

**Health Promotion in Ink: Grassroots Comics as a Medium for
Participatory Communication in the Khwe community.**

by

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Declaration

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Sciences, in the Graduate Programme in Culture, Communication and Media Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was not used. This dissertation is being submitted for the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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A special mention to Tam - if it were not for you I would be lost and not nearly as happy.

"Don't excuse yourself from life today,

On the pretence of your past..."

- August Burns Red.

"Every word that's ever written,

Will fall short of its intent."

- Protest the Hero

Abstract

This dissertation engages in a longitudinal study of the method of grassroots comics (Packalen & Sharma, 2007) amongst the Khwe people in the community of Platfontein, which is situated outside of Kimberley, South Africa. The study is largely informed by contemporary shifts in development theory, particularly that of participatory communication, which values individuals who live in the community as active participants in the research process.

The use of grassroots comics (Packalen & Sharma, 2007) is largely based on theoretical concepts surfacing in current literature regarding the field development communication, which is somewhat critical of older, more dominant theories of development. Instead of applying a predetermined, uniform model of communication to multiple different settings in which varying development issues exist, this study is driven by the *active involvement* of community stakeholders throughout every stage of the research process. This includes the identification of community issues, the utilization of grassroots comics in the context of adapting and communicating about those issues on a community-wide scale, and the overall analysis of the process once research has been carried out.

This particular study focuses on general health issues and how these might affect the Khwe community from a development perspective. However, what is of central importance is how the comics created by certain stakeholders in the community might serve as a means of promoting participatory communication amongst the local population, for the sake of alleviating certain health issues prevalent in the community itself. The practical nature of grassroots comics as a forum for health communication is what is of particular interest in this study.

Purposive sampling techniques are employed in order to identify key participants and informants in the research process, to present a case-specific analysis of grassroots comics in use, and for purposes of limiting this study. Data collection methods applied to the research setting and research findings are conducted using various qualitative research techniques including participant observation, interviews, discussions and a participatory grassroots comics workshop.

List of Acronyms

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CCMS - Centre for Culture, Media and Society

CODESA - Convention for a Democratic South Africa

CPA - Communal Property Association

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ICT - Information Communication Technology

NACCW - National Association of Child Care Workers (South Africa)

NCO - Non-Commissioned Officer

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

PAR - Participatory Action Research

PRA - Participatory Rural Appraisal

RDP - Reconstruction and Development Programme

SABC - South African Broadcasting Corporation

SADF - South African Defence Force

SASI - South African San Institute

SWAPO - South West Africa People's Organisation

TB - Tuberculosis

UN - United Nations

UNESCO - United Nations' Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

WIMSA - Working Groups of Indigenous Minorities

Field-work site

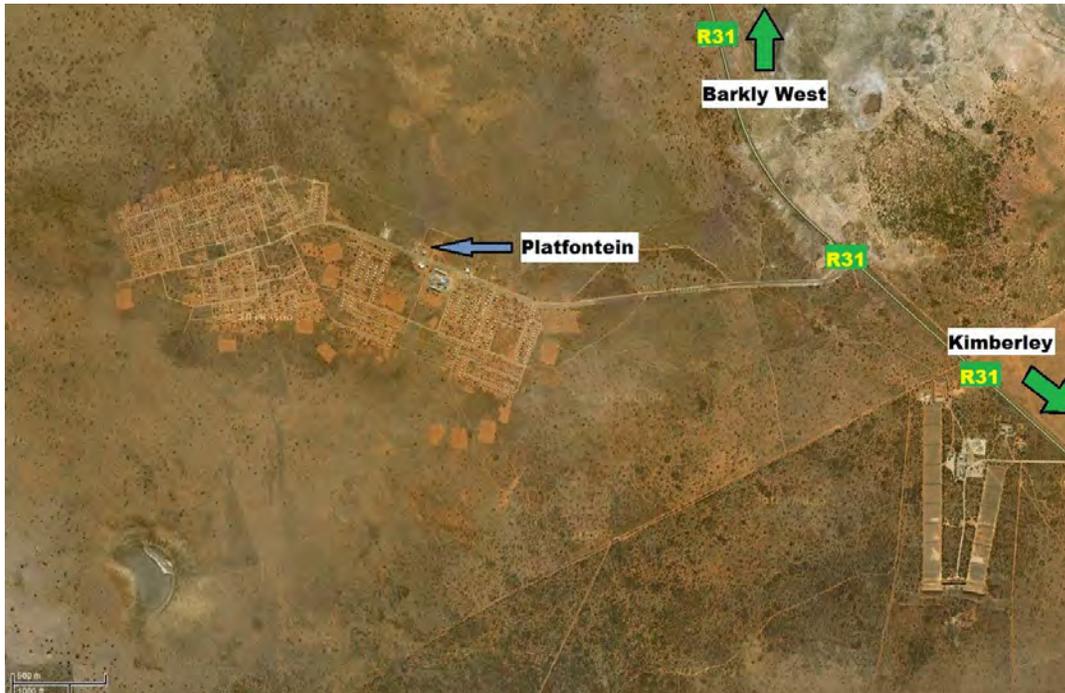


Figure 1 - Map of Platfontein



Figure 2 - Map of South Africa

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation was inspired by my visit to the Platfontein community in 2008 as part of a group of students on a field-trip to the Kalahari. My research is part of the Rethinking Indigeneity project, headed by Professor Keyan Tomaselli, that has been running for some 20 years and is focused on issues involving the Kalahari Bushmen, ranging from representation and identity, to cultural tourism, as well as development communication (see e.g., Tomaselli 2005, 2007). My particular interest was on working with a community in discovering the usefulness of comics in health communication.

The first community we visited in 2008 was at Platfontein, just outside Kimberley, South Africa. Immediately I became interested after shadowing a Masters student, Thomas Hart, who was conducting research on the community radio station, X-Kfm. I wrote a research paper on my experiences in the field, and chose to examine how soccer was played by the different communities we visited. This allowed me the opportunity of meeting people in Platfontein, and setting the platform for my Masters research.

Platfontein consists of two different Bushmen groups, namely the !Xun and the Khwe, who share this piece of land and its services¹ equally, as one geographical community. I became well acquainted with the Khwe mostly because of their location (being at the entrance to the formal settlement) and from meeting a lot more Khwe people than I did !Xun.

Issues of naming

Much debate has occurred around the naming of øBushmenø or -Sanø (Gordon, 1992), therefore when using the term Bushman, I refer to a culturally diverse group of people who consist of a number of different clans, and who come from different regions of the Kalahari. The terms Khwe and !Xun, however, refer to the two different groups of Bushmen living at Platfontein.

Robert Gordon and Stuart Douglas (2000: 4) explain that the Bushmen are not one unified group, as they refer to themselves by different names. Although the word Bushman may be perceived as being derogatory by some scholars, the word originated from the Dutch word

¹ The services mentioned here refer to the community clinic, the school, SASI, the radio station, department of home affairs and the convenient store. All of these services are shared by both the !Xun and Khwe.

used to describe the San peoples - *Bosjemen* (Robbins, 2004: 1). This referred to the nomadic, hunter-gatherer lifestyle the Bushmen lead as they were foragers more than farmers. The word became synonymous with the San people over time. I use the term Bushmen here because the participants in the research refer to themselves as Bushmen too. Whilst working in the Platfontein community, it became clear to me that participants with whom I was working seemed comfortable with the term Bushman (either through their own responses to the term, or through observation of the term in use). The word seemed to hold a sense of nostalgia in terms of the Khwe and !Xun involvement in the Border War as the Bushman battalion (cf. Robbins, 2004), and also reflects their traditional lifestyles as being connected to nature.

On a side note, this dissertation incorporates the real names of informants instead of employing pseudonyms when referencing interviews or field notes as the subject community requests that their names be used in full, and that there be no masking of their involvement in the research process. Moreover, the relationship between the researcher and the community has been established over several years and is an extension of a pre-existing relationship between the Centre for Communication, Media and Society, and the community of Platfontein.

Enter Grassroots Comics

I had read about comics being used for development purposes in small rural communities in Asia and Africa, and wanted to understand how this might work in the context of the Platfontein community. The central theme of this research is focused on the medium of grassroots comics, a method intended for community-based participatory communication as introduced by authors and development workers such as Leif Packalen and Sharad Sharma (2007). Grassroots comics are intended to be a platform for communication amongst people within the community about particular issues that need to be confronted. These issues may range from civil rights to basic health concerns to domestic violence, and are often grouped as themes when constructing a comic story message. The point is that the themes reflected are selected by, and bear weight in the lives of the people in the community.

Grassroots comics dramatise specific issues which are brought into the debate in the community. Comics are often related to some activity of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) or a community group, and are rarely the work of an individual in his/her own capacity (Packalen & Sharma, 2007: 12).

This study is grounded by theories of development communication, but most specifically, the paradigm of participatory communication. This paradigm acknowledges the idea that there is no universal path to development, rather "it must be conceived of as an integral, multidimensional, and dialectic process that can differ from one society to another" (Servaes, 1999: 78). A central tenet of participatory communication is a focus on community-based modes of communication that are horizontal in nature, as opposed to top-down, one-way forms of communication associated with mass media like television, or nation-wide promotional campaigns.

Grassroots comics ðare made by socially active people themselves, rather than by campaign and art professionals. They are genuine voices which encourage local debate" (Packalen & Sharma, 2007: 11). My aim is to discover the relevance of grassroots comics as a participatory method of development communication. The focus rests on health-related issues affecting the Platfontein community, and how these can be addressed. This study seeks to discover the relationship between theory and practice as applied to grassroots comics. If comics constitute a practical, accessible form of development communication within the sample population, then they may serve as an effective method of participatory communication.

Chapter 2: Sketching for Social Development - A Literature Review

The key departure point of this study rests on the idea that each different context involving an aspect of development requires more than just the application of previous modes of thought regarding the matter of participatory communication. Development must be conceived of as an integral, multidimensional, and dialectic process that often differs from one society to another (Servaes, 1999). "Because there is no reality *out there* separate from human perception and, as put forth in the multiplicity paradigm, there is no universal path to development, it is maintained that each community or grouping must proceed from its own plan in consideration of its own situation" (Servaes, 1999: 113).

A frequent pre-occupation amongst development scholars leans largely towards the use of information communication technologies (ICTs) in supporting the development of infrastructure within underdeveloped nations or localities. The individual consumer has revolutionized the way in which individuals (and groups) affect dominant communication systems already set in place; and the Internet has paved the way for instant global and local information transmission. Despite interest into these respective fields, and the potential benefits they offer for development communication, there is less interest regarding less technical forms of media in current scholarly writing. Increasingly, we are being caught up with the idea that as a result of our shifting technological circumstances, models of communication and development strategies too, should shift in accordance with this ever-changing technological environment.

However, in rural communities where these modern forms of technology are haphazardly distributed or irregularly accessible, how can one possibly "and accurately" - measure the affects of ICTs as mediums for development? This question is not easily answered and is not posed for this reason, but merely to stress the point that older, more accessible forms of media might very well prove useful as communication resources. By older more accessible media I refer to - in this case -print media (like that of magazines, posters, pamphlets, books, comics etc.), theatre, education entertainment, participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques, local press and rural radio, where the individual may feel more open to express opinions and ideas to others in the comfort of their own surrounding, with a means with which they are possibly more familiar.

Highlighting the differences

Community radio has proven valuable as a means of promoting collective dialogue and fostering a sense of empowerment amongst members of a given community by providing a platform for them to express opinions and ideas (cf. Boeren, 1994). Television too is a compelling medium as it easily attracts an audience and includes the extra advantage of the visual dimension (*Ibid*, 1994). Participatory video is a particular technique that involves a group or community in shaping and creating their own film, and the idea behind this is that making a video is easy and accessible ó with the right idea and resources - and is a great way of bringing people together to explore issues, voice concerns or simply to be creative and tell stories.

However, because of the expense of television or video, development professionals and communication specialists still consider radio to be a more useful medium within developing countries (*Ibid*, 1994). Both mediums have been successfully adapted, in certain contexts, to meet the development needs of local communities. However, print also offers its own unique insights and approaches to the process of development communication.

Picturing the solution: An overview of print media and community participation

Printed media combines words, pictures and diagrams to convey accurate and clear information. Their great advantage is that they can be looked at or read for as long as the viewer or reader wishes, and can be referred to time and time again (Boeren, 1994: 154). Additionally, õ[p]osters and images are often used to raise awareness on a topic. It is important to combine them with interactive activities with community membersö (Bessette, 2004: 122). Undoubtedly, the question for most development workers and/or communication experts is whether or not the medium is suitable for the community in which a development initiative is focused. However, õthe adaptation of traditional media for education and social action are encouraged because of their cultural values and their inexpensivenessö (Servaes, 1991). This further stresses the point that print media are often more accessible and affordable to communities where the availability of other, more expensive forms of media might be scarce or non-existent.

Defining development

Development is an ambiguous word and requires a degree of simplification for the purpose of this chapter. This study focuses on participatory communication that stresses the importance of collective dialogue and local culture in the context of participatory research (Servaes, 1996; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Tomaselli, 2001). This study therefore borrows from the paradigm of Another Development² in identifying the researcher, not as an active agent of change, but rather as a facilitator of participation and action (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; White, 2004; Manyozo, 2008). Print media offers a variety of potential strategies and resources for promoting a participatory aspect within a community where there are common issues that need to be voiced. The reason why this is so, is because these media convey ideas beyond the context of interpersonal communication. Ideas are deposited in physical form (comics); therefore they can be interpreted at a distance, in time as well as in space (Boeren 1994: 122). Moreover, since the nature of print media is of a visual dimension, the reader is more likely to be attracted to the narrative of the image, as opposed to the necessity of having to make sense of printed text in order to understand the message. (*Ibid*, 1994)

Participatory Approaches to development communication

Let us not assume that print media is the best and only way to go about successfully discussing a problem. Rather, that print is one of many approaches towards promoting a sense of expression and co-operation within communities. The handing back of decisions to the development beneficiaries is one of the most significant moves towards empowerment (White, 2004: 12).

Community members are the driving force behind participation, for it is through their knowledge that the message is created. "The expansion of small group and community media increasingly allows all to become producers of messages and to affirm their perception of reality to themselves and to others in the community" (Rodriguez, in White, 2001). Print media offers the development practitioner the opportunity to present a viable medium for participatory community action as producers and stakeholders of the messages being created.

² Another development originated in the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in the 1970s, addressing the idea that development is a layered phenomenon as a whole and incorporates ecological, social, cultural, economic, institutional and political dimensions which can only be understood in their systematic interrelationships. The paradigm focuses on the satisfaction of needs, beginning with the eradication of poverty relying on the strength of societies which undertake it and stressing that the approach is in harmony with the environment requiring structural transformations that are both necessary and possible (Ascroft et al. 1994).

Therefore indigenous knowledge³ should be treated as integral to the process when using posters, pamphlets, comics, books, etc. to promote dialogue, as these media draw from the visual and social perceptions of the community members themselves (Servaes, 1996).

The problem that presents itself when dealing with words like 'communication medium' or 'development communication tool' is that they have little or no meaning to the people within the community, and are rather strict in their definitions within academic writing. However, in a situation where indigenous knowledge is inherently assumed, how can one evaluate the reception of a particular 'communication tool' when interpreters use completely different terms of reference, or communicate in a different mother-tongue than that of the researcher. There is no simple answer, and the degrees of reception of a particular communication medium (in any given development context) are too diverse to discuss in this section. However, there is either a general dislike for a particular communication tool that is physically and cognitively evident in the reactions of the community members, or the members generally accept the medium and see its adaptive potential as a useful means of promoting the communication of common issues encountered by the community as a whole (Packalen & Sharma, 2007). Participatory research offers a problem-solving approach. The objective is to uncover the causes of community problems and to mobilize creative human potential to solve social problems by transforming the conditions underlying the problems (Servaes: 1991).

The concern may not necessarily lie in the choice of medium itself, but rather with the way in which the medium is utilised by the members of a community in discussing and dealing with a particular issue. 'Participatory research involves people gaining an understanding of their situation, confidence and ability to change that situation' (White, 1984: 28). Therefore it would be imperative to focus rather on the nature of the issue.

The Comic as a canvas for Practice

A number of theoretical contributions to the medium of print and its practical use in the field of development communication have come to the fore in recent years (Boeren and Epskamp, 1992; Bessette, 2004; Packalen and Sharma, 2007), owing to the seemingly useful nature of

³ Indigenous knowledge refers to the long-standing traditions and practices of certain regional, indigenous, or local communities. It is an integral part of the culture and history of a local community and is often expressed through stories, folklore, rituals, songs and even laws. Indigenous knowledge is orally passed for generations from person to person (Brokensha et al. 1980).

print communication in situations of lesser developed or under-developed communities. It is important to highlight the scholarly work responsible for such contributions in order to gain a better understanding of the subject under review. This study deals with only one aspect of print media, and does not encompass the entire scale of this group. The aspect I am speaking of is that of still, panel images of a sketched nature accompanied by simple text to produce a simple narrative - or more specifically ó comics. õComic books come in various formats ranging from fairy tales and adventure stories to historical documentaries and instruction guides. The information is given through sequences of drawings which contain text balloons and/or simple text running below the pictureö (Boeren, 1994: 158)

Although these media may combine images with printed text (in the form of speech bubbles), their effectiveness lies in the telling of a story which appeals to the visual senses. This is one of the many attractive qualities of pamphlets, posters and comics ó their ability to create a narrative through simple pictures or illustrations, which are often easily read by passers-by (cf. Bessette, 2004; Boeren, 1994). Packalen and Sharma (2007) have dealt extensively with comics and wall-posters as the primary tools for promoting health awareness, human rights and community empowerment in their projects. In the case studies discussed throughout *Grassroots Comics* (2007), they adapt the use of comics for the specific needs and purposes of the community in dealing with local issues which require an engaged sense of participation and communication. Like the phrase *grassroots* suggests, these initiatives may be guided by development practitioners, but they are driven and sustained by community members themselves.

While some have glorified the use of comics as a practical form of development communication (cf. Packalen and Sharma, 2007; Boeren, 1994), it does not, however, suggest that the use of comics comes without any drawbacks or hindrances, especially in health communication:

For some time there has been controversy in development circles about the use of comic books to disseminate health information to rural populations. Many development communicators believe that comics are not a good medium for disseminating these messages, whether for adults or for children, since understanding the visual image requires a sophistication of perception developed only after a good deal of exposure to reading and pictorial materials(Rana, 1987: 1)

Additionally, [i]n developed countries, comic books have long been regarded as children's literature, and an aid to help develop an interest in books, however, that many educators and parents were opposed to the idea of comic books because they were afraid that comic books would keep children from developing proper reading skills (Boeren, 1994: 158). Similar arguments have been presented in congruence with the negative influence of excessive television watching. It may be that because of the idea that comics were considered to be children's literature, it was assumed that comics might be a good educational medium for semi-literates and illiterates (Boeren, 1994; Rana, 1987).

Not all people possess the same level of visual literacy. In simple terms, the aforementioned scholars suggest that people in rural areas are possibly less exposed to pictorial images on a daily basis than are those living in urban areas. However, the success of the comic lies in the correct format of the story within the respective community and the participatory process inherently involved in the creation of the comics, not holistically within the images themselves. Moreover, grassroots comics are not designed to be intricate and elaborate with regards to detail, but rather to appeal to the average passer-by through simple illustrations and guided text (either in bubbles or in panels) so that the message is easily read (Packalen & Sharma, 2007). Community members who are involved in the creation of comics adapt messages into their local language, so that those who have trouble making sense of the visual image can then combine the simple text with the narrative of the picture to understand the comic more clearly.

Comics that are designed for commercial purposes and for popular-culture are often flashy, detailed, and contain fairly long and complex storylines. Noting this difference, rural communities often view these flashy formats with caution (Rana, 1987). Therefore, a smaller, less flashy format is the optimum choice for grassroots comics, printing on paper with ink or pencil and photocopying the end product. The aim here is to construct short-stories contained within three or four panels of a standardized comic book format, which are drawn by hand, and contain a simple story (behind which the moral/message of the comic's narrative will be based). This can be done on a single sheet of paper with a pen or pencil, the key component being the message that is to be shared (Packalen & Sharma, 2007).

Grassroots comics can extend beyond issues that are on the surface to express hidden concerns, thoughts and perceptions about somewhat sensitive issues (which is usually the case when dealing with health communication) where expression through words might be

awkward or difficult (Packalen & Sharma, 2007). Through the creation of the actual stories and through the process of generating comics, the group process of comic-making can foster opportunities for interaction, collective thinking and consensus-building (Das Gupta, 2005). In other words it evokes the active dialogue of community groups, in a participative and creative manner.

Problems of Perception

Visual literacy can be viewed from various perspectives, such as depth psychology, cross-cultural anthropology and semiotics (Zimmer and Zimmer, 1978. In Boeren and Epskamp, 1992). What is important in this context however, is the examination of images so as to apply them more effectively in situations involving sketched or drawn images in the process of information transfer; in turn, to have the receiver understand the messages the way they have initially been intended (Epskamp, 1992)

According to Giltrow (1977, In Boeren and Epskamp, 1992: 88) visual literacy involves the ability to comprehend and derive meaning from two-dimensional representations of reality found in illustrations, photographs, motion pictures and television. In essence, for one to be visually literate, s/he must be able to 'read' pictures and make sense of them. To be able to 'read' a picture may come across as a simple act of viewing and reacting to an image. However, there are numerous negotiations of perception occurring throughout our 'reading' of an image. 'We perceive things in terms of classes or categories of phenomena'; these categories may consist of colour, shape, size, etc. the combinations of which provide one with the basis for a perceptual and cognitive organisation of their world (Epskamp, 1992: 81).

The problem of perception arises when considering the pragmatic use of images in a cross-cultural setting. In the case of grassroots comics, the researcher introduces the medium to the community through participation. The community members then adapt that medium to fit their social environment, and adopt a visual form that is familiar within their cultural setting. The researcher himself comes from a different cultural setting to that of the community, with completely different modes of reference altogether, and 'Graphic symbols...are visual signs of a predominantly symbolic nature which are culturally determined, and which must, consequently, be acquired before they can prove useful' (Epskamp, 1992: 83). '[P]articular cultures have *vocabularies* of schemata, which might cover people, animals, architectural styles, landscapes and so forth' (Gombrich, 1960. In Waller, 1987: 24). Those details that we consider essential to the drawing need not be the ones considered important by the local

population (Epskamp, 1992). Therefore, cross-cultural communication is involved in the creating of grassroots comics.

Various scholars have referred to the *≠*language of artø in their writing, and while some argue in favour of this, others disagree with the idea that art can be understood in a similar way to that of written language (cf. Langer, 1986; Eco, 1975). Critics of the *≠*language of artø argue that òthere is no direct equivalent, in a painting, to the syntactic structure of languageö (Waller, 1987: 24). Thus we cannot base our understanding of visual literacy on the same models as our written language as it is easier to segment language (into words, etc.) than to agree upon the elements that comprise a picture (*Ibid*; 1987). The untrained viewer may have difficulty making connections, spatially, temporally as well as casually (Boeren, 1992). However, what matters is not necessarily whether the picture is recognisable, understandable and culturally acceptable, òbut also what style appeals to the viewerö (*Ibid*, 1992: 89). Throughout these contributions there seems to be a central tenet underlying the authorsø intentions, and that is an emphasis on the reader (community).

The theme of participatory research constantly requires that attention be brought back to the root of the development issue. Much like issues of visual literacy and visual perception, this suggests that the design and flow of the communication process stems from the groups involved in the creation and dissemination of the media message itself ó in other words ó from the perspective of the community. According to Waller:

In practice, most diagrams draw on a repertoire of patterns or schemata that have their origins in abstract notation or visual metaphor, and that have become part of our shared but constantly changing visual culture. Because of this, diagrams are hard to analyse or classify ó we would need to analyse not only the visual marks that comprise the diagram but also the whole of the culture that produced them. (1987: 28)

Images are made and used by different people for different reasons, and these makings and uses are crucial to the meanings an image carries (Rose, 2007: 11). Furthermore, the actual seeing of an image will always take place within a particular social context that will then mediate its impact. òIt also always takes place within a specific location with its own particular practicesö (*Ibid*, 2007: 11). Thus the social and cultural context of the community are of central significance to the process of producing, reading and reacting to a visual medium utilised for participatory communication. Culture provides readers with experiences that influence what their audience expects to see in pictures. One would expect the local

artists' work to match more closely with the "cultural grid of the people" (Cook, 1980. In Boeren and Epskamp, 1992: 90). In light of the above, it is not entirely the image itself that we are interested in, but rather the social and cultural significance of the image, or message, within the context of its use. What I mean here is that it is not so much the text, rather the social setting of the text that is of relevance.

Health Communication, Comics and the Community

Although the emphasis of this study is focused more on the use of grassroots comics to promote participatory communication within the Khwe community, the theme in which communication is embedded in this case is that of public health awareness.

In the context of the Khwe community, public health issues seem to be a site of much interest and contestation. In other words, although there are community groups involved in the process of public health communication⁴, there still exists a growing need for public health interventions to discuss problems such as correct sanitation methods, waste disposal, medical support, landfill scavenging, harmful substance abuse, malnutrition and tuberculosis – to highlight a few. The focus of this study, however, is not to dwell on each individual problem in major detail, but to stress the need for a community-driven medium that can disseminate important information to mobilise the communication of particular community-based health concerns. Therefore, the concept of public health here refers to all those factors involving health that the community feels affects them as a group.

Public Health Communication

Health communication can encompass anything from a doctor giving a patient medical advice, to mass media campaigns designed to inform the audience of the dangers of a particular disease. In other words, health communication involves the process of "communicating" about health in and amongst society. Society is comprised of different cultural and ethnic groupings which differ in their understanding of the world, but could possibly share the same social spaces from time to time. Where two or more cultures share the same social space, there may be a greater risk that the receivers of a message belong to a culture and space that is different from the sender's altogether (cf. Kar et al., 2001: 109).

⁴ The *Isibindi Health Organisation* and the *Red Cross* are actively involved health communication within the Khwe community. Both NGOs seek to support community members in recognising correct health measures and avoiding situations which are potentially hazardous to their health.

Therefore, to be effective, communication campaigns must be in synchronicity with the target audience's culture at all message levels: the textual and the visual the denotative and the connotative, the explicit and the symbolic (Kar et al, 2001; 109). Additionally:

in the development of public health communication intervention messages, researchers and practitioners have increasingly noted the importance of involving target audience members in the design of messages, whether through focus group methods or involving them as actual producers of messages (Guttman, 2000: 142).

There is a strong similarity between public health communication and the goals and strategies of participatory development. Both seek to actively involve the community regarding a particular matter inherent to the community itself. Interventions in the community context are conducted not only because the community is viewed as a crucial site to reach people but because it is believed that the community itself can serve as a change agent (Guttman, 2000: 142). In accordance with the paradigm of participatory communication, participation is the best way to ensure that the effects of the intervention would be sustained over time (Bracht, 1990: 20) as the community is actively involved in the process as opposed to being the passive recipients of a particular health intervention.

Although a number of health communication models exist, it is not of central concern in this study to discuss these models in great detail, but instead, to recognise the impact of community involvement within health campaigns, and the issues involved with health communication at the community level. The ecological model of health promotion considers both individual and environmental factors as possible explanations for unhealthy behaviours (Kar et al. 2001: 112). Instead of focusing on the individual as the cause of their own misfortune, the ecological model also identifies environmental factors as being the cause of particular health problems. Therefore, from an ecological perspective, Multiethnic media campaigns must engage individuals and their environments, and require supportive environments to succeed as people's behaviours affect and are affected by health at the individual, family, and community levels (Kar et al. 2001: 113).

