findings or conclusions can be transferred or generalised to other contexts. *Credibility* refers to the extent to which a case study measures or reflects what it was intended to (Rule & John, 2011); and questions

whether the findings of the study make sense (Zucker, 2009). *Dependability* determines whether the research processes are “consistent and reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods” (Zucker, 2009, p.10). It also focuses on “methodological rigour and coherence” in findings that can be acceptable to the research community (Rule & John, 2011, p.107). Adhering to accepted ethical research practice enhanced the trustworthiness of my data. The transcripts and observation notes were verified by the participants for accuracy and this was used to provide thick descriptions of the case. This helped establish the credibility of data. *Confirmability* addresses issues around the influence and bias of the researcher in the study.

According to Rule and John (2011), the dependability and confirmability of the case study can be facilitated by ‘full disclosure of the research process’ (p.107), including limitations, researcher positionality and ethical requirements. I have disclosed the limitations of this study, my positionality and ethical requirements in this chapter. I used the process of triangulation which required that I use multiple sources and methods (observation, interviews and document analysis) to promote the quality and trustworthiness of the data collected. The interpretive paradigm, in which this study was located, acknowledges the multi-faceted nature of reality.

### **3.6 Ethical Issues**

The responsibility of ethical research ultimately lies with the individual researcher (Anderson, 1998). The relationship between the researcher and researched is based on ethical implications about openness, trust, commitment and confidentiality (Burgess, 1989). According to Burgess (1989) two basic ethical problems that impact all research practices are: firstly, the morality of doing educational research and secondly, the ethics surrounding covert as opposed to overt observation.

I ensured that I obtained signed informed consent from all the participants in my research before interviewing, tape-recording or observing them. I also ensured that: 1) they had sufficient knowledge about the research; 2) they were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the research whenever they felt they needed to; 3) their identities are kept confidential and that raw data are kept in a safe location for a specified amount of time; and 4) the participants were given the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the transcripts of interviews and observation notes.

### **3.7 Limitations of the study**

One of the limitations in my research was that it was a small scale case study. My chosen methodology posed a limitation in that it involved a single case study (AVP-KZN network) which does not allow findings of this study to be generalised. The time available to collect data also created some limitations. It determined the type and number of workshops that I was able to observe. I was restricted to observing workshops that were conducted within a reasonable distance from my place of employment and within the timeframes I had scheduled to complete my data collection process.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an overview of the data collection methods, research design and methodology used in this study. The next two chapters deal with the analysis and findings of the study obtained via the various data collection methods. Chapter four focuses on how AVP members participate in and experience the AVP network and their underlying motivations for participating in the network while Chapter 5 focuses on the peace educators' learning and development within the AVP network.

## **Chapter Four-The network as a site for learning**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The findings of this study are presented in two chapters: Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. This chapter presents a thick description of the AVP-KZN Network as derived from: 1) an analysis of AVP documents and observation of network activities; 2) experiences and perceptions of AVP network members; and 3) an exploration of the peace educators' motivations for network participation. The chapter also presents the application of the Community of Practice Theory, i.e. a view of the network through the lens of the Communities of Practice Theory. The literature reviewed on peace education, the need for peace educators and the Alternatives to Violence project discussed in chapter 2, serves as a basis for engaging with the findings in this chapter. As is typical of a case study, this chapter provides a rich and thick description of the case followed by some interpretation and analysis related to the network as a rich site for learning and development of peace educators. Chapter 5 thereafter engages with the findings related to the journey of self-discovery, informal and social learning that peace educators embark on within the AVP-KZN network.

### **4.2 The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP)**

The AVP Basic Manual (2002) describes the Alternatives to Violence Project as follows:

The Alternatives to Violence Project is a multi-cultural volunteer organization that is dedicated to reducing interpersonal violence in our society. AVP workshops present conflict management skills that can enable individuals to

build successful interpersonal interactions, gain insights into themselves and find new and positive approaches to their lives. The AVP programme offers experiential workshops that empower people to lead nonviolent lives through affirmation, respect for all, community building, cooperation and trust (AVP Basic Manual, 2002, p.A-4).

From the above description, it is evident that AVP aims to enrich its participants with conflict management skills, interpersonal skills, the ability to introspect and the power to take control and responsibility for their own actions. This definition of the AVP programme is supported by the major findings that have emerged from this study in terms of the learning and development of peace educators, as presented in the next chapter. The main objective of AVP is to reduce violence in our society, by exposing people to non-violent transformative conflict resolution alternatives. The extreme violence being experienced in KZN (discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2), necessitates such peace education interventions. AVP provides a means to curb this cycle of violence in KwaZulu-Natal. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Alternatives to Violence Project was first introduced in a New York Prison (Green Haven Prison) in 1975. The initial success of AVP in transforming “hostility and destructiveness into cooperation and community” (AVP Basis Manual, 2002, p.A-2), has led to it being offered in other prisons and in local communities around the world. In 1995, this program was introduced to South Africans, and brought to KwaZulu-Natal in 2000. An analysis of various AVP documents obtained from the network, UKZN reports, and relevant literature enabled me to trace the history of the AVP in KZN.

### **4.3 The history of the AVP-KZN Network**

As the numbers of facilitators grew, the need arose for an organization that would provide support for the facilitators, organize and coordinate the AVP workshops which

were increasing in popularity. This necessitated the establishment of an AVP network office which is located at UKZN in Pietermaritzburg. There are currently, approximately 170 trained AVP facilitators in KwaZulu-Natal (AVP Database). The history of the AVP-KZN network has been traced through an analysis of documents from meetings, gatherings and funding proposals obtained from the network coordinator as well as from information obtained from various AVP websites. The table below summaries the events that led to the development of the network to this point:

YEAR	MILESTONES	SOURCE
1975	The AVP program was initiated by the Quakers (a religious group) in the Green Haven Prison in New York.	AVP Basic Manual (2002)
1995	AVP was introduced to South Africa by 3 AVP facilitators from New Zealand and the U.K.	<a href="http://www.phaphama.org/index.php?sid=103">http://www.phaphama.org/index.php?sid=103</a>
2000	The Student Leadership Development (SLD) Office (UKZN wing) conducted the first Basic and Advanced Workshops in Pietermaritzburg.	UKZN -Funding Proposal,2007
2003	The Student Leadership Development (SLD) Office conducted the first Facilitator workshops (T4F) in Pietermaritzburg.	UKZN- Funding Proposal,2007
2004	The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust supported the Peace Education Programme in UKZN's Centre for Adult Education to set up the AVP-KZN Network.	UKZN-Funding Proposal,2007
2005	The Certificate in Education (Participatory Development) program included AVP Basic workshops as part of its curriculum.	UKZN – Educating for Peaceful Change
2005/ 2006	Support, reflection and sharing sessions and short refresher sessions were offered by the UKZN practitioners to support learners.	UKZN – Educating for Peaceful Change
2007	A funding proposal was presented to the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust in order to establish an AVP Network Office at UKZN (Pietermaritzburg).	UKZN Funding Proposal,2007
2009	The Constitution of the AVP-KZN Network (final draft) was finalized.	AVP-KZN Constitution - Final draft

Table 1: History of the AVP-KZN Network



Having established some of the events that led to the formation and formalization of the AVP-KZN Network, the following section presents a thick description of the AVP-KZN network as obtained from various sources.

#### **4.4 Structure of AVP-KZN Network**

The AVP-KZN Network involves a medley of stakeholders which includes AVP facilitators at the different wings, Management Committee members and a Board of Trustees. According to the Constitution which was finalized on 10 October 2009 (AVP-KZN Constitution, 2009), the structure of the AVP-KZN Network includes: 1) A Board of Trustees (5-8 trustees); 2) A Management Committee (minimum of 5 AVP-KZN office bearers); 3) Membership (which comprises individual and organisational membership). The Network is 'headed' by a Board of Trustees who meet biannually to discuss strategic issues pertaining to the network, and is managed by a Management Committee (MANCOM) consisting of some of the experienced facilitators and organizers. The Management Committee meet bi-monthly to ensure continuity and sustainability of the network.

The AVP-KZN membership consists of loosely-constituted branches or "Wings". There are currently five operational wings within the AVP-KZN network which are located in different geographical locations of KZN and are organized around the AVP activities in local communities. The UKZN wing and the Greater Edendale Development Forum (GEDF) are located in Pietermaritzburg while the Newcastle Wing, Durban Wing and Eshowe Wing are located in other towns in KwaZulu-Natal as indicated by the names of the wing. The Wing Leader of each wing liaises with the AVP Network Coordinator, and is responsible for coordinating and organizing AVP activities within the wing.

The network coordinator, who operates from the network office located on the UKZN campus in Pietermaritzburg, coordinates all activities thus ensuring that these interrelated communities connect to form the AVP-KZN network as a whole. The structure of the AVP-KZN network is illustrated below:

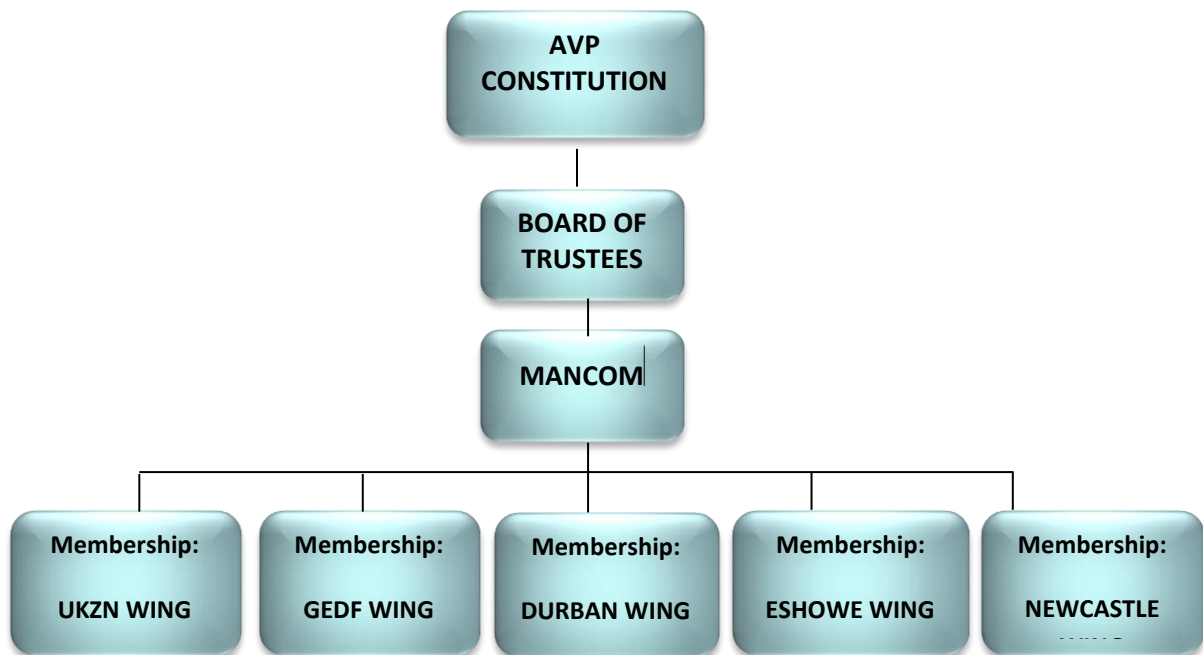


FIGURE 1: Organogram of the AVP-KZN Network

#### 4.5 The AVP activities within the AVP-KZN Network

The following diagram illustrates the multiple activities that facilitators are engaged in at the five different wings, such as: Annual General Meetings; informal AVP meetings referred to as Gatherings; AVP workshops; AVP workshop preparation sessions; and Management Committee Meetings (as indicated in the inner circle).

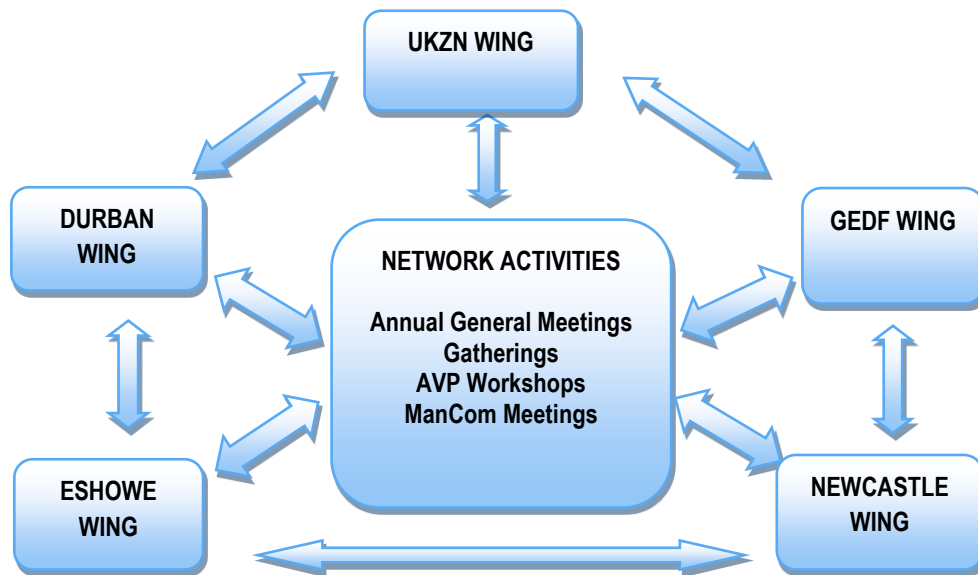


FIGURE 2: Activities within the AVP-KZN Network

The AVP Network offers a range of activities in which facilitators participate and support each other. These activities include workshop preparation sessions, network meetings and gatherings as well as refresher courses. This creates a space where facilitators can meet, socialize, keep in contact, share ideas and resources as described by a novice facilitator:

we meet once a term, once in three months, they remind us or refresh us about the AVP programme ... We exchange ideas (Naseema Interview, July, 2012).