In the Mobilisation model of Public Health communication, messages may be developed and produced by community members themselves as part of a problem-solving educational experience, following a Freirean model, and as a means for stimulating discussion among the peers of those who produced them (Rudd & Comings, 1994). However, structural factors and well entrenched economically-based institutional arrangements are clearly difficult to

influence, even by a well-meaning, well-designed intervention that aims to facilitate power and participation among those with limited power (cf. Guttman, 2000; LaBonte, 1994). Moreover, Janes and Corbet (1996. In Guttman, 2000) propose that an over-emphasis on self-help, self-determination, and empowerment ignores risks that are beyond local control. Therefore, it is of central importance to identify health concerns that can be tackled by the target population itself for the sake of promoting health awareness through comics, and highlighting those concerns where change is needed in the community, and assistance is required from institutional and/or governmental agencies (cf. Guttman, 2000).

Within the Khwe community, for example, is a landfill site located within walking distance. According to Matios (the Isibindi Health Group leader), individuals daily make their way to the site to scavenge for food and other 'useful' items. From a community perspective, this needs to be discouraged by informing people of the health dangers when rummaging through waste. From an institutional perspective, awareness needs to be raised to prevent Khwe community members from being able to access the landfill site on a regular basis.

Another issue is how risk behaviour⁵ is perceived by the community, and what cultural function it might fulfil. 'Understanding the cultural norms of a target group toward the health risk behaviour enables us to accurately conceptualize the health issue and position the communication strategies accordingly' (Kar et al. 2001: 114). As stated above, communication strategies need to be tailored to the needs and characteristics of the target population (*Ibid*, 2001). Individuals or groups within the community may choose to focus on 'issues that are not directly related to the specific health objectives of the researcher' (Guttman, 2000: 146), thus the communication medium should be adapted and guided by the community themselves. Activities should aim to generate discussion on what health-related issues should be prioritised, and a method that supports this function is that of grassroots comics.

Messages should be 'comprehensible' (expressed in the group's own words) and 'relevant' in that 'the situation should be familiar and should reflect the group's reality' (Kar et al, 2001: 115). Therefore interventions 'should remain with the community for as long as the health issues require' (*Ibid*, 2001: 115). From the outset of the intervention however, before

⁵ A lifestyle activity that places a person at risk of suffering a particular condition. E.G. smoking puts one at risk for cancer; being overweight puts one at risk for heart disease etc.

any particular goals and objectives are articulated, "formal and informal forums for identifying people's concerns, community resources, and potential solutions should take place in the community and involve diverse community constituencies" (Fawcett et al, 1996. In Guttman, 2000: 147). The social struggle of dealing with unemployment, poverty, poor health care etc. can "obscure the possibility of community reflection and analysis of health issues" (Kar et al. 2001: 115). However, positive health behaviour of the community group should be recorded and understood by the researcher. According to Kar et al (2001: 117) "[c]ulturally diverse populations have much to offer to the rest of society in terms of health behaviours and lifestyles".

The role of the researcher can thus be significant in raising awareness and mobilising participation. This is done through building support and trust between community groups and the researcher. The researcher is most valuable when "respecting the unique strengths that the audience brings to the health communication process, and of redefining communication as an active exchange between participants" (Dervin, 1989: 116).

Why Context Matters: The role of the Researcher in the Community

There are often overlapping or even congruent objectives in mind when using grassroots comics towards a specific development goal. Using comics to try and shed light on an issue of environmental concern is very much the same as highlighting an issue of violence in the home. Both are trying to bring to the fore an issue that requires attention and action, and suggests the solution in the form of behaviour or attitude change⁶ as related to the socially "correct" way in which to conduct oneself within the community. Therefore both elicit a process of recognizing a problem, and forming a solution through action and collective awareness.

Servaes and Arnst (1999) refer to the empiricist notion of participatory research referring to research that involves the community and, essentially, "belongs" to the community as indigenous knowledge. Rather, "most participatory research has been conducted in a non-

⁶ Health behavior change refers to the motivational and volitional processes of abandoning health-compromising behaviors in favor of adopting and maintaining health-enhancing behaviors. Attitude change, on the other hand, involves a reorientation of one's tendency towards a particular mode of response regarding an object or concept in question.

participatory fashion where the community is viewed as an abstract object as opposed to a group of people within a geographical space belonging to different sub-groups and sub-interests, age-groups, genders etc. (Servaes & Arnst, 1999: 110). This is one of the many reasons why context is crucial to the participatory communication process, and an understanding thereof is the backbone of research. Although case studies may refer to situations in which grassroots comics have been successful in achieving a respective communication strategy, no single situation can bear identical semblance to another and so one must be extremely cautious when referring loosely to terms such as cooperation, participation and dialogue as these terms are context specific.

This is why we should delineate between ambiguities of action research and participatory research; the former can often be non-participatory and related to top-down development research under the guise of participation. Conversely, Participatory research assumes a bias towards the poor rather than the professional. Participatory research is related to the processes of conscientization and empowerment (Servaes & Arnst, 1999: 127). Most crucial in these two processes are the correct perceptions of trust, dialogue and collaboration between all stakeholders within a particular development context, including the researcher.

The reason this is clear is because negotiations of development (be they on a macro or micro scale) should not be determined by someone who does not directly bear the consequences of any particular development cause. In other words, the people who receive the effects of the development process should be the ones to drive the initiative from the start, with the researcher fulfilling the role of a facilitator rather than that of a leader. Analysis should begin at the level of the people within their own experience and their own level of understanding. This ensures people's collective initiative and participation in the direct development process (Xavier Institute, 1980, In Jacobson and Servaes, 1999: 127). Perhaps most importantly, the inquiry must be of immediate and direct benefit to the community, and not just a means to an end set by the researcher (Servaes & Arnst, 1999: 120). The researcher may not necessarily be viewed as a threat to the particular community in which they are conducting their research; however, trust and communication are still integral to developing a sense of understanding and cooperation among community members and the researcher. The community needs to know that their way of life will not be threatened by the requirements of the researcher.

The long-term existence of hierarchical structures have often conditioned rural people to see themselves as consumers rather than participants in development (Narula and Pearce, 1986: 21). One must be careful when dealing with change as people are not always open and accepting of it (especially when it involves their very livelihood). It is often the case that community members might see themselves as external to the research process, being the subject of research rather than a participant. According to Paulo Freire (1983), this may be much more effective at creating resentment than change. Therefore you must learn to involve community groups more closely in the communication strategy, and help them take ownership of the initiative rather than seeing themselves as beneficiaries of a research or development intervention (Bessette, 2004: 19-20). As cultural variance increases, so too does the difficulty of communication. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the social intelligence of the farmer [community member] is often a more necessary possession than abstract intelligence of the expert [researcher] (Servaes and Arnst, 1999: 119). In other words, different people see the same phenomena and, based on different cultural perspectives, indeed different realities, they arrive at different conclusions (*Ibid*, 1999).

The question that arises at this point is how we go about illuminating the definition of community so as to account for the idea that communities are not social objects but rather extremely diverse situations of social interaction between different groups of people. After all, the community is the foundation of participatory communication, hence it would be imperative to formulate a conception of the community within the paradigm of participation. The concept of participation also involves that of community. If the goal is to facilitate participation, we must not forget that a local community is not a unified group, but rather a grouping of individuals and groups with their own characteristics and their own interests (Bessette, 2004: 19). It is important, then, to identify clearly the different groups that are affected by a common development problem and who are willing and able to deal with it, and to ensure that each group can express its own viewpoint (*Ibid*, 2004: 19-20). Furthermore, seeking participation of the rural population in identification of problems, setting priorities, and mapping of alternative solutions, increases the probability of successful development (Nair & White, 1994: 346).

As the researcher comes from a different social context to that of the subject community, one would consider the fact that he or she would bring with them a certain sense of baggage in the form of perceptions and interests internal to their understanding of the world. This is often vastly different to that of the individuals within the community as both parties come from

different social and cultural backgrounds altogether. In light of this difference, the researcher engaging in participatory research must develop an understanding of the community with which they are working on a personal level, not just on a surface-based level. In other words, the researcher must first learn to establish dialogue with a community, and should be able to bring people to express their points of view and listen to others, and to build a consensus around a course of action (Bessette, 2004: 23). Above all, the development communicator needs to be highly committed to the common goals of development and facilitate everyone's participation in concert to achieve them (Nair & White, 1994: 352). Communication thrives not on the ability to talk fast, but the ability to listen well. People are voiceless not because they have nothing to say, but because nobody cares to listen to them (Servaes & Arnst, 1999: 125).

Participatory communication takes place through dialogue, commitment, collaboration and trust between community groups and the researcher. Trust fosters or inhibits communication and participation between and among all groups regardless of education, culture, social, or economic status. It is an a priori requirement for dialogue...without this faith...dialogue is a farce which inevitably degenerates into paternalistic manipulation (Freire, 1983, 79). Freire noted the dangers of arbitrating the research process from the people directly involved in it, and stated that this form of manipulation only further degrades the communication process as conscientization and empowerment do not stem from subordination, but from cooperation and commitment to a common goal (1983). I am not advocating that this research seeks to bring about 'empowerment' or 'conscientization' of the subject community on the level that Freire would suggest, but that in order to achieve genuine participation, active involvement of the community at all levels of research is of utmost consequence.

A 'Case' of Comics: Empirical use of Grassroots Comics in Communication

To fully and practically understand the nature of comics in participatory communication, it is imperative that we analyse a few cases where comics have been successfully used for this purpose. It is time to shift the focus of discussion to a critical analysis of grassroots comics campaigns in context, and the insights this might share regarding comics as used for development communication purposes in rural communities. An evaluation of existing case studies which provide a platform on which to discuss actual issues and achievements experienced by professionals in previous grassroots comics efforts.

According to Packalen and Sharma (2007: 14), "Grassroots comics are best suited for local campaigning and peer communication in local languages. The comics⁷ have been successfully used in campaigns involving issues of human rights, health education, corruption, environmental concerns, etc. The case studies discussed in this section come from evaluations and observations of campaigns conducted by professionals in the area of grassroots comics, dealing with their production and reception in the most diverse and interesting of circumstances.

Grassroots Comics in Tanzania

After various successes in India using grassroots comics as a tool for development communication - particularly for participatory communication amongst community members - Leif Packalen and Sharad Sharma (both members of the NGO "World Comics") discuss the expansion of the campaign to countries in Africa. In 2003 the Tanzanian Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO) and World Comics arranged a four-day workshop on grassroots comics production in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (Packalen & Sharma, 2007). All the participants were drawn from TANGO member organizations and had a thorough knowledge of their own organizations and communication needs; none had ever made comics before or had any professional training in drawing. The workshop aimed to introduce comics as an inexpensive and effective communication method for the use of communities and NGO-activists (*Ibid*, 2007). Before this, the concept of grassroots comics had never been exercised in Tanzania.

At first the only material to draw from had been previous grassroots comics which had been produced in India and were not that interesting to Tanzanian NGO activists. However, at the end of the workshop, the participants had produced numerous real-life Tanzanian grassroots comics for use within their various organizations. According to Packalen and Sharma (2007: 69-70), "half of the participants were women, which was very good, as comics are often seen as something which only men make. Stories made by women are of great value in NGO campaigning when it comes to issues dealing with gender, sex and family matters, just to name a few. The comics produced in this workshop provided a platform for later campaigns, and were used in promoting the use of grassroots comics in other African countries (*Ibid*, 2007).

⁷ "Comics" in this sentence refers to grassroots comics as implemented/observed by the authors in the various campaigns discussed in their book *Grassroots Comics: A Development Communication Tool* (2007).

HIV/AIDS campaigning in Njombe

Ushirika wa Wanafunzi Wakristo wa Tanzania (UKWATA), is a Christian youth movement with representatives in all Tanzanian regions. The UKWATA Branch in the Njombe region in Southwest Tanzania ran an HIV and AIDS awareness programme 2003-2005 in about 40 schools in the region (Packalen & Sharma, 2007). Among other means of communicating their messages, the movement activists also wanted to add grassroots comics to their campaigning tools. Therefore, a workshop was held in mid 2005 in which the activists were shown the practical nature of comics and how to apply their use to the particular communication issue.

Although much like previous efforts, many participants were intimidated at having to exercise their skill at drawing (most of which possessed very little), they quickly appreciated that the comic format was a powerful communication tool for rural communities (*Ibid*, 2007). A Tanzanian cartoonist who was involved in the workshop training exercise was at first nervous about whether the youth activists would be able to adapt the use of comics appropriately, but later concluded that it is the desire to say something that is the main driving force in making comics, not necessarily the ability to draw well (*Ibid*, 2007).

The format of the comics produced was that of four-panelled wall poster comics, and the workshop participants pinned their finished products up in the centre of Njombe town. The authors record a high level of reception to the comics amongst the population in and around the area, òthey received immediate feedback from the towns-peopleí Many were astonished that the youngsters had made the comics themselvesö (Packalen & Sharma, 2007: 74). In this particular campaign, attention was focused on safe-sex, rape, and multiple partners etc. The medium of grassroots comics is useful in dealing with issues of a sensitive nature as they stretch further than the boundaries of interpersonal communication (Boeren, 1994).

Grassroots Comics in other parts of Africa

Benin

The African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY) is an organization that tries to organise child workers to improve their own conditions and social environment. They support education, literacy, health care, freedom of expression and work safety and resist child trafficking and exploitation (Packalen & Sharma, 2007). The AMWCY has branches in

20 countries with an emphasis on West Africa. The twelve priority rights for working children as recognised by the AMWCY are:

- The right to be taught a trade
- The right to stay in the village (not to migrate)
- The right to work in a safe environment
- The right to light and limited work
- The right to rest when sick
- The right to be respected
- The right to be listened to
- The right to healthcare
- The right to play
- The right to learn to read and write
- The right to self expression and to form organisations
- The right to equitable legal aid, in case of difficulty
(Packalen & Sharma, 2007; 81)

A workshop was set up to introduce comics to 17 AMWCY activists from nine different countries at a gathering in Cotonou, Benin in May 2005, sponsored by local and international NGOs. The goal was to make comics a communication tool for AMWCY which called for a systematic training of tutors in grassroots comic production. The role of the tutors is to share and exercise what they have learnt with their various groups and organisations so as to utilise the medium for participatory communication efforts. A few people are taught the easy and practical process of grassroots comic creation, some of whom later become tutors themselves.

The workshop conducted in Benin proved to be more successful than anticipated and it was noted that the participants were able to pick up the needed skills easily, with no shortage of stories they wanted to tell. Stories containing concerns about the twelve rights associated with AMWCY were very popular, as well as stories which contained mention of vulnerable female workers (Packalen & Sharma, 2007: 82). The AMWCY coordinator, Romaine Dieng, said after a meeting of the World Movement of Working Children in Siena, Italy 2006 (where comics from AMWCY were exhibited):

The comics created interesting moments of exchange and discussions between us and the participants. Thanks to them the participants have an idea of the situation prevailing in Africa. In short, the comics just summed up what was to be written in the reports or explained verbally (*Ibid*, 2007: 82)

In other words, the comics were such powerful tools in portraying the perceptions of the individuals who created them, that there was no need for a report on the situations that plague these individuals; it was all summed up in the comics they had produced that this brought attention to the very concerns they felt were important.

Mozambique

World Comics ó Finland was invited to conduct a grassroots comics workshop in Mozambique to train 30 odd participants in comic production so as to empower the participants to exercise the use of comics within their respective areas. The participants were made up of students, tutors and teachers from the teaching training colleges who came from various locations in and around Mozambique (Maputo, Beira, Chimoio, Nacala etc.). The workshop was held in Chimoio in October 2005 with the focus of training the participants to become comics tutors themselves for their respective communities and/or NGOs (Packalen & Sharma, 2007: 85).

Since a large majority of the participants came from a teaching background, the workshop was designed to instruct them mainly on basic comics-making skills and an understanding of the concept. The initial workshop consisted of a four-day exercise in which the participants were trained in making the comics themselves. Thereafter, the participants were split up into four groups and sent to four different locations to run their own comics workshops as tutors. They received backup in the form of workshop facilitators, but that these facilitators acted more as advisors than as coordinators of the workshops. According to the authors:

The tutors took charge of their workshops with admirable eagerness and ran them quite successfully, and almost all test workshop participants were able to finish their comics within three days and in most cases also distribute them in their communities (Packalen & Sharma, 2007: 86)

This suggests a rather remarkable interest for NGOs and teachers into the usefulness of grassroots comics; the comics would encourage ñactive dialogueö in the workshop setting, and facilitates public health message dissemination to broader community.

The core group of comics tutors trained in October 2005 have now run several workshops in different parts of Mozambique. It is projected that by the end of 2009, there will be more than 1300 persons who have gone through training in making grassroots comics and thirty new tutors will be trained in Mozambique itself (*Ibid*, 2007: 86). According to the authors, the

reason for this is that “because grassroots comics build on local issues, local community involvement, and local visual culture, there is no need for further outside intervention once the basic skills have been learned” (*Ibid*, 2007: 86). Through a fostered sense of self-development and social learning, the creation and dissemination of grassroots comics need not be sustained by communication professionals and/or workers external to the community as the skills that are required are learnt by those within the community through their own indigenization of the medium. Thereafter they can be further shared with others who are willing to learn or those who share a common goal in the development process.

Conclusion

This chapter introduces the concept of grassroots comics and its correlation to the field of development communication. The medium of print has a unique history within human society and can be found in any community as a means of expression or communication. Various forms of media have been adapted as apparatuses in aiding the goals of development communication practitioners over the years, including radio, television, print and in more contemporary times, the internet. This chapter explores the particular usefulness of print media within certain development communication initiatives and reflects on theoretical contributions to interpreting the communicative value of print media. The case studies discussed highlight the practical use of grassroots comics in context and provide some insight into understanding grassroots comics as a development communication tool. The following chapter will deal more with the overarching field of development communication, and discuss the fundamental and paradigmatic shifts of theories advocated within the field of development.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Development communication, as a body of knowledge, incorporates a plethora of ideas and theories that attempt to understand issues from macro perspectives of international relations, to micro perspectives of local community development. Indeed, the word 'development' is itself ambiguous, depending on the context in which it is defined. This chapter attempts to clarify the progression of the field of development communication from 1945.

This requires a critical discussion of the progressive stages of development communication theory and the key contributions that support the different modes of thought found throughout this umbrella theory. Development communication is still not a watertight area of academic inquiry and indeed continues to undergo academic (as well as pragmatic) negotiation from context to context. The major point of consideration in this instance is that development communication theory does not exist to present an exact and all-encompassing solution to the problems faced by underdeveloped nations or communities. Rather, it aims to present a set of useful guidelines and criteria for which to appropriately analyse a particular context with reference to the shortcomings and achievements of other development communication endeavours.

This chapter discusses the relationship of the notion of development communication to this study. Although much can be said regarding the historical progression of the theory of development itself, it is my aim to focus on significant changes within the field, and the criticisms or support each have received.

Although it may be important to consider the following chapter as a description of the conceptual framework, it is to remain exactly that, a conceptual framework – and not a precise or structural method at achieving true participation. One of the very tenets of contemporary development research promotes this notion of specificity in communication with regard to the development context. Therefore, as a central guideline for this project, development communication is to be determined in large by the participation of the community itself, without the implementation of pre-determined structures of development communication. The theory does, however, significantly contribute to the methods used in order to direct and obtain research objectives amongst myself and the Khwe community.

Development Communication: A progressive overview

Now some six decades old, the notion of development communication has been a confident driving factor behind most international relations following the Second World War, especially between developed nations and under-developed nations - although these terms themselves are rather ambiguous. The field of development communication encompasses a divergence of theoretical contributions, some often contradicting others; but nevertheless there is a determining factor in all development research that is of particular significance. All theories start with the community or society as the target for development. This simple factor suggests that all processes of development are somewhat hermeneutic in that their departure point is a focus on the community (or society) and their end point should come full circle to return to a focus on the community in context. Whereas many older theories did not promote this idea, it is nonetheless important to consider that all development focuses on social groupings. Whilst geography, technology, infrastructure, economy, culture, religion and so on may be important elements to consider in any development context, it is a return to the simple fact that all these groupings share in common that they inherently involve the aspect of social orientation ó human interaction. Thus, development can never be determined in terms of positivist or reductionist discourse for it suggests that the human being is the beginning and end-point of development, and that people are constantly adapting to their socio-cultural environments far too quickly for any theory to support a mechanistic approach towards development.

Modernization in Development

Definitions of development and communication are somewhat fractured and prolific in scholarly writing. Out of a number of studies looked at by Jo Ellen Fair and Hemant Shah (1997) - approximately 140 studies - in the final years of the nineties; they noted that only roughly a third of these studies on development communication actually conceptualised development (cf. Melkote & Steeves 2001: 34). Additionally, where definitions were given, understanding about development differed greatly.

Events following World War II called for a rapid re-evaluation of the term development, and what this term meant to nations that required rapid economic, political and social restructuring in the eyes of "developed" nations (cf. Servaes, 1999). As a result of world powers radically redesigning their definitions of global communication support and innovation for the purpose of rapid development in lesser developed nations (including war-

torn Europe and the colonial states of the pre-war years), development was deemed answerable by a number of economic and structural factors designed (by developed nations themselves) to be adopted by nations in which development had yet to be achieved (cf. Servaes, 1999; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; McPhail, 2009).

The first dominant paradigm to emerge in the late 1940s was that of modernization, which extolled scientific rationality and individualism to the process of development. According to Srinivas Melkote and Leslie Steeves (2001: 71), "Economic growth via the Western model of adopting a capitalist economic system, building up formal infrastructure, and acquiring technologies is prioritized." In actual fact, dominant world powers were defining development in terms of their own progress in the industrial era and the overcoming of economic and political factors that curbed these development procedures. "The United States was defining development as the replica of its own political economic system and opening the way for transnational corporations" (Servaes, 1999: 18). Furthermore, "implicit in the discourse of modernization is a certain philosophy of what development in the Third World should be, and how it should be brought about" (Melkote and Steeves, 2001: 71)

The underlying assumption of this paradigm was that in order to "catch up" with the developed First World nations, Third World countries were to adopt a model deemed necessary by the qualified professionals in the "developed" nations (cf. Servaes, 1999). This assumption was largely based on the idea of diffusing information and innovations on a massive scale so as to pique the interest of developing nations into adopting Western structures for the security of their own social and economic environments. Thus this dominant paradigm of development guided academic thinking and practice from the late 1940s to the early 1960s and was extremely influential in development communication theory as well as practice (*ibid* 2001: 71).

According to Jan Servaes (1999: 19), developed nations were successful in promoting their ideas of economic determinism, and the adoption of new platforms of media to rapidly spread this determinism was attractive to developing countries:

These nations were attracted by the new technology transfer and the model of a centralized state with careful economic planning and centrally directed development bureaucracies for agriculture, education, and health as the most effective strategies to catch up with the industrialized world.

In this regard, "traditional ways of doing things, particularly in the agriculture sector, were looked at negatively and modern methods were viewed as saving and eventually uplifting the poor" (McPhail 2009: 8). These new approaches were to be communicated most effectively to large audiences via the mass media.

This tendency towards the use of mass communication originally marked the first decade or so during which the media were used in the field of development (cf. Bessette, 1996: 12). "These initial experiences, centred mainly on the mass media, relied both on a communication model based on persuasion and information transmission, and on a development model based on increasing economic activity and changes in values and attitudes" (*Ibid*, 1996: 12). Servaes (1999: 25) elaborates on this notion by describing it in other words: "the media stimulate, in direct and indirect ways, mobility and economic development; they are the motivators and movers for change and modernization." Many critics have argued that this approach was more of a veiled form of Westernization, namely the imitation of Western models and institutions in the developing world. The reason is that it is based on a communication process that views a message as simply going from a sender to receiver under the assumption that the receiver will utilize this information in reorienting their social, political, economic and cultural practices towards a more "informed" way of living as suggested by the media message (cf. Casmir, 1991; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Servaes, 1999).

Although early theories of development did recognise, to varying degrees, the importance of communication, they all stemmed from different academic backgrounds and thus adopted strategies already in-place within industrialized nations and "fine-tuned" them to better suit the conditions of developing nations in the South⁸. "Indigenous ways were dismissed, marginalized, ridiculed, or ignored" (McPhail, 2009: 9). Consequently, the means of modernization were the prolific transfer of capital, ideology, technology and know-how to lesser developed nations, and "[t]he measures of progress were Gross National Product, literacy, the industrial base, urbanization, and the like: all quantifiable criteria" (Servaes, 1999: 20).

⁸ Development in the modernization paradigm looks at the influence of "developed" nations in the northern hemisphere over the development processes of "lesser-developed" nations in the southern hemisphere.

Social scientists such as Walt Rostow (1960) and Daniel Lerner (1958) were key proponents of the unilinear model of modernisation. These two intellectuals stated overtly that once key institutions and certain behaviour patterns were established, development would be more or less sustained. 'The changes were irreversible and the process of development moved in a common universal direction' (Melkote & Steeves, 2001: 84). The problem with this was that although the intention was to rapidly support Third World nations in emancipating themselves from underdevelopment, there was a large amount of support coming in from industrialized, western nations. This opened the way for the implementation of western models of government and free trade which were in contradiction to the culturally diverse and disparate models of Third World nations. 'The development strategy that was emphasized was the principle of *lassaiz-faire*. In French this would mean 'complete independence' (Melkote & Steeves, 2001: 78).

It was generally assumed that a nation became truly modern and developed when it arrived at a point where it closely resembled Western industrial nations in terms of political and economic behaviour and institutions, attitudes toward technology and innovation, and social and psychic mobility. (Fjes, 1976, In Melkote and Steeves, 2001: 79).

The overarching themes of modernization presumed that lesser developed Third World nations were somewhat limited in their capacity to cope with problems and crises or even to master their own social, political and economic environments (cf. Ascroft et al., 1994; Servaes, 1999). The advanced Western nations, on the other hand, were seen as possessing the means with which to achieve these ends through their wide range of systematic autonomy and the ability to effectively achieve successful rates of industrialization, urbanization and economic growth. In other words, these development strategies were based on the impact of central countries providing those on the periphery with the means for development (cf. Baran, 1967; Gunder Frank, 1967).

In summary, one can notice an ongoing theme that is evident throughout this paradigm in explaining development policies and practices. That is that, on the macro level, economic growth in Third World nations can only be achieved by the application of western models of industrialization and technology diffusion disguising the notion that these factors, although developed in a context of their own, cannot objectively be applied to diverse national contexts on a global scale. On the micro level, altering people's attitudes and beliefs through the use of new technology and simple sender-receiver models of communication to adopt

new modes of thought, is a romantic theoretical ideal that is difficult to adhere to in practice as it completely ignores the socio-cultural climate of the receiver.

The modernization paradigm stressed the importance of aiding Third World nations in adopting development policies and models that were deemed beneficial to their economic and political growth by professionals within the developed nations (cf. Melkote & Steeves, 2001). Almost like the analogy of an older brother giving support to his younger brother who has not yet experienced everything his older brother has so as to avoid making the same mistakes as him. The difference being, that the Third World would thus have to look up to the First World nations for support and development assistance, as opposed to a self-sustainable means of alleviating development issues for themselves (which was the ultimate intention of the modernization paradigm). Thus scholars and development practitioners within these Third World nations started to identify major flaws in the critical reasoning of the modernization paradigm, and consequently started to criticise the model itself for its positivist and determinist tendencies.

Modernization versus Dependency

Out from under the umbrella of the modernization paradigm came what could probably be described as the exact antithesis of the First World dominance over development practices from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. More and more, modernization was being criticised for being overtly deterministic and ethnocentric in the opinions of Third World intellectuals (cf. Kumar, 1994: 84, 85). The main argument that stemmed from this criticism was that underdevelopment was not a result of primarily - internal factors such as a lack of capital and technology, but rather that underdeveloped nations were being further underdeveloped by developed nations. To simplify this line of thought I refer to developed nations as nations at the core or centre, and for underdeveloped nations I refer to the periphery⁹. In other words, what was occurring was that the nations at the centre were widening the gap between developed and underdeveloped nations by implementing global economic and political strategies within nations in the Periphery. This line of thought refers to the paradigm of dependency.

⁹ Dependency theory tends to delineate between developed nations with the capital to promote their development interests as "core" nations, whereas nations in the "periphery" refer to those nations dependent on the core nations for their economic and industrial support (cf. Baran, 1967; Gunder Frank 1967)

Development in the periphery depended on foreign investment and support from the centre, and so western models of economics and politics were seen as the cornerstone for implementing development policies for nations in the periphery. One of the founding fathers of this paradigm was Paul Baran (1967) who was one of the first to articulate the concept that development and underdevelopment are interrelated process, in essence, "two sides of the same coin" (Servaes, 1999: 32). "In Baran's view, continued imperialist dependence after the end of the colonial period is ensured first and foremost by the reproduction of socioeconomic and political structures at the periphery in accordance with the interests of the centre powers" (*Ibid*, 1999: 32).

On a theoretical level these criticisms stemmed from a general Marxist or structuralist reorientation toward the issue of development. Unlike the modernization paradigm which found its roots in western views of development, this new line of thought was brought about by Latin American social scientists who believed that "underdevelopment was and still is generated by the very same historical processes which also generated economic development: the development of capitalism itself" (Gunder Frank, 1967: 9). In this sense, the centre powers utilised underdevelopment in the periphery to sustain development and economic growth within their own nations. According to Melkote and Steeves (2001: 171), "The dominant paradigm denied history to developing nations" in that "the assumption was that the Third World nations resembled earlier stages of the history of Western European nations." In actual fact these Third World nations did not signify an earlier stage of European developmental history but are, in contrast, "a historical product of the past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries" (Gunder Frank, 1967: 4). The central feature of the Third World, within this paradigm, is its dependent global economic position on the centre, and the criticisms against the power imbalances of the dominant paradigmatic model (Melkote & Steeves, 2001: 170). "The obstacles (for development) were, in other words, not internal but external to the dependent society" (Servaes, 1991: 58). "This also means that development in the Centre determines and maintains the underdevelopment in the Periphery" (Servaes, 1999: 34).

One of the most intriguing models resulting from this paradigm, which still dominates a large part of development communication today, is the consciousness model developed by Paulo Freire (1973).

Freire...identified communication as a process that is inseparable from the social and political processes necessary for development. According to him, for development communication to be effective, it had to be linked not only to the process of acquiring technical knowledge and skills, but also awareness-raising, politicization and organization processes (Bessette, 1996: 15).

This model and its various applications have also been subject to a fair degree of criticism, but more will be discussed about this later on in chapter. What Freire was referring to however, was a localised idea of the situation of underdevelopment in line with the more global theory that dependence is a conditioning situation in which the economies of one group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of others (Dos Santos, 1970, In Servaes, 1999: 231).

In order to remove the external obstacles to development for the nations in the periphery, *Dependistas*¹⁰ argued that each peripheral country should strive for self-reliance and search for new allies within the framework of a New International Economic Order (Servaes, 1991: 58). This was a set of proposals put forward during the 1970s by developing countries through the UN conference on Trade and Development in order to promote their interests by improving their terms of trade. It was to be a revision of the international economic system in favour of Third World countries (cf. Servaes, 1991). Paulo Freire argued for the same course of action within a national context, urging communities and peoples to become aware of the various facets of the real development problems within their region, organising themselves in order to react collectively and effectively to these problems and obtaining the necessary tools to put to proper use the solutions provided by the community (cf. Bessette, 2004).

It is not possible to account for the diversity of thought present in dependency theory within the scope of this chapter, however it is important to note that this theory was supported by a number of intellectuals representing a variety of disciplines in the social sciences. This would clarify why *Dependistas* argued that the domination of the periphery by the centre occurs through a combination of power components – military, economic, political, cultural, and so on (Servaes, 1999: 35). Whereas the modernization paradigm took the nation state as its main framework of reference, *Dependistas* supported a predominantly international level of analysis towards development in the periphery. Modernization argued that structures internal to the nation had to be changed in order to establish long-term development goals, whereas

¹⁰ *Dependista* refers to those theorists who were in support of the Dependency theory. (cf. Servaes, 1999: 41)

dependency suggested that these very models are themselves the problem as they are external to the nation under development.

In general, the research into cultural dependency patterns is limited to quantitative and objectively measurable results. The problem with dependency theory is that the qualitative impact and consequences of this dependency relationship are often overlooked: how these unequal processes affect the culture, ideology, and identity of the local population in the long-term (Servaes, 1999: 39). *Dependistas* put too much emphasis on the contradictions at the international level and thus tend to overlook the existing contradictions at the national level between interests of the state and the media owners and between the government and the population (*Ibid*, 1999: 41). In other words, dependency theory generally views the backwardness of development in the periphery as a result of exploited economic relations between the periphery and the centre, and does not account for the fundamental contradictions of development present within a national context. For example: the division of labour, class structures, media ownership etc.

Modernization saw mass media as a key component for promoting sustainable development to countries in the periphery through what is referred to as a "trickle-down" effect (cf. Melkote & Steeves, 1999). This refers to the idea that it is enough to merely disseminate the knowledge and technology of the centre nations to the periphery through mass media, relying on a communication model based on persuasion and information transmission (Bessette, 1996: 12). Dependency theory, however, saw mass media as another component of the modernization paradigm that was further supporting the development and growth of centre nations at the expense of the periphery. Instead *Dependistas* argued that ownership and control should be in the hands of the nation undergoing development instead of international donors.

This also related to the communication strategies designed for development purposes. They stated that mass media provided a vehicle for the cultural imperialism of the centre on that of peripheral countries, and so should not be allowed to portray the ideological framework and tendencies of the First World. One often observes that technologies are under control of those with power and are used in ways consistent with those interests (Servaes, 1999: 30). Dependency theory argued for a more horizontal form of communication where the interest of the media was geared more towards emancipating communities from their particular

development concerns, through awareness raising and conscientization of the problem, as opposed to reflecting a model of Western media¹¹.

Criticisms of Dependency

As stated above, dependency theory flows from a dissatisfaction with the modernization paradigm in that it was said to be too reductionist and did not account for diverse target populations. Instead, it adopted a mechanistic approach toward all situations of development communication. The dependency theory, however, has also been criticised for being minimally different from the modernization paradigm in that it is incapable of explaining the realities of the postcolonial world (Servaes, 1996: 59). Both approaches ó for example ó start from mainly economic and/or socioeconomic variables, although where modernization stresses the importance of change for internal factors, dependency argues that the problem stems from external factors.

Thus the dependency theory sees the fundamental contradiction in the global context between the centre and the periphery and, therefore, fails to take into account the internal class and productive structures of the periphery that inhibit development (*Ibid*, 1996: 59). The theory argues for a politicization of local media, and advocates that the average man should take control of his or her environment. Thus they will actively emancipate themselves from western dominance by becoming aware of the various sources of the development problems in their very region, and organising themselves in order to react to these problems collectively. The problem with this, however, is that communities might group themselves together to overthrow the dominant political or economic structures without having any real or solid means with which to change the current conditions. This would merely be a *coup* or confrontation situation in place of collective negotiation towards solving the problem effectively. Through promoting change and transgression from the 'dominant' paradigm, it is argued that dependency theorists were indirectly promoting rebellion and resistance to outside support and/or exploitation (Servaes, 1999).

The relentless tensions between the modernization and the dependency paradigms revolve around the somewhat similar and structured differences between that of internal and external factors facing developing nations. Although a thorough analysis of the differences between

¹¹ Within developing nations themselves, development and the use of the mass media mirrored a scaled down version of the dominant top down model.

the two would take us on a long-winded, intellectual 'roller-coaster ride', it nevertheless remains that these two paradigms may claim to emphasize a focus towards 'internal' and/or 'external' issues inhibiting development, but in reality these factors are not inherently independent of each other. In order to understand a situation in context, one is to take into account both internal and external factors that contribute to - or inhibit - development within that context.

In other words, in order to develop an understanding of any particular context of development, one must first understand the social formations and class relationships of the subject community; and how these structures articulate with the external factors of globalisation and cultural imperialism, on the one hand, as well as the internal factors of the ruling classes and the social, political and economic climate in which the individual lives, on the other (Servaes, 1999; 42). "To dismiss Third World ruling classes as mere puppets whose interests are always synonymous with those of the centre is to ignore the realities of a much more complex relationship" (*Ibid*, 1999: 42). This "complex" relationship refers to the notion that development is hardly defined by an attack on the dominant paradigm and the tensions that exist between modernization and dependency, but rather that if development is to be taken seriously, it cannot merely be the subject of a biased point of view including all-encompassing explanations which determine the affects of development from either an "internal" or "external" point of view.

What I mean is that it is important to consider the implications of the dependency paradigm in the field of development communication, as it contested the dominant notion that development was uniform and started with the implementation of Western models of development in the Third World. However, it is equally as important to note that although the dependency theory offered a divergent method of understanding the concept of development, it too has its own shortcomings and cannot comprehensively account for an accurate understanding of development as a whole. According to Servaes (1999; 44) dependency tends to be more of a macro perspective which "diverts attention to an interest in the problem of policy" but possesses a lack of concrete internal development strategies.

Blomstrom and Hettne (1984: 199) suggest that the failure of a society to gain independence and self-reliance "must be understood in accordance with the structural and political changes in the world," and should not only be viewed as a result of poor national development or internal structural weaknesses. Furthermore Friberg and Hettne (1985: 212) note that "Self-

reliance is a difficult option in the context of the present world order and as a result of this, dependency does well to analyse major problems inherent in development communication, but lacks a suitable solution to these problems. Dependency addressed the causes of underdevelopment but did not provide ways of addressing that underdevelopment (Servaes, 1999: 45).

Ultimately, development and communication theories stemming from the dominant paradigm of modernization called for a reassessment in the eyes of more contemporary views of communication which began to emerge in order to address particular development issues that previous theories had failed to identify. Dependency theory was one such theory, which reacted to the failure of modernization in producing the positive economic and social changes that it had predicted. However, as Thomas McPhail (2009: 26) points out, both the modernization and dependency paradigms focused on theories of mass communication and the affects thereof, for the formulation of their views on development or cultural imperialism respectively. Amidst the debate between these two theoretical approaches emerged a somewhat counterbalancing approach (McPhail, 2009: 26) towards the field of development communication, namely that of Another Development. In order to discuss the relevance of Another Development in the context of the Khwe community, I will first discuss examples of modernization and dependency in relation to the historical context of the Khwe Bushmen.

The position of the Khwe within the Dominant paradigm

For the Khwe, the years of the Border War (1966-1989) might have been the high point of hierarchical development structures dominating their socio-political and cultural environments, as well as their physical ones. The South African government's direct political involvement in the affairs of this group of people led, in turn, to their complete economic dependence on the South African military (Robbins, 2004). The !Xun and Khwe were utilised by the South African Defence Force (the SADF) along the Caprivi strip¹² for their unique tracking and field-work qualities, especially in the area of military reconnaissance. The fleeing of the !Xun and Khwe from war-torn Angola led them ultimately to the South African military base named Alpha (which was itself designed to train Bushman trackers in the war

¹² The Caprivi strip is a corridor of Namibian land that separates the borders of Angola and Botswana from one another. This strip of land was extremely valuable (strategically speaking) to the SADF during the years of the Border War (cf. Robbins, 2004). See *Figure 3*.

against the South West Africa Peoples' Organisation [SWAPO¹³]). In earlier years this may have been purely a disguise by the South African military, to coerce a neutral group of traditionally nomadic people into joining their cause, but eventually the SADF began to see the usefulness of the Bushmen battalion (the infamous battalion 31) and the qualities of both the !Xun and the Khwe in low-intensity warfare (cf. Robbins, 2004: 10 - 11).



Figure 3 - Map of Caprivi Strip

The !Xun were the first of the two clans to be employed by the SADF in the Caprivi, and hence the base named "Alpha" was established in the 1970s to accommodate the growing number of refugees from Angola who had been coerced¹⁴ into joining the army. The arrival of the Khwe from West Caprivi came a short while later, and a large number of them assisted in the building of the Alpha base. The Khwe too were asked to enlist and provide more manpower for the Bushmen Battalion in return for employment and social security. The Khwe obliged, and the construction of army base Omega (which was located across the road from Alpha) began in order to accommodate both the !Xun and Khwe (cf. Robbins, 2004).

¹³ The former liberation movement in Namibia in opposition to the South African Defense force during the struggle for Namibia's independence in what was known as the Border War.

¹⁴ There was little in the way of volunteering for the army. Bushmen men were offered very high salaries and services for signing up which easily created the delusion that signing up was an act of "free choice". Bushmen refugees from Angola actually had very little choice in the matter; they either had to sign up or leave the Caprivi region entirely (cf. Robbins, 2004).

According David Robbins (2004: 12) "by 1978 the base already housed more than 3000 San ... with a considerable percentage of the remainder living in an informal settlement immediately outside the base." Omega had a strong monthly cash-flow, and possessed "all the characteristics of a self-sustaining village" (*Ibid*, 2004: 12). By 1981 the population exceeded 3500 people and a second Bushman battalion was formed. This highlights the considerable impact the SADF had on the lifestyles of the both the !Xun and the Khwe, and the economic support and social infrastructure imposed by the South African government on these groups of people.

One might think of it in terms of the modernization paradigm as bringing a valuable process of change and development to an otherwise under-developed group of people. The dominant political and economic structures in place were those imposed by the South African government through its Defence Force, and the provision of living space, security and employment (which are seen as basic needs under modernization) were exchanged for the use of the Bushmen's skill in warfare (cf. Robbins, 2004). In the 1980s Omega was even something of a tourist attraction, and an example of how the South African government was involved in the upliftment of non-white communities affected by the war. The latter was of course in line with the fact that the SADF had proudly proclaimed that it had abolished race-discrimination. Beneath the surface, however, a basic racist structure still remained, and the fact that the Bushmen were non-white, and in a position against the communist-inspired African independent movements, they naturally fell largely in favour of the agenda of the South African military (cf. Robbins, 2004).

By 1989 Omega had over 4500 inhabitants and was a thriving community. According to Linford (in Robbins, 2004: 14): "the quiet peaceful community soon became a thriving social establishment." The Department of Education had become involved, as well as health services and the church. People were living in wooden cabins, and there was a proper hospital, a shop and a school. Some of the NCOs' wives who were stationed at Omega started their own bakery, and even a clothing factory where they employed the local !Xun and Khwe women (cf. Robbins, 2004). For all intents and purposes, Omega was an example of modernization in the context of the !Xun and Khwe, and the acculturation¹⁵ of the Bushmen from their traditional, nomadic lifestyles to the 'more developed', contemporary society lay in

¹⁵ The process of adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of another group (Oxford English Dictionary).

the imposition of social and structural constraints placed upon them in their new socio-economic and political environment.

This marks the point at which the arguments of the dependency paradigm relate to the situation of the !Xun and Khwe communities. Having relied on the South African government for economic support and security, the population of Bushmen in the Western Caprivi (most of whom were stationed at Omega) became completely dependent on the SADF, and if the military were to pull out, the entire socio-economic structure in place would collapse (cf. Robbins, 2004: 11). "Talk of upliftment and development were underpinned by a more sinister economic reality" (*Ibid*, 2004: 11). Unfortunately for the Bushmen of the Western Caprivi, this reality was felt in full when the Defence Force pulled out of Namibia in order to avoid what has been termed by Robbins (2004) as a "military disaster". The date for the independence of Namibia had been set and the main task of the Bushmen Battalion had become the preparation for demobilisation. South Africa had lost the war against SWAPO and the question now was what would become of the !Xun and Khwe after the demobilisation of the Bushmen Battalion.

Already Colonel Linford, who had lived and fought with the !Xun and Khwe for several years, noted in his reports that the Bushman soldier could not be judged according to the same rules used for RSA servicemen (Robbins, 2004: 13). Additionally he stated that the Bushmen were, and would remain for several generations, different, and that he should be measured according to his own standards (*Ibid*, 2004; 13). However, in accordance with dependency, this potential was suppressed through external factors such as the economic and political agendas of the South African government, and its Defence Force.

Having stated that both the !Xun and Khwe communities had become largely dependent on the SADF, one can assume that there was not much left for these two groups of people once the SADF had no use for them. Once again, the two Bushman communities had become the victims of socio-economic structures that they were not accustomed to, and instead of being in a place of self-sustainability, they were in a place where their future lay in the hands of the very people who had caused their dependence on them in the first place. Therefore, the continual dependence of the Bushmen communities on the South African government was masked by the promise of housing, employment and security. Although the !Xun and Khwe did receive these things initially, they were now too accustomed to a Western way of life to return to their nomadic way of living. The SADF had to think about the consequences of its

involvement in the affairs of these two communities as they were largely responsible for the resulting dependence of the !Xun and Khwe after the Border War was over.

The Schmidtsdrift Land Claim is another checkpoint along the historical journey of the Khwe (and the !Xun community alike). The South African government, faced with the demand for living space and housing by the !Xun and Khwe, needed to make a reasonable decision as to what would happen to the some 4000 inhabitants of Western Caprivi who opted for moving to South Africa. After all, the Bushmen had been fighting against SWAPO, and now that SWAPO was in power, many of them feared the future were they to remain in Namibia (cf. Robbins, 2004: 17). Their dependency lay in their trust that the government would never abandon them or leave them to their own demise the way the Portuguese had in Angola (*Ibid*, 2004: 17). The !Xun and Khwe who had served in the military, and their families, were thus offered the option of relocation to South Africa where they would be provided with land and housing.

Most of !Xun and Khwe situated at the Omega army base in Western Caprivi chose to be relocated to an open arid space 80 kilometres outside Kimberley in the Northern Cape named Schmidtsdrift. This resulted from lengthy negotiations between representatives from South Africa, Namibia, SWAPO, the United Nations Transition Assistance Group, the Organisation of African Unity, as well as delegations from both Angola and Botswana (Robbins, 2004: 18). The basic understanding on the part of the Bushmen (made up of !Xun and Khwe soldiers and their families) was that they were to be resettled, and "looked after" in terms of their needs by the South African government during this period of transition.

If continued imperialist dependence after the end of the colonial period is ensured first and foremost by the reproduction of socioeconomic and political structures at the periphery in accordance with the interests of the centre powers (Baran, 1967), then the dependence of the Bushmen on the SADF would be an example of a community at the periphery being moulded by the interests of the powers at the core. After the Border War, South Africa went through a radical change itself and entered a period of democratic negotiation between the government and previously marginalised independent movements (Robbins, 2004: 17). The development of South Africa as a whole took precedence over a small community of Bushmen who did not figure so much in the greater scheme of things. The SADF had funded the relocation of the Bushmen from Caprivi to Schmidtsdrift where they were allowed access to over 38 000 hectares of land.

The problems would arise, however, from the fact that the South African military had secured the economic dependence of the !Xun and Khwe. The Bushmen battalion that was still deployed to patrol the South Africa/Botswana border, was disbanded following the National Party's commitment to disbanding the notorious Koevoet (crowbar) military unit in 1989. The fate of the !Xun and Khwe at Schmidtsdrift was most uncertain as their economic support came from the salaries earned by the men working for the military. With the Bushmen battalion disbanded, there would be no form of income for the !Xun and Khwe families unless the men served in units much too far away from home.

This all fell in line with the reluctance of the National Party to accept the logic of a unitary state which resulted in some impasses at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA¹⁶). CODESA had favoured the request to implement a housing project for the !Xun and Khwe in the Schmidtsdrift region, and planning for the project was already well under way before the South African Cabinet had finally decided by mid 1992 that there would be no housing for the San at Schmidtsdrift. All hope was finally severed with a simultaneous claim, from a group of Tswana people, over the same land (cf. Robbins, 2004). The !Xun and Khwe were left with literally no hope of a new start (which is the exact opposite of what they had been led to believe). Their dependence on the centre powers (the SADF and the government) was determined by socio-economic and political factors, and whilst South Africa itself was undergoing its own democratic development, the development of the Bushmen communities situated at Schmidtsdrift took a largely unnoticed back-seat. A massive difference to the way things were at Camp Omega, Schmidtsdrift was a town of canvas tents and makeshift schools and clinics. These were hardly the conditions the Bushmen were accustomed to, or even promised for that matter (cf. Robbins, 2004).

It is interesting to note elements of early development theory within the historical context of the !Xun and Khwe San communities. The dominant paradigm of modernisation can be noted as far back as their colonial past under the rule of the Portuguese in Angola. Their incursion into the events that were shaping the world around them lead them to relinquish a dominantly nomadic lifestyle for the safety and security of modern ways of life. Their later incursion into

¹⁶ Convention for a Democratic South Africa. This convention began in late 1991 and represented 19 groups (including the ANC, the NP, IFP, the DP etc.). It rapidly fell apart after the National Party and the Pan Africanist Congress boycotted it in 1992. Democratic negotiations for South Africa were to continue for some time, however, the convention did contribute to negotiations about the eventual national democratic elections to be held in South Africa in 1994 (cf. Robbins, 2004).

Bushmen battalions under the SADF in the Caprivi strip in the 1970s paved the path for their economic dependence on a centre power.

The infrastructure and aid they received from the South African military at Camp Omega during the war years, and up until 1989, reflected the positive effects of concrete development strategies. However, their reliance on such a system ultimately led to their own acculturation into the modern world, and their indefinite dependence on the powers that put them there. From the time of their relocation to South Africa in 1990¹⁷, to this current day, the !Xun and Khwe communities have been subject to continuous, and very much contentious development strategies. A focus on the communities themselves has largely been misdirected by the need to judge these people by the standards of modern development, completely alienating them from their very real, personal, local experiences. In other words, a socio-cultural understanding of the Khwe community has been substituted by a quantifiable set of criteria determined by dominant models of development (the same is true for the !Xun community as they have shared a complex past with the Khwe).

A Starting Point for 'Another' Approach

The years following the Border War saw further struggles for the Khwe community in terms of their own development. In fact, situations at Schmidtsdrift were worse than they ever were at Omega camp, and the population of Schmidtsdrift was growing larger whilst health-care and education services were getting steadily worse with employment becoming more and more scarce. The long-winded negotiations of the !Xun and Khwe Trust and the Communal Property Association (CPA), not to mention the tensions between these two organisations, eventually ended with a purchase of land just outside Kimberley on a farm named Platfontein.

The land cost R 7.5 million and spanned 13 000 hectare. Corruption and political infighting was involved with the purchase of the land, but the CPA had finally secured a piece of land for the now disconnected !Xun and Khwe communities, even though they had an immediate debt of roughly R 1 million. The land was initially bought in 1997, however, the purchase was followed by delays and stalled negotiations, and on 18 May 1999, President Nelson

¹⁷ The !Xun and Khwe families who chose to relocate to South Africa were flown from Omega to Grootfontein, and from there to Kimberley. The final 80km from Kimberley to Schmidtsdrift was travelled by army trucks. The trip was recorded as being traumatizing to most involved (cf. Robbins, 2004).

Mandela visited Platfontein himself and handed over the title deeds (Robbins, 2004: 31). After nearly 10 years, the !Xun and Khwe had been in and out of hopes for a resolution to their situation at Schmidtsdrift, but not once had the needs or concerns of the community been accurately accounted for, or met¹⁸.

For another few years the !Xun and Khwe would remain in tents at Schmidtsdrift whilst the CPA secured funds and provisions for the development of housing in Platfontein. The construction of housing in Platfontein commenced in late 2002 and finished in 2003. There were to be a total of 1000 households divided between the !Xun on the one side of the settlement, and the Khwe on the other, with a school and clinic bridging the two communities (cf. Robbins, 2004). Starting in December 2003, and continuing for the next few months after that, !Xun and Khwe families were transported from Schmidtsdrift to their new homes in Platfontein¹⁹.

The move from Schmidtsdrift to Platfontein marks the point at which the !Xun and Khwe communities find themselves today. For roughly seven years, the !Xun and Khwe have possessed ownership of their own land and own housing, yet there are still major problems concerning the population of Platfontein. These extend from basic health-care issues, to poverty, substance abuse, unemployment and a general frustration with the way things were (Robbins, 2004: 24). After so long there has been very little genuine effort to empower the Khwe community to view its true collective potential from a socio-cultural point of view. Politics and economics have been the predetermining factors behind this community's history for the past few decades. The need now is to shift the focus towards a more humanitarian approach in order to identify the tensions of the community at the grassroots level.

Another Development - Development Communication in the Community

Development and communication theories have continued to change over the years due to the fact human social and cultural interactions develop over time and are never fixed by a measurable standard. Keeping this in mind, theories of development communication that

¹⁸ The !Xun and Khwe communities had been promised at camp Omega that they would definitely be well looked after by the South African government once they reached South African soil (cf. Robbins, 2004). More than 10 years had passed since they had been promised a better life, and nothing had yet come to fruition.

¹⁹ The houses in Platfontein were literally being occupied as they were being completed which is why it took so long for families to be completely relocated from Schmidtsdrift to Platfontein. In all the process took roughly six months and during this time confusion reigned as the communities were spatially separated for some period of time (cf. Robbins, 2004: 34).

incorporate the concepts of economic growth and capital-intensive industrialisation are subject to objective and quantifiable analysis based on differences in Gross National Product and technological and industrial resources. However, these are merely 'parts' of the 'greater problem' when considering issues of development and communication. In the words of some, it is in fact a lack of understanding on the part of the cultural aspects of development which have led to the shortcomings of previous approaches (cf. Servaes, 1999; Kumar, 1994; Hedebero; 1982).

In the mid 1970s, the United Nations' Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjold, advocated that development should be viewed as something other than just industrial development, as 'it is a process involving the whole person, the self, the spirit, and the society, referring to it as 'Another Development'²⁰' (Jacobson, 1994: 65). The Dag Hammarskjold Foundation established three sub-foundations for Another Development:

- Another Development is geared to the satisfaction of needs, beginning with the eradication of poverty.
- Another Development is endogenous and self-reliant.
- Another Development is in harmony with the environment (Servaes, 1999: 78)

Furthermore, "Another Development applies to all levels of societies, not just the poor of the nonaligned world" (*Ibid*, 1999: 78).

This approach differed from existing theories of development communication which relied on the hypotheses of the modernization and dependency paradigms, as it contested previously held notions and theoretical approaches about the way in which development communication is viewed. Far from having a predetermined model for society based on that of the industrialized West, development scholars trended towards favouring the idea that there is no universal path to development - "it must be conceived of as an integral, multidimensional, and dialectic process that can differ from one society to another" (Servaes, 1999: 78). This had a remarkable impact on the field of development communication as a whole for it suggested that development was not a controllable force that can be directly applied to any situation which requires it. Development cannot rely on hierarchy and top-down intervention,

²⁰ "The New International Economic Order (NIEO) was a comprehensive package of multilateral policy options that aimed to improve the position of Third World countries in the world economy relative to the richest states. It came together at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Conference held at Algiers in September 1973." - (Sneyd, 2005) - http://www.globalautonomy.ca/global1/glossary_entry.jsp?id=EV.0027

it is to be the vehicle through which a collective group of people find a common voice and exercise their active involvement in local affairs.