The Network Gatherings and the Annual General Meetings which are attended by members from all the different wings are usually held at a central venue, at the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus where the network office is located. Each wing conducts AVP workshops which necessitates preparatory sessions for the facilitators of each workshop. Member participation is not restricted to a specific wing. Facilitators have the opportunity to meet and interact with members from the different wings during the

gatherings and meetings. The network members also have the opportunity to facilitate workshops in the different wings as the need arises, thereby enriching their experiences. A description of each activity based on the data that emerged in this study, follows.

#### **4.5.1 The AVP Workshops**

AVP workshops have been identified as a powerful set of dynamic and experiential activities where participants are guided on a journey of self-discovery as they are exposed to various non-violent conflict resolution techniques. The AVP participants are guided through the process of identifying the problem, taking control of their emotions and taking responsibility for their behaviour. This behaviour is channelled into non-violent, non-destructive alternatives through the process of self-directed learning.

While the Basic Workshop is more facilitator-guided, the AVP Advanced Workshop (second level workshop) is a participant-guided process which focuses on consensus as a decision-making process. The participants decide which aspect of conflict/violence they wish to explore in depth and the facilitators select appropriate activities and guide the workshop activities. The AVP Training for Facilitators (third level workshop) is a workshop for participants who have completed the Basic and Advanced Workshops and wish to become AVP facilitators. On completion of this workshop, the new facilitators are able to co-facilitate workshops with a team of co-facilitators. At the end of each workshop, participants receive an internationally recognized Certificate of Attendance. Successful completion of all three AVP workshops, entitles the newly certified facilitator, legitimate participation and membership into the AVP-KZN Network.

Participation in any of the workshops is completely voluntary and as the AVP Basic Manual (2002, p.A-4) states, AVP workshops promote “personal growth, and people

can only grow when they choose to do so themselves” as one facilitator reflects: “I don’t think ... people are mandated to come to an AVP workshop, but they come because they know that there is an alternative.”

#### **4.5.2 The AVP Workshop Preparation Sessions**

Before each workshop, the lead and co-facilitators meet to plan and prepare for the workshop.

We always used to meet on a Friday night, so the workshop is the next day ... and you go on till half nine, ten o’ clock at night and you have to go home and prepare (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

The preparation sessions create a space where novice facilitators are supported and assisted in preparing for the workshop scheduled for the next day. Facilitators are expected to be well prepared (as expressed by Naseema in the next chapter) to facilitate the activity that they have volunteered to do. In addition to the preparation sessions, novice AVP facilitators are also supported during other network activities such as the Gatherings and the Annual General Meetings where they are exposed to a rich source of valuable stories, knowledge, experiences and contact with experienced facilitators.

#### **4.5.3 The Gatherings and Annual General Meetings**

The network gatherings provide a space for new and experienced facilitators to meet and interact with each other. Facilitators gather four times a year at a central venue

(usually at the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus) where they have an opportunity to meet other facilitators. The gatherings also provide a conducive environment where network members can share experiences, success stories and challenges which enable them to develop a sense of common perspective. Chens, a novice facilitator comments on this “sharing of experiences” which encourages facilitators to: “let me do like this or like that experiences that you heard from that fellow”. Another novice facilitator describes the gatherings as a conducive environment where members feel comfortable to express their opinions, assess situations and design ‘programmes’:

The gatherings are well planned because there everybody has a chance of giving their opinions and assessing situations; also designing the programmes. So it’s just like an open gathering for all the members so I feel at home with the gatherings (Chens Interview, August, 2012).

The gatherings also play an important role in the organizational development of the network. The gatherings deal with the facilitation as well as the administrative issues of the network. One of the network members who is actively involved in the network highlights the dual purpose of the gatherings, namely to deal with the business side of coordinating the activities of the network and also to provide support and mentorship for the facilitators:

... the first meetings, we called them the gatherings ... and maybe the thing about the gatherings that always struck me, is how to strike a balance between the business side of a gathering which is making the decisions ... talking about the policies, those kind of things, marketing, fundraising ...those kind of issues to balance those with ... what we saw in the beginning was a ... key purpose of those gatherings was to provide a

platform for mentorship and support of new facilitators (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

While issues of facilitation and the business side of the network are discussed at the gatherings, the network has two other forums that focus on the business side of the things. One forum is the Management Committee which will now be discussed.

#### **4.5.4 Management Committee Meetings**

A group of network members are also engaged in Management Committee (ManCom) meetings where the operational issues of the network are discussed. The management committee of the network is involved with the administration, advocacy, fundraising and co-ordination of activities within the network. They keep in contact with the network members via sms, emails, and other cost-effective telecommunication means. The Management Committee is responsible for advocacy, organization and coordination of workshops.

The Management Committee has the added responsibility of ensuring sustainability by constantly planning fundraising activities, writing proposals to secure financial assistance, “keeping the network alive”, and allowing the network to develop and thrive. One of the experienced facilitators expressed his concern regarding the organizational issues which impact on the main role of the network, namely, supporting and training new facilitators:

In order to create a community of practice and bring people together to train or to focus more on the training, and developing the facilitation skills of the facilitators, we would have to have money to pay for peoples’ transport and

bring them to a central place and spend four hours with them, you know. And there's a feeling that we can't operate as a network till we are very clear about our identity or the constitution, the policies, the bank account ... (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

The constitution and policies are key elements in the management of the AVP-KZN Network. The Board of Trustees, which includes some ManCom representatives are responsible for the strategic planning of the network.

The above section presented a description of the different activities in which the facilitators are engaged in. The interviews with the six facilitators revealed the valuable knowledge acquired through their engagement in these activities. All facilitators concur that the AVP-KZN network participation has enriched their knowledge and learning experiences. The network has emerged as a site of rich learning and development of peace educators due to the diverse experiences, personalities, and situations encountered in the AVP workshops, gatherings and network meetings. The following section presents a detailed discussion of the findings relating to the facilitators' experiences within the AVP-KZN network.

#### **4.6 The supportive nature of the AVP-KZN Network**

The network has emerged as a supportive environment to both novice and experienced facilitators as they journey through and participate in the network. Three metaphors emerged as network members described the network as a support structure for AVP facilitators, namely: the network is a team, the network is a family and the network is a life-support system.



**The network is a team:** The AVP programme advocates team facilitation and the network operates as a team, where each member supports each other, looks out for each other and unites to achieve the common goal of the network – promoting alternatives to violent behaviour. This support is reflected by this novice facilitator:

The positive attitude in the team, we always look out for each other, you know, the support. The support system, we're a team, all of that ... you feel like we all are facilitators. The oneness type of a thing, the unity (Busi Interview, June 2012).

**The network is a family:** The sense of unity that team facilitation instils in its members where the facilitators 'look out for each other' also gives the network members the feeling of being part of a big caring family, as reflected by this experienced facilitator:

I would describe AVP as a family. I look at AVP as a family. People who care about you. You know what you get in the network is what you don't get outside (Busi Interview, June, 2012).

This quote also implies that the family connection provided by the network may be lacking in society. This feeling of being part of a family is enhanced by the shared passion and commitment of the network members to "keep the network going", as they participate in the various network activities such as the gatherings, as reflected by this facilitator:

... the beauty about the gathering is that it is with people who know what they talking about and it's not with 100 people. Often it's about 30 people who are really driven to keep the network going... that is also an advantage because you feel like you have a family (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

**The network is a life support:** Chens, a novice facilitator, extends this metaphor of the network as a family to incorporate a sense of dependability and reciprocity as he describes the AVP-KZN network as his “life-support”:

So it's just like my survival pegs ... Everybody is given something that will sustain one. So it's like my life support. So I see it being there till I make it and so I'm also there to support others (Chens, August, 2012).

Chen's reference to the network being like his “survival peg” and “life support” highlights the vital role that the network plays in his life as a novice facilitator. The network as a life-support conjures up the image of a person in need of assistance and support, being connected to life sustaining resources, and being closely monitored by a team of well trained, committed and knowledgeable personnel. Chens uses the metaphor of a life-support where the AVP network serves as a lifeline with its well-trained, committed, knowledgeable and experienced facilitators who mentor, support and assist the novice facilitators as they journey through the network towards the centre of this practice. This support ensures the sustainability of the project and facilitates the trajectory from the periphery towards the centre of the network. Without this assistance the success and survival of the project could be threatened.

According to Wenger (1998, p.77) in “some communities of practice, conflict and misery can even constitute the core characteristic of a shared practice, as they do in some dysfunctional families”. It is very interesting that Wenger (1998) also used the term ‘family’ and ‘survival’ in relation to the concept of communities of practice. The following extract also alludes to the existence of potential tension and conflict which exists in any family situation:

Families struggle to establish an habitable way of life. They develop their own practices, routines, rituals, artifacts, symbols ...Family members hate each other and they love each other; they agree and they disagree. ...Surviving together is an important enterprise ... (Wenger, 1998, p.6)

The network members develop their own 'routines, rituals, artifacts, symbols' (Wenger, 1998, p.6), which will be discussed in the following sections. To facilitate the acquisition of a "habitable" and acceptable way of doing things in the AVP-KZN network, AVP facilitators meet regularly to share experiences and discuss relevant issues. The following section delves a little deeper into the benefits that members derive from being an actively participating AVP-KZN network member in the network.

#### **4.7 Merits of participating in the AVP-KZN Network**

As the facilitators shared their network experiences with me during the interviews, the following recurring merits of network participation emerged, as quoted below:

**Network participation facilitates the development of a sense of self-worth:** Bongzi, a novice facilitator, explains how her engagement in the AVP network improved her sense of self-worth: "But before I became a part of the network, my life was miserable and I didn't believe that there was anything good that might happen in my life".

**Network participation helps develop a sense of belonging (an identity):** Two facilitators, a novice and an experienced facilitator explains how participating in the network fulfilled their need to 'belong to something': "and then you become an AVP member so you have to belong to something to carry on doing something as a member"

(Naseema, a novice facilitator) and “In order for me to grow as a facilitator, I needed to belong in the network” (Busi, an experienced facilitator).

**Network participation enriches learning experiences:** Active participation in the network facilitates learning for both novice and experienced facilitators: “I would learn more, when there’s a change in happenings” (Naseema) and “You also learning, because people share experiences” (Faye).

**Network participation keeps its members informed about network activities:** Being a network member helps to keep the facilitators abreast of latest developments in the network: “Just so that I would be in touch with the members ... I would know what’s happening.” (Naseema); “Well you always have your finger on the pulse. You know what’s going on, you know when there’s going to be AVP workshops, you always networking with others” (Faye).

**Network participation ensures access to refresher courses:** “You know sometimes there can be a couple months or so when we don’t do any workshops, you are reminded of doing workshops”(Naseema); and “you have refresher courses where if you haven’t facilitated for a year, you know, you have little bits of training that happens” (Faye).

From the above it is evident that the network plays a major role in supporting and developing its members as they engage in various activities within the AVP-KZN network. The following section therefore explores the extent to which the network can be viewed as a site for learning and development

## **4.8 The AVP-KZN Network as a site of learning and development**

As discussed in Chapter 2, adult learners are engaged in different types of learning which can be broadly categorized as formal, non-formal and informal learning. Dighe (2003, p.42) posits that besides formal institutions supporting adult learning programmes, “the challenge is to identify all learning spaces that are available for non-formal and informal learning”. According to Knight (2001, p.232), “[k]nowing, in the form of skills, information, rules, expectations and dispositions” is characteristic of communities of practices which are therefore seen as “sites of learning”. These “sites of learning” (Knight, 2001) or “learning spaces” (Dighe, 2003) include: community centres, organizations and gatherings of people with a common interest, that “make up a learning environment” (Dighe, 2003, p.42).