Advocates of Another Development noted that there are no countries which function completely autonomously and that are completely self-sufficient; nor are there any countries whose development is exclusively determined by external factors. Additionally, they stated that every society is dependent, in one form or another, on others. The only logical explanation for development communication scholars was to assume the fact that in order for development to be truly meaningful and successful, each society or nation should attempt to define its own strategy for development (cf. Servaes, 1999; White et al., 1996). This development strategy should be looked at holistically as inclusive of social, economic, cultural, and religious elements (Kumar, 1994: 86). One can see that for a large amount of time, the social and cultural needs of the Khwe community were not being identified. Their circumstances were being dealt with from purely economic and political points of view. There was a fair degree of volunteer work taking place in Schmidtsdrift with support from various NGOs, but for the most part, the !Xun and Khwe communities seemed to be a thorn in the side of a fledgling democracy.

The common themes espoused by Another development supporters seem to constantly refer to the synonymous relationship between the concept of nations and communities, which require their own introspective familiarization with the social and cultural aspects of basic needs, participation, dialogue and self-reliance in the context of their own environments (cf. Bessette, 1996; Servaes, 1999). Once a community identifies their potential for the collective identification of a particular development problem, the ideal is that they develop an endogenous communication strategy in which they all participate towards achieving a common goal in solving the problem. This is achieved through community dialogue and amplifying communication efforts through the reciprocal use of communication channels. If and when the communication strategy is adopted, and produces some form of positive outcome, the community should ideally acknowledge the need for change and not rely on external sources to provide this change but to retain a strong sense of self-reliance.

According to Servaes, in his analysis of the prominent works of those in support of Another Development, "self-reliance implies that each society relies primarily on its own strength and resources in terms of its members' energies and its natural and cultural environment" (1999: 79). Servaes notes that self-reliance is a rather multidimensional term and that it is open to

many interpretations, however, in his opinion this concept is used as a counter pole to dependency as a strategy for development on the basis of a community's own capabilities and needs (cf. Servaes, 1999: 81). Ergo, self-reliance is clearly an aspect of development that needs to be addressed and exercised both at the national and international level, however, "it acquires its full meaning only if rooted at the local level, in the praxis of each community" (*Ibid*, 1999: 79).

In order to better understand these intricate and ubiquitous elements of the concept and reality of the community, Another Development thinkers suggested that a useful method of approaching the community would be achieved through the dialogical and less hierarchical approach of participatory communication. Instead of having professionals from the outside imposing techniques and practices deemed necessary for the community's benefit, participatory communication incorporated the notion that in order for any community to develop, there first has to be an informed idea of what that community requires collectively, from their own understanding of their situation, before the obstacles to development can be removed. The paradigm of participatory communication largely informs the methods appropriated by me for obtaining a greater understanding of the Khwe community, and the fragile issues of development and communication amongst this group of people.

Participatory Communication – Involving the Individual

Unlike the modernization and dependency paradigms, Participatory communication arose as a social and cultural approach towards dealing with development issues in context. Participatory communication is more of an approach within itself than a theoretical explanation of the conditions of underdevelopment as it forms a larger part of the paradigm of Another Development. A fundamental tenet of participatory communication is a focus on the community in which development policies and practices are taking place more than on a set of quantifiable variables which determine each instance of development and communication. Whereas modernisation and dependency tend to highlight the effect of mass media approaches to communication, participatory communication highlights the importance of dialogue and less on a vertical form of communication from a professional sender source to a generally naive receiving public.

Early communication models in the 1950s and the 1960s saw the communication process in simple terms as a message going from a sender to a receiver. Emphasis was put on state control and censorship and stress was laid on the freedom of press. However, since the 1970s

communication has become more message - and receiver - centred (cf. Servaes, 1991). "The emphasis is more on the process of communication (i.e., the exchange of meanings), and on the significance of this process (i.e., the social relationships created by communication and the social institutions which result from such relationships)" (Servaes, 1991: 68). In other words, as opposed to earlier models of communication, the present view is fundamentally two-way , interactive, and participatory; and applies not only to centralized, state-controlled media, but also smallness of scale, and locality.

The idea behind successful development and communication in the participatory approach lies in the concept that communication is an integral aspect of any society, at all levels of that society. It is communication on a horizontal level (that is communication amongst people on a personal level) that is important for the sake of development and not a top-down communication approach which subordinates the receiving public as passive recipients of information. The former hierarchical, bureaucratic, and sender-oriented communication model was replaced by a more horizontal, participative, and receiver-oriented approach (Servaes, 1999: 83).

Although communication became centrally important in modernization theory after Daniel Lerner's (1958) contributions to the field in identifying that economic development required at least a certain degree of attitudinal change, communication has become even more important in development approaches focusing on community participation (Jacobson, 1994: 65). To understand communications potential, one must necessarily start with an examination of the societal context under which communication is to operate (Contreras, 1980, In Servaes, 1999: 86). In order to do this, however, one cannot rely on the idea that all societies are on a development course towards the same end-point, as the communication policies adopted would be designed to apply generally to all contexts of development, ignoring the fact that societies communicate in different ways and means from one another.

Participatory communication is more aptly characterised by multiplicity in one world suggesting that societies are expected to set their own development goals which may not coincide with those of the industrialized First World nations (cf. Jacobson, 1994: 65). Additionally, communication is then expected to support these goals and may tend to vary across countries instead of copying the role of communication in other developing nations. While modernisation and dependency focus on the ability of industrialized nations at the core in implementing change in underdeveloped societies on the periphery, scholars of

participatory communication identify the power of the individual in the communication process as having the potential to influence those around them and to participate in dialogue and action for the betterment of their own social, political and economic environments (McPhail, 2009: 27). This open approach to communication attempts to facilitate trust and is aimed at recruiting the participation of the native populations in third world countries in their own development (Ibid, 2009: 27).

An important aspect of participatory communication is a shift away from informing the people about procedures for achieving predetermined development goals, and instead places an emphasis on self-reliance and focuses on the goals of the individual and the community as the basis for decision making (Jacobson, 1994: 66). Instead of highlighting the effects of external agencies in the context of development, participation requires that communication be viewed as a process that takes place between people within a community, as well as negotiations made between a local population and the world around them. This involves internal and external negotiations of information and power.

According to McPhail, three rationales exist for participatory communication:

The native population possesses relevant information regarding their own circumstances and are a unique resource without which a development project might fail; the native population has the fundamental human right to contribute to the formation of their own advancement; and inclusion of the native population will draw more support which will in turn facilitate the achievement of common goals. (McPhail, 2009: 29).

Through the inclusion and direct involvement of the local population in the development process, individuals obtain a sense of empowerment in contributing to the design and implementation of a project, and are inclined to feel more motivated about working towards a common goal.

The model of participatory communication is indeed a cornerstone of contemporary development theory as it pays homage to the intricacies found at the very foundation of the community. However, it is still merely a theoretical hypotheses of what may occur if a particular communication model is adopted. Participatory communication, therefore, finds its pragmatic sustenance in the teachings of Freire and his idea of dialogical pedagogy, as well as the ideas of access, participation and self-management articulated in the UNESCO debates of the 1970s (cf. McPhail, 2009; Servaes, 1999, 1994).

According to Thomas McPhail, Freire based his idea of participatory communication around the key concepts of dialogue, conscientization, praxis, transformation, and critical consciousness (McPhail, 2009: 28). To elaborate on these concepts, McPhail (2009: 29) explains further:

Dialogue consists of the back and forth communication between those within development organisations and those they serve. *Conscientization* is the acknowledgement, awareness and handling of the inherent power differential and the possible disenfranchisement between the organisation and the native population. *Praxis* involves the ongoing examination of theory and real world practice. *Transformation* refers to the enlightenment or education of the native population in a way that promotes active consciousness and critical thinking in regards to their situation and/or why certain change implementation is taking place. *Critical consciousness* is the active social and political involvement of the beneficiaries.

Freire believed that incorporation of these concepts in implementation of a development project would lead to a more democratic or participatory form of communication than the more hierarchical forms of top-down communication. In any development context, subjugated peoples must be treated as equals in political processes. Therefore this implies dialogical communication between development workers, communication professionals and the subject community (Servaes, 1999: 84). Freire's strategy was to identify a respect for the autonomous personhood of each human being and a respect for otherness, or more bluntly put, a respect for the opinions of others in any development project. His second strategy was derived from early Marx and was based on the idea that human beings are destined for more than just a life which strives for the fulfilment of material needs. Therefore, through participatory communication and the identification of collective solutions aimed at resolving local problems, native populations can liberate themselves from poverty and cultural subjugation (cf. Servaes, 1999, 1994).

The second major approach to participatory communication is the UNESCO discourse involving the concepts of access, participation and self-management. These concepts were highlighted in the final report of a 1977 meeting held by UNESCO in the former Yugoslavia, Belgrade. According to Jan Servaes (1999: 85), the report defined the terms as such: "*Access* refers to the use of media for public service," that is the opportunities made available to the public to choose relevant content, and to have some form of feedback in order to communicate reactions and demands to production organisations. "*Participation* implies a higher level of public involvement in communication systems. It includes the involvement of the public in the production process, and also in the management and planning of

communication systems" (*Ibid*, 1999: 85). Participation in this sense may be no more than the representation and/or consultation of the public in the decision making process. Therefore, "self-management is the most advanced form of participation." In this instance, the local population exercises the power of decision making within communication enterprises, and are also fully involved in the formulation of communication policies (*Ibid*, 1999: 85).

According to Servaes, these ideas are considered important and are widely accepted as normative theories of participatory communication. Any participatory approach must involve a strong sense of access to the native population, and participation at all levels of development. There are, however, some differences between the ideas put forth by Freire, and UNESCO. UNESCO includes the idea of gradual progression, that is, that participation may not occur from the outset of the development project but has to be collectively agreed upon and nurtured if it is to be successful. "Some amount of access may be allowed, but self-management may be postponed until sometime in the future" (Servaes, 1999: 85). Freire's pedagogy allows for no such compromise and argues that one either respects the culture of the other, or falls back into a situation of domination and that of imposed education (*Ibid*, 1999: 85). UNESCO discusses in neutral terms, the idea of "the public," whereas Freire spoke specifically about the subordination of the "oppressed" by professionals who are trained to deal with development issues. Lastly, UNESCO puts its main emphasis on the institution rather than on the group itself. In other words, participatory radio would refer to a radio station that is self-managed by those that are participating in it. Freire on the other hand places his main emphasis on the idea of "group dialogue rather than such amplifying media as radio, print, and television" (Servaes, 1999: 85).

Both Freire's dialogical pedagogy and the discourse surrounding the UNESCO debates of the late seventies identify that there is no universal path to development and that all local communities should engage in participatory communication amongst themselves and with those intending to aid the development process. Although these two major approaches may have some differences and shortcomings, they nevertheless form the backbone of participatory communication as a normative theory of development. A central underlying theme of participatory research is that in order to understand communication potential in any given development context, "one must necessarily start with a serious examination of the societal context under which communication is to operate" (Contreras, 1980. In Servaes, 1999: 86). It cannot be stressed enough that in viewing the native population as the

foundation of any development process, participatory communication broke away from the dominant paradigms of Modernisation and dependency in focusing on intrinsic social-cultural factors of development, rather than on mechanistic factors of technology and capital.

Whilst there may be high regard for the theory of participatory communication amongst those who disagree with the dominant paradigm, there are nevertheless those who critique the participatory model of communication in contemporary development discourse. Whilst participation is popular in theory, it is difficult to promote in practice by its very nature. The idea that development is a participatory process, which brings about social and material change, for the majority of the people involved, through gaining a greater understanding of their environment (cf. Rogers, 1976b) is one that can be easily accepted by scholars and academics. However, the situation might be vastly different in reality, or in practice.

Problems with Participatory Communication in practice

Participatory communication, by its very nature, places an emphasis on the community and the active involvement of the community in the development process. In practice, however, applying participatory communication methods to real-world situations encounters several pitfalls. Implementation and evaluation of participatory projects become rather difficult when dealing with concrete practicalities as participatory communication is defined by subjective, non-quantifiable terms (McPhail, 2009: 29). A practical model for authentic participation does not exist. Theory, therefore, is somewhat disconnected from practice when it comes to participatory communication as each participatory project must be designed and implemented solely with the subject community in mind as prominent stakeholders in the development process. This emphasizes the contentious nature of participation in practice as context is key, and a concrete model of participation would be somewhat contradictory to the central tenets of participatory communication as a whole.

In order to problematise the practical application of participatory communication, I draw on the questions of McPhail, in his book *Development Communication: Reframing the role of the Media* (2009), in order to outline the obstacles that this approach may encounter when applied to real-world situations as opposed to hypothetical ones. McPhail (2009: 29) poses the following questions:

- How much participation should the indigenous population have before a development project can be labelled participatory?

- How does one facilitate participation with enough neutrality so as to not overly influence the people one wants to participate, thus negating the entire approach? What about education and translation issues? Indigenous people might not be equipped with the skills to participate actively.
- How easily can the term be manipulated to cover up a venture that is more profit -and power -based than well meaning?
- Who should hold the ultimate responsibility for a project - the intervening party, the investors, or the stakeholders?

I use this template as McPhail did in acknowledging the fact that participatory communication is far more layered in reality than on paper. There are no single answers to participation, and again, there are no concrete definitions for participatory communication. It is here that the problem lies when applying the notion of "theory" to the participatory communications approach (McPhail, 2009: 29). To quote Servaes (1999: 200): "There is no magic formula for injecting participation into projects, it must come from within."

In addition, Servaes claims that barriers to participation are certainly not limited to "powerful-powerless" relationships or those between the government and the community (*Ibid*, 1999: 201). To be avoided is a view that the community is a collection of unified groups of people or that the community is "one big happy family." Each subgroup within a community has its own self-interest to protect, "an endeavour which may or may not serve the needs of the community at large" (Kennedy, 1984. In Servaes, 1999: 201). More powerful community members may take advantage of any possible opportunity for influence towards their own ideals, therefore arbitrating the purpose of the participatory approach and undermining the cooperative effort (Servaes, 1999: 201). Community members (regardless of wealth or status) need to take control of the participatory process themselves, and not rely on the powerful few to make their decisions for them. For a project to be truly participative, all voices must be heard and acknowledged, and a mutual understanding between stakeholders (or community members) is to be the aim of participatory communication.

A major problem within participatory research is the issue of self-depreciation. The long-term existence and proliferation of hierarchical structures have often resulted in a subordination of rural people. They see themselves as "consumers" rather than "participants" in the development process (Narula & Pearce, 1986: 21). Consequently, "people often have lost the power to make decisions affecting their communities and expect solutions to come from

above" (Servaes, 1999: 202). Freire (1983: 49) referred to this too. He stated that people in rural communities have been told for so long that they know nothing, are incapable of learning, and are thus unfit to alleviate themselves of their own situation, that they have become somewhat convinced of their own incapability. As a result, resentment is more likely to be felt amongst the local population, making a participatory climate rather difficult to promote in practice.

Further problems are encountered at the levels of language and culture. Local communities do not think, speak, or act in the same way as an outside party would. Therefore, the very act of imposing one's worldview, or a strictly theoretically based observation, on a subject community is largely based on one's own linguistic and cultural background. In other words, researchers differ from subject communities in their perception of reality, and their understanding of the world around them. What may be seen as an act of wasting time to a researcher may be seen by the community as an important aspect of their culture (Servaes, 1999: 202,203). For example, a researcher in the Khwe community might see the social orientation of the community members as laziness, or a waste of time, when it comes to the time they spend on the maintenance of relationships with others in the community through sitting around talking. However, to the community, sitting and spending time with others might be viewed as an important aspect of cultivating social relations, rather than laziness or a waste of time. This is just a brief example, but it nevertheless stresses the fundamental issue that communities operate in a different socio-cultural sphere than that of an outsider, especially one who adheres to the rigorous structures and theories of academia.

This correlates with the problems of cross-cultural communication which, by its very nature, acknowledges the importance of language and culture in communication efforts.

According to Servaes (1999: 204) "there is an inverse relationship between cultural differences and communication ease." The greater the difference in the understanding of language and culture between the researcher and the community, the harder it will be to communicate effectively. A larger part of the problem is that the researcher can never fully be immersed or acquainted with the entirety of the culture of the community as they are themselves from a different socio-cultural background. Culture then, is to be understood by the researcher to the extent that they can represent some of the significant aspects of that culture through their own observations or encounters, without skewing or antagonising the way in which the local people experience their culture. "Culture, when not understood, or

seen as antagonistic...constitutes a substantial barrier...in development communications and participatory endeavours" (Servaes, 1999: 204).

The problems facing the participatory approach in the field are numerous. However, considering that there are no concrete methods of achieving true participation, there are no concrete answers to the problems faced by participatory communication professionals. Social science research is based on a proposition that is reliably proven and infinitely testable, and participatory communication rejects this analytical, scientific method of evaluation (McPhail, 2009: 29). To prevent some of the problems of participatory communication in practice, researchers are to maintain the fundamental understanding that all members of a community have a voice in deciding future courses, and focus should not be put solely on communication professionals, community leaders or any other key figures in the development process. Additionally, previous knowledge of the problems and characteristics a community is essential in order to identify current issues and future development strategies within that community.

Possibly the most important aspect of participatory communication is that it is a long-term perspective. It is not interested, like funding agencies and governments, in achieving quick results. According to Servaes (1996: 87) "the process of participatory research is cyclical, continuous, local, and accessible. Study-reflection-action is the integrating process in this type of research." True participation does not occur overnight, it is dependent on a number of complicated factors and the researcher is to remain aware of this throughout their involvement with the subject community. Additionally, "adaptation of traditional media for education and social action are encouraged because of their cultural values and their inexpensiveness" (Servaes, 1991: 93). Grassroots media themselves are not sufficient in achieving an overall participatory climate. Populations need long-term education to develop skills and to be able to think critically. However, local grassroots media do provide a sense of ownership and participation that is key to achieving long-term sustainable development, proving that they can be useful in the participatory development process.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter is centred on a discussion of the methods used in obtaining and analysing research data for this particular study. In particular, this chapter will consider the methods used in conducting grassroots comics workshops, as posited by Leif Packalen and Sharif Sharma (2007), and the various other qualitative methods used in obtaining information useful to this study. The central aim of this chapter is to maintain a focus on qualitative methods of social science research so as to accommodate the theme of participatory communication²¹, which is a vital theoretical component of this dissertation (as discussed in the previous chapter). In order to better understand the Khwe community, the methods of participant observation and various aspects of ethnographic research are utilised so as to comprehend the social and cultural climate in which this community lives and operates, and also to account for any nuances or anecdotes which arise through the course of this research. A brief explanation will also be given of the basic methods of inquiry used for the purpose of gaining access to the opinions and attitudes of my sample group and members of the local community; including interviews, discussions and observations. Finally, this chapter discusses the methods used in identifying development issues and health concerns present within the Khwe community, and then proceeds to a discussion about the method of grassroots comics, from introducing the concept, to negotiations around the creation and placement of comics within the community.

Defining applied research

Research can be typically divided into two sub-categories, that of *basic* research and that of *applied* research (cf. Merriam, 2009). Simply put, basic research refers to research that is motivated by intellectual interest in a phenomenon. The primary purpose of this research is the extension of knowledge through an analysis of factors surrounding a particular phenomenon. Applied research is used when one wants to contribute to the quality of practice of a particular discipline (by adding to the knowledge-base of that discipline). "Applied social science researchers generally are interested in speaking to an audience different from that of basic researchers" (Merriam, 2009: 4). They hope that their work (or the knowledge produced

²¹ See pages 45-52, chapter on *Theoretical Framework*. Participatory communication favours qualitative research over quantitative etc. qualitative is more reflective of 'real-world' experiences.

though their work) will be used by stakeholders of a community, administrators or policymakers so as to improve the way things are done (*Ibid*, 2009).

Applied research argues that traditional academic paradigms of research fail to address everyday issues in the lives of those being researched and instead focus on empirically uniform methods of analysis (cf. Van Langenhove, 2007). Applied research is interested in understanding how people 'interpret' their experiences, how they go about 'constructing' their worlds, and what 'meaning' they attribute to their experiences, ultimately to contribute towards improving the practice of a particular discipline or to address a particular localized problem (Merriam, 2009: 5). Applied research informs, to a large extent, the nature of my methodology and will be discussed in further detail as the chapter proceeds.

A form of applied research worth paying particular attention to is that of action research. This form of research has the goal of addressing a particular problem within a specific setting, such as a classroom, a workplace, a community or even an organisation (cf. Merriam, 2009). Moreover, action research often involves the participants or stakeholders in the research process, and whilst some training in research is helpful, action research tends to be conducted by "people in the real world" who are interested in practical solutions to problems, and who are concerned with social change (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007: 234).

I mention these aspects of research so as to better describe the methods adopted within my own research. I believe that this study is driven by the strategy of applied research, whilst also reflecting certain aspects of a case study. There is no single definition for applied research or basic research, but these two broad methods of inquiry nevertheless inform the way in which we conduct research within our own discipline or context. Basic research, as it has been loosely defined, bases its findings and analyses on facts and quantifiable statistics, often also written or verbal accounts of a phenomenon from trusted sources, all for the sake of furthering knowledge about that particular phenomenon. In contrast, applied research adheres to more inductive (or qualitative) methods of inquiry, and often involves the stakeholders of a particular research endeavour in contributing to an understanding of the phenomenon from a local perspective, thus allowing the researcher access to crucial information and socio-cultural nuances that may contribute invaluablely to improving conditions or practices within those contexts.

Much like development practice, qualitative research itself has no single, solid definition of what classifies its purpose. Attempts to define the concept have many themes in common but

no free-standing explanation exists²². This is no doubt a result of the philosophical, disciplinary and historical influences on what we have come to term 'qualitative research'²³. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2000: 3 & 4) describe qualitative research as a situated activity that "locates the observer in the world", and go on further to say that "qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand". Patton (1985, in Merriam, 2009: 14) explains that qualitative research "is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as a part of a particular context and the interactions there...to understand the nature of that setting". Additionally, he states that "[t]he analysis strives for depth of understanding". Merriam (2009: 14) attempts to summarize the themes of qualitative research in positing that "the focus is on process, understanding, and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive".

These points highlight the relevance of applied research, and how this strategy has come to inform the methodology adopted in this study. The fact that it is so broad and diverse equates to the simple idea that qualitative research is not uniform or prophetic in its approach towards academic inquiry; rather, it is useful in that it accounts for the unique experiences and interactions of those being researched in their own context or socio-cultural climate. "There have never been so many paradigms, strategies of inquiry, or methods of analysis for researchers to draw upon and utilize" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; 18). This may serve as a positive factor for researchers interested in making use of qualitative methods of inquiry, but may also have the polar effect of confusing researchers about which methods to utilize that would best suit their particular field or study²⁴. According to Merriam (2009: 14) "the key concern is understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants' perspectives, not the researcher's", and this is what this research hopes to achieve.

²² Although many scholars attempt to formulate a solid definition of qualitative research in their works, most advance definitions that reflect the complexity of the method; not necessarily a complete, linear description of the processes involved.

²³ During the 1970s and 1980s qualitative research gained great support from scholars ranging from many different fields outside the traditional disciplines of anthropology and sociology, marking the popularisation of qualitative research in disciplines such as education, health, social work, psychology and so on (Merriam, 2009: 7).

²⁴ According to Merriam (2009: 7) a large amount of researchers make the mistake of over-burdening their research with a focus on multiple methods of inquiry. The purpose of qualitative research is to produce quality and undertaking too many methods at once can distort the nature of the research, instead of producing a thorough analysis using only a few primary methods of inquiry.

Sample group

One of the most crucial aspects of successful qualitative research involves selecting the correct 'unit of analysis', or sample population (cf. Merriam, 2009). The general problem of observing whether or not grassroots comics are useful as a communication tool amongst people of the community requires that a corresponding target group (or groups) become the unit of analysis. Choosing what, where when and whom to observe or interview is key to understanding the phenomena under question (cf. *Ibid*, 2009), therefore I will mention why and how I chose to approach, interview or observe certain community members instead of others and how this relates to the question of this study, that is, what relevance do grassroots comics serve, and how is this evident in the Khwe community?

The Khwe side of Platfontein consists of roughly 1200 people, approximately a third of the size of the adjacent !Xun area. The two groups of people share the same land and are integrated to a certain extent through the central placement of the school, the radio station and other municipal buildings²⁵. My research focuses only on the Khwe as the !Xun is too large to conduct a qualitative analysis of grassroots comics for the sake of this study, and this would require a comparative case analysis of the two groups of people, which is far too broad for the purpose of this dissertation. This does not exclude the !Xun from possibly benefiting from research results, instead what I am hoping will occur is that the activists who take part in the grassroots comics workshop (which will be participants from the Khwe side of the community) will share their experiences with their colleagues in the !Xun side of the community²⁶.

The sampling technique is based on the non-probability principles of purposive sampling, more specifically, a particular type of purposive sampling known as snowball sampling (cf. Merriam, 2009: 79). Snowball sampling involves choosing an initial sample based on its obvious relevance to the research problem (*Ibid*, 2009: 79). A few key participants are located at the start of the study and as the researcher interviews these people they are referred

²⁵ These public service buildings have been built in between the two groups of Bushmen so as to allow for equal access between the two groups of people. Both the !Xun and the Khwe occupy opposite ends of the Platfontein farm land, but join together where the government buildings, and privately owned buildings like the kiosk and the radio station, are situated. This is not to say that the communities are isolated from one another, in fact integration is promoted. The two groups are merely situated in this way because of the fact that both come from different traditions and cultural backgrounds ó (Fieldnotes, Mar 2009).

²⁶ The Isibindi health group, the Red Cross and SASI all have groups of activists/counsellors amongst the Khwe and the !Xun respectively, and these groups often work in collaboration with one another ó (Fieldnotes, Feb 2009).

to other participants who may offer information which may also be significant to the research topic. "By asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases" (Patton, 2002: 237).

The key participants who are initially selected for this particular study are chosen due to the knowledge they possess regarding health issues affecting the Platfontein community, and because of their orientation as either healthcare workers or health counsellors in the community. To be more specific these participants include people from NGOs and community-led groups within the community, as well as professional healthcare workers. The reason for selecting a sample is because those participants are people who are actively involved in working with health in the community, and would possess a better understanding of the issues that are of relevance to this study. Also, to reiterate, a major criteria for sampling is focused on selecting participants from the Khwe side of the community in keeping with the limitations of this particular study.

There is an inherent bias in using purposive sampling in that the analysis of results is limited to the population under study, and because sampling establishes criteria for the amount of involvement from the subject community, interpretation of results is therefore limited. Despite this inherent bias, however, if a selected sample is representative of actual groups that operate within a community, it becomes applicable to that area or realm. Purposive sampling can indeed produce reliable data that contributes to the validity of qualitative research, and the strength of the technique is ultimately based on its intended bias (cf. Bernard, 2002, in Tongo, 2002). That is, when used appropriately, purposive sampling is more useful than random sampling in research that relies on practical field-work, the reason being that a random sample may not be as aware or knowledgeable as participants who are directly concerned with issues relating to the study.