In the Communities of Practice Theory, focus is placed on the “learning curriculum” which refers to the range of self or organized activities in which a learner is engaged in, as opposed to a “teaching curriculum” (O’Donnell & Tobbell, 2007, p.315). In the AVP-KZN network, the gatherings, workshops, preparation sessions and AVP meetings can be regarded as the “learning curriculum” (O’Donnell & Tobbell, 2007), “site of learning” (Knight, 2001), or “learning spaces” (Dighe, 2003) of a community of practice for peace educators. It is through interaction with network members at these informal sites of learning that facilitators learn new skills and knowledge. The AVP network creates opportunities for learning experiences where the facilitators interact with participants and other facilitators. The facilitators learn from each other as they acquire and impart new knowledge and skills and share experiences, as reflected by this experienced facilitator:

So my experiences have always been great, it’s always been rich in learning, because you’re learning you know. You’re learning constantly because you’re not the facilitator who has the vast knowledge. You are the facilitator who is imparting some things and getting back too. And you’re

always learning from other people's experiences. And that's been my experience (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

Faye posits that the "network creates a very conducive environment, very conducive to openness, sharing, caring ..." and through its supportive and nurturing structures enables the facilitators to grow and develop in such an environment. As previously discussed, the gatherings create a space where facilitators come together to: 1) share experiences and success stories; 2) discuss issues of concern; 3) give updates on new developments; 4) draw on each other as resources for enrichment; 5) solving issues; and 6) learning from each other. The following novice facilitator highlights the "learning" and "growing" (developing) that happens as they meet and share experiences and learn from each other:

Ja, sharing of experiences and then from that sharing you learn that I am not the only one in that situation. So this helps you to grow and maybe it helps you to acknowledge that maybe I was shifting the blame (Chens, 2012).

Knight (2001) sees communities of practices as "sites of learning" where novice facilitators learn through the mentorship process, learn by doing, learn by "building a collective pedagogical repertoire" (p.238), learn by sharing stories and learn through evaluation (appraising and reviewing the progress of novices). In the following extract, Chens, a novice AVP facilitator captures the role of the gatherings as a rich site of learning:

Ya, the gatherings teaches one to be part of the community as well 'cos when one is only engaging with the manual [AVP Manual] one does not understand exactly how to apply the manual. That's why tutorships comes along. So when one is at the gathering, everybody is given a

chance to even... project what one understands about the context. So with the gatherings, one is always assessed and one is always sharpened, one is always motivated so gatherings are very crucial, yes, they are needed (Chens Interview, August, 2012).

The above extract captures the vital role of the gatherings in the learning and development of peace educators. It highlights the value of “tutorships” (practical experience) as opposed to “only engaging with the manual” (pure theoretical knowledge). The workshops encourage participants to express their feelings by reliving experiences and sharing stories. The gatherings provide a space where facilitators are informally “assessed” and self-assessed (evaluated) and where their skills are developed and enhanced.

The workshops, preparation sessions, gatherings and meetings have all been identified as rich sites of learning and development of the peace educator. This will be further demonstrated through discussions in chapter 5. The next section presents findings relating to the network as a community of practice where learning and development is facilitated.

## **4.9 The AVP-KZN Network as a Community of Practice**

The AVP network displays many of the characteristics common to a community of practice as identified by (Wenger, 1998) namely: 1) being a collaborative network; 2) voluntary participation; 3) focused on capacity building; and 4) facilitates the sharing of knowledge, development of expertise, and problem solving. The findings in this chapter show that the AVP network is a collaborative network of volunteers who offer their services to facilitate workshops. In this section, I will illustrate the extent to which

the AVP facilitators are willing to learn from each other and share their knowledge and how the network supports learning and capacity building, the development of expertise and problem solving skills.

The three distinguishing elements of communities of practice namely: *the domain*, *the community*, and *the practice* (Wenger, 1998) distinguish the AVP network from other groups and communities. The AVP-KZN Network has its own identity which is defined by a shared domain of interest (Lave and Wenger, 1991). The network membership share a passion and commitment for promoting peace education through non-violent conflict resolution and sharing a common goal as highlighted by Busi, an experienced facilitator:

...we share the same vision in the network, that's what anchors us together. Nobody comes with their own funny behaviour. Everybody is bound by the same goals, same vision, you know, same energy, you know (Busi Interview, June, 2012).

The AVP-KZN network members engage in joint activities such as gatherings, workshops, workshop preparation sessions and meetings, where they build relationships, help each other, share information, learn from each other, support each other and build relationships. The AVP members also share resources, experiences, stories, tools, language and gestures, routines, vocabulary and symbols that are unique to their practice.

My observation of some of the network activities highlighted some of the routines that are unique to this community of practice. Within the network, there appears to be a shared way of doing things with reference to planning



and running of workshops. The network members engage in team facilitation and participate in preparation sessions for every workshop they facilitate. Workshops commence with the necessary documentation (registration of participants before the workshops) according to the administrative requirements of the network. Having participated in and observed a variety of teaching and learning workshops during my career as an educator, I found some of the AVP routines and activities particularly fascinating as it characterized the uniqueness of the AVP workshops. Some of these include: the democratic way in which “ground rules” are co-constructed by the participants while guided by the facilitators; the total immersion of the facilitators in the whole AVP experience (facilitators are not projected as people of authority in the workshop; they engage in all activities with the participants); interspersing the somewhat serious and often emotional sharing and ‘storytelling’ activities with humorous and fun activities (called Light and Lively activities); the clinic (break-away sessions for facilitators to caucus); the ‘graduation’ ceremony and the affirmative and evaluation posters (where participants highlight the positive attributes of each other).

I found it extremely interesting that the network members have their own ‘AVP specific’ language and routines which they use freely in dialogue which was unfamiliar to an outsider like me. Terms like “T4F”, “Sandwich” and “Clinic” made no sense to me until I sought an explanation from one of the facilitators during a break. I discovered that “T4F” is the acronym for Training for Facilitators and “Clinic” – refers to an impromptu break away session that the facilitators take when they feel the need to quickly caucus during the workshop about something or about the progress of the workshop. Likewise, I clearly recall the first time I heard the term “sandwich”. As a T4F workshop concluded with an evaluation activity, a team of trainee facilitators were then asked to evaluate each other’s performance. As one trainee facilitator

commenced with negative feedback about his colleague, he was cautioned by the lead facilitator to “sandwich” the feedback. It is only after the workshop, when I queried the meaning of “sandwich” that the richness of the AVP pedagogy in training educators emerged once again. The trainee had been focusing on negative feedback and was being cautioned to “sandwich” the critique. “Sandwich” is an affirming technique of giving constructive criticism where a negative comment is “sandwiched” between two positive comments. The personal experience of the application of this technique (and its positive effect on their self- esteem) is reflected by this novice facilitator:

Even when there is something that you’ve done that is wrong, it’s not brought up in a manner that will crush you (Busi Interview, June, 2012).

The AVP philosophy forces one to see the good as well as the bad in all situations. This philosophy has positively influenced the learning and development of a peace educator identity (which is discussed in chapter 5). According to the Communities of Practice Theory, opportunities for learning presents itself as newcomers learn the practice of the core members and core members gain new insights from interacting with “less-engaged participants” (Wenger, 1998, p.3). In AVP, the new facilitators join the network as legitimate participants when they successfully complete all three AVP workshops, and through their increased interest, participation and commitment eventually become more involved in the network activities. They then move from the outskirts of the practice towards the centre as they become more experienced. Using the metaphor of an onion, one of the participants capture the various levels of participation within the AVP network as follows:

... there tends to be a kind of ... almost like an onion, there's layers, there's a core group which is ManCom [*Management Committee*] ... in fact even within ManCom there's another core group ... ManCom consists of about 7 people within that, there's I think, possibly 4 people that interact quite a lot ... then outside of Management Committee there are perhaps another 10 people who interact quite a lot around workshops and talking about AVP and so on. Then there is a sort of more fluid grouping of about 30 to 40 facilitators who we usually see at the gatherings and AGMs and then the majority ... probably 80 facilitators or so, we don't see very often, or don't hear of much, we not really aware of and where they are or what they're doing and so on (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

The analogy of the network as an onion with its various 'layers' within the network supports the concept of different levels of participation that Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) identify in a community of practice. According to them a community of practice invites different levels of participation enabling all members to play a role in the communities of practice based on their interests and commitments. Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) identify three main levels of participation in a community of practice (CoP): the core group, the active group and the peripheral group.

**The core group:** For Wenger et al. (2002, p.1) this group is usually a small core group of people "only 10 to 15 percent of the whole community" who are actively involved in the network. This group is the heart of the community and are ultimately the group that coordinates the activities of the network and are committed to ensuring its sustainability. This group takes on a leadership role in guiding the rest of the

community (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). Tim, an AVP facilitator describes two groups of people as the core group i.e. the core consisting of 7 people and the 'inner core' consisting of 4. The "inner group" consists of experienced facilitators who have moved into the central activities of the network. They had entered the network as novice facilitators and through their commitment and increased participation in network gatherings and workshop facilitation have become members of the Management Committee (ManCom). They now assist with the running of the network and the coordination of network activities. Three of the participants interviewed in this study participate at this level.

**The active group** is the next level outside the core group. They attend and participate regularly, "but without the regularity and intensity of the core group" (Wenger et al., 2002, p.1). This is also a small group of members who attend meetings regularly and participate occasionally in the community activities and make up approximately 15 to 20 percent of the community. The active group in the AVP network includes those members that attend the network gatherings and meetings and are actively involved in the facilitation of workshops.

**The peripheral group** typically represents the majority of the network members who play a more passive role in the network, but still learn from their level of involvement. These members remain on the outskirts of the practice watching the interaction of the core and active members. According to Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002, p.1) some members remain peripheral members because they "do not have the time to contribute more actively". According to an AVP network member interviewed, this group of members attend AVP gatherings and meetings but do not take an active role in facilitation of workshops. Wenger et al. (2002) identify the issue of time as one of the reasons why these members remain on the outskirts.

The interviews with the novice and experienced peace educators revealed some

interesting data on reasons for varying levels of participation within the network which include: lack of commitment, lack of time, lack of interest and lack of education:

**Lack of time:** “being a student consumes a lot of my spare time so I decided to focus more on my academic side of it. I only attend the annual gatherings but I don’t wish to participate in the facilitation at the moment” (Chens Interview, August, 2012).

**Lack of interest:** “Besides the financial side of things, I’m not really interested in all of that. I’m just a member” (Naseema Interview, July, 2012).

**Lack of commitment:** “we have some facilitators who come to all the gatherings but other than that we don’t see any commitment” (Naseema Interview, July, 2012).

**Lack of education:** “and so I think this is what’s also happening is that people on the periphery ... It’s the people with very low levels of education, who are unemployed and who don’t have resources beyond a cell-phone” (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

Wenger et al. (2002) also identify another level of people outside the three levels (core, active and peripheral). These are non-members who have an interest in the community. When considering the AVP network, this level of participation applies to the participants in the AVP workshops. They are members of the community, outside the AVP network, who show an interest in peace education. I concur with Wenger et al.(2002) that community members through their participation, eventually move through the levels. All the AVP facilitators were once part of this group. It is through public interest in peace education, that people participate in the Basic Workshop, then move onto the Advanced and Facilitator workshops which allows them entry into the AVP network. From there they start off on the periphery and eventually work their way to the centre of the practice. As AVP-KZN network members become more

competent in facilitating, they become more involved in the AVP activities and participate in more AVP workshops. They move from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation, which involves the transition from novice AVP facilitators to experienced facilitators. The focus on learning within the communities of practice is therefore, on *social* participation rather than the acquisition of knowledge (Lave and Wenger, 1991). It is also true that the experienced network members who are actively involved can also become disengaged from core activities and start to move towards the periphery. Wenger et al. (2002), posits that the active members may be deeply engaged for a certain period of time then disengage. The following table summarizes the description of the different levels as described by Tim, an experienced AVP facilitator, and Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2002):

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION	DESCRIPTION OF THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION	
	TIM AVP FACILITATOR	WENGER, MCDERMOTT AND SNYDER
Within the Core Group	"Interact quite a lot"	Is usually small and is the heart of the community.
Core group	"work closely together.. talk quite a lot to each other"	
Active Members	"Interact quite a lot around workshops and talking about AVP and so on"	Also a small group of members who attend meetings regularly and participate occasionally in the community activities.
Peripheral Member	"see at gatherings and AGM's"	Do not have the time to contribute more actively.
Non-Active Members	"we don't see very often or don't hear of much"	

Table 2: Description of levels of participation

This section presented the findings relating to the AVP network as a site for learning and development of peace educators. The next section explores the motivations for network participation.

#### **4.10 Motivation for participation in the AVP-KZN Network**

In analysing the experiences of the six network members who participated in this study, three main motivators for Network membership emerged: 1) Violence in South Africa; 2) being victims of rejection or violent and abusive behaviour; and 3) family value systems. One of the participants explained that her reason for becoming an AVP-KZN network member was motivated by the violence in South Africa:

So I was absolutely keen and I thought looking at the context of South Africa and looking at the violence and looking at the townships and I thought this will be perfect to be running it in communities as well and that this is more a preventative thing and probably would, in the long term, address issues of crime. So that is what triggered off that interest (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

A second underlying motivation was associated with a network member's past experiences of violent and/or abusive relationships. One of the network members recalls his experiences of violence (bullying) during his childhood, and exposure to excessive violence (in the army) during young adulthood. Tim relates his experiences of being bullied at school which resulted in him resorting to violence and assuming

the identity a vigilante to protect others who were in a similar situation of being bullied:

... When I got into ... school immediately I started to be teased and it was very traumatic for me because I was ... still ... though it's hidden at times ... a sensitive human being. So I was very upset by that and the upsetness would eventually get to the point where it wouldn't stop people if I cried you know. They wouldn't stop with the teasing, that the crying seemed to spur people on so that didn't help. So I would turn to violence. And I was very good at it because I was very big, much bigger than the others. And that was my way. And I discovered very early on that a way to get myself out of situations like that would be to resort to violence ... and then I got a vigilante sort of an attitude because I saw that bullying was a very big part of school and so because I had been bullied myself I had real empathy towards kids who had been bullied (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

While Tim was motivated by his sense of empathy and personal experiences of being bullied, to become an AVP facilitator, Faye was motivated by her desire to curb violence in the society:

You know having worked ... in an organization that was riddled with conflict but also working in an environment where violence is so high cos ... domestic violence ... active physical abuse, you know, made me see that there has to be something that is more preventative rather than dealing with just that issue (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

Bongi's motivation to join the network was the result of her experiences of rejection



from her family and community. It was her search for inner peace that led to her becoming involved with peace facilitation and becoming an AVP member:

So I was so negative about myself because of the environment in which I grew in. So in the environment that I grew in, I was experiencing rejection within the community and also within my family. So which makes me to look down, to lose self-esteem. So, ja, till I became part of this course which changed, helped me, motivated me to think positively about myself. Then I came to a turning point that I can make it (Bongi Interview, October, 2012).

Two of the network members attribute their interest in peace education to the values that were instilled in them by their parents/guardians. The desire to help others motivated them to become AVP facilitators:

I remember, I think it was in grade 11, I always used to say ... Oh man when I grow up, I just want to be a motivational speaker to always encourage people when they feel down and all that kind of stuff ... I grew up like ag man, I just want to be a peace maker (Busi Interview, June, 2012).

From the above, it is evident that the motivation to join the AVP-KZN network resulted from various life experiences which include exposure to violence, abuse, rejection and personal values (helping others). Irrespective of the reasons for network participation, all share a common goal: a desire to promote peace education.

## **4.11 Conclusion**

The findings in this chapter indicate that the network is a source of rich learning and development of peace educators. The peace educators reflected on the supportive and nurturing environment of the network, which creates a conducive environment for their learning and development as they interact with other experienced facilitators. In chapter 5, I will further explore the learning and development within the network.

## **Chapter Five: A journey of informal social learning in the AVP-KZN Network**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the AVP-KZN network was identified as a site for rich learning and development of peace educators, where the workshops, gatherings and meetings emerged as dynamic and enriching sites of learning. While chapter 4 presented the findings that characterizes the AVP-KZN network as a 'site of learning', chapter 5 presents the findings relating to the types, nature and processes of learning and development as peace educators participate in this dynamic environment which is enriched by its multicultural, multi-linguistic and multi-skilled network membership.

### **5.2 Collaborative and Social Learning**

The findings of this study supports recent literature on educator learning and development, which shows a paradigm shift from a focus on individualized cognitive processes of educator learning and development, to foci on social and collaborative processes of learning and development (Putnam & Boroko, 2000; Graven, 2003; Viskovic, 2006; Gómez and Rico, 2007; Servage, 2009; Pella, 2011; Kohlmeier, Saye, Mitchel & Brush, 2011; Lisahunter, Rossi, Tinning & Flanagan, 2011 and Macdonald, 2011). The findings in this study support the findings in recent literature, in terms of the extent to which participation in the AVP-KZN network has contributed to the learning and development of the AVP facilitators. The network emerges as a dynamic and supportive environment (as discussed in chapter 4) for collaborative learning and social interaction and provides a wide array of opportunities for engaging with other members in a variety of network activities where AVP facilitators learn new skills and new knowledge and develop the identity as peace educators.

### **5.3 Types of learning in the AVP-KZN Network**

This 'AVP networked learning' has emerged as a process that facilitates the personal development of peace educators and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for novice as well as experienced AVP facilitators. The AVP facilitators concur that their participation in the network can be described as a journey of continuous learning where "you end up in a place where constantly you are groomed"(Busi Interview, June 2012). Adult learning is associated with life-long learning and conveys the notion of change, acquired in a variety of learning activities and various sites of learning (Bennaars, 1993; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007) which is evident in the AVP-KZN network:

Wow! You know you go here [*in the network*] you are built ... What you learn in AVP, in the network, if you put it into practice, it's a step-by-step process of growing day to day (Busi Interview, June, 2012).

Becoming effective as an educator is a developmental process and "is a journey, not a destination" (Papastamatis, Panitsidou, Giavrimis & Papanis, 2009, p.86). The journey covers a range of different learning situations, from formal institutions, such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal, to informal sites of learning such as sites of social networking which characterizes the learning acquired by the AVP-KZN peace educators.

#### **5.3.1 Formal and Non-formal learning of peace educators**

The six facilitators who participated in this study have acquired some form of formal peace education, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which ranged from Certificates in Education to Masters in Education. The non-formal learning was acquired through participation in the three levels of AVP workshops which were organized, short-term,

voluntary opportunities (Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner, 2007; Eraut, 2004) to learn about peace education. These workshops exposed the facilitators to the AVP philosophy, routines and practices of the AVP programme and to the non-violent conflict resolution techniques advocated by the programme. On successful completion of all three workshops, the participants became certified AVP facilitators and were eligible for membership into the AVP-KZN network.

While this formal and non-formal learning provided the peace educators with the essential basic knowledge about peace education, all participants in this study concurred that much of their actual learning, as peace educators, happened during their informal participation in the network (as will be discussed in later sections). The findings show the vital role that informal network learning plays in equipping peace educators with 'on-the-job-training', contextual knowledge and specific skills to develop themselves into effective and efficient peace educators. The rest of this chapter presents the informal learning acquired by the AVP facilitators as they embarked on their journey of self-discovery and social learning during their transition from AVP participant to AVP novice facilitator and eventually to an experienced AVP peace educator.

### **5.3.2 Informal learning acquired by peace educators**

Participation in the AVP-KZN network has emerged as the main source of informal and social learning which takes place in a variety settings, often without the peace educators' being conscious of the learning taking place. As the newly certified AVP facilitator joins the AVP-KZN network, they may or may not be immediately aware of the vast amounts of spontaneous, unstructured (cited Merriam et al., 2007, p.35) and incidental learning taking place since it is often embedded in their daily lives as they go about their everyday activities within the network. This type of learning is often

characteristic of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lave, 1996; Sharp, 1997; Wenger, 1998; Putnam & Boroko, 2000; Merriam, Courtenay & Baumgartner, 2003; John, 2012). Marsick & Watkins (2001) posit that “[i]nformal and incidental learning is at the heart of adult education because of its learner-centred focus and the lessons that can be learned from life experience” (p.25). Various forms of incidental learning, experiential learning and transformative learning emerged in this study.

### **5.3.2.1 Incidental learning**

Much of the learning in this study appeared to be unintentional learning that happened as an accidental by-product of doing something else, but at some point the facilitators became aware that some learning had taken place. According to Merriam, et al. (2007), this is characteristic of incidental learning. Although this learning may be tacit or unconscious it can be “probed and intentionally explored” (Marsick & Watkins, 2001, p.25) as revealed in reflections during the interviews in this study. As the facilitators participate in the network, they interact with co-facilitators and other network members in a variety of network activities and learn from their mistakes, through action, through observation and through reflection on their network experiences (as will be discussed later in this chapter).

### **5.3.2.2 Transformative learning**

The second type of informal learning that has emerged in this study is transformative learning which requires an individual to open up their frames of reference, to discard a habit of mind and consider alternatives which prompts changes in behaviour, thus resulting in them acting differently in the world thereafter (Mezirow, 2000). This type of learning is significant to this study since the “principle of *Transforming Power* is the bedrock upon which AVP rests” (AVP Basic Manual, 2002, p.A-6). Through network participation, AVP facilitators encounter various forms of transformative learning. An

experienced facilitator recalls the transformative power of the network experiences and learning when reflecting on her own experiences of an abusive marriage, her experiences in the AVP network and then critiques the role of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) in promoting peace in South Africa. Her learning trajectory begins with her reflecting on her personal experiences as she realized:

Oh my God, I'm holding so much and I'm giving this man power in my marriage, out of my marriage because I haven't forgiven him.

Because if you don't forgive someone you still allow them to have power over you. And I sat down and I sobbed and I sobbed ... and ... I actually forgave him and I realized forgiveness does not happen overnight. It's a long process (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

Faye's personal experiences of hatred, forgiveness and the sense of relief and empowerment that forgiveness unleashes, made her reflect on the events in the world around her. She applies her personal experiences to the process of forgiveness undertaken during the Truth and Reconciliation Process in South Africa:

... I always say that the TRC as far as I'm concerned did some good and was actually cosmetic. A cosmetic thing to bring... peace because ... certain things need time for healing to actually take place. And so for healing to take place ... It doesn't happen like that. It happens with therapy... and forgiveness is not something that just happens, it happens in stages. You know ... from a personal experience you know, with my ex-husband, having come from an abusive marriage..., it took about 8 or 9 years to actually forgive him... if there's anybody in the world I hated ... was him, you know(Faye Interview, August, 2012).

And thirdly, Faye learns through critical reflection. She reflects on her own personal experiences and the extensive process of letting go of her anger and hatred. She uses her personal experience and the meaning she has made of this experience and applies it to the world around her. She comments on the 'healing process' of the Truth and Reconciliation process:

You know communities really should have had a major weaning process, healing processes. There should have been therapy, group therapy. There should have been discussion groups ... (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

She finally assimilated her personal experience and the transformative effect of forgiveness with the TRC process and concludes:

You know, so the TRC was a weak, feeble attempt of reconciling and bringing people together for peaceful purposes. So long term, we need other interventions. ... you know and personally I believe that all the crime in South Africa has to do with the fact that we never really had a weaning process ... so I thought AVP would be a way of starting that kind of conversation... And it's surprising what brainstorming about violence ... can bring about and you realize this is actually the space to talk about these kinds of things ... so ja! (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

These powerful quotes from Faye clearly show her view of AVP for "healing" based on her personal need for healing and a societal need given the weakness of TRC. It was her experiences in the AVP-KZN network that enabled her to open up her frame of reference regarding forgiveness, to discard her habit of mind and consider alternatives which prompted a change in her attitude and behaviour (forgiving her husband), thus resulting in her acting differently in the world thereafter. It is through experiences like



this that AVP facilitators learn and develop as peace educators. This learning through experiences is discussed in the next section.

### **5.3.2.3 Experiential learning**

The third type of informal learning that encapsulates the learning and development of the peace educators in this network is experiential learning which is foundational to the pedagogy of the AVP programme. This type of learning focuses on story-telling and sharing, and combines experience, perception, cognition and behaviour (Dighe, 2003). It also distinguishes on-going meaning-making of experiences from theoretical knowledge (Fenwick, 2000) and all informal learning experiences: self-directed, incidental and tacit learning. The numerous life experiences that adult learners accumulate provide a resource to draw upon when learning (Kolb, 1984). Each adult learner (peace educator) brings a wealth of knowledge and experience into the learning situation (Kolb, 1984, Kolb et al., 1999, Dighe, 2003, Lawler, 2003), which influences the acquisition of new knowledge and skills which is aligned to their existing knowledge and experiences. These experiences provide a rich source of learning which is shared with others within the network. Adults learn through everyday situations and challenges and constantly learn and relearn as they adapt to new circumstances as is reflected by this AVP facilitator:

Ja, sharing of experiences and then from that sharing you learn that I am not the only one in that situation. So this helps you to grow ... Let me do like this or like that experiences, that you heard from that fellow (Chens Interview, August, 2012).

As AVP facilitators share their experiences with each other, valuable knowledge is often unconsciously transferred from one to another.

## 5.4 Transfer of knowledge amongst AVP facilitators

For learning experiences to be beneficial to peace educators, it must be meaningful, immediately applicable and effectively transferred. Lawler and King (cited by Lawler, 2003), identify the six principles which they consider to be vital for the effective transfer of knowledge for adult learning to take place, namely: “create a climate of respect, encourage active participation, build on experience, employ collaborative enquiry, learn for action and empower the participants” (cited in Lawler, 2003, p.17). The learning trajectory of the peace educators was traced from their first experiences of minimal peripheral participation to active central participation. These six principles were clearly evident in the AVP-KZN network.

The AVP-KZN network creates a climate of respect which is considered to be necessary for effective transfer of knowledge (Lawler, 2003) as reflected by this AVP facilitator:

It's the way things are shared, the amount of respect and care that's given to each other. The sharing of responsibilities and nobody is dictating anything to anyone, you know. It's always negotiated. Do you want to do this? Are you comfortable? That kind of thing... (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

The network also employs a ‘collaborative inquiry’ (Lawler, 2003, p.17) approach and peace educators ‘build on experience’ (p.17) as they learn from each other and support each other through collaborative sharing of stories and resources:

So my experiences have always been great, it's always been rich in learning, because you're learning you know. You're learning constantly because you're not the facilitator who has the vast knowledge. You are

the facilitator who is imparting some things and getting back too. And you're always learning from other people's experiences. And that's been my experience (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

The AVP-KZN network also “encourage[s] active participation” where facilitators “learn for action” and “empower[s] the participants” (Lawler, 2003, p.17) as will be discussed in the following sections.