Those individuals who do not form a part of the sample are also helpful for the purpose of gathering information on what the general public feels towards certain issues or problems within the community. Therefore, although there would not be time to interview or discuss the particulars of grassroots comics with everyone in the Khwe side of the community, all community members are, essentially, important role-players in the process of data gathering. For now though, this chapter will shift its focus towards the research methods utilised for the sake of conducting applied research within the Platfontein community.

Ethnographic methods

Ethnography originated in the field of Anthropology and its history can be traced back to late nineteenth-century anthropologists who engaged in participatory observation in the "field" (cf. Tedlock, 2000, Merriam, 2009). The process involves doing research in a naturalistic setting²⁷, with the writing up of findings as ethnography. The process is inductive and is structured around producing a self-reflexive account of research findings in context. Nowadays ethnographic studies are utilised by researchers from many different disciplines, however, "the factor that unites all forms of ethnography is its focus on human society and culture" (Merriam, 2009: 27). Although the term *culture* might be ambiguous, it essentially refers to the beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behaviour patterns of a specific group of people (*Ibid* 2009).

As I was interested in understanding more about the cultural inclinations of the Khwe community, I found certain ethnographic methods to be useful in grounding a contextual understanding of my research findings. According to Schensul et al. (1999: 7) "We conduct ethnographic research because we find that it can be an effective tool for both understanding and improving conditions faced by research participants and others in similar situations". Furthermore, ethnographic research is useful in generating knowledge and translating that knowledge into policy and program development (cf. Schensul *et al.* 1999). Because this particular research entails the use of grassroots comics, ethnographic methods aid greatly in evaluating this intervention within a cultural context, and furthermore, for developing a further understanding of grassroots comics as they are applied in the local setting.

Criticism is directed at ethnography as a writing practice and "leaves us with the uncomfortable phenomenon whereby observation is reduced to 'the text' that describes it, and claims to empirical 'facts' are treated with varying degrees of suspicion" (Clifford & Marcus, 1986: 66). Ethnographic research therefore becomes prey to criticism from a purely scientific point of view, yet as qualitative methods of inquiry, ethnographic studies seek meaning making from the point of view of the participants being studied, and what the researcher makes of this encounter as he or she observes and records, not from a distance, but as an

²⁷ By "naturalistic setting" I mean a context which is devoid of any researcher manipulation and is exactly as it seems - natural. Anthropologists were interested in understanding the world from the point of view of the people they were studying, so they would enter the natural environment in which these people lived to observe closely and to better understand the ways in which these people interacted with each other and the world around them (cf. Schensul *et al.*, 1999).

outsider participating in research with members from the community. In the words of Scheyvens and Storey (2003: 65) "there seems to be no real reason why the 'social facts' generated by qualitative and interpretive approaches should not be considered as 'real' and accurate as those empowered with the confidence of numbers".

Up to this point the philosophical and theoretical aspects of ethnography have been discussed, but in order to simplify a definition for the purpose of this study:

Ethnographic research calls for an engagement in direct learning through physical and social involvement in the field setting. Knowing...is first and foremost experienced by observing, participating in conversations and daily activities of the members of the community under study, and recording these observations (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte (1999: 72).

One of the key methods that characterises most ethnographic research, and is crucial to effective fieldwork, is that of participant observation. "Immersion in the site as a participant observer is the primary method of data collection" (Merriam, 2009: 28). Additionally, this method "emphasizes the legitimacy of a researcher's interpretation of observed cultural phenomena" (Brockington & Sullivan, 2004: 65).

Participant Observation

Participatory Communication²⁸ theoretically implies that research be driven towards meeting the needs of the people of the community in which a particular development project is to be undertaken or attempted. Participant observation is a methodology that has its roots in anthropology and is extremely useful as a method within ethnographic research²⁹ (cf. Fetterman, 1998). It has also become extremely useful in applied social science research and is a practical method for understanding people and the meanings they create and share in their day-to-day lives, in the context in which they live. In my analysis of the Khwe community and the introduction of grassroots comics in this context, I refer to examples and observations in order to validate my research assessment. This contextual understanding is based on the method of participant observation.

The value of participant observation as a qualitative method of analysis can be noted through the extensive writing about the practice itself (cf. Fetterman 1998, Denzin and Lincoln 2005, Merriam 2009). Danny Jorgensen (1989: 12) poses the following definition: "Through

²⁸ See previous chapter on *Theoretical Framework*.

²⁹ Brockington and Sullivan (2003: 65) state that "the key methods [of ethnography] are participant observation and oral testimony: the first emphasising the researcher's interpretation of observed cultural phenomena."

participant observation, it is possible to describe what goes on, who or what is involved, when and where things happen, how they occur, and why things happen as they do in particular situations." Denzin (2009: 9) offers a straightforward explanation saying that "participant observation is a commitment to adopt the perspectives of those studied by sharing in their day-to-day experiences", a striking similarity to what is suggested by participatory communication theory. In my opinion, Fetterman (1998) presents the most descriptive definition, encapsulating the true nature of the method in as little words as possible. He states that "participant observation combines participation in the lives of the people under study with maintenance of a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data" (Fetterman, 1998: 34-5).

We have discussed some key elements involved in the method of participant observation, however, there are also many ambiguities associated with this practice. Firstly Sharan Merriam (2009: 124) refers to several possible roles that the researcher might adopt in conducting qualitative research. These roles range from the researcher as a complete participant to roles where observing is more important than participating. I am more inclined to fit into her category of "observer as participant" as my research is driven by understanding the community from an insider's perspective, whilst acknowledging my own role as an outsider to the community, but it is participative in the sense that I engage in a practical form of communication with the community members through comic workshops, informal interviews and focus groups. My activities are known to the community that I am interested in researching so my role as an observer is not obscured. It is my interest to "observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider's identity (to some degree) without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership" (Adler & Adler, 1998: 85).

Through participant observation I have managed to observe relationships between people and processes, cultural patterns and continuities over time, as well as to get a "feel" of what it is like to live in the community. Moreover, participant observation has allowed for the method of critiquing my own assumptions about the community and those literary sources which still concentrate on the historical contexts of the Bushmen and how they came to be acculturated into modern ways of life³⁰. A large volume of academic writing regarding the Bushmen fails

³⁰ A large amount of literature written about the Bushmen still romanticises the Western perception of the Bushmen as the 'noble' savage, as a hunter-gatherer and an astute tracker etc. although these cultural traits have

to contextualise their subjects emotions, beliefs, living conditions etc. (cf. Garland & Gordon, 1999), therefore, through participant observation I wish to understand relationships between the people, the environment and the issues faced by the local Khwe community. In the words of Jorgensen (1989: 12):

The methodology of participant observation is exceptional for studying processes, relationships among people and events, continuities over time, and patterns, as well as the immediate socio-cultural contexts in which human existence unfolds.

To use this quote as a template, I emphasise that participant observation is a valuable tool for analysing or observing community members in their social and cultural contexts and accounts for nuances unaccounted for by strict academic writing and quantitative analyses.

Grassroots Comics

The concept of grassroots comics was introduced by Leif Packalen and Sharad Sharma who both have a background in cartooning and development, and who have both worked extensively on bringing the method of grassroots comics to life in parts of Asia, Europe and Africa in the last few years. They are founders of the website Worldcomics.fi³¹ where resources are made readily available to those looking at using the grassroots comics methodology in practice. The basis of the grassroots comics methodology used in my research is adapted from their book, *Grassroots comics - a development communication perspective* (Packalen & Sharma, 2007).

Grassroots comics are intended to be a platform for communication amongst people within the community about particular issues they feel need to be confronted. These issues may range from civil rights to basic health concerns to domestic violence and so on, and are often grouped as themes when constructing a comic story message. The point is that the themes reflected are selected by, and bear weight in the lives of, the people in the community. "What makes these comics different from professional material is that they are made mainly for local distribution" (Packalen & Sharma, 2007: 11). In other words, these comics are not designed to be used on a massive scale or to be applied to the socio-cultural anomalies of different communities. They focus on the local setting and encourage debate in the local environment.

been long forgotten, and bushmen have become more and more acculturated in to modern society, and further removed from their traditional past (cf. Gordon, 1992).

³¹ www.worldcomics.fi - an online source where the public can either read up on grassroots comics initiatives that have been successful, or make use of the practical guides offered by Packalen and Sharma.

According to Packalen and Sharma (2007: 11) grassroots comics are "comics that are made by socially active people themselves, rather than by campaign and art professionals, [they] are genuine voices which encourage local debate in the society". In essence this method calls for a large degree of participation, both from people within the community and on the part of the researcher, in understanding the environment in which they are to introduce this method. Additionally, this method differs from methods of observation in that there is a resultant product, and the people involved in the production of grassroots comics create something that is tangible and intended for use by the community itself. Therefore it is a method that produces a physical outcome as well as an intended socio-cultural outcome.

The grassroots comics method constitutes the practical side of this research and shifts away from a focus on observation to a focus on participation and utility, and whether or not a method such as grassroots comics can be useful in promoting communication and dialogue amongst the people of the community about local problems or issues that they need to deal with as a group, using a practical and accessible medium. The researcher concentrates "on showing the participants how to visualise the story, make the story into a logical sequence, and make it easy to read and understand correctly" (Packalen & Sharma, 2007; 12)

"Grassroots comics dramatise specific issues and bring them into the debate in the community" (Packalen and Sharma, 2007: 12). Moreover, "the comics are always related to some activity of an NGO or a community group, and are rarely the work of an individual in his/her own capacity" (Packalen & Sharma, 2007: 12). This stresses the importance of a community driven form of communication. Although the researcher is there to facilitate and introduce some of the technical aspects of grassroots comics, the control and motivation of the comics is in the hands of community activists or volunteers themselves. Not only is this the case, but the messages or themes adopted in the narrative of the comics is usually agreed upon by the various NGO's and activists involved in the creation of the comics themselves, not by a single person or group with one particular agenda in mind. This falls in line with participatory communication in that beneficiaries participate towards a common understanding and agreement as to what choices should be made for the benefit of the community as a whole. "Any group with an identity, a message and a target audience can produce and use grassroots comics as a communication tool" (Packalen & Sharma, 2007: 13).

I did not personally select possible candidates for the comics workshops, instead I suggested to the group leaders of the respective NGOs and activist groups that they inform their

colleagues about the nature of the workshop and leave the choice up to them as to whether they would like to join in or not. The respective NGOs I am referring to are SASI, the Isibindi Health Group and Red Cross³². These groups are all actively involved, in some way or another, in improving the living conditions of people in the Platfontein community.

My visits to the Platfontein community consisted of a number of fieldtrips that took place over a period from 2008 to 2011. The first set of fieldtrips (2008 - 2009) were shorter visits than the trips made from 2010 ó 2011, owing to the fact that it was first required of me to discover who were key role-players in the community, who was explicitly involved with healthcare work, how the community would react to my research objectives and to develop a better understanding of the research setting in general, refining the aim of this study within the context of the Platfontein community. Fieldtrips that followed these preliminary data-gathering trips required more time so that research goals could be accomplished; including interviews, conducting a workshop, analysing the reaction of the community to the comics and conducting follow-up interviews with participants in the research process. For a more detailed delineation of when fieldtrips were conducted see appendix 1 (pg. 164).

The grassroots comics workshop only took place on 12 November 2010, and started from about 10am. Participants consisted of health-care workers from the respective NGOs of Red Cross and Isibindi. The workshop was held in a classroom at the !XunKhwesa school located in the centre of the community. Mr. Jonkers, the school principle, kindly allocated a classroom to me and the participants so that we could have access to the resources we would require, namely desks and a blackboard. There were seventeen participants in total(see appendix 2), including the two facilitators of their respective groups, Dala Sibongo from Red Cross and Matios Sibongo from Isibindi.

The participants had never made comics before, but most were willing to give it a try. A few individuals seemed somewhat disinterested with the exercise but quickly came to enjoy the workshop as the processes became more clearly defined, and the various groups of people started to develop ideas, messages and direction for their respective comics. Those who seemed disinterested at the outset ended up being completely enthralled by the workshop and all-in-all the results were inspiring (Field notes, November 2010). What differed between my

³² These three groups each have their own agenda and are not formally associated with one another, although they do work collaboratively with one another, or with the community clinic, at times when their support is required.

workshop and the workshop plan proposed by Packalen and Sharma was that instead of spanning the workshop across 3-4 days (see Fig. 4), I was struck with time constraints and limitations with regards to when I could meet with the respective NGOs and activists involved, and therefore had to fit the workshop in to the space of one single day (see Fig. 5).

At first I thought this task would prove impossible, but after the workshop started, participants seemed to express a sense of enthusiasm as they learnt more about what they were going to be doing in the workshop. In other words, aspects of the workshop that were structured in detail as a step by step process became more fluid and I noticed that participants were understanding and grasping techniques and ideas at a collective rate that was quicker than what I had expected. All participants involved had started the drawing process at least 2-3 hours in to the workshop session. To stress how fascinating this is, I refer to the fact that the drawing process should only start on day two or three of the workshop (see Fig 4), yet the participants had grasped the concept, structure and techniques so quickly, that there was no point in procrastinating and so the creation process began.

See figure below/

<p>I. How to plan a comics workshop programme:</p>
<p>We assume that you will use a minimum of four days for your workshop, ideally five. If you have four days only, the feedback interaction with the community would be difficult to fit in.</p> <p>The first day should give the participants an orientation in the grassroots comics concept and what can be done with the medium.</p> <p>Suggested programme for Day One: Comics communication basics - why it is clever to use comics Samples from different parts of the country (or world), in-depth analysis Drawing exercises Various formats of comics Thematic discussions start</p> <p>On the second day the focus of the stories and the basic rules of comics-making will become clear.</p> <p>Suggested programme for Day Two: Thematic assignment continues (individually or in groups) Messages, desired change and target groups are decided Work on initial stories – feedback and discussions Comics rules, reading order, placement of texts, balloons, effects, etc. Drawing exercises Work on the scripts</p> <p>On the third day the participants will work on the scripts and then on the final artwork.</p> <p>Suggested programme for Day Three: Visual scripts - feedback and discussions</p>
<p>Inking exercises Final artwork starts</p> <p>On the fourth day everybody will have finished the artwork, and some have started a second story.</p> <p>Suggested programme for Day Four: Finalising artwork Photocopying starts Critique session Distribution plan, division into teams</p> <p>The fifth day will give the participants an insight into how the comics work in the community.</p> <p>Suggested programme for Day Five: Distribution/exhibiting of the comics in the community Collecting feedback on the comics from the community Practical advice on how to make a project proposal and budget Final discussion and evaluation of the workshop</p> <p>These are suggestions only, you will have to accommodate the programme to local circumstances, how participants are available, what premises you can use, how much time you have at your disposal, etc.</p>

Figure 4: *Proposed workshop plan on grassroots comics production as suggested by Packalen and Sharma (2007).*

Grassroots Comics Workshop Plan - Khwe Community

1 Day: 6-7 hours in length

Hour 1:

Comics communication basics and samples of comics from other communities

Hour 2:

**Drawing exercises and explaining of various types of comic formats.
Rules about reading order, placement of text, effects and perspective.**

Hour 3:

Thematic discussion in groups about messages, target groups and desired change required through the reading process.

Hour 4:

**Further drawing exercises and working on visual scripts.
First drafts of comics drawn.**

Hour 5:

**Short discussion session centred around first drafts.
Adjustments made and finalisation of comics begins (Inking, speech etc.)**

Hour 6:

**Completion of comics.
Short discussion about distribution plan.
Photocopying of comics.**

Hour 7:

Distribution of comics around the community (provided the comics are complete).

Figure 5: My proposed workshop on grassroots comics in the Khwe community, adapted from the model offered by Leif Packalen and Sharad Sharma (2007), but compressed into the space of a day to account for the time-constraints surrounding my research.

The elements of ownership and directorship on the part of the participants instilled a sense of motivation and encouragement in their engagement with the workshop, and the creation of

the grassroots comics. "By anchoring the grassroots comics to the community activists and to their NGOs, the messages in their stories are more exact, to the point and relevant to the debate within the community" (Packalen & Sharma. 2007: 13). The fact that these people were already working, in some way or another, towards making a difference in the community, was presumably the reason for them to become so involved in the grassroots comics workshop, as this was just an attractive, accessible and affordable medium with which to encourage participatory communication amongst people in the community.

An analysis of the themes chosen for the grassroots comics and the nuances observed in the workshop will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. For now what is important is to emphasize the structure and methods of Grassroots comics. By this I mean the purpose or function as well as the format of the proposed grassroots comics as there are many different principles behind the use of grassroots comics, and so too are there different types of comic formats (cf. Packalen and Sharma, 2007). The use of grassroots comics in the context of this research is aimed at campaigning and peer group distribution within a local community, the most common use for grassroots comics. Packalen and Sharma also refer to the possible use of grassroots comics in published material or at public exhibitions for the sake of creating awareness outside the boundaries of the community about a particular issue (Packalen and Sharma, 2007: 16). The potential format of grassroots comics can range between several templates including wall poster comics, comic booklets, eight-page story from one double-sided photocopy (A4), accordion comics and so on³³ (cf. *Ibid*, 2007). Although there are quite a few to choose from, the most common format is the wall poster comic. This is the format emphasised in the workshop I conducted in the Platfontein community. The wall poster comic is a four-panelled comic drawn on two A4 pieces of paper stuck together to make one A3 sized wall poster. This is the cheapest, most accessible and most commonly used format of grassroots comics.

The grassroots comics method is largely practical and also very much dependent on the willingness of the researcher and the community members to work collaboratively towards achieving a common understanding and creating a relevant message for the purpose of the community as a whole. This may be easier said in words though, and the process inherently comes with a few hitches as reality can often be very different to what is suggested in

³³ See Figures 6 - 9.

literature. The methods I used for my research in the community underwent constant negotiation and re-negotiation when applied in the real-life context of the community itself, and often, I found I had to readjust my subjective perceptions of the community in order to accommodate the fact that the local population often had different priorities and perceptions in life compared to the ones I may have become accustomed to in my own local setting. The research process progressively developed in to a long standing relationship between myself and the community, and as a result became far less uniform and mechanistic than I had ever anticipated, but I will make particular mention of this in the following chapter.



Figure 6: An example of a wall poster comic made by a community activist. Source: Packalen, L. & Sharma, S. (2007) *Grassroots Comics: A Development Communication Tool*.



Figures 7 & 8: Examples of a *comic booklets*. The format resembles more of a short story-book with visuals to support the narrative. Source: Packalen, L. & Sharma, S. (2007) *Grassroots Comics: A Development Communication Tool*.



Figure 9: An example of an *Accordion comic*. a very simple and attractive way of telling a story. Source: Packalen, L. & Sharma, S. (2007) *Grassroots Comics: A Development Communication Tool*.

Interviews

My research made use of interviews. I conducted both person-to-person and group interviews with quite a variety of people. I conducted over 11 in-depth interviews with primary informants from Isibindi, SASI, Red Cross and the clinic (see appendix 2), took part in semi-formal focus groups with several different groups (including youth, NGO workers and clinic staff) and interviewed a number of other community members on an informal basis. According to DeMarrais (2004: 55) "an interview is a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study." However, the process of interviewing is significantly more complex than this somewhat simple explanation can provide.

There are dominantly three types of interviews that determine the structure, direction, and intention of an interview and these are structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (see Fig. 10). Each type of interview varies depending on the pre-determined structure inherent in the interview (cf. Merriam, 2009). Quite a number of the interviews conducted were not particularly formal, owing to the fact that many participants did not see the particular relevance of meeting a stranger (or outsider) in order to answer random questions; or otherwise they simply did not know what to expect. Therefore numerous semi-structured and unstructured interviews were conducted as if they were just informal discussions between two people, as opposed to a more structured Q&A session, in an attempt to establish more of a dialogue and understanding in relation to my study.

When working in different social and cultural settings it is of paramount importance that the researcher account for the fact that the local population may not view the world in the same vocabulary, or mode of thought as that of the researcher. Therefore, the process of interviewing may require a certain degree of adjustment in order to successfully elicit the particular information desired by the researcher.

Usually specific information is desired from all respondents, in which case there is a more structured section to the interview. But the largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand (Merriam, 2009: 90).

This is most definitely the case when conducting ethnographic field-research as the focus is on the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of individuals in their local setting, not on answering a question about a random sample of controlled research participants. "For the most part...interviewing in qualitative investigations is more open-ended and less structured. Less structured formats assume that the individual respondents define the world in unique ways." (*Ibid*, 2009: 90).

TABLE 5.1. INTERVIEW STRUCTURE CONTINUUM.

<i>Highly Structured/ Standardized</i>	<i>Semistructured</i>	<i>Unstructured/Informal</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wording of questions is predetermined • Order of questions is predetermined • Interview is oral form of a written survey • In qualitative studies, usually used to obtain demographic data (age, gender, ethnicity, education, etc.) • Examples: U.S. Census Bureau survey, marketing surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview guide includes a mix of more and less structured questions • All questions used flexibly • Usually specific data required from all respondents • Largest part of interview guided by list of questions or issues to be explored • No predetermined wording or order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended questions • Flexible, exploratory • More like a conversation • Used when researcher does not know enough about phenomenon to ask relevant questions • Goal is learning from this interview to formulate questions for later interviews • Used primarily in ethnography, participant observation, and case study

Figure 10: The three types of interviews discussed by Merriam (2009).

To emphasize why interviews are so important in my research I refer to Patton (2002: 341) where he says:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe...we cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world.

Interviewing is essential when there are variables that the researcher is not exposed to. They give the researcher an idea of how people behave or feel about a particular topic, how they interpret the world around them and also to highlight past events that the researcher can never experience for themselves. As an outsider I was not exposed first-hand to many of the cultural rituals, myths, hierarchies and so on of the Khwe community, and therefore had to rely on information gathered from interviewees and research participants. In order to gather this information however, I could not apply my own understandings of government, religion or politics to the people of the community, and therefore had to understand that what I could not observe would have to be explained to me by individuals who had their own unique way of explaining reality. This was achieved through dialogue and the digital recording (on Dictaphone) of discussions more so than it was through structured interviews and pre-determined questions. In my opinion the interview process was one of the most intriguing and challenging parts of conducting this research.

Coding

Several qualitative methods of inquiry (participant observation, interviews etc.) were applied in obtaining data for the sake of understanding in more detail, the current state of health, and development regarding issues of health, within the community. In order to organise this data into segments or categories that are responsive to my research questions I make use of the method of open coding, and later axial coding which is the process of grouping open codes for the purpose of interpretation and reflection on meaning (cf. Merriam, 2009; Richards, 2005).

Coding helps the researcher make sense of all their research data by grouping common patterns and recurring regularities found in interviews, focus groups and questionnaires into categories or themes into which relevant information is sorted. According to Merriam (2009: 181) "the challenge is to construct categories or themes that capture some recurring pattern that cuts across your data. It should be clear that categories are abstractions derived from the data, not the data themselves." In other words, the researcher assigns codes to sections of data by working through interview or focus group transcripts, making marginal notes and comments, and then grouping those comments or notes that seem to go together. The main purpose behind this is to create a set of categories or themes that are common amongst the data obtained from research and that are responsive to the larger research questions. The

name of the categories will be congruent with the orientation of the study (Merriam, 2009: 184).

There are many different ways to go about coding and applying themes or categories to bits of data obtained from the field, and some of these processes are extremely complex undergoing a number of processes before finally producing a deductive account of research findings. For the sake of my own research I utilised coding as a preliminary method for determining which factors or issues were frequently spoken about by research participants in order to relegate information that was either too confusing, or did not necessarily deal with the research topic. I found that there were often commonalities between the things people spoke about or particular questions they responded to that reflected the thoughts or ideas of others. The coding process I adopted in my research was largely used to map out these commonalities, and to produce an overview of factors or issues that were important to the people I was interviewing. I did not employ any excessively formal techniques of coding as this would have required far too much of a statistical account of research responses than is needed for this particular project. Instead I focused on making use of coding as a means of mining useful information and anecdotes from data collected through interviews, field-notes and observations.

Instead of making use of classification schemes used in previous studies that utilized the method of coding, I relied largely on generating themes and categories that reflected what I saw in the data in relation to my research questions and aims. Additionally, I made use of classification suggested by participants themselves when discussing or referring to certain aspects of health or development in the community. In other words, classifications I may have given to certain categories or themes in particular instances, were corrected by the way participants viewed certain aspects of the community and the classifications they gave for certain issues, processes or phenomena that occurred the way they described it or the way in which they explained particular information (through the responses they gave). The reason I did this was because coding is not a central aspect of my research, rather it is a mechanism with which I explain or reflect on the responses I received from participants instead of just arbitrarily inserting useful quotes and responses that I found interesting during the course of my research.

The reason I did this was because I took largely into consideration the idea that "there is some danger in using borrowed classification schemes" (Merriam, 2009: 185). When

selecting data for a category that has been established by another theory tends to hinder the generation of new categories...also, emergent categories usually prove to be the most relevant and the best fitted to the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 37). Furthermore, borrowed classifications may not be relevant to the current topic, and may not be designed for the purpose of arbitration into another set of research data or observations; therefore (more often than not) they need to be re-specified. In other words, categories or themes which arise, and are useful to the researcher in one particular study, may not apply to the data received from another study.

As a result of the nature of my research, I did not want to rely on borrowed classifications as there are few research inquiries (if any) which deal with the questions or issues I am hoping to clarify through my research.

Conclusion

This methodology allowed me to incorporate my own observations and experiences of the research process, and also allowed for a slightly more informed understanding of the community from the perspective of those who live there. Through the ethnographic method of participant observation I was able to observe and record data whilst still interacting with those who live and work in the community. My more structured analysis stems from the grassroots comics workshop and the interviews, discussions, and community involvement that surrounded this workshop, however, the analysis section of this study goes in to a lot more detail about that. Additionally, coding served as a useful mechanism for sorting data in to relevant categories so as to make the process of interpreting the data (received from workshops, interviews and discussions) a great deal easier, and less ambiguous³⁴ to an extent. The following chapter will discuss in detail, the analysis of data and the interpretation of research findings.

³⁴ Whilst conducting interviews (and indeed, whilst transcribing too) I realised that there were concepts or terms used by certain interviewees that were not necessarily phrased the same way by other interviewees, although the term or concept referred (more or less) to the same ideas. This is what I mean when stating that the method of coding assisted greatly in clarifying some of these ambiguities.

Chapter 5: Analysis: Part 1 - Planning and Observation

It was noted in the previous chapter that specific methods were appropriated in this study for the purpose of eliciting data, making sense of observations whilst in the field, and also for the daunting task of interpreting these data for the sake of representing a more formal and structured analysis of research findings. The purpose of this chapter then, is to provide a platform for which this can be done. It has been noted by various authors (cf. Merriam 2009, Gray 2003, LeCompte & Schensul 1999) that qualitative research analysis does not follow a particularly linear trajectory that can be applied from one research context to another³⁵. Although models of analysis may sometimes be adapted from other studies which deal with the facets of qualitative research, we are concerned here with the analysis and interpretation of research data gathered in the context of this particular study, and therefore require a process of making sense out of the data obtained.

To emphasise the point made above it seems relevant to refer to the following statement:

"[I]t is my experience that one can read about data analysis, even take a course in it, but it isn't until you work with your own data in trying to answer your own research questions that you really see how data analysis 'works'" (Merriam, 2009: 175).