## **5.5 Learning through increased participation**

One of the major findings that emerged in this study is the extent to which peace educators learn, develop and support each other through increased participation in a variety of network activities. This learning through participation is what Lave and Wenger (1991) refer to as situated learning; where learning involves a process of engagement in a community of practice. The findings show that the AVP facilitators are involved in situated learning as they grow and develop through a process of interaction, socialization and engagement in the AVP network. This situated learning enables the AVP facilitators to “learn for action” (Lawler, 2003, p.17) and is a characteristic of adult learners. Peace educators are interested in learning things that are immediately applicable to their lives. Network participation plays an integral role in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills as facilitators' journey from novice to experienced facilitators and learn as their levels of participation within the network increases. It is therefore necessary for AVP facilitators to have access to participation in a variety of network activities, especially to facilitate AVP workshops.

### **5.5.1 Access to participation**

With reference to the metaphor of an onion used by Tim, one of the experienced facilitators, to describe the network (in chapter 4), different levels of participation and commitment within the network emerged. While some AVP members are quite content to participate from the periphery with minimal engagement in network activities, others are more committed and available, and are actively engaged in a variety of key network activities. As network participation increases, opportunities to learn increase. Graven (2004) posits that access to participation is central in relation to a community of practice, since the degree and level of access to participation determine the level of participation. To become a full member of the AVP-KZN network, the facilitator is required to move from the periphery to the centre and this can only be achieved through increased opportunities to participate in network activities.

According to Lave and Wenger (1991, p.101) increased access to “old-timers; and other members of the community; and to information, resources and opportunities for participation” is key to the learning process. Therefore, in order for learning to take place within the AVP-KZN network, novice facilitators must have access to the experienced AVP facilitators, information, resources and opportunities to participate in various network activities. O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007), argue that when opportunities to journey from the periphery to fuller participation is prevented or if there are barriers being experienced, it is disempowering and can result in conflict situations if not handled appropriately. The existence of tension which results from perceived barriers to access to participation is evident in the AVP-KZN network as described by this experienced AVP facilitator:

... we have members that are ... part of the network, but they consistently feel that they are not really included because the whole show is being run by a core group ... I think it's almost as if people feel that there is an inner circle that keeps everything for ourselves and so on ... facilitators are always asking us for opportunities to facilitate and criticize the core group for always picking facilitators that they know ... not giving other people a chance (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

This lack of access to facilitation is confirmed by Chens, a novice facilitator:

I didn't have opportunities, chances of being a facilitator in any of workshops that were organized by our network (Chens Interview, August, 2012).

While barriers to access to facilitation may exist, the network creates an environment where this type of challenges can be addressed. Chens illustrates the effectiveness of the gathering as a space for addressing these kinds of issues:

... but I with the other members who were also not having any opportunities, raised issues within our gatherings. Then it was taken into account. We also devised to change the system that is used to allocate facilitators and then was given a chance and then I also ended up getting two chances and so, I am happy with the network and the way we transform it as well (Chens Interview, August, 2012).

By working together and supporting each other, the facilitators were able to come up with an acceptable and effective solution in an amicable manner. The above extract also highlights the dynamic and responsive nature of the network. The AVP-KZN network could be 'transformed' as necessitated and showed the role of the gatherings in providing a space where members can share their concerns and challenges and collectively find a solution. The dynamic nature of the network also creates a space where AVP members collectively experience and internalize the unique AVP pedagogy.

### **5.5.2 Learning about AVP pedagogy through participation**

The findings of this study highlight the unique AVP facilitation styles and techniques which distinguishes it from other adult learning programs. AVP involves "a process of seeking and sharing and not of teaching" (AVP Basic Manual, 2002, p.A-2) as confirmed by this AVP facilitator, who provides her views on peace education and the pedagogy that it necessitates:

You know, I guess the term peace education actually misleads people because it sounds like you're standing there and you're telling people how to kind of behave and live peacefully, which is not what it is. It's actually facilitating and actually helping people to understand themselves in situations that are conflictual. So to me, it's allowing people the space, allowing people, and giving them enough ... eh... what's the word ... it's almost like allowing people the space and the opportunity to understand that there are alternatives to violence ... of dealing with things. That is what peace education is for me. And it's also hmm ... giving them the space to just engage and you just facilitating that process. So then, peace education is then actually them educating themselves about their situations and perceptions and their attitude and behaviour. So you're doing peace

facilitating, they're doing the educating [laughing] (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

This extract aptly captures the essence of what peace education involves and describes the pedagogy that AVP promotes, where the learners are in control of their learning and the learning process is merely guided by the facilitator, by using the learner's personal life experience as a point of departure. This 'peace facilitation' aligns itself to the peace pedagogy advocated by Hicks (1990) as well as Kreitzer and Jou (2010), where power relations are neutralized by participating and interacting with the group rather than dominating. "AVP is not about hierarchy, it is about community" (AVP Manual, 2002, p.A-5). This type of pedagogy was clearly evident in the AVP workshops that I observed (as discussed in chapter 4). Learning to facilitate this type of programme is challenging and necessitates specific knowledge and skills that peace educators have to develop. It is through participation in the various network activities that the facilitators gain a better understanding and in-depth knowledge of the unique peace pedagogy which is fundamental to the AVP philosophy, i.e. experiential learning and learner-centeredness (AVP Manual, 2002). The following sections present findings on the how network participation facilitates the acquisition of this pedagogical knowledge and skills and how it contributes to the development of the peace educator's identity.

## **5.6 Six inter-related learning components of network participation**

Through a process of categorizing various recurring learning experiences, the following six key learning components have emerged as a result of participation in the network: 1) learning from diversity; 2) learning through changes in community; 3) learning through changes in meaning; 4) learning through practice; 5) developing an identity as a peace educator; and 6) learning through the development of self. The first four learning

components support Wenger's (1998) four interrelated learning components namely, changes in community, meaning, practice, and identity. The fifth component supports Graven's (2004) additional learning component which she added onto Wenger's (1998) learning model, namely, the 'phenomenon of confidence'. The sixth learning component, namely, the phenomenon of diversity, emerged in this study as a recurring contributor to the learning and development of peace educators within the AVP-KZN network. The following diagram illustrates these six inter-related learning components which will be discussed in terms of how it influences the learning and development of peace educators.

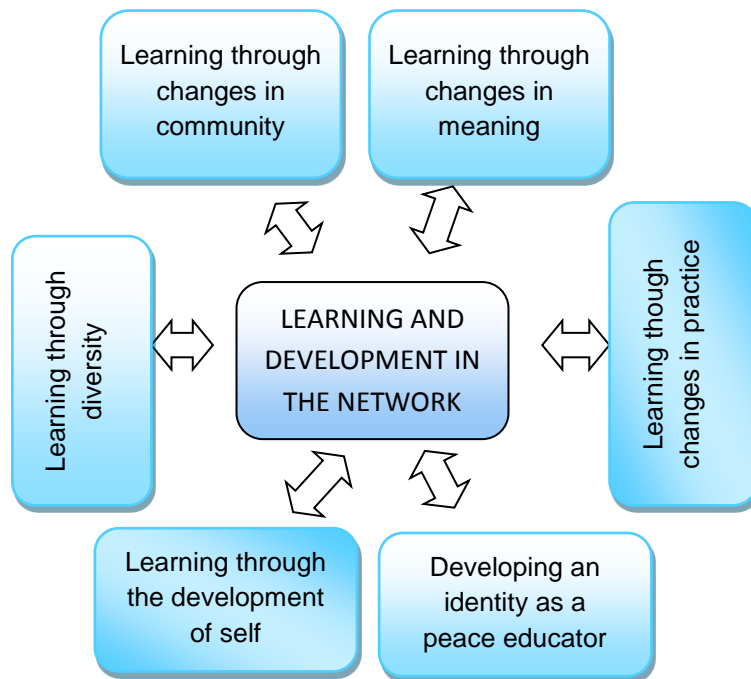


FIGURE 3: The 6 inter-related learning components of AVP-KZN network participation

### 5.6.1 Learning through changes in the community

As Wenger (1998, p.229) posits, people have through the ages, formed communities that “share cultural practices reflecting their collective learning” (p.229). In the AVP-KZN



network the wings can be considered to be smaller interdependent sub-communities within the larger community (AVP-KZN network community). Levels of participation are determined by the degree of involvement each facilitator is engaged in and influences their learning trajectory within the network. The process of learning in the AVP-KZN network can be understood as beginning with 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Wenger, 1998) where a newcomer is allowed access to a community of practice but spends some time at the periphery of the practice. Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of "Legitimate peripheral participation" provides a springboard to assess the relations between newcomers (novice peace educators) and old-timers (experienced peace educators), and about "activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice" (p.29) that emerge through their participation in the various joint activities within the AVP-KZN network. According to Lave and Wenger (1991, p.108-109) for new comers, "the purpose is not to learn *from* talk as a substitute for legitimate peripheral participation; it is to learn *to* talk as a key to legitimate peripheral participation".

I concur with O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007, p.327), that "there are no shortcuts to full participation in a community" and that "learning and participation are not events but rather processes that happen over time and place". As discussed in chapter 4, members enter the network, as novice facilitators. They are then given an opportunity to co-facilitate with a team of facilitators. As the novice facilitators observe and adopt the routines, values and practices of the network and become more actively engaged in the network activities, they eventually become full participants. Change in the community is facilitated through increased participation in network activities, as facilitators develop new ways of belonging to the different wings, different committees, and different communities of practice (sites of learning within the AVP-KZN network). Learning is also facilitated as facilitators learn through changes in meaning.

### **5.6.2 Learning through changes in meaning**

As the AVP facilitators participate in the network activities, they develop an understanding and appreciation of the practices of the network. Learning is acquired as new knowledge creates changes in meaning which in turn facilitates new learning experiences through the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and attitudes. Faye describes how she developed an understanding and appreciation of some of the AVP practices during the actual facilitation, which she hadn't understood during her training:

And I remember sitting at the first workshop ... At first in the beginning when I was doing the training ... I'm like ok ... where's the wisdom in this, you know? ... er... then half way through, I'm like, ok, this is really interesting, the role modelling, you know, because you're basically role modelling in the training and then you know, it's really interesting. And when I started facilitating I said , no, no, no, I think this is an excellent way of doing things – it's respectful, it's allowing people their space, and the pace ... it's allowing people to engage in things, allowing people to think more critically and I thought no, I could live with this. This is really good (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

Through increased participation in the AVP network the facilitators gain a better understanding and in-depth knowledge of the AVP practices, which they put into practice as they become experts in the application of AVP's philosophy, routines, practices and techniques. This learning process is enriched by the diversity experienced within the network.

### 5.6.3 Learning through diversity in the network

The great strength of the AVP-KZN network lies in the uniqueness and the diversity of its membership which exhibits a multicultural, multi-national, multi-linguistic and multi-skilled membership that unites and creates a diverse pool of talent, knowledge, skills and experience. This membership comprises of UKZN students, academic staff, non-academic staff and non-UKZN community-based educators (John, 2013). Busi, one of the facilitators, comments on this diverse membership:

Regardless of our differences in background, racial groups whatsoever, when you are amongst the network you don't feel like an outcast ... So in AVP there's no such thing as 'we're doctors, we're professors ... whether a person is uneducated, we still will love and respect them (Busi Interview, June, 2012).

The findings that emerged from this study reveal the challenges as well as the rich learning opportunities that are created by this diversity, as members engage with each other and participate in a range of network activities. These learning opportunities expose the AVP facilitators to the relevant knowledge and skills required in peace education, which involves a “*process that allows people to experience the way of nonviolence*” (AVP Basic Manual, 2002, p.A-6). By engaging with different people in different situations and being exposed to different experiences, a rich source of learning is created as facilitators learn from each other. Wenger (1998) acknowledges the merits of diversity in enhancing the productivity of a community of practice:

If what makes a community of practice a community is mutual engagement, then it is a kind of community that does not entail homogeneity. Indeed, what makes engagement in practice possible and productive is as much diversity as it is a matter of homogeneity (Wenger, 1998, p.75).

The dynamic nature of the workshops exposes the peace educators to diverse experiences as they engage with different people, as reflected by this facilitator:

I've been involved in AVP since 2004, I think it is. First as a participant then as a facilitator ...you know, every AVP experience, every workshop is different. Because you have different kinds of people that come in - different dynamics(Faye Interview, August, 2012).

By participating in the network, the facilitators have the opportunity to work with different people, in different situations and are exposed to different experiences. This exposure enriches their learning experiences as expressed by this facilitator “you always learning about people, different situations, the way they respond, different things they do”. In addition to the diverse people, personalities and situations that AVP facilitators encounter within the network, they are also exposed to the unique AVP facilitation style (as discussed in the preceding sections):

Well you know AVP has a totally different style ... I think I was fascinated by the AVP style of facilitating ... It was absolutely a style that allows their own pace, their own space as well and their own pace in terms of their development (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

This 'different style' of facilitation requires the AVP facilitator to be skilful, flexible and adaptable to handle the different situations. The peace educators revealed that the training received in the workshops is not always adequate to prepare them to anticipate and deal with the challenges experienced in the workshop. This knowledge and skill is developed through increased participation in the workshops and interaction with other facilitators as reflected by Busi:

What you learn in AVP, in the network, if you put it into practice, it's a step by step process of growing day to day. It shows in you through the ways you behave, how you handle situations and how you relate to people regardless of their personalities, because it helps you also to deal with different personalities ... (Busi Interview, June, 2012).

The acquisition of these essential knowledge and skills is enriched by the interaction of the facilitators as they share their expertise, experiences and stories with each other. In the AVP network, diverse groups of peace educators with different personalities, knowledge, expertise and facilitation styles converged during workshops, gatherings and meetings where they share their expertise and experiences with each other. The value of learning from fellow members in the network, and benefitting from the community's diversity, is also acknowledged by Putnam and Boroko (2000, p.8):

... when diverse groups of teachers with different types of knowledge and expertise come together in discourse communities, community members can draw upon and incorporate each other's expertise to create rich conversations and new insights into teaching and learning.

Through the process of co-facilitation and mentoring, which characterizes AVP workshops, opportunities are created for facilitators to learn and support each other. Facilitators draw from each other's knowledge and experiences to adjust, enrich and

transform the way they facilitate. Bongi, a novice facilitator, acknowledges the benefit of working with a diverse membership:

For me I understand it, as a place where we are working with different ... facilitators, different people from different backgrounds of which you learn more from them ... So you learn more from them as part of the network because the way they conducting themselves ... so, that's why in the network you learn from other people (Bongi Interview, October, 2012).

These different facilitators form a 'circle of facilitators' who provide the necessary support structure for facilitators in both 'academic' and 'personal issues', and enrich their problem solving skills:

... it's just like our... I don't know what to say, circle of facilitators, you see 'cause we also share, besides these academic or projects, facilitation or workshops we also deal with a lot of personal issues where one is exposed to different styles of problem solving skills so it helps a lot (Chens Interview, August, 2012).

The findings revealed that it is not only novice facilitators that learn and benefit from engaging with other facilitators. Experienced facilitators also benefit from co-facilitation. Tim, an experienced facilitator, acknowledges that despite being a good facilitator, co-facilitating with a facilitator with a different facilitation style, exposed him to a "different" and "refreshing" style of facilitating:

I can see I got a lot to learn but I also see myself as a good facilitator. But Sifiso has in fact ...got reams more experience in terms of facilitating than I

have ... and when I facilitated with him, he has a very different approach which I found refreshing (Tim, 2012).

Co-facilitation, mentoring and engaging with a diverse membership creates relationships among people which, when sustained, connects facilitators and enables the development of strong interpersonal relationships among them. Wenger (1998), however, cautions that relationships, which are influenced by the diversity of membership, are not always harmonious. “Peace, happiness, and harmony are therefore not necessarily properties of a community of practice” (Wenger, 1998, p.77). As in any other real life situation, the AVP facilitators are also subjected to the perception of ‘power relations, conflict and tensions’ (Wenger, 1998). Within a network of such a diversity of people, there is bound to be disagreements, tensions and conflict situations among the facilitators as reflected by Tim:

... you know how sometimes you never gel with someone? She was someone from overseas... I felt, she was too arrogant (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

Despite the intention of the AVP programme to eliminate the presence of hierarchical structure and power relations, this may still be visible in the network and can cause conflict situations and a barrier to effective learning. It is through their engagement and continued practice within the network that AVP facilitators learn to work together and develop as peace educators.

#### **5.6.4 Learning through practice**

Knight (2001) acknowledges the importance of continued practice, as he posits that initial educator training does not contain the “propositional ... and... procedural, ‘how to’

knowledge which grows in practice”, which has also emerged in this study. Through continued practice in facilitating workshops and engaging in other network activities, facilitators gain a better understanding and in-depth knowledge of the AVP practices and eventually move from peripheral participation to full participation.

I concur with Bahar, ÜtünlÜođlu and YÜreki (2010, p.1) that irrespective of the quality of the (teacher) training courses, the real “learning to teach” process starts in the classroom, as novice teachers make the transition from “the learner” to “the teacher”, or in this case from an AVP participant to a novice AVP peace educator to an experienced AVP peace educator. Bahar et al. (2010), acknowledge that ‘within this transformational process from learner to teacher’ (p.1), the first experience is a difficult challenge, as was expressed by Bongi, another novice facilitator:

Yo! It [*first facilitation experience*] was overwhelming. I didn’t know what was expected of me though I did assign myself to particular items in the agenda ... So I was like... overwhelmed! I feared to ask from ... other facilitators so I was like ... nervous ... It was as if I didn’t even have one training... I was so nervous (Bongi Interview, October, 2012).

As Bongi shared her first facilitation experience with me, she recalled what an “overwhelming” experience it was. She felt unprepared and ill-equipped to handle the actual experience of facilitating, despite her facilitator training. It appears that despite having attended the formal CEPD programme and the non-formal AVP programme (3 levels of AVP workshops), and a preparation session (where she assigned herself to a particular session/activity), Bongi did not feel adequately prepared for her first facilitation experience. Veenman and Huneman (cited by Bahar et al., 2010, p.1) refer to this first



experience as a “culture shock” and a “reality shock”. Faye, an experienced facilitator also recalls the nervousness she felt during her first facilitation experience:

as a facilitator you evolve ... and your first time, you’re kind of nervous in that kind of world (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

This nervousness, however, dissipates and facilitators “evolve” from that first experience as they gain the necessary experience and expertise. This learning is enhanced by team facilitation, an advocated way of facilitating AVP workshops (AVP Basic manual, 2002). John (2012, p.6) refers to as a “built-in system of peace educator apprenticeship”, where experienced facilitators take on the role of lead facilitators as they guide and mentor novice facilitators. Putnam and Borko (2000) acknowledge the value of novice educators learning from their experienced colleagues. They draw attention to “how novices can work effectively with multiple mentors who hold varied conceptions of teaching and learning” (p.10) and the learning that is acquired through this diverse mentorship.

In a supportive and constructive process, team leaders help other novice and experienced members of the team, to learn, develop and become better leaders. Team facilitation enables novice facilitators to learn more about the hands-on application of the AVP philosophy and acceptable practices in the AVP network. Chens, a novice facilitator describes how he learnt how AVP facilitation differs from teaching:

... I went over to them with the style of being a teacher and then I had a small chat with my lead facilitator that hey, peace [education] is different than the traditional teaching environment ... so then I learnt quite perfectly how to address the masses. I didn’t have to be in the front so

that children are there waiting for me to pour my understanding on their empty heads. So I felt like we are all equal ... (Chens Interview, August, 2012).

Chens learnt that AVP pedagogy involved a two-way process where facilitator and participants are treated equally and enrich each other with their knowledge and experience. Naseema, another novice facilitator, describes the how she learnt from her co-facilitators:

And I learnt about volunteerism. AVP taught me that one should not volunteer another ... And in my first experience, I volunteered as a participant. I was reminded by the rest of the facilitators that what I did was not right so that has stuck and I don't do that. I don't volunteer anyone ... Yes, that was my learning experience because you do make mistakes when it's your first one (Naseema Interview, July, 2012).

During the AVP workshops participants are made aware about not 'volunteering' another participant, however, in the above extract, it is evident that Naseema, a novice facilitator, had only understood this concept of 'volunteerism' during the actual practice of facilitation. This also reinforces the view that the actual learning to facilitate, happens as the peace educators participate in the network.

The unique AVP practices and styles that have emerged in this study necessitate the development of the relevant expertise to become effective peace educators. Billet (cited in Viskovic, 2006, p.325) posits that this expertise is developed within a particular social context:

Expertise is *relational* to a particular ... community or practice; is *embedded* in social practice over time; requires *competence* in the community's discourse, activities and ways of behaving; is *reciprocal* as people shape and are shaped by the communities of practice; requires *pertinence* knowing what behaviours are acceptable (Viskovic, 2006, p.325)

Participation in the AVP-KZN network has emerged as being vital in the acquisition of the expertise which is "*relational*" to the AVP-KZN network, is "*embedded*" in the AVP practices which is acquired over time. This is reflected in Naseema's comments that "every-time you do a workshop you improve" (Naseema Interview, July, 2012). This specialized competence aligns to what Billet calls "*competence* in the community's discourse, activities and ways of behaving" (Viskovic, 2006, p.325). It is through increased practice that novice AVP facilitators learn, develop and gain the necessary expertise to become experienced facilitators and where experienced facilitators adapt or acquire new knowledge and skills. The expertise is also "*reciprocal*" as AVP facilitators shape, and are shaped, as they learn from other people's experiences:

You're learning constantly because ... you are the facilitator who is imparting somethings and getting back too. And you're always learning from other people's experiences (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

By participating in various network activities over a period of time and by engaging with other co-facilitators, peace educators learn to plan and prepare workshops:

I learnt that I had to prepare for the day ... We meet the day before ... So, I must make sure that I go through my AVP manual and learn my tasks, so I

would be able to be fluent in what I'm doing (Naseema Interview, July 2012).

Being thoroughly prepared, well organized and keeping to time are often characteristics of good educators/facilitators; however in the context of the AVP programme, thorough and rigid preparation could become a barrier to rich learning and sharing as this experienced facilitator discovered:

... sometimes, I found that in being very prepared, you focused on a structure and then you are unable to be flexible. So, that's why I think the key thing that I've learnt in AVP in preparing for a workshop is ...you can't be unprepared ... but there is a sense of allowing the process to unfold. So, I've learnt a little bit as well that not to go in too prepared in terms of what I want, you know, in terms of the learning I want to get from this particular activity. ... But, also to say well sometimes something else will be stimulated which seems to be important and meaningful to the participants and then you can't actually bring everything in ... (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

From the above extract, it is evident that AVP facilitation requires a unique blend of thorough preparation and flexibility, a skill that AVP facilitators need to develop. Whitaker (1988, p.32) also emphasized the need for peace educators 'to evolve a pedagogy which places the learner's personal experience rather than the teacher's subject preoccupation, at the fore-front'. With increased participation, facilitators observe others, facilitate workshops and listen and share success stories, acquire the skills of neutralizing power relations and being able to guide the process which allows the participants the space and opportunity to learn from their experiences. As the peace educators learn and develop, they master the necessary skills. By engaging with other

facilitators within the network, peace educators learn best practices from each other and learn to adapt and incorporate the learners' personal experiences within their workshops. The study shows that both novice and experienced facilitators learn through social interactions with other facilitators. Tim, an experienced facilitator, shares his learning experiences about how he learnt to compromise good time management for rich sharing of experiences while co-facilitating:

I tend to be very fixated on time ... But then I would tend to sacrifice rich sharing because of time, whereas Sifiso will never let time influence ... He will be so into the sharing and learning coming out that he loses track of time altogether. But, what I have learnt from him is to not be so obsessed with the time and allow at least some kind of sense of 'how rich is this' and 'how beneficial it is to everybody', to keep a process like this, deepening and deepening because people are learning something and sharing is important here ... (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

Whitaker (1988) also posits that peace educators need to be empathetic, good listeners and be able to acknowledge learners' experiences; respect the uniqueness of each individual; and be honest and open with participants. A novice facilitator comments on how network participation facilitates the learning of such skills: "AVP has taught me to listen to people; to consider them as valuable as well" (Chens Interview, August, 2012). The nature of the AVP workshops require the facilitators to be attentive, listen to the participants and be empathetic. Participants often become very emotional during the workshops, as expressed by another novice facilitator. "I noticed that one or two participants usually cry during that ..." (Naseema Interview, July, 2012).

It is through observation and co-facilitating workshops that facilitators learn to handle these situations in an effective and sensitive manner. The network participation evidently facilitates the acquisition of other essential peace educator skills such as respect for others and focusing on one's strengths rather than one's weaknesses, as reflected as one of the experienced facilitators:

Everybody you know is considered to be great. There's good in everybody. The fact that we believe there is good in every single person, we do not dwell on the weaknesses of the person. We dwell on the strength of the person (Busi Interview, June, 2012).

This practice of focusing on one's strength is a skill that must be developed by all AVP facilitators. A novice facilitator, who has a speech impediment, comments on the positive and motivational effect that this practice had on him:

Because Tim [*experienced, lead facilitator*] showed me that even though ... I can be a stammerer, I can project you see. It takes a lot of motivation to be a facilitator, to be in front of people to what it appears to be. So hey, ... I also felt encouraged because I felt it was more about appearance - but now I know it's otherwise so ya ... (Chens Interview, August, 2012).

The above extract highlights the potential that a lead facilitator and mentor have in encouraging, motivating and building up the self-confidence of a novice facilitator.