In short, data analysis in qualitative research is rather unique to the questions being asked, and the theoretical underpinning of, the topic of study itself. More importantly, however, is the orientation of the 'third party', or in a less ambiguous sense, the researcher themselves, towards the process of organising that data. Much like Merriam, Jorgensen (1989: 108) acknowledges the distinct relationship a researcher shares with their actual research; he says that "facts do not speak for themselves! They do not make sense except by reference to some intellectual context or framework you employ to render them sensible and meaningful." Therefore, it is safe to assume that in order to make sense out of the data in a qualitative study, the researcher must be mindful of the theory which informs his or her study, the questions posed in order to understand more about the topic of study, and the methods used in order to answer these questions. Most importantly however, the researcher must orientate the process of analysis in such a way that they can organise and make sense of the data collected in a creative, sensible and meaningful manner.

³⁵ The same can be said for theoretical frameworks that support this type of research E.g. Participatory communication, Ethnography etc. see chapter on *Theoretical Framework*.

Keeping these points in mind, I must stress the importance of ethnographic methods of participant observation in coming to inform (to a large extent) my understandings and observations of the Khwe community, throughout the course of this study. As prolific and context specific as the use of these methods may be, they have allowed me the capacity to analyse the method of grassroots comics in the Khwe community, to the degree that this analysis may not necessarily be considered a case study per se, but does indeed contain aspects of a case specific analysis of the phenomena of grassroots comics in context. One of the most daunting tasks of this dissertation has been the process of analysing, and making sense of, the data gathered from observations, notes, interviews, workshops, focus groups and casual conversations - to the extent that I felt as though I had absolutely no frame of reference in undertaking an analysis such as this. Facing the reality that despite the amount of data gathered about a particular phenomena, it would prove to be redundant unless sense could be made of it all, I found myself at odds with the objectives of my own research: discovering whether or not grassroots comics could be used in the community to promote general health awareness, provide a platform for communication about common issues and consider its broader potential as a medium for development communication.

It was only when I considered the words of Jorgensen (1989: 110) and descriptions of the process of analysis similar to his, that I came to understand what 'analysis' entailed within my own area of research. Jorgensen states that "while it is important to consult existing literature, you should not be constrained by what other people have done. Use your imagination!" (Jorgensen, 1989: 110). Thus, the process of analysis must be compelled and driven by the researchers desire to answer their particular research question/s, and a process for analysis must be structured accordingly. Jorgensen (1989: 110) then goes on to say "the analysis of data leading to discovery requires creativity," suggesting that the researcher cannot rely on information itself to produce answers, but rather that answers are obtained from the very unique and creative engagement required of the researcher with the information gathered, and the analyses and interpretations of the data should reflect this engagement.

The analysis of my research will be done in two parts in order to better understand the social and cultural context in which I was working, and the results produced through the grassroots comics workshop. Therefore my analysis will also be presented in two parts. Firstly, Part One will deal with preliminary observations, conversations and information about the community which I gathered through numerous visits to the community itself. More particularly though, Part One will attempt to explain how I came about planning, observing, asking questions, and

trying to get a better view of the way things happened in the community, within the lens of this study. Central to this process was gathering an understanding of how the community was structured, what facilities were available, what public services were offered, what issues or problems the community faced that were prevalent amongst, and agreed upon by, groups of people, and what could be done to overcome these problems. Who would the research participants be in a general sense, and would they even be willing to accept the idea of grassroots comics to begin with? Part two of the analysis will be explained in more detail, and carried out in chapter six.

The structure of the Platfontein Community

Quite simply put, "human communication is not linear and the interpretation of meaning should not be linear either" (Henning, 2004: 105). Therefore the flow of this chapter will be determined by the categories and themes identified as significant for the purpose of answering my research questions, and providing an intellectually grounded analysis of research findings in accordance with the literature that informs this study. Although this may seem a linear process in description, I must mention (from the outset) that the initial procedures for organising data are in no way a linear and straightforward process. Additionally Henning (2004: 105) notes that "it is not only in the use of a variety of data collection methods and sources, but also in the use of different approaches to 'working the data' or building the interpretive text, that the strength of an inquiry is built.ö

In other words, it is through a culmination of precedent methods of organising the data, methodological approaches towards understanding the data presented, and theoretical interpretations of the findings, that the analysis and interpretation of research material can take place. The theoretical grounding of the study (as discussed earlier) provides a lens through which to interpret the significance of research findings in this context. Thus, in this section I wish to discuss different aspects of the Platfontein community as observed in the field, and through the interpretation of research data gathered from a number of sources throughout my time working in this community.

Location



Figure 11: A map of important locations located within the Platfontein community.

Platfontein is located outside of Kimberley on the R31 heading towards Barkly West. It is about a five to ten minute drive from Kimberley, and is opposite the road (and a little further North) from the massive Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) settlement known as 'Galeshewe'. It is rather isolated from the urban centre of Kimberley in that a large number of Platfontein inhabitants do not possess the necessary means of transport in getting to and from Kimberley itself. In an interview with Sister Alexander (the head nurse at the Platfontein health clinic), she mentioned that the clinic has to deal with a lot of patients who they cannot treat because they do not have the necessary resources or adequate staff to do so. However through this description she reveals the common issue of transport in the community by saying: " You see it's because they [the patients]don't have transport or any way of getting to the hospital, so we will do what we can to help those people" (Interview #1, May 2010). Another factor of isolation is that there is only one 'convenient store'³⁶ present in the community (Fame General Dealer), possibly supported by a few independent 'tuck

³⁶ This convenient store resembles what I would be more familiar with in calling a tea-room or café. Nothing like a supermarket or a place to conduct weekly grocery shopping.

shops³⁷ located around the community. People from Platfontein, who are able to do so, purchase their groceries from the SPAR on the fringe of Kimberley as you exit for Barkly West. Also, although there is a clinic present in the community, according to Sister Alexander "there is an entire ward at Kimberley Hospital³⁸ that is kept aside for Platfontein patients" (Interview #1, May 2010). This ward is reserved for those patients who require medical attention that the clinic cannot provide.

In addition, the issue of job or employment proximity is largely a problem for those who have to commute to Kimberley, or are employed elsewhere in the country; and respectively for those who are unemployed, as a lack of transport hinders chances of finding employment. Sister Alexander mentioned in an interview: "You know most of them, especially the men, go out to work on farms in other regions like Durban or Johannesburg etc. They go to get income because there is no work for them here" (Interview #1, May 2010). As an added issue, Sister Alexander mentions that men in this predicament are often the patients who stop taking their medication before it has run its full course, either because they fail to receive their prescriptions before they leave the community to find work, or they fail to mention that they are sick to their employers so they can receive treatment from where they are working (Field notes, March 2010).

Given that Platfontein existed as a farm³⁹ before being allocated to the !Xun and Khwe for living space, it is only natural (and correct) to assume that, aside from the Rock Art Centre and the settlement of Galeshewe a little South-East, Platfontein is surrounded by flat and arid farm-land. Lastly, and possibly the most significant factor, is the presence of a massive land-fill site just South of the settlement, and within walking distance of the community (this is obviously not shown on the sign in Fig 11).

The general orientation of the structures and services present in Platfontein can be clearly seen by referring to the key in Fig 11. All public services and private or government-owned buildings are positioned in a somewhat circular and centralised fashion. This is most definitely a true representation of the orientation of these facilities in reality. This is the location at which the Khwe and !Xun groups meet geographically, and where these services

³⁷ Literally, small shops that sell general tuck like sweets, coca cola, chips, cigarettes etc.

³⁸ Dala (team leader for the Khwe Red Cross volunteer health workers, and a member of the community himself) confirms this with his own description of Kimberley Hospital and the translation work he does for them in the ward reserved for patients from Platfontein (Interview #4, November 2010).

³⁹ See chapter three on *Theoretical Framework*.

can be accessed equally by both groups of people because of their centralised location, in other words, a common middle point - according to Mario, who is one of SASI's coordinators employed in the health and education programme (field notes, May 2010). This was verified through my own observations, because whilst doing my research in Platfontein, I spent most of my time in and around this area and noticed that it is quite the 'hub' of activity; probably the busiest space in the community.

The map in Fig. 11 provides a good template for visualising how the Platfontein community is physically orientated in reality. However, there are a few extra things that the map does not account for. Firstly, the roads evident in the maps are indeed visible, although there is also a network of dirt roads that connect in a grid-like fashion separating blocks of houses from one another, which is not displayed. This is probably in an effort to eliminate what is not important to visitors of the community, but if one were to visualise the setting from the air, it would look very much like an urban suburb in terms of its road patterns⁴⁰. The only tar-road evident in the settlement is the main road leading in to Platfontein, and even this eventually becomes a dirt road after the first two kilometres or so. There are a large number of man-made soccer-fields situated haphazardly around the rims of the community where local soccer teams have their own space to practice the sport. Also, the space situated above the school as seen in Fig. 11 is the location of the Isibindi office and its surrounding playground, which has become a lot more developed than when I first started research in the community in 2008.

Population

In the area there are roughly 3 500 !Xun inhabitants, and 1 100 Khwe inhabitants⁴¹. Therefore, there is an average of approximately 4 600 people of Bushman descent living in Platfontein today. This is a rather large population considering the amount of space on which these groups of people have been allocated to live. This underlines the very real factor that although this community is growing in terms of population, it is not growing in terms of support and services available to this population.

Unemployment is a major issue in the community as there are few jobs available in the community itself, and others have to travel quite a distance to get to where employment can

⁴⁰ Rectangular shaped sections of land on which houses are built, divided by roads constructed in a grid-iron fashion.

⁴¹ I was told by the Sister Alexander at the clinic that this was roughly the amount of people from both the !Xun and Khwe communities respectively. This approximation was later confirmed by SASI representatives and can be cross-referenced with their own approximations - <http://www.san.org.za/sasi/page5/page8/index.html>

be found. In short, there are far more people than there are jobs available. Therefore, one can assume that there is an ever-growing population with an unemployment rate directly proportional to the increasing size of the population itself. In some cases there are more than ten people who live in a house that is designed to occupy only half that amount. According to Sister Olifant, "it is a major problem, because here the unemployment rate is high, and there are no houses but families keep getting bigger and the community is becoming overcrowded" (Interview #7, June 2011).

I believe that a part of the reason for this over-population can be attributed to what Sister Alexander described as 'family planning'. In an interview she told me that there are family planning workshops that the clinic conducts in order to inform community members of the hazards and potential burdens of not limiting their family size (Interview #1, May 2010). She made a specific point about people who do not agree with this line of thinking, and mentioned that it was mostly the men who disregard the idea of limiting the amount of children they have because from a traditional point of view the more children they have the better (this I cannot support though and simply refer to her personal observations). She did mention that it was not the same for all families, but that it was prolific enough to be a cause for concern.

Although I cannot accurately estimate the amount of children there are as compared to adults in the community, the figures of school learners attending !XunKhwesa⁴² in 2011 give us a rough idea of how many children there are in the community⁴³. With the school having approximately over one thousand learners, it is possible to estimate that roughly 25% of the community is made up of children who are of a school-going age. Not to mention the fact that there are still children who do not attend school (therefore this number could actually be higher). The reason why it is important to consider this demographic is because children are particularly vulnerable to issues relating to healthcare and their general well-being in this community as they are, to a large degree, dependent on their parents and those around them for security, support and guidance.

⁴² The name given to the local school in Platfontein. The name is a combination of the words !Xun and Khwe (as it is made up of learners from both communities), ended off with the letters 'sa' referring to the abbreviation of the country name (and the country in which they now live), South Africa.

⁴³ According to the Headmaster Mr. Jonkers, there were approximately 1000 children who are attending the school as of 2011. A database of school information for South African schools recorded 1131 learners currently enrolled at !XunKhwesa - <http://www.schoolfind.co.za/!xunkhwesa%20gekombineerde%20skool.html>

I do not wish to explore in immense detail, the infrastructure of the Platfontein community, as I am not studying the quality of infrastructure in its entirety, rather I am more interested in the effects of infrastructure (or lack thereof) on the environment and the people who live in Platfontein. Throughout my research I constantly encountered issues relating to the infrastructure within the community, e.g., roads, housing, human services, government services etc. Whether it be through personal interviews, focus groups or mere observation, discussion about the services available (and those lacking) in the community no doubt arose on a regular basis. Thus it important to discuss briefly, the state of infrastructure in Platfontein before moving on to an analysis of the various issues encountered and perceived by the community.

Briefly defined, the word *infrastructure*⁴⁴ refers to:

1. An underlying base or foundation especially for an organization or system.
2. The basic facilities, services, and installations needed for the functioning of a community or society, such as transportation and communications systems, water and power lines, and public institutions including schools, post offices, and prisons

Naturally, we are concerned with the latter definition in this case and although reporting on the infrastructure of an area may encompass a vast amount of factors (some of which might not even be considered in this study), it is intended that through understanding vital aspects of the state of infrastructure in the Khwe community, as perceived or identified by participants and community members themselves, we can discern a lot about the various health and development issues which are directly related to, or are a result of, the current infrastructure of the community.

In terms of man-made structures, Platfontein consists of mostly dirt roads (aside from the half-finished tar road leading in) and low-cost housing situated in a relatively disorganised grid-iron fashion, each covering an area of roughly 6m x 6m, painted in different colours yet mimicking one another in design which is simplistically box-shaped and uniform. Each property has a small garden and a fixed exterior (outside) toilet enclosed in a small corrugated iron room. A number of households have small tents pitched outside in the garden which serves as their kitchen because the Khwe keep their kitchen separate from their living

⁴⁴ www.thefreedictionary.com/infrastructure, accessed on 16 April 2011

space⁴⁵. A lot of people grow their own vegetables in small gardens, but the quality of the land is generally somewhat arid. In some cases there are three or four generations of a single family living in (and sharing) the same small house.

Each household has access to running water and electricity which are provided through power lines and water pipes leading from Kimberley. Also, there is a community clinic, a public school, a small public library and a department of home affairs (named the One-stop). There are a few private enterprises present in the community including the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) radio station, X-K fm, the local convenient store and shebeen (Fame General Dealer), and a few informal shops operating from certain homes. There are also non-profit organisations that have established a footing in the community namely SASI, Isibindi and Red Cross, which deal with community issues. There is a small presence of police officers present in the community who operate from the One-stop centre.

Government services that are severely lacking include factors such as the lack of an effective waste disposal system (both human and physical waste), the absence of an effective transport system or modes of transport, and therefore by extension, physical isolation from Kimberley and hence isolation from employment as there is not much work available in the community itself. According to a number of informants, there is no proper protocol in place for the removal of physical and human waste from the community. Government trucks are supposed to visit the community once a week in order to remove its waste, but this rarely occurs. Instead what most people do is dig a hole in their yard and throw the waste into this hole, after which they set the contents alight and cover the hole up temporarily until the next time they are in need of getting rid of their waste (Field notes, May 2010). Additionally, housing is of poor quality and the toilets do not function on a flush system, but rather a bucket system which requires that the bucket be removed from below the toilet, and emptied of its contents once it has reached a relatively full capacity.

As stated above, the reason for highlighting factors relating to the infrastructure of the community is not so that we could provide a holistic solution towards dealing with issues of infrastructure, but rather so that I as the researcher could grasp some of the crucial factors responsible for major health and development concerns in the community itself. Moreover, by indentifying factors experienced as problematic in the opinions of various informants, I

⁴⁵ Interview with Matios (Interview #3, May 2010).

was able to establish a broad understanding of some of the issues requiring the collective attention of the community, and how these issues could be incorporated into the objectives of the grassroots comic workshop objectives conducted with the respective participants.

Approaching NGOs and aid organisations

One of the most difficult aspects of my preliminary research was establishing a relationship with various organisations (and individuals) present in the community and who dealt specifically with issues of health-care and community development. This proved to be tiresome and somewhat disconcerting during the early stages of research as it was difficult to identify key stakeholders involved in what I was interested in studying. To my surprise however, one of my early informants, Moshe, introduced me to the leader of the Isibindi group working in the Khwe side of the community. This man was named Matios Sibongo, with whom I later established a very good relationship and who came to be one of the most informative and driven participants.

Thereafter I was referred to various other groups working with health and development issues and was able to introduce my research objectives to them in the hope that they would be willing to assist, and ultimately guide, the application of grassroots comics in the community. I will identify the way in which these groups contributed to the implementation of grassroots comics and why their involvement in this research was so significant. As this research is primarily interested in studying the usefulness of grassroots comics in the Khwe community specifically, I did not pursue any action in incorporating the various groups present in the !Xun community who worked with health and development, but instead constantly encouraged those I was working with to share what they had learned with their respective partners in the !Xun community.

Isibindi

As noted above, I came to meet the Isibindi group through first meeting the acquaintance of their facilitator in the Khwe community, Matios early in 2009⁴⁶. After an hour or so of meeting and informing Matios of what I was hoping to achieve through my research, he agreed rather enthusiastically to participate in the process. A short while after this I was

⁴⁶ Matios is from the community and was a young boy when his family moved from Namibia to Schmidtsdrift. He went to school in Schmidtsdrift and matriculated there. He was also, therefore, relocated to Platfontein when this land was made available to them through the CPA.

introduced to the rest of his colleagues and also informed them briefly of what grassroots comics were and how I would appreciate their willingness to participate in my research.

Isibindi is a volunteer group that is mostly concerned with child welfare in the community and belongs to the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW). The organisation has become very successful during my time working with the community. The reason I mention this is because when I was first introduced to the group it was at their 'group headquarters'⁴⁷ which was located on the open field next to the !XunKhwesa school. Their group 'office' was a dilapidated shipping crate converted into a mobile office (there were signs that there were once windows and an air-conditioner that were subsequently removed through theft or vandalism). The reason for the group operating out of this location was that it was close to school grounds and allowed children access to an area where they were free to play and receive various healthcare advice from the Isibindi counsellors.

From my point of view, it was somewhat difficult at first to ascertain exactly what it was that these people were doing that was related to what I was doing in the community, as I battled to comprehend how a small and desolate looking field with a dilapidated crate offered any attraction to small children other than that there was a makeshift soccer field present. Nevertheless, the determination and positive attitudes of Matios and his colleagues convinced me that these people performed an invaluable service within the community, and their willingness to help me with my research was noticeable.

Upon returning to Platfontein during my trip in November 2010, I was astonished to see how much the Isibindi 'headquarters' had changed, and how much busier Matios and his colleagues were. The desolate field on which the dilapidated crate once stood had been fenced off with a gate leading in, providing a secure area of playground roughly an acre in size. The shanty crate had been removed, refurbished and relocated to provide an office/seminar room for the Isibindi group to conduct their work and receive any assistance from visiting professionals. Furthermore, there were two additional crates that were placed next to one another which had also been renovated to provide what Matios described as 'an indoor activity room.' The playground was full of newly placed swings, slides and jungle-gyms for children to play on and there were always children on the site after school hours.

⁴⁷ As quoted by Matios, Field notes - June 2009

Basically, to me, the Isibindi group had changed overnight and it seemed that they now received a lot more attention from the community in terms of what they were doing, and also a lot more acknowledgement for their work with the children from external donors. As a result they also seemed more focused and determined to make a change in the community, and this new found inspiration motivated me to some degree too. At this moment it became clearer to me the role that this group played within the community. Consequently, their involvement in the grassroots comics workshop seemed invaluable, given the relationship that they already shared with the community on a personal level and the objectives of the group itself in promoting health-care and education for the younger demographic in the community.

Red Cross

Red Cross remained rather elusive when I first entered the community, and it was only after meeting Matios, and Sister Alexander at the clinic, that I was able to establish contact with a man named Dala Sibongo⁴⁸. Dala is the facilitator of his respective colleagues in the Khwe community, which comprise of four other ladies who also live in the community. Red Cross operates as a home-based health-care group. In other words, Dala and his colleagues have a co-operative relationship with the clinic in making house visits to patients who are either too sick, or too stubborn to seek medical help from the actual clinic itself (Interview #4, November 2010).

Their work entails making sure that these patients receive their treatment when necessary, and in more serious cases, they liaise with the nursing sisters at the clinic to make house-calls if the nurses' professional advice or assistance is required. Their central focus is on people who require constant follow-up treatment, yet cannot remove themselves from bed⁴⁹, and people that are too ignorant or stubborn to seek medical assistance in the first place. Additionally, both Dala and sister Alexander mentioned "defaulting"⁵⁰ patients, and noted how they try to advise these patients to carry on with their follow-up treatments, and not to

⁴⁸ Dala is also a volunteer from the community, although he does receive a stipend from Red Cross. Dala is also Matios' half-brother, so naturally him and Matios know each other well and both work with health communication in the Khwe community.

⁴⁹ Both Sister Alexander and Dala referred to these patients as "bed-rendered patients," and Dala stressed that these were the people whom Red Cross worked most closely with (Field notes, May 2010).

⁵⁰ According to Sister Alexander, a defaulting patient is one who does not return to the clinic for their follow-up treatment, for whatever reason (except if they are bed-rendered). Also, she referred to scenarios where commuters from the community were "defaulting" because they would cease their treatment after leaving the community for a few months to go work elsewhere.

cease the treatment as soon as they start feeling better, but to continue until the treatment has run its course.

Red Cross basically acts as a liaison between the community and the clinic, for those who do not seek help from the clinic of their own accord. Dala mentioned that he and his colleagues work as peer-educators in helping people identify what might be wrong with them, then referring them to the clinic or revisiting these people daily to make sure they are resting and receiving their medication as is recommended. Dala said that his group works with both children and adults, and mentioned some of the illnesses they deal with ranging from malnutrition to TB and HIV. Dala and his colleagues partake in training seminars run by health professionals, where they are informed of basic health-care procedures and are equipped to perform their roles as health counsellors in the community. Moreover, Red Cross often works collaboratively with the community clinic (as already noted) and SASI's peer-educators, who perform a similar role in the community.

In contrast to the Isibindi group, Red Cross has seen its support (in terms of staff and funding) dwindle in the last few years. According to Dala, when he first started volunteering for Red Cross in 2004, "We were ten people. And five of us were lucky because they gave us a stipend. And the other five, they promised them that the next year, when they have the budget, they will also put those people on a stipend" (Interview #4, November 2010). Dala continued to explain that these additional stipends did not come to fruition, and so those volunteers who did not receive a stipend withdrew from working for Red Cross.

Now there are only five volunteers working in the Khwe community, three of whom receive a stipend from Red Cross (this includes Dala), and two others who receive no form of remuneration for their work. Additionally, Dala informed me that the Red Cross headquarters in Kimberley was closing down because they were running out of funds, and therefore Red Cross would also be pulling out of the community as a result. In a very concerned manner, Dala told me that as of December 2010, his group could no longer perform the duties that they had been doing for so long, and that their roles as Red Cross health counsellors would cease to exist⁵¹ (Interview #4, November 2010).

⁵¹ After conducting follow-up research in 2011, it was confirmed that what Dala had mentioned was true. Red Cross's involvement in community related health outreach had drastically decreased due to nationwide budget cut within the larger organisation itself.

Apart from being somewhat shocked about this news, I was humbled by the enthusiasm the Red Cross volunteers still had in performing their jobs to the last. Dala himself mentioned that he would like to continue to work as a health counsellor where possible. However, he also mentioned that he was worried about how he was going to receive income, and that he could not continue to do volunteer work his whole life or he would not be able to provide for himself financially. I discuss these factors because it is evident that this group of volunteers performed an otherwise absent service in the Khwe community which seemed to have been successful in providing health assistance to both the clinic, and the individuals in the community itself.

Clinic

The Platfontein clinic provides health care to roughly four-and-a-half thousand people between the !Xun and Khwe communities. It is situated next to the !XunKhwesa school⁵² and (as stated earlier) this is because this area is where the two communities meet geographically, and can thus share equal access to the clinic. Fortunately I was granted casual access to the clinic in order to conduct my research and two of the clinic nursing sisters, sister Olifant and sister Alexander, were more than forthcoming regarding matters of the clinics services, and the relationship between the clinic staff and the Platfontein community.

The staff at the clinic consists of three registered nurses, and one staff nurse - all of whom are not local community members, but residents of Kimberley who commute to the clinic every day. Additional staff includes one data-capturer, one admin clerk, two cleaners and four VCT counsellors⁵³ - all of whom are local community members employed by the clinic. Furthermore, the clinic accommodates a range of health professionals who frequent the clinic on respective days in order to provide their services and assistance to the community. These professionals include speech therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists etc. who do field-work in the community on Fridays. A nutritionist comes in every Tuesday and a Doctor provides his specialized services for three hours on a Monday.

The community clinic operates according to an agenda that accommodates for a diverse range of general healthcare provision. Sister Alexander explained that, "we have allocated different days for different health issues" (Interview #1, May 2010). She then elaborated on what this

⁵² See Figure 11.

⁵³ Volunteer counsellors in training. These are basically peer-counsellors who provide helpful advice for HIV and other illnesses within the context of the community.

entailed and explained how, for different days of the week, they deal with particular health-related issues in order to accommodate more patients at a time from both the !Xun and Khwe sides of the community, seeking assistance for similar health concerns.

The main agenda for each respective day of the week works as follows: On a Monday the clinic focuses primarily on patients with high blood-pressure, diabetes, flu and other viruses or diseases. On Tuesdays the clinic provides an immunisation programme for the children in the community and is therefore focused on providing inoculations for various illnesses and diseases. On Wednesdays the clinic nurses travel to another clinic on a farm in a rural district named Olie Rivier, which is 300km away from Platfontein (Interview #7, June 2011) where they conduct antenatal treatment to all ladies from surrounding area who require this aid. On Thursdays the clinic deals predominantly with assault or burn victims, and on Friday the clinic nurses facilitate a family planning programme⁵⁴.

However, though there might be a particular focus for every day, the clinic staff assists with all health related issues throughout the week, especially in the case of emergencies. The template or agenda they work by is structured in such a way as to maximise the efficiency of the clinic regarding certain health issues, whilst still providing healthcare where necessary. In the words of Sister Alexander "we said to the people, look it's not that we are going to chase them away if they come on a Monday with something different, we see them and we treat them if it is serious" (Interview #1, May 2010).

Although the clinic is funded and facilitated by the Department of Health, and is therefore a government-run facility, I was fascinated to discover the working relationship the clinic staff share with the people of the Platfontein community, including their collaborative rapport with independent aid organisations that operate within the community (such as Isibindi, Red Cross and SASI). According to Sister Alexander, "We do whatever comes our way. So if there is a campaign we will do it, because we take our home-based care-workers [Red Cross] to help us and there is also the Isibindi group that we work with; and we have never had a problem with these groups. They are really helpful" (Interview #1, May 2010).

⁵⁴ This is a forum where nursing sisters and health specialists inform and advise parents about correct health-care procedures for themselves and their family. Additionally the forum may include topics such as limiting the size of one's family, or eating the correct diet so as to avoid illness or malnutrition etc. (Field notes, November 2010).

SASI

"SASI is an independent, non-governmental organisation that mobilises resources for the benefit of the San peoples of southern Africa as mandated by the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA) and other San organisations"⁵⁵. In short, SASI has a broad organisational focus which includes empowerment and community development as fundamental components of their programme activities⁵⁶. My key informant in the SASI office was Mario Everisto⁵⁷, who works predominantly with culture and education in the community, but was also initiating a culture and health programme at the time of our first meeting (Interview #2, May 2010). Mario provided an abridged description of SASI's services in the community:

SASI provides programmes in the community, like the development of our indigenous language, health programmes (where the peer-educators come in), livelihood programmes, cultural and eco-tourism programmes like 'Footprints of the San'⁵⁸, and then arts and crafts programmes. And what SASI is trying to do is to empower community members to do things on their own (Interview #2, May 2010).

Mario illuminated a number of issues regarding healthcare and health related problems in Platfontein, as he works with issues like this on a daily basis, and approaches them from the perspective of somebody who lives in the community himself.

Mario also supervises a number of peer-educators who do volunteer work in the community for SASI. Much like the work done by Red Cross, these volunteers perform the roles of health counsellors within the community. However, they simply provide healthcare advice to those who seek it, and occasionally participate in health outreach programmes initiated by SASI whereas Red Cross workers provide an additional service through their home-based healthcare programme⁵⁹ in collaboration with the clinic. Nevertheless, it was my hope that

⁵⁵ As I personally found it rather difficult to condense SASI's objectives in a few words, I relied on a description taken from <http://www.openafrica.org/participant/sasi-office>, and cross-referenced with <http://www.san.org.za/sasi/page5/index.html>.

⁵⁶ Also taken from <http://www.san.org.za/sasi/page5/index.html>.

⁵⁷ Mario is a male in his mid-twenties who works for SASI and is one of the junior leaders of the Khwe community.

⁵⁸ "*Footprints of the San* is a thematic cultural tourism route guided by the San. The goal of the route is to provide a way for the San to share their beautiful and ancient culture with the greater world, while at the same time generating income within the communities and preserving the skills, mythology, customs and traditions of the past" (<http://www.sanfootprints.co.za/home.php>).

⁵⁹ The Red cross workers and the clinic staff work co-operatively in providing home-based health care. Red Cross workers conduct house calls where they help those who are sick to take their medication, or if there are people who require advanced medical treatment they will inform the sisters at the clinic who will then make house calls in such extreme cases (Field notes, November 2010).

these peer-educators would be willing to impart their knowledge and experience through their participation in the Grassroots comics workshop.

Nonetheless, Mario provided his most valuable assistance where possible and introduced me to some of the peer-educators whom I was told were willing to participate in the Grassroots comics workshop. His assistance proved to be extremely useful in giving me a better understanding of some of the issues which are prevalent in the community and relate, directly or indirectly, to health concerns and the communication amongst community members around these concerns.

In Piecing together the Problem

In working with grassroots comics, one of the most crucial aspects for the potential of success involves encouraging participants to creatively engage in using a less mainstream form of media to provide messages or stories with which the 'common man' is familiar. According to Packalen (2007; 14) and Sharma, "by anchoring the grassroots comics to the community activists and to their NGOs, the messages in their stories are more exact, to the point and relevant to the debate within the community". Through establishing a relationship with the various organisations mentioned above, I was given a closer view of the issues in the community and, even though I am an outsider, it gave me a better idea at how this community looks at life and communicates about various health issues.

The focus of this research, however, was not dependent on whether one could make complete sense of the health issues in the community, but instead, if one could encourage respective groups to be open to the idea of participating in a workshop where they could learn to use a simple medium in order to portray an impactful message regarding health issues or concerns that they themselves were familiar with. Therefore, it was the opinions of the participants who were already working in the health communication arena that I was hoping to research. The reason for me doing this is quite obvious in that it was these individuals whom I had hoped would form the driving force behind creating the comics and their respective messages (considering their proximity with healthcare and health communication in the community).

Over the course of roughly three years, and visiting Platfontein every few months, I was able to develop a broad understanding of the Khwe from working with individuals like Matios, Dala and Moshe, conducting interviews, noting observations and recording various anecdotes. The aim was to primarily establish trust with the people with whom I worked so

that they understood from the very beginning what my research entailed. Additionally, it was hoped that if that were the case, interviews and participation would potentially be more sincere than if the relationship between myself and these individuals was aloof.

During this time I also came to learn a great deal about a number of health issues which are prevalent in the community, and others that were possibly even indirectly related to health, but still of no less significance. In order for there to be direction for the grassroots comics workshop, it is required that one becomes aware of the way in which the common man views a problem in the community (Packalen & Sharma, 2007). In this case, what problems they identify as contributing to the cause of poor healthcare. Thus the following discussion will present a variety of health related issues that challenge the Khwe community so as to better frame the objectives of the grassroots comics workshop towards tackling some of these issues as emphasized by the research participants themselves. Where possible I will refer to examples in context.

Identifying the Issues

As stated in a definition offered by the World Health Organisation, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."⁶⁰This is a more true definition of health in the context of this analysis.

There are a vast number of variables and factors that contribute to the general wellbeing of any individual found in any given society. Therefore, in order to understand what affects the *health* of an individual, one would have to consider the more layered factors that characterize the individual's social and physical environment, and their interaction with this environment (physically, socially, economically, politically, spiritually etc.). To provide an accurate or complete portrayal of this in the Khwe community would require years of research and statistical data gathering and analysis. Therefore, I will attempt to briefly explain how issues of health in the community correlate to the broader dynamics of employment, infrastructure, poverty etc., and how these are the particular issues of development I am concerned with in this analysis. In order to understand something, one has to first understand all of its interrelated parts.

⁶⁰ Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948. The Definition has not been amended since 1948.

To start off with, disease is a factor which affects all societies and all cultures, and is therefore also a major problem within the Khwe community. The most notorious diseases in the Khwe community are tuberculosis and HIV AIDS (Interview #4, November 2010). In fact, tuberculosis seems to be more of a concern than HIV as both Red Cross workers and the clinic nurses stressed how, more often than not, they have to aid TB patients in receiving treatment before HIV patients because of the amount of people suffering from TB⁶¹. However, HIV is still very much a concern, and those requiring medical aid for this disease are not subject to any lesser health assistance than those with other diseases.

In addition to these concerns, there is also trepidation amongst the clinic staff about various other viruses and diseases in the community, including diabetes, influenza, kwashiorkor and diarrhoea. Although these cases may not be as prolific as their aforementioned counterparts, there is a genuine concern for the treatment of viruses and diseases in the Platfontein community, especially by the clinic staff. One of the main apprehensions shared by the clinic and the Red Cross workers however, is that some of the people suffering from these diseases do not seek any medical attention or support from the clinic or Red Cross, and instead lie in pain, worsening their situation (Interview #1, May 2010).

The clinic is only helpful insofar as the people that make use of the services offered continue to do so or encourage others who are sick to do the same. Time and time again, my informants repeated to me the tendency of patients to either avoid going to the clinic for treatment, or failing to make their follow-up appointments and/or treatments, and that this was a problem that desperately needed to be addressed. Although this has been mentioned previously, it is here that we can identify indistinctness between health provision and actual healthcare. The former refers to the availability of healthcare services, for example: the clinic, and the practical skills or medication offered by the staff. The latter takes place when an individual actively engages in the use of these services as they are required, for example: a mother hoping to find treatment for her child's cough. It is a simple, and possibly age-old, debate between availability and access. The issue is also one of communication between biomedical roles and social science roles relating to healthcare. Not only is treatment important (biomedical) but so is communication to raise awareness and encourage people to

⁶¹ I was told that this is largely due to families making fires within their homes as, according to Sister Olifant (Interview #7, 2011) this is common practice amongst certain people in the community.

seek treatment and adhere to it (social science) ó hence the importance of mediums such as grassroots comics (cf. Scalway, 2010)

There are people that attempt to alleviate these issues in the community by providing home-based healthcare services (Red Cross), although disease is often further sustained by poverty and poor living conditions. This too is a major problem in Platfontein. Housing is of a low-cost, uniform design and employment is very minimal in the local community, therefore some people have to travel great distances to maintain a job. The combination of a lack of income, small living spaces and inappropriate waste disposal systems presents people in the community with ever-present issues related to health and well-being. Physical and mental well-being are directly related to societal factors such as infrastructure, employment, human services etc. and where each of these factors is lacking, there will be a higher chance of poor health in a community.

As mentioned earlier, housing and infrastructure are major contributors to the prevalence of disease and illness in the Platfontein community. According to a number of informants, waste disposal is of major concern to health workers in the community as those people who are ignorant of the dangers of incorrect waste disposal open themselves up to extremely harmful bacteria, and are therefore more likely to contract diseases associated with human and non-human waste.

The ironically named -Kwik SPARØ or landfill site that is located within walking distance of the community is extremely hazardous as there is no fence or boundary in place to prevent the public from straying into the -dumpØ and scrounging for various items of interest. For example: left over (rotting) food, or items that they might find useful for other purposes, yet have been largely tainted by bacteria. This behaviour can be attributed to poverty and unemployment. This behaviour is practised by hundreds. Although this may not be the case for everyone, it warrants attention as those that do make trips to the landfill justify their behaviour by explaining that they have little other choice. This however, is the opinion of the individual and although they may be advised against this, many of them see no alternative to gaining access to food on a regular basis.

Many other problems present in the community that are related to health and wellbeing can potentially be attributed to the attitudes or behaviours of those individuals involved in improper health practices, to the point that these problems can sometimes become proliferated amongst people who share the same opinions. What I am referring to here are

issues such as alcoholism, physical abuse (assault), defaulting patients, stigma involving negative views about the clinic etc. Alcoholism, for example, is an issue that occurs in many communities and is not specific to the Platfontein community. What does make it specific to this community is that a large number of people consume beer that is locally made and costs only 50c a cup. Even for a community that is fraught with unemployment, this is a cheap price to pay for an alcoholic beverage. According to almost all of my informants, alcohol is a major problem in the community because it is seen by many as a harmless, social practice:

There is that beer what they make here né, and then people drink too much because it's cheaper. They buy it for 50c for a cup. People do nothing here, totally, there is not a recreation place where people can go out and that's why people think Ok lets go to those places, and maybe they have friends sitting there, and maybe they come with R5, R5 and they just sit there and drink those cups of beer. alcohol is too much here (Interview #4, November 2010).

Parents often leave children unattended and use what little money they have for alcohol instead of providing sustenance for their family. In the words of Sister Alexander, 'I've even seen people drinking at the shebeen with young children on their backs, but they just sit there talking and drinking, and not worrying about their children' (Interview #1, May 2010). Additionally, Sister Alexander mentioned that it is when people are under the influence of alcohol that they become violent or speak out negatively about the clinic. What she means by this is that there is a negative stigma amongst a number of people in the community about the clinic and its staff. One such stigma is that the clinic does not protect the privacy of its patients and that the nurses do with the patients personal files what they will (Interview #1, May 2010). Issues like these are not the opinions of a handful of people but are instead shared by quite a number of community members who hold similar opinions.

Although I could carry on at length discussing the various issues and problems faced by the Platfontein community (and in particular, the Khwe people) regarding health and wellbeing, and its relation to broader factors of development and infrastructure, this would nevertheless deter from the questions I am trying to answer through this research. It is imperative, however, that we shift the focus of this analysis to discussing how the methodology of grassroots comics may serve as a vehicle for illuminating these issues among the public in the Khwe community, and may offer a perspective on how to collectively deal with issues relating to poor health practices and their prevalence in the community, from the opinions of those healthcare workers or volunteers who live in the community itself.

Conclusion

In order to accurately understand each and every facet of health as it is understood within the context of the Platfontein community, one would have to spend several years of intensive interviewing and surveying of the community and its members as a whole. This would also require close examinations of health reports, statistics and institutional reviews regarding health in the community to even come close to describing precisely what various dynamics of health or wellbeing are present in the community at large.

For all intents and purposes, however, the issues of health discussed in this chapter are those which are of paramount concern to the people who live in the community itself, and who are presented with these struggles on a daily basis.

Chapter 6: Analysis Part II

In the previous section, analysis was centred on an understanding of the factors that contribute to poor health and wellbeing in the Khwe community. It is important to consider the fact that health care and wellbeing, in general, are layered facets of any given community which are affected by larger social and economic structures which mould such communities. Without such an investigation, we would merely be isolating the focus of our study from the various components which share an intrinsic value with the topic at hand.

In this section, the aim of analysis is to examine the methodology of Grassroots comics in the context of the Khwe community, including an examination of the various participant roles, and the relationship this method shares with the broader theory of development communication (or more specifically in this case, participatory communication). The focus of this dissertation is on identifying the relevance of this method for the promotion of health within the community, and understanding the potential it may have in contributing to community involvement for the purpose of collaboration in terms of health communication and, by extension, the possibility that this serve as a conduit for community participation at the grassroots level.

Grassroots comics as a Participatory medium

It is important to provide a distinction between the concepts of participatory development and participation-in-development as this is imperative when analyzing the practice of participation in context. Kumar (2002: 27) provides a table that distinguishes between the roles of participatory development and participation-in-development which I found useful in explaining my focus with regards to the concept of participation. Although the term may have been used rather loosely throughout this study, it is for the purpose of practicality that I now clarify the role of participation in this analysis. ‘Participatory development’ has generally been described as a top-down form of participation whereby the ‘management of the project (the researcher) defines where, when, and how much the people can participate’ (*Ibid*, 2002: 27). In contrast to this, ‘Participation-in-Development’ broadly refers to a bottom-up form of participation whereby ‘local people have full control over the process and the study provides for necessary flexibility’ (*Ibid*, 2002: 27).

The nature of participation, as it is carried out in this study, is an amalgamation between these two concepts of participation in that it focuses on the inherent quality of local participants in

contributing to the research process, yet full control of the research process is not assigned to the various participants. The only methods which account for such an understanding of participation are the methodologies of Participatory Rural Appraisal and Participatory Action Research which are distinct methods in their own right, and are not specific to this research. The aim of participation in this research is more in-line with the understanding of participation as offered by Green and Thorogood (2004: 17) where they describe the instance where researchers from participatory traditions of methodology see research as ideally a co-operative enterprise, involving working with communities as co-investigators. What this means is that although the people of the community may not have full control over the research process, they are nevertheless invaluable in contributing to the research process from a participative point of view.

Achieving a level of Participation

I have mentioned the various groups or organizations present in the community⁶² that I approached in order to involve in the grassroots comics project, and how these people enlightened me about the various issues that affect their health and wellbeing. However, it is still unclear as to how these people actively participated in the process of Grassroots comics production and dissemination within the community setting itself. Therefore the following section will describe the noteworthy involvement that individuals belonging to these groups added to the grassroots comics workshop. After all, without this contribution from local stakeholders, this methodology would prove to be rigorously hopeless before it even began.

It is noteworthy to mention, at the outset, the fact that it was not an easy task organizing these groups for the purpose of participation, and had it not been for both Matios and Dala (both co-ordinators of their respective groups ó Isibindi and Red Cross) I am certain that this project would not have had the outcome it did. This is because time and place seem to be perceived in a vastly different manner amongst people in the Platfontein community than what I am used to, coming from an urban and academic background. Everything seems to happen at a much slower pace in Platfontein, and meeting times are far less adhered to than say, a set time where I am to meet with my professor for the supervision of a particular chapter.

⁶² Isibindi, Red Cross, local health clinic and SASI.

Co-ordinating a date and time with which to conduct the Grassroots comics workshop took several days of constant negotiation amongst the various groups involved. This was also partly due to the fact that the groups were busy with their own agendas and had to set aside a day where they could participate in the workshop. After all, the workshop was designed to take up a large portion of the day, and had already been constrained from the suggested four days to one day for this exact reason. However, the date was finally set for November 11, 2010. The time was agreed upon for 9 o'clock in the morning. I had organised with the !XunKhwesa principle to make use of one of the schools' classrooms - which was vacant at the time - for the purpose of the workshop. This was more than appreciated as I was able to make use of the desks and blackboard available in the class, and would have otherwise struggled further to organise such paraphernalia.

The day of the workshop had finally arrived, and I briskly made my way to the community early in the morning to set up the classroom so that when all the respective participants arrived, we could engage straight away with ice-breakers and the respective task-at-hand. Once again however, I was met with a certain degree of disillusionment as 9 o'clock had come and gone, and not a soul had arrived. At this point I was getting rather anxious as I would not be able to secure the classroom for another day, and (as previously stated) it would be difficult to co-ordinate a time where all the respective participants would be available to partake in the workshop. This disillusionment quickly subsided though after the arrival of Dala and his group (Red Cross) at about 10: 30 that morning⁶³. Shortly after their arrival, Matios and his colleagues (Isibindi) arrived, and we all sat in the car-park of the school grounds for a few minutes chatting and waiting for the members of SASI's peer-educators to arrive.

Some more time passed and I eventually went on my own accord to the SASI offices across the road to inquire as to whether the peer-educators were going to attend the workshop or not. Immediately I was informed that they were 'involved in a training exercise' and would not be able to attend the workshop. I could not see one of the aforementioned peer-educators present in the SASI office, and so I decided to return to the school and conduct the workshop without their participation. To a certain extent, I was disappointed about this, but the fact that

⁶³ This was an hour-and-a-half after the agreed upon time, which serves as a further example of how time and space are perceived differently between members of the community and myself. Even after arriving, the participants did not seem to acknowledge the fact that they were significantly late.

the Isibindi and Red Cross workers expressed interest in the workshop, was more than enough to motivate me for the task at hand. Upon returning to the school, myself and the groups present subsequently began to engage in the process of Grassroots comics production. Months of research, planning and collaboration had culminated to allow for this one event, the actual Grassroots comics workshop.

Participation at the 'grassroots' level

The aim of Grassroots comics is to mobilise local activists and stakeholders in the community towards debating sensitive issues present in the community itself, and creating messages that are relevant to their local setting. This much has been stated previously⁶⁴. And so, many months of prior visitation to Platfontein, and constant discussions and observations conducted whilst spending time in the community, allowed for some form of direction with regards to the content of the Grassroots comics. The involvement of both Isibindi and Red Cross early on in my research allowed for a broad understanding of the health related issues that affect the Khwe in their everyday lives (as discussed in *Chapter Five*). However, the problem at this point was then translating these concerns into comics messages that the rest of the community would be able to recognize and acknowledge.

The workshop began with myself introducing the concept of Grassroots comics to the participants. This entailed an hour or so of going through the various techniques of comic story-telling. Although one does not have to be an artist to create grassroots comics, one still has to understand (even if at a relatively simple level) the various techniques of composition, perspective and narrative flow in order for the message to be readable by any particular audience. If these aspects were to be overlooked, comic stories and their messages would be ambiguous and somewhat difficult to understand. Below are photo's taken of the blackboard on which I was explaining the various techniques of comic composition to my participants.

⁶⁴ See chapter on Literature Review.

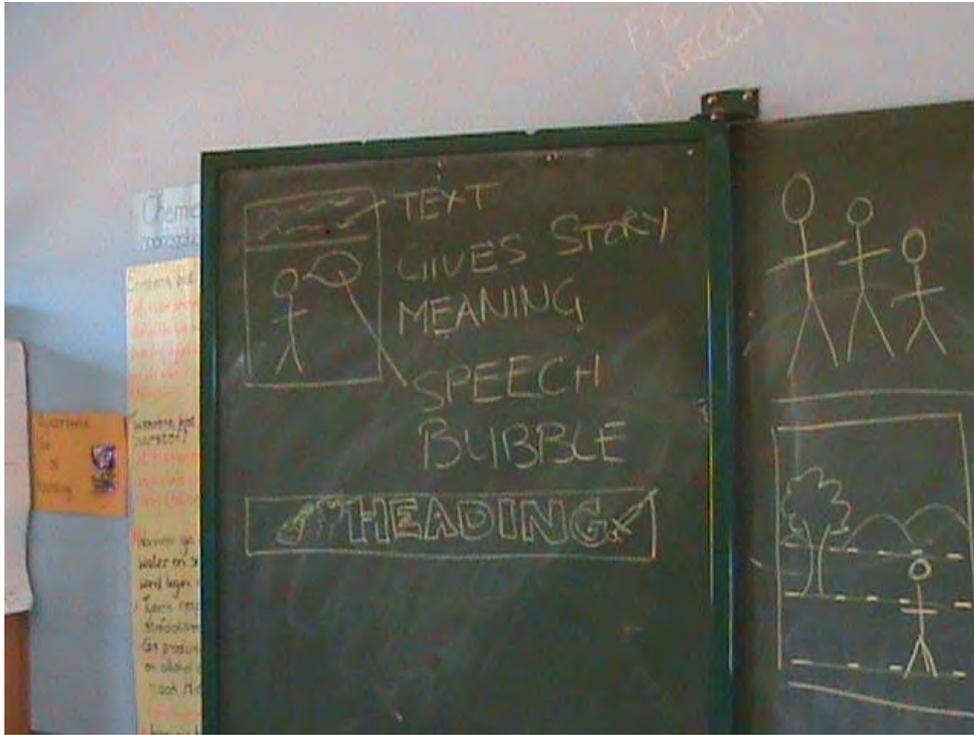


Figure 12 - Blackboard with suggested techniques for illustrating stories in the format of comics.

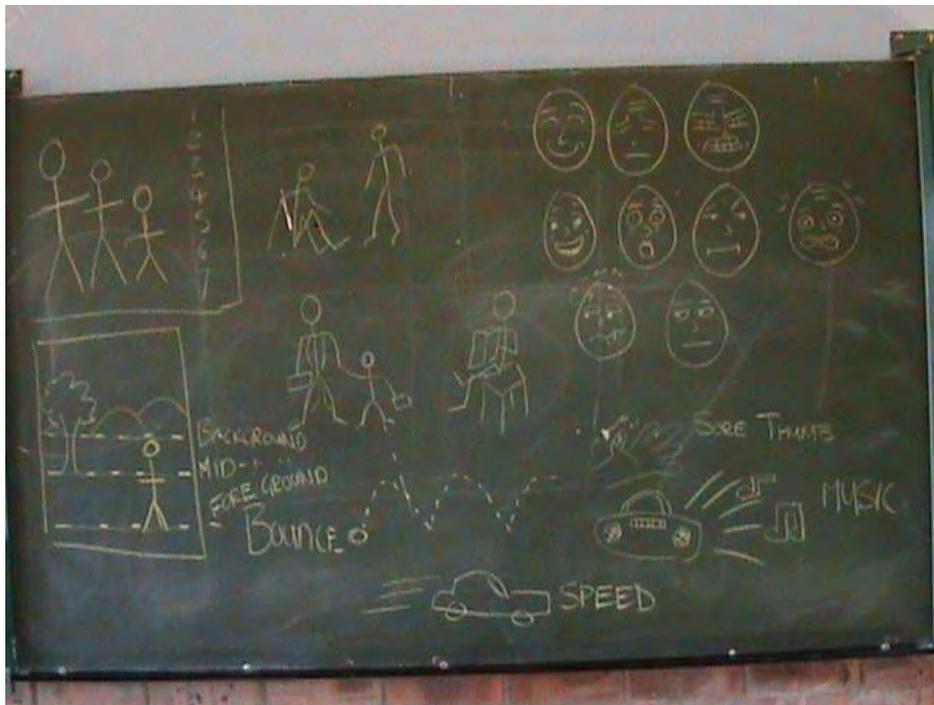


Figure 13 - Blackboard with suggested techniques for illustrating stories in the format of comics.

It was through a preliminary exercise of creating mock comics that the participants came to understand and employ the various techniques of comic story-telling in their own individual capacity. The objective of the workshop then became a focus on translating community issues into comic stories that would be understood by the community at large. This of course could not come from anything I could impart to the participants, and instead had to be driven by the their knowledge of which particular health related issues required attention in the community setting. Although I could not tell them which issues to focus on, I did however suggest an example of how they could create a message about TB or HIV in the community, and the case where bed-rendered patients do little to seek medical advice, using information they had shared with me. If there was any confusion as to what they were doing before this, the example of them narrating their own experiences through the comic seemed to have been useful in substantiating their own motivation for developing a particular message. Having developed an idea of how to develop a short story in the form of a comic, using the wall-poster comic format of four panels displayed on two pieces of A4 paper in order to make final size of A3, the participants started to tackle the task at hand.

I was amazed at the level of participation I received from the Isibindi and Red Cross groups respectively. Dala, Matios and their colleagues each got involved to their own projects and for the next few hours, they all sat diligently completing their comic stories, discussing their stories amongst each other. There were of course breaks in between where the participants and I enjoyed beverages and snacks together, and discussed how their individual projects were coming along. What I was astounded to observe however, was the tenacity with which they worked. If I can explain it in laymen's terms, it was like they were 'on fire' when working on their respective comics. Figures 14 - 17 below illustrate this.



Figure 14 - Group one of the NGO workers who participated in the grassroots comics workshop.



Figure 15 - Group one of the NGO workers who participated in the grassroots comics workshop.



Figure 16 - Group two of the NGO workers who participated in the grassroots comics workshop



Figure 17 - Group two of the NGO workers who participated in the grassroots comics workshop.

Towards the end of the workshop, the participants sat for an hour or so doing various editing to their drafts, or pen-ultimate copies, of their very own Grassroots comics. This entailed going over pencil lines with black ink⁶⁵, and inserting written words so as to assist the plot or dialogue of the comic. Although grassroots comics rely on the image to portray the message, there is still an element of language used in portraying any discussion present in the comic⁶⁶ (either in the form of a narration of events occurring in the comic, or of words spoken by actors present in the comic story). The participants decided among themselves that Afrikaans should be used when using written words. The reason for this is that there is no formal way of writing Khwedam, and those that are able to read in the community can do so mostly in Afrikaans.

Once all editing had been done, we discussed each individual comic and what they portrayed to the community, what issues they represented or what message was to be imparted. Apart from one or two comics, the comics carried a preferred meaning that everyone in the group could understand and they agreed that these comics were appropriate for conveying the issues they felt needed attention within the community (Hall *et al.* 1996). The comics mentioned above which were somewhat ambiguous had minor editing issues that needed to be reworked, and so, with small adjustments and a little work, they were deemed just as ready as the others by the participants. After a short discussion and photo session with the groups, the workshop came to a close (at roughly 4pm).

The last thing left to do was to photocopy the comics and combine the double A4 pages into single A3 size wall-posters. Matios and I were responsible for this and so we went to a printing agency in Kimberly in order to complete this part of the comic creation process. The photocopying of the comics constitutes the final process of Grassroots comics creation. In this process the comics go from separate pieces of paper into one final product, or comic. We made numerous copies of all the respective comics that were produced in the workshop, and once this had been completed, we were ready to go and stick the completed comics up at public places around the Platfontein community (particularly on the Khwe side).

⁶⁵ Felt-tip pens were used for this as pencil drawings can often be too light for the purposes of photo-copying, therefore pencil lines need to be accentuated by dark ink.

⁶⁶ This is done either in the form of a narration of events occurring in the comic, or of words spoken by actors present in the comic story (speech bubbles).



Figure 18 - Group one of the NGO workers who participated in the grassroots comics workshop.



Figure 19 - Group two of the NGO workers who participated in the grassroots comics workshop.

Encouraging local debate through comics

The central focus when using grassroots comics is allowing activists and NGO's a platform on which to promote community awareness for issues that are close to the work that they are doing within the community themselves. According to Packalen & Sharma (2007: 11) "They become grassroots comics when they are made by NGO or community activists about some issue which is relevant to that particular community." In the workshop conducted in the Khwe community, the participants discussed and agreed upon addressing certain health issues in the community that they felt needed particular attention.

It would be of significance to note some of the themes and messages created by the participants in order to understand the relationship between the NGO workers and the communicational elements underlying the method of grassroots comics. The use of this method is deeply motivated by the theory of participatory communication, and the use of more traditional forms of media in promoting local debate about common issues. In the words of Boeren:

The use of media for awareness-raising and empowerment of the people has been promoted by participatory development projects, most of which were supported by non-governmental organisations. In these projects, media are used to stimulate community discussions and to express the views of the community. Self-management of the production process is propagated, and the media which suit this purpose best are drama, local radio and video, and a number of 'little' media⁶⁷. (Boeren, 1994: 137)

In this particular case, propagation of the production process involved the participants debating about common issues and taking control of the grassroots comics workshop to the point that I was merely an observer for a large portion of the production process. The participants had been briefly shown a few of the basic elements of comic drawing, yet they had swiftly grasped this and moved on to discussion and creation of their own comics.

The reason self-management and direction of the process by the participants is of such importance is because only the people who live in a particular setting, and those who speak

⁶⁷ Ad Boeren elaborates on the term 'little' media by referring to "media that do not require capital investments, do not depend on technology, and can be easily understood by illiterates" (Boeren, 1994: 159). Although grassroots comics have a visual component, which requires what academics like to call 'visual literacy', they can nevertheless be considered a form of small or 'little' media in that they are designed for the community context; they are affordable, accessible and do not rely on technology or capital investment.

the language the people who live there speak, or experience the same things as they do on a daily basis, can understand truly what is happening 'on the ground'. In other words, "because grassroots comics are created by common people and activists, they give a first-hand view - *first voices* - to the issues in the community" (Packalen and Sharma, 2007: 14). Furthermore "by anchoring the grassroots comics to the community activists and to their NGOs, the messages in their stories are more exact, to the point and relevant to the debate within the community" (*Ibid*, 2007: 14). The 'debate' we are concerned with here are factors concerning health and wellbeing amongst the people in the community.

According to Packalen and Sharma (2007: 18), "wall poster comics are the most common and most cost effective format... told visually in four parts, so it is a compact format." This is in comparison to other grassroots comics formats like accordion comics or booklets etc. which tend to be a bit more lengthy in terms of story, characters and plot development. Additionally, "in the wall poster comic, you can put in a lot more information and feeling as in the story there can be drama and a sequence of things that happen" (*Ibid*, 2007: 18). A contrast to traditional development communication posters which often have one message or slogan intended to be applicable across a large scale of socio-cultural contexts. The following figures represent the 'final product' of the grassroots comics workshop, the actual wall poster comics created by the NGO workers themselves, and the messages contained within them which relate to the local context in which the comics operate.

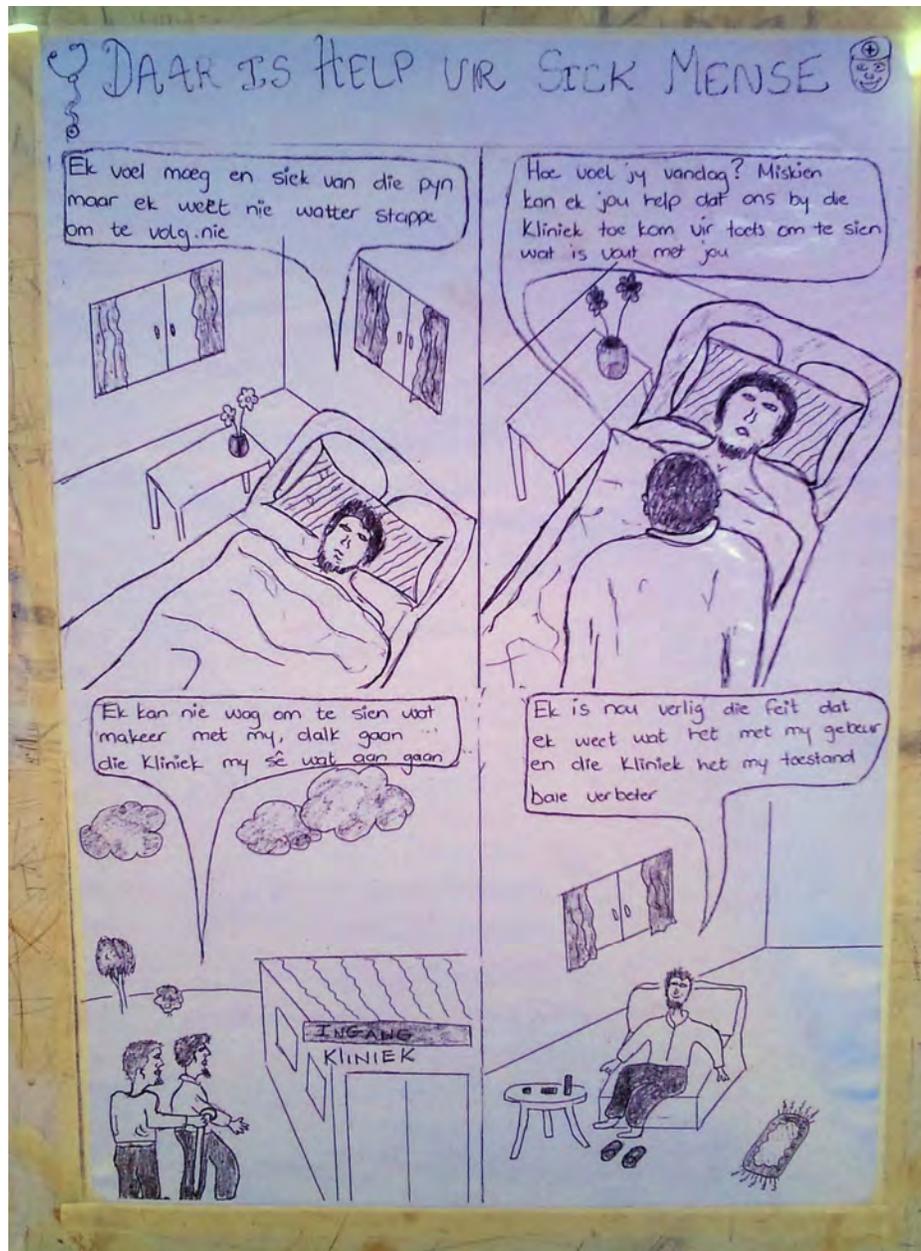


Figure 20

Daar is help vir siek mense (There is help for sick people).

In this comic there is a man who is suffering from pains related to illness, yet he does not know how to deal with the situation. His friend comes to see him and informs him that he is going to go with him to the local clinic to get diagnosed and receive some treatment. The man agrees and accompanies his friend to the clinic. After some time, he is healthy again and he says he is grateful for the services of the clinic and the fact that he now knows what was wrong and how to avoid it



Figure 21

Veilis in ons Huis (Waste in our Home)

In this story, there is a lady who does not know how to dispose of her waste, so she does so by burying it in a hole in her garden. In frame 2 there is a man throwing his waste into a garbage bin, illustrating that this is actually how waste should be disposed of. Instead of disposing of waste on their properties, people should try to keep their living space clean by using garbage bins and relying on the services of the municipality to dispose of their waste.

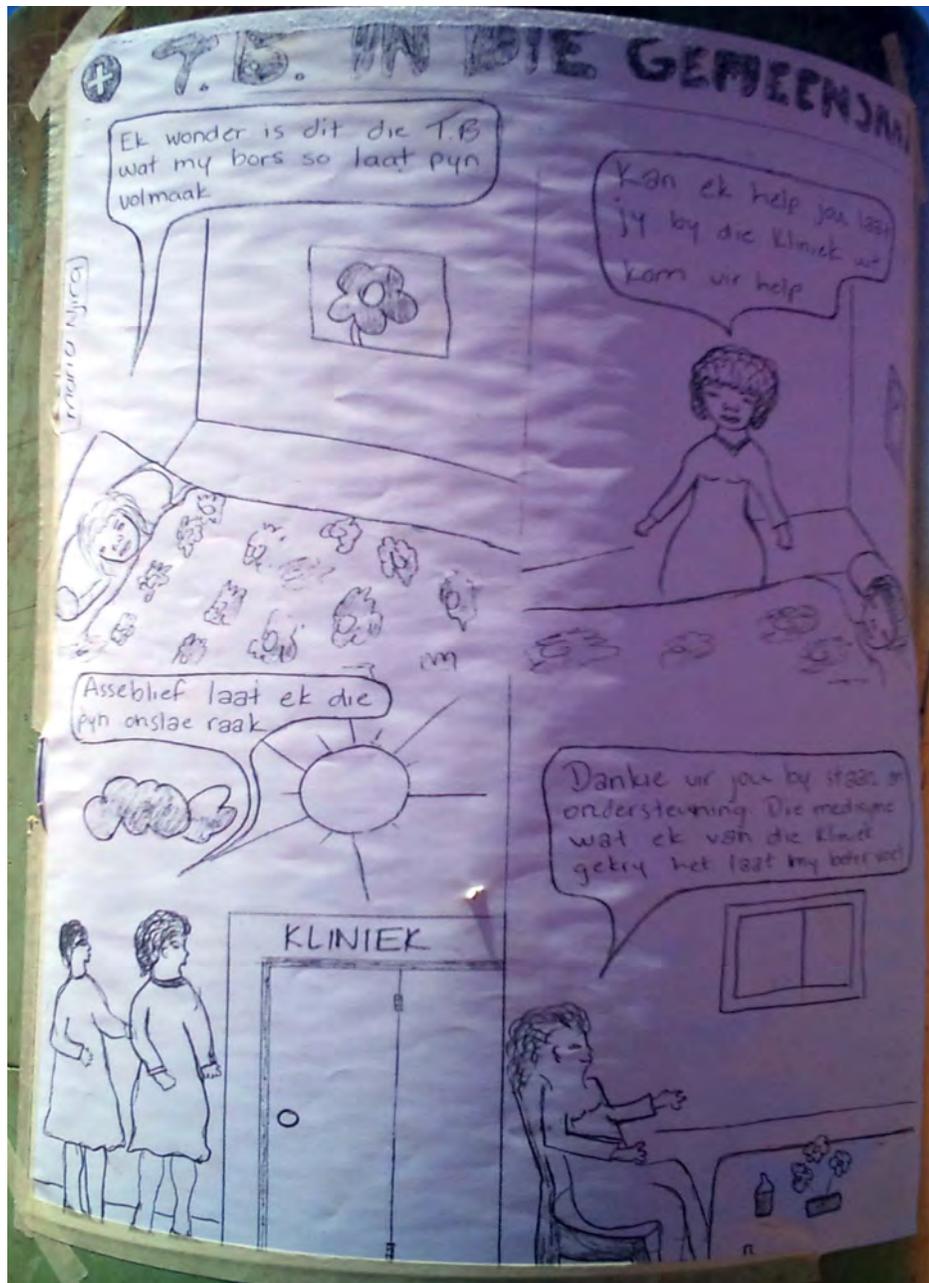


Figure 22

T.B. in die Gemeenskap (TB in the community)

Similar to the first comic, this story starts with a woman sick in bed, concerned about what it is that is making her chest hurt so much. Her friend comes around and convinces her to go and get it checked out at the clinic. On the way there she pleads to finding relief from her pain as if she has been suffering for a while. Finally the woman has recovered and she thanks her friend for her support and understanding, saying that the medicine she received from the clinic has helped her recover

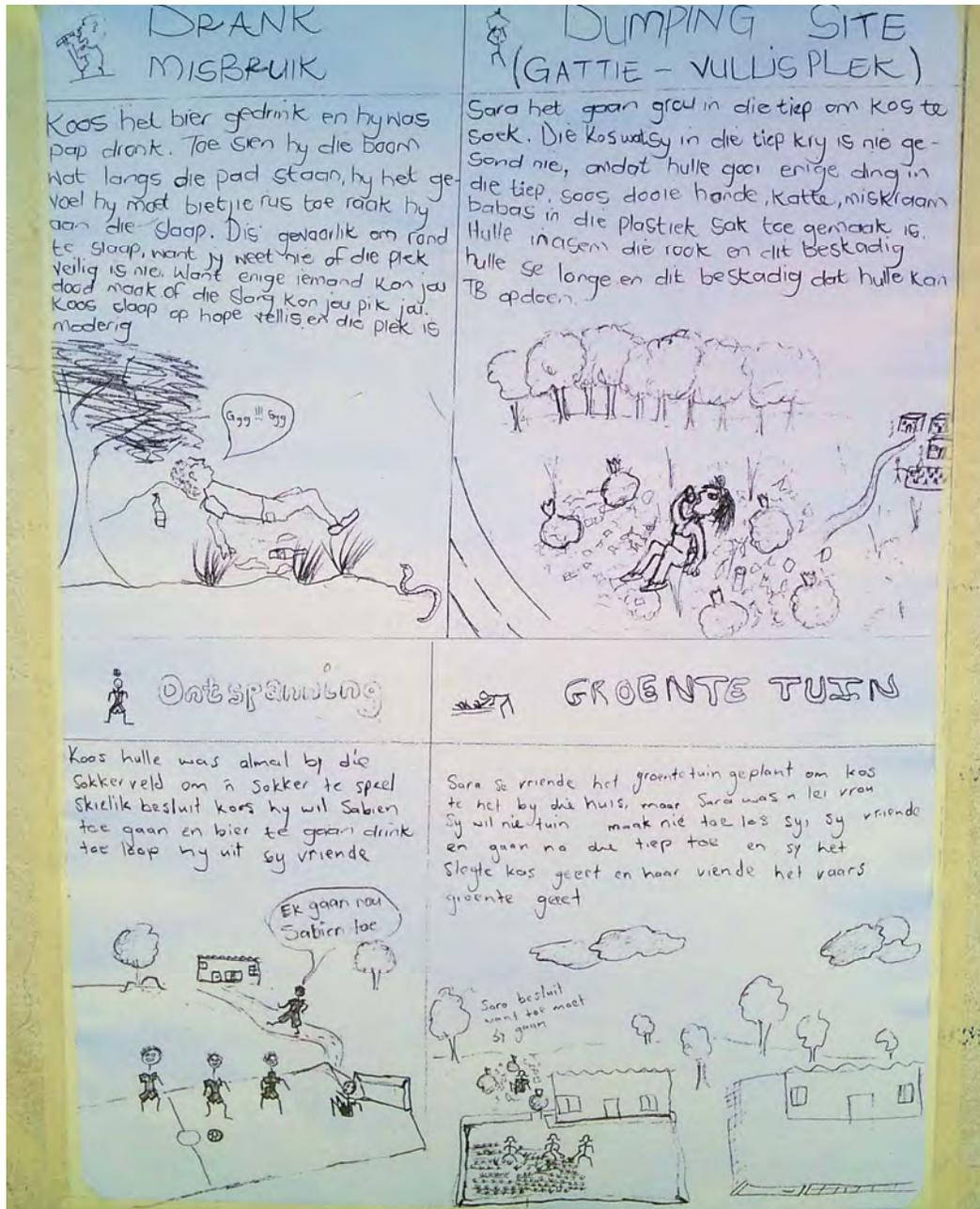


Figure 23

Drank Misbruik (Alcohol Abuse) and Gattie - Vullis Plek (Dump - Land Fill)

This comic is rather unique in that it deals with two separate stories from two different points of view. In the first story, **Drank Misbruik & Ontspanning** (recreation), a man named Koos has become drunk by consuming too much beer. He feels he needs to rest so he finds a tree to sit under and falls asleep. However, he is unaware that he is sleeping on heaps of rubbish and is exposed to a number of dangers, including being assaulted or being bitten snakes. The second part of the story (Ontspanning) shows Koos with his friends at the soccer field. They are all gathered to play a game of soccer together, but Koos decides instead to go to the shebeen to get beer, walking out on his friends who are having a good time without alcohol.

In **Gattie - Vullis Plek & Groente Tuin** (Vegetable Garden), Sara goes to the landfill site look for food. However, the food that she gets there is rotten and unhealthy because of the sorts of things that are found at the landfill, including dead animals and sometimes even aborted babies in plastic bags. Additionally the smoke that lingers from burning rubbish is inhaled and can damage the lungs leading to T.B. In the second part of the story (Groente tuin), Sara's friends are working in their gardens so that they can grow their own vegetables to eat, but Sara is too lazy to do so. She leaves her friends to go to the landfill (dump) and ends up eating rotten food whilst her friends eat the vegetables that they have grown for themselves in their gardens.

Grassroots comics in space

Although the message and meaning involved in grassroots comics is of central importance, it is the placement or positioning of the comics in everyday communal space that establishes the value of the message to the general public. In other words, if the wall poster comics were to be placed in spaces where the larger majority of the community could not see or read the comics, it would render the message of those comics insignificant to those people. Therefore it is equally as important to consider the placement of wall poster comics in public spaces where most, if not all, people have access to them. "The advantages are obvious; you can cover a whole village population by pasting two or three wall poster comics in strategic places. All this for the cost of a few photocopies" (Packalen & Sharma, 2007: 18).

Matios, Moshe and I were responsible for placing the comics at various public places around the community where people were more likely to notice them and receive the message portrayed through the story. These places were mostly located in the central part of the community. Amongst some of the places where we placed the comics were the school, the SASI office, the clinic, the One-Stop building, The Fame general dealer, various other landmarks along the main road, and near tuck shops.

After all the final editing work had been done to the grassroots comics, Matios and Moshe took charge of the placement process and informed me where it would be best to place the comics in and around the community. Unfortunately Dala could not accompany us at the time as he had other commitments to attend to, but after all the relevant copying had been done I left a large quantity of completed comics with him to place where he saw fit (and where we had possibly overlooked a valuable spot). He informed me at a later visit that he had taken all of the extra copies and placed them where he believed they would be most effective.

It was interesting, from a theoretical perspective, to follow Matios and Moshe around in finding spaces to put up the various comics. It seemed as if Matios had taken control of the

entire procedure and was actually directing the process of where to place the comics, leading us (myself and Moshe) from place to place and selecting certain messages for certain locations. For example, he placed comics concerning alcohol abuse near the shebeen, or messages dealing with children's issues around the school etc.

Although Moshe did not take part in the grassroots comics workshop because of work commitments, he nevertheless expressed a fair degree of interest in joining us for the placement of the completed comics. His feedback of what the comics were portraying was evidence to me that he understood the message and the meanings behind the comics. He also commented on how he thought the comics were most useful to adults from the age of eighteen up to those in their mid-forties, as most of the issues portrayed were ones that this age-group were faced with the most, and the future of the community lay in their hands. Why I say the middle-age is the fact that these people are everywhere, they move around, they are very active, and I would also say that they are also the problematic group, the ones who are drinking and misbehaving. So I think that is why I think they responded the most (Interview #11, July 2011).

Matios, Moshe and I spent the better part of three hours walking around the community on the Saturday after the workshop, placing wall-poster comics on walls with large amounts of prestik and sticky-tape. We often got questioning stares from locals going about their daily routines, and the odd inquisition from a passer-by about what we were doing. It is at this point that one realises the true nature of working within different socio-cultural contexts. On one hand it was as though I was spending some time with a few good friends I had made, putting up posters and keeping each other entertained mostly through light-hearted conversation. And on the other hand, I was a complete stranger to the community (in the eyes of many onlookers) walking around putting funny-looking pictures up with a few people who were also vaguely familiar to them. The point to consider, however, was that the process had nothing to do with me at this point, and had been completely appropriated by the community through Matios, the rest of the participants, and everyone else that engaged in grassroots comics stories.

The following pictures illustrate the decision of comic placement in the Khwe community, and my final involvement as an active participant in the grassroots comics project. Apart from some feedback research and a few follow-up interviews, this was the last time that I

would be a third-party facilitator of the grassroots comics process because, despite a few hitches along the way, the intended outcome of community ownership⁶⁸ had been achieved.



Figure 24 - Moshe Maghudu and Matios Sibongo.

⁶⁸ I use this word ambiguously in that ownership encompasses an active involvement in the processes of design and implementation, and therefore also invokes the possession of the grassroots comics by the community.



Figure 25 - store-room.



Figure 26 - !XunKhwesa school notice board.



Figure 27 - SASI Offices.



Figure 28 - Fame General Dealer convenient store.



Figure 29 - Lamp post on main road.



Figure 30 - Rubbish-bin on main road.



Figure 31 - Fence of X-Kfm radio station.



Figure 32 - Front wall of Fame General Dealer convenient store.

Observable Outcomes

In order to analyse the process of grassroots comics, from the introduction of the concept to the implementation of the community-made comics, I utilized the method of participatory observation (as discussed in the methodology chapter). Although there are different roles that the researcher may adopt when conducting participatory observation within the context of their particular study, when reflecting on my own use of the methodology it became immediately apparent to me that the role I adopted as an observer, and participant, constantly shifted depending on different stages of my research. Merriam (2009) discusses these roles and the orientation of the researcher in each case towards their study group, from being directly involved in the research process, to the role of being more of an observer than a participant.

As a result of my 'blurring' the boundaries between such distinctions in my own research (constantly shifting orientation between participant and observer) I managed to develop a rather unique understanding of the process of grassroots comics by observing community members and participants throughout different stages of the research, and from different points of view. To provide a brief example, it was interesting to observe that in the early stages of this research key informants such as Matios and Dala assumed the roles of being professional when it came to the work they were involved in, and therefore they acted more as information providers and gatekeepers between myself and their respective colleagues than as active participants of the message creating process which was to come at a later stage. At that time I myself fulfilled the role of observer more than that of a participant in that my goal was to understand the community and its workings better before introducing the method of grassroots comics as a platform for participatory communication, and engaging with the community as an active participant in the actual grassroots comics process.

This shifting orientation, however, provided me with a unique method for describing the community in that it allowed for a way of observing the community from the roles of researcher, a participant in the research process and also as an outsider to the community. Observing the way in which interviewees/participants reacted to certain cues or interview questions in the early stages of data gathering provided a way of understanding how these people engaged in everyday life within the community, and how they felt towards certain factors which affect health in the community. Often interviewees or participants would stress

factors about the community that they felt were important and needed attention, either through their body language or through their explanations of the community verbally.

Observing the roles and behaviours of participants in conducting the grassroots comics workshop revealed certain aspects of the methodology that were crucial to its applicability, including a shift from passive information providers to active workshop participants and eventually to becoming stakeholders in the very process through the messages they were creating about resolving common community issues. Therefore, by extension, one was also able to observe the general acceptance of the medium of grassroots comics amongst the participants as a somewhat viable means of implementing community participation in dealing with commonly agreed upon dilemmas faced by the community as a whole. By this I mean that although the participants started out as passive information providers at first, in terms of identifying health issues in the community which required attention, they became the driving force behind the grassroots comics workshop after having been introduced to, and having grasped, the various components and elements involved in this medium of communication.

This became apparent when I attempted to observe my role as facilitator in the workshop. At first I was seen as the person who was 'in control' or 'in charge' because of the fact that none of the participants knew exactly what was involved, or what the true outcome of the process was at the initial stages of the workshop and therefore I was to inform the participants of how exactly grassroots comics operated, and the various theoretical and practical components involved in such a process. Also, because it was me who had organised this workshop, and the meeting of these groups in the first place, a lot of participants naturally relied on me to direct the workshop and tell them exactly what to do throughout. It was not until the participants actually started working on their own messages and wall-poster comics that they truly began to take active control of the workshop and the grassroots comics process as a whole. My role in the process began to shift from that of workshop facilitator, to observer as participant in answering questions related to structure and design only, until eventually my role in the workshop became that of a straight observer of the process.

Through observing the community and recording observations whilst on site, it became exceedingly apparent in the later stages of my analysis that a number of community members who participated at various stages of the research process (especially those from Isibindi, Red Cross and the Clinic) tended to express an enthusiasm or motivation for the grassroots comics project once they understood more of what it was about and how it worked. There was a

definite sense of excitement shared by some of the participants for the practical use of grassroots comics, particularly after they had engaged in the workshop, and after they had seen the finished wall-posters they had created. This seems to reflect the words of Packalen and Sharma (2007: 14) in saying "since comics stick out, they are attractive for NGOs, which always have to look for new and innovative ways of communicating with their target audience". Anna Kamuti, one of the workshop participants, supported this claim when she mentioned how she had found the comics practical in discussing community issues: *ōOns het in die werkwinkel gepraat van drank misbruik, en dit is nog steeds die ergste, is drank misbruik hier op Platfontein. Maar die problem het a birtjie verbeter nadat n paar van die gemeenskap het die comics gelees*⁶⁹ (Interview #9, June 2011).

Furthermore, because the participants belong to NGOs that deal with health issues in the community, the nature of grassroots comics as a cheap and accessible form of communication was even more useful to them for the sake of campaigning within their own capacity and with their peers, within the parameters of the work done by their respective NGO's. *ōEk dink sommige mense het hulle (the comics) gelees, en daar was mense wat die inligting gekry het. Maar daar was ook mense wat die strokiesprente gelees het wat gee nie om nie...Ek dink ons gaan dit weer doen. Jy sien, mense vergeet iets as dit nie teenwoordig is. Ons moet dit weer doen om dieselfde, en ander probleme, te bespreek sodat ons altyd n boodskap kan kommunikeer*⁷⁰ (Interview #9, June 2011).

Aside from a few minor difficulties, the method of participant observation proved to be a rather inimitable means of observing participants' behaviours and attitudes during the research process, whilst still conducting the principle research. As discussed above, observing the final stage of the grassroots comics process - the placement of the comics - from the perspective of a researcher and an outsider to the community revealed various anecdotes about Matios and Moshe that would otherwise have gone unnoticed had I not accompanied them for this process. It is imperative to note that the method of participant observation is intrinsic to the entire grassroots comics research process, from the initial stages of research

⁶⁹ Translated from Afrikaans: *ōWe spoke about alcohol abuse, and this is still the biggest problem here in Platfontein. But the problem has improved a bit after some of the community members read the comics.ō*

⁷⁰ Translated from Afrikaans: *ōI think a few people read the comics, and there were people who received the messages (from the comics). However, there were also people who read the comics but don't care about the messages. I think we are going to use this method again. You see, people forget things if they are not always present. We must do this again to discuss the same, and other, problems so that we can always be communicating a message.ō*

through to the final stages of research, not excluding analysis of the implications of research within the Khwe community⁷¹.

Returning to the Community

A few months after conducting the grassroots comics workshop, and accompanying the participants in the placement of the wall-poster comics, I returned to the Khwe community to conduct follow-up research on the reception of the comics by the larger community (In June 2011). In order to do this I relied on the verbal accounts of participants and members of the community about how they, or others that they knew of, received and reacted to the messages in the comics. I was also surprised to discover that after some 6 months, there were still several wall-poster comics that had not been vandalised, removed or damaged by weather and were still being displayed where they had been originally placed.

My results relied dominantly on the feedback I received from interviews and discussions with participants and community members as opposed to a detailed quantitative account of which age-group or gender reacted to which particular comic message. The analysis began by interviewing those that had actively participated in the workshop, and understanding how they had experienced the process from their initial involvement, to whether they felt that it had been a successful communication initiative or not. I also interviewed and spoke with various other community members and stakeholders for their feedback on the wall-poster comics, including the Khwe community leader Kwamama, and the sisters at Platfontein clinic.

As a researcher I had had certain apprehensions about whether or not the community had responded to the comics, or whether they had even noticed them at all because of the time I had spent away from the community since the placement of the comics⁷². I was also concerned, to a degree, as to whether the participants themselves still had a desire to work with the comics in addressing community issues, without any involvement from my part; or if the method had simply held its appeal for the times that I was present in the community. In

⁷¹ What is meant by this is that it is also through observation of the sample population that the researcher is able to identify attitude or behavioural changes towards research outcomes amongst participants. In other words, some community members who participated in the research may find the method of grassroots comics useful and attempt to manipulate it and utilise it for their own means within their own organisation and according to the agenda of that organisation. On the other hand, others might find the method attractive and useful, yet do not intend to make further use of