### **5.6.5 Development of confidence through network participation**

The participants were asked to talk about their experiences in the network and its impact on their lives. As they recalled their experiences on network participation, three broad and interrelated concepts emerged: the development of self-confidence, the role of affirmation and the role of empowerment in learning and development of AVP facilitators. According to Graven (2004), the development of confidence is “deeply interconnected with learning as changing meaning, practice, identity and community” (p.179) and involves “ways of learning through experiencing, doing, being, and belonging” (p.179). She critiques Wenger’s (1998) work which she argues, does not engage with the notion of “mastery” especially since the mastery of professional knowledge contributes to confidence as an educator. Graven (2004) therefore challenges Lave and Wenger’s concept of communities of practice for not acknowledging the role of confidence in learning. The recurring references to the development of self-esteem, self-confidence, inner peace and the impact of affirmation in this study supports Graven’s (2004) findings relating to the ‘phenomenon of confidence’ (p.177), which she identifies as an essential component of learning which facilitates the ‘movement from the periphery ... towards more central participation’ (p.179).

The AVP programme promotes confidence building through constructive criticism in all levels of workshops such that:

Even when there is something that you’ve done that is wrong, it’s not brought up in a manner that will crush you. You are built; you are built all time (Busi Interview, June, 2012).

The effective practice of “sandwiching” (discussed in chapter 4) and providing constructive criticism contributes to improving self-confidence as novice facilitators journey from periphery towards the centre as is evident in this quote:

I remember when we were making ... ground rules, when Tim said that we mustn't use 'put-downs'. So, if somebody's saying something, you mustn't criticize him or her in such a way that he or she will lose hope ... So, that's added to my self-confidence because I was used to the environment where everyone was putting me down (Bongi Interview, October, 2012).

The facilitators acknowledge the effect of continuous positive criticism received from co-facilitators. Co-facilitation and network participation also contributes to the personal development of peace educators as Chens remarked that it enabled him to find “inner peace within myself ... and ... made a very big impact on my life especially when it comes to self-management ... and self-discipline”. One facilitator claimed “it helps you become more confident as you are progressing,” and enabled her to develop a more positive self-image:

I was so negative about myself because ... I was experiencing rejection within the community and also within my family. So, this makes me to look down to lose self-esteem ... [AVP] changed, helped me, motivated me to think positively about myself (Bongi Interview, October, 2012).

Sasson (2008) concurs that self-confidence plays a vital role in performing any task or action:



Self-confidence is freedom from doubt, faith in yourself and in your abilities, self-esteem, and the inner conviction that you can go through any task or action. It is the mark on inner strength (Sasson, 2008, p.1).

Bongi comments on how network participation helped her to develop her self-confidence as she claims that:

it's about the inner strengths that's inside of you and it's up to you whether you use it positively or negatively. So I was reminded ... I have that inner strength so I want to use it positively (Bongi Interview, October, 2012).

This development of peace educator self-confidence is also reinforced by the concept of 'affirmation' which is practiced within the AVP-KZN network. Affirmation is the practice of making people conscious of positive characteristics and personality traits, and helps to improve a person's confidence. Having had the opportunity, of not only observing a Basic workshop, but also participating in one (as a means of experiencing AVP first-hand), I concur that the affirmation experience has a major impact on one's self-esteem. Each AVP workshop begins and ends with an affirmation activity. The workshop commences with an activity that requires each participant to write their first name preceded by a positive descriptor starting with the first letter of their name, for example, "Fantastic Faye", and "Smiling Sue". This encourages the participant to acknowledge one of their positive attributes. The workshop concludes with another exercise of affirmation, where each participant is encouraged to identify the positive attributes of others in the group. Each participant has a blank page with their name on it. Participants go around to each blank page and write something positive about that person. This is the affirmation poster that Faye and Naseema refer to in the extracts below. Naseema, comments on the empowering effect that this experience of affirmation has on her:

It makes you feel nice so that affirmation is very heartening. It empowers you to feel that you know that someone else cares about you and says something nice about you. Because, despite imparting what you know, you also want to feel good within yourself (Naseema Interview, July 2012).

As the workshop drew to a close, a graduation ceremony which also reflected the uniqueness of the AVP experience maintained the same non-hierarchical structure as the AVP workshops. Instead of the facilitators presenting the certificates, each participant had the opportunity to present the certificate and the affirmation poster to another participant. Some of the AVP facilitators acknowledged and described the major impact that affirmation' had on their lives within the network. Two facilitators, Naseema (a novice facilitator) and Faye (an experienced facilitator) describe the effect of affirmation on their lives:

When you are affirming others, you read out an affirmation for someone else and hmm, you write out an affirmation for someone else. You see how their face beams when you say something nice about them (Naseema Interview, July 2012).

This participant describes the impact of the affirmation experience on her life:

It always ... you know, when you facilitate, you have the affirmation posters and I have my affirmation posters all put away. And sometimes when I'm feeling a bit low and down, I pull them out and I

read them [laughing] and I kind of reaffirm myself with all of these things (Faye Interview, August, 2012).

This whole process leaves the participants with a feeling of renewed self-confidence and a sense of empowerment. According to Cranton (cited in Lawler, 2003, p.19), reflecting and taking action based on learning empowers the adult learners. The AVP program is designed to “empower people to lead non-violent lives through affirmation” (AVP Manual, 2002, p.A-4) and this feeling of empowerment which the network member attributed to the affirmation, is acquired through participation in network activities such as the gatherings, as Naseema reflects, “we leave the gathering ... we leave with something empowering” (Naseema Interview, July, 2012).

There appears to be a positive relationship between the development of confidence and a sense of empowerment. As the facilitator journeys through the different levels of participation, their level of participation increases. This facilitates the gradual transition from the periphery of the network towards the centre. The development of self-esteem and confidence are processes which occur over time and appear to be by-products of increased facilitation opportunities, motivation and positive feedback from significant others. This positively influences the transition from novice facilitator to experienced facilitator as the necessary knowledge, skills, expertise and experience are acquired. This improves the confidence and empowers the peace educator. Jeans and Forth (ND) also acknowledge the effect of confidence and competence which contribute to the development of identity of a professional educator.

#### **5.6.6 Developing a peace educator identity through network Participation**

Sachs (1999, p.4) posits that identity “provides a shared set of attributes, values ...

which enable the differentiation of one group from another” and according to Wenger (1998, p.149):

there is a profound connection between identity and practice. Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants.

Through increased participation in the network activities, facilitators move through the different levels of participation within the network, resulting in the development of an identity as a peace educator. Their identities change from novice facilitator to co-facilitator and then to lead-facilitator. Their continued and increased participation in network activities leads to the development of other new identities. According to Yerkes (2004) an educator’s identity is fluid and is influenced by the individual’s environment, the people that one interacts with, the multiplicity of roles as well as the personal experiences. The existence of multiple identities within the network emerged very clearly. The experienced facilitators participated in various network activities and according to (Eckert, 1992, p.8) “individual identity is based on the multiplicity of this participation.” The experienced AVP facilitators exhibit multiple identities dependent on the multiple roles that they play which necessitates different identities such as co-facilitator, lead-facilitator, member of the management committee, member of the executive committee of the management committee. Yerkes (2004) posits that a person’s identity is constantly changing. This identity is dependent on the specific situation, the people in that situation as well as each person’s different experiences which results in unique individuals and unique educators.

In addition to these multiple identities within the network, each peace educator joins the network with other pre-AVP identities such as: 1) a divorced woman (as revealed by Faye); 2) a white man (as Tim reveals below); and 3) a university student (Chens). The peace educators have to reconcile these different identities which inadvertently

influence the interaction with their AVP identities. The findings in this study show that multiple identities could pose a challenge in reconciling the different identities:

And it's just my identity as a white man, as a university person and as a coordinator of a project and as someone who represents funding that allowed activities to happen on the ground. I just found that in the year or so I was engaging with Zulu speakers ... in fact, that it was impossible given that time or approach, that I'm not exactly sure it was impossible for me to shed that identity. I tried in various ways, it didn't work. Perhaps and I'm not sure why, perhaps, because I wasn't able to convince people that I wasn't holding onto that identity or embodied that identity or because people themselves were so entrenched in a history or in a way that society operates. That there wasn't a breakthrough and I think in AVP, I think that we have to remember that as well.

Another interesting finding is the possibilities of conflicting identities as one facilitator reveals how one identity overpowers his other identity. While Tim acknowledges that the network should be focusing on supporting and training peace educators and developing their facilitation skills, his identity as a network coordinator required him to also focus on the business side of the network: "the constitution, policies and bank account":

I think that what my focus is on ...how to ... support peace educators and that's what we are not doing. And it seems that partly, part of that, is that in order to create a community of practice and bring people together to train or to focus more on the training and developing the facilitation skills of the facilitators, we would have to have money to pay for peoples' transport and bring them to a central place and spend four hours with them, you know. And there's a feeling that we can't operate

as a network till we are very clear about our identity or the constitution, the policies, the bank account ... (Tim, May 2012).

Wenger (1998, p.149) identifies five dimensions of identity, namely: 1) Identity as *negotiated experiences*; 2) Identity as *“community membership”*; 3) Identity as *“learning trajectory”*; 4) Identity as *nexus of “multi membership”*; 5) Identity as *a relationship “between the local and the global”*. The findings of this study shows the extent to which these five dimensions emerge in the formation of an AVP facilitator/peace educator identity.

AVP facilitators define who they are through: 1) their experiences and regular engagement in the AVP network activities; 2) by what is familiar and unfamiliar; 3) by assessing where they started and where they are going to:

there are many people who did the AVP facilitator course and ... they are not facilitators (Naseema, July, 2012).

The above comment made by Naseema, shows that although the successful completion of AVP facilitator course certifies a participant as an AVP facilitator, some facilitators may not have acquired an identity as an AVP facilitator due to lack of opportunities or lack of interest to facilitate workshops as reflected by this facilitator:

we have some facilitators who come to all the gatherings but other than that we don't see any commitment ... (Naseema, 2012).

These facilitators operate on the periphery, merely observing from the outskirts. The development of their identity as a peace educator could be enhanced through increased

participation. AVP peace educators are continually shaped through their individual and collective network efforts, by reflecting on their past experiences and projecting future experiences:

You end up in a place where constantly you are groomed. You are built ... at all time. And we share the same vision in the network, that's what anchors us together (Busi, 2012).

Two participants brought the identity of an educator into the AVP network. It wasn't something that emerged in AVP:

I feel very comfortable as a facilitator, in fact that's an identity that I have and I relate to that and when I'm in a workshop I find, I find the dialogue, facilitating kind of dialogue, I find that stimulating and I find it easy (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

Although Tim and Faye joined the network with experience as facilitators, they had to develop their identity as an AVP facilitator. The environment, the people they were interacting with and the experiences within the AVP network differed from that of their prior facilitation environments, people and experiences. Tim relates his experiences in the army where he was a "war educator" and now he facilitates as a "peace educator".

... for nearly 8 hours a day I trained people and it was all army stuff, how to take a weapon apart ... so, that is what I did and I was a fitness instructor so that was my role to train them ... so, that's when I began my life as an educator (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

One thing that stands out is the difference in the style of facilitation which both identities (war-educator and peace-educator) entail. The identity of being a “war educator” involved a very regimental, power-laden, and hierarchical type of facilitation style which is contrary to the AVP style. In the AVP workshops, the facilitator does not possess that type of power or control as AVP promotes a non-hierarchical facilitation style as discussed in chapter 4.

Another interesting perspective on the development of peace educator identity was shared by one of the experienced facilitators:

... the issue of [*AVP branded*] t-shirts and caps dominate for people who don't feel that they're part of the network ... because for me ... and other people in the management committee, ourselves, the whole obsession with t-shirts and caps and things is not an issue... But the more on the periphery you are, the more it seems the facilitators are, you know, it became a big issue. ... facilitators on the periphery ... don't have an identity where they are as a peace educator. ... so if you have a t-shirt and a cap AVP blah, blah, blah, people are going to say what's that about and they'll get an identity. So the identity becomes the T-shirt, highlights people to an identity so, in that way, maybe that's the message that the ... facilitators on the periphery are giving to us (Tim Interview, May, 2012).

The above extract reveals Tim's observation and reflection on an issue that was constantly raised in the network gatherings. While the experienced facilitators already have an identity as a peace educator, the novice and 'peripheral facilitators' seem to be unable to develop this identity on their own accord. They therefore require the AVP



branded items to gain recognition and an identity as a peace educator and AVP facilitator. The development and sustainment of a strong peace educator identity is what distinguishes both novice and experienced AVP network members (peace educators) from other educators or other people. The findings of this study demonstrate that increased participation in the network facilitates the development of a stronger sense of peace educator identity. As facilitators start to facilitate more workshops and become more engaged in other network activities, they enhance the development of their confidence (as discussed in an earlier section) and identity as a peace educator.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

From the analysis of the data, it is evident that the AVP network is a rich source of informal and social learning. The diversity of the network membership facilitates rich learning experiences. Facilitators learn and develop as their participation in the network activities increases. Learning is acquired by observing, doing and reflecting on experiences within the network. The next chapter provides concluding remarks and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In exploring the learning and development of peace educators within the AVP-KZN network, this study has traced the learning trajectory of three novice and three experienced AVP facilitators via life experiences and learning experiences within the network. Viewing the AVP-KZN network through the lens of Lave and Wenger's (1991) Communities of Practice Theory as well as the perceptions and experiences of the AVP facilitators, has led to the conclusion that the AVP-KZN network is a rich site for learning, development and support of peace educators. The study also reinforces the view that adult educators (peace educators) learn informally from experience, by participation in the network and through social interactions with significant others. Both novice and experienced facilitators learnt and developed as a result of the dynamic experiences and diverse membership of the network. While the learning experiences of novice facilitators centred on the application of the AVP pedagogy, principles, techniques and values which they had been exposed to during their training, the experienced facilitators shared their learning experiences which involved changing their terms of reference and applying best practices which they observed from co-facilitating with others with different styles to them.

### **6.2 Limitations**

The study was limited in that it only involved a small number of members of one network. Findings on the learning and development of peace educators therefore, cannot be generalized and can only be seen as specific to this particular context. It would be interesting to conduct this study in other AVP networks to ascertain the extent

to which the learning and development of peace educators is facilitated in other networks.

One salient limitation of this study was time constraints. I was unable to observe as many workshops as I had initially intended. My initial intention to conduct two in-depth interviews at different times did not materialize for one of two reasons: time constraints and/or personal preference of interviewees to have both interviews conducted consecutively, on the same day. This arrangement may have compromised the richness of data which could have been gathered had the interviewees had time to reflect on the first interview before commencing with the second interview.

Since I am not a member of the AVP network, I conducted this study as an outsider, and orientated myself to the process of peace education by attending an AVP Basic AVP workshop. This knowledge and experience was further enriched by me observing other workshops, analysing various AVP documents and conducting in-depth interviews with three novice and three experienced AVP facilitators. The study sought to gain a response to the following research questions:

### **6.3 Research questions**

1. What are the underlying motivations for participation in the AVP network?
2. How do members participate in and experience the network?
3. What role does the network serve in terms of the learning and development of peace educators?

### **6.3.1 Summary of findings relating to research question 1: What are the underlying motivations for participation in the AVP-KZN network?**

My request for the AVP facilitators to share something about themselves yielded rich data on their personal experiences, learning experiences and also revealed their underlying motivations for participation in the AVP network. An analysis of this data revealed three salient motivators for network participation namely: 1) the on-going violence in South Africa; 2) past experiences of rejection, exposure to violent and abusive behaviour; and 3) the internalization of family values instilled during childhood.

Some AVP facilitators were motivated by their concern about the extreme violence that plagues South Africa. Having been exposed to the alternatives to violence techniques during the AVP Basic Workshop, some facilitators were motivated by the realization that the AVP programme was a means of curbing this violence. Another underlying reason for network participation emanated from the facilitators' past experiences of being bullied, being rejected by family or being a victim of an abusive relationship. Having personally experienced the transformative and therapeutic power of the AVP programme in counteracting the negative effects of bullying, rejection and abuse, some facilitators were motivated to become AVP facilitators and subsequently AVP-KZN network members. Participating in the network helps some facilitators to face their own fears, and enables them to develop their confidence and a sense of empowerment. While some facilitators were motivated by negative past experiences, some were motivated by positive past life experiences. Some facilitators were motivated by family values that were instilled in them from an early age such as helping other people, being generous and spirituality.

### **6.3.2 Summary of findings relating to research question 2: How do members participate in, and experience the network?**

The study revealed that there are different levels of member participation in the network. The experienced facilitators are more actively involved in the core activities of the network than the novice facilitators. The novice facilitators attributed their limited participation to various factors including: limited opportunities for workshop facilitation, lack of time and lack of interest in taking on additional network roles and responsibilities.

Both the experienced and novice facilitators commented on the supportive nature of the network which facilitates the learning of context specific knowledge, skills and attitudes. The members used the analogy of a family, team, and life-support system to project the nurturing and supportive experiences of network participation. The existence of underlying tension and potential conflict situations also emerged.

### **6.3.3 Summary of findings relating to research question 3: What role does the network serve in terms of the learning and development of peace educators?**

The facilitators have articulated the major role that the network served in exposing them to a rich world of collaborative and social learning and their development as peace educators. Network participation facilitated the acquisition of various types of learning including incidental, transformative and experiential learning. As the facilitators journeyed from the periphery towards the centre, their levels of participation and interaction with significant others increased and new knowledge and skills were acquired as their attitudes were transformed.

The study revealed six key learning components that have emerged as a result of participation in the network namely: learning from diversity; learning through changes in community; learning through changes in meaning; learning through practice; developing an identity as a peace educator; and learning through the development of self. The degree of learning acquired, appears to be relational to the level of participation. As participation increases, learning increases. The study revealed that the diversity experienced within the network, enriched the learning experiences of its members and positively influenced the development of identity and self-confidence for both novice and experienced facilitators. The newly acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes are attributed to the richness of the collaborative and social learning which is enabled in a supportive and conducive network environment.

## **6.4 Summary and key findings**

One of the major findings in this study relates to the emergence of the AVP-KZN network as a site of rich learning and development of peace educators. The findings in this study revealed the extent to which the peace educators were actively involved in their learning as they planned their workshops (during preparation sessions), engaged in discussions and sharing of experiences (during gatherings), engaged in operational and strategic planning of the network (ManCom and Board of Trustees meetings), observed and were observed by facilitators (during workshops). This active involvement in the AVP network activities enabled them to acquire new knowledge, develop new skills and changed their practices as necessitated. The data revealed that the AVP-KZN network is a rich source of learning and facilitates the development of professional and personal knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

The study found that increased participation was the key to learning and development of peace educators. Learning appeared to be relational to the level of participation. Increased participation in network activities facilitates the transition from peripheral participation towards central participation. The experienced facilitators tend to play multiple roles and have multiple identities. The various roles and identities often necessitate the acquisition of the relevant knowledge and skills which, according to the facilitators, is acquired through network participation. The study also highlights the various types of adult learning that emerged from increased network participation. The peace educators' learning and development was framed by the incidental, transformative and experiential learning acquired within the network.

The study also reveals the merits of collaborative and social learning. Working in teams (with co- and lead facilitators) has enabled novice facilitators to learn the contextual knowledge and skills of the AVP program and develop confidence and the identity of a peace educator. It was also found that while the formal and non-formal learning laid the foundation and provided the facilitators with content knowledge, the actual learning to facilitate (pedagogical skills) was acquired by actually facilitating workshops and observing others 'in action'. The wealth of peace educator knowledge is thus gained informally through practice.

The study also revealed various barriers to learning which are experienced within the AVP-KZN network. Some facilitators have commented on the limited access to participation, financial constraints, inappropriate timing of preparation session and the existence of tension among members, which can have an adverse effect of the learning and development of peace educators.

## 6.5 Recommendations for further research

There is an abundance of literature on collaborative and social learning relating to teacher education and training. However, there appears to be limited literature on peace educator learning, training and development. This study has revealed the variety and richness of learning which is facilitated by network participation. However, since it was conducted using a specific unit of analysis, the findings are limited to this case study. It would be interesting to explore the learning and development of peace educators in other networks with specific focus on the role of social learning on the development of identity and confidence, as well as, the effect of diversity on learning and development of adult educators.

Using Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of Communities of Practice as a lens has enabled me to analyse the data and categorize the recurring learning experiences into six interrelated components which emerged very strongly. Four of the six components of learning (as discussed in chapter 5) which emerged in this study supports Wenger's (1991) learning model, namely, the changes in community, meaning, practice, and identity. The fifth component, the "phenomenon of confidence", was also identified by Graven as an important component of learning within a community of practice, which she adds to Wenger's model. While Wenger (1998) acknowledges the merits of diversity in enhancing the productivity of a community of practice, this component is not reflected as a component in Wenger's learning model.

The "phenomenon of diversity" emerged strongly as an integral component of learning in this study, but not in others. The diversity of the network membership has emerged as a rich contributor to the learning, development and support of peace educators in the AVP-KZN network. Both novice and experienced facilitators described the merits of engaging with facilitators who have different personalities, facilitation styles and



experiences which enabled them to adapt to the dynamic nature of the AVP workshops and its unique pedagogy. It would be interesting to conduct further research on how the 'phenomena of diversity' impacts on learning, development and support of adult educators in other social networks.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

This study has helped me uncover the extent to which people working within a group who share the same passion, knowledge, skills, resources and experiences can enrich the learning experiences of each other. I am thankful for the exposure and enrichment that this study has afforded me in broadening my view on the potent role of informal learning in the lives of adult educators working for peace and justice.

I concur with Braman and Randall (1998) that, although conflict is part of our everyday human experiences, one has only to read a newspaper, or watch the television news to realise that society lacks, and is in desperate need for, successful conflict resolution and peace-making skills. In view of the extreme violence being experienced in KwaZulu-Natal, it is evident that our society is in desperate need of peace education. This highlights the need for more attention to be focused on the learning and development of peace educators in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa. Braman and Randall (1998) posit that adult educators are required to proactively address this challenge by teaching peace to adults since it is critical to personal and social change. Learning to teach peace education to adults, however, does not merely involve training educators to use prescribed conflict resolution formulae. The effective training of peace educators involves a process of guiding the participant to become aware of the underlying assumptions that influence their conflict, being able to challenge these assumptions, and transform their thinking and behaviour to enable them to consider new ways of thinking (Braman and Randall, 1998). The AVP programme and AVP-KZN network appears to be doing this!

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## **Annexure 1: Consent form**

### **INFORMED CONSENT**

I, Shireen Rowena Barnabas, am conducting research into the learning and development of peace educators at University of KwaZulu-Natal. The research explores the impact of the AVP network participation on the learning and development of three new peace educators and 3 experienced peace educators. It seeks to understand the formal, non-formal and informal learning, supportive networks and pedagogical practice on the learning and development of novice peace educators and their peace education practice.

This research forms part of a larger project under the leadership/supervision of Dr Vaughn John. Should you wish to contact him, Dr John can be contacted on email at Johnv@ukzn.ac.za or telephonically on 033 2605069.

I would like to interview you on two occasions, which are suitable to you, and to make a voice recording, about your experiences as a peace educator.

If you choose to remain anonymous, your name will not be mentioned in the research. A pseudonym will be used throughout the research. With your permission and that of your learners, I would also request to observe a peace education workshop which you are facilitating.

The recordings and transcriptions of the interviews and a copy of the observation notes will be made available to you for verification. All data collected will be kept safe at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for 5 years, thereafter it will be destroyed.

If you are willing to be interviewed please note that your participation is voluntary and that you may withdraw from the study at any stage and for any reason.

**DECLARATION**

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

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, without any prejudice, should I so desire.

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

\_\_\_\_\_

DATE

## **Annexure 2: Interview Schedule**

<b>INTERVIEW INTRODUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION</b>	
1	Introductions
2	Purpose of study
3	Ethics and rights of participants
4	Consent for interview
5	Permission for recording
6	Choice of pseudonym
7	Interview Question/Queries

### **FIRST IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW: FOCUS IS ON LIFE HISTORIES**

Tell me a little about yourself.

How did you hear about the AVP workshops?

What motivated your participation in the AVP: Basic workshop?

What motivated your completing the Facilitator workshop?

Tell me about your experiences of the AVP?

How has it impacted on your life?

Have you had any formal training in peace education/conflict resolution?

What does 'peace education' mean to you?

How do you hope to use the knowledge and experiences gained from AVP in the future?

### **SECOND INTERVIEW: FOCUS IS ON PARTICIPATION IN THE AVP NETWORK**

How would you describe the AVP network?

When did you join the network?

Why did you join the network?

Tell me about your first experience when you joined the network?

Tell me about your subsequent experiences in the network?

Has participating in the AVP network had any influence in how you see yourself?

Has your participation in a network impacted on your ability as a facilitator?

Are there any advantages of being a network member? If yes, please explain.

Are there any disadvantages of being a network member? If yes, please explain.

What roles/activities have you participated in, in the network? How long did it take for you to feel comfortable in the network? What helped or obstructed your transition?

Has any particular member influenced your participation/learning? Who? How?

What is your most memorable learning experience within the network? How has this experience impacted on you as a facilitator?

Is there any new knowledge that you gained from interacting with other members? Explain.

How does network participation relate to your formal studies?

Would you recommend network participation to other peace educators? Why?

What do you hope that your studies and participation in the network will do for you in the future?

**Thank you for participating in this interview**

## Annexure 3: Ethical Clearance Form



Research Office, Govan Mbeki Centre  
Westville Campus  
Private Bag x54001  
DURBAN, 4000  
Tel No: +27 31 260 8350  
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609  
snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

27 March 2012

Mrs SR Barnabas (211558348)  
School of Education

Dear Mrs Barnabas

Protocol reference number: HSS/0190/012M

Project title: Learning and development via network participation: A case study of a peace educator network

In response to your application dated 02 May 2012, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

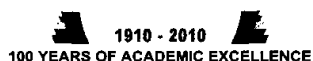
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....  
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)  
Humanities & Social Science Research Ethics Committee

cc Supervisor: Dr Vaughn John  
cc Academic Leader: Dr MN Davids  
cc Mr N Memela / Mrs S Naicker



Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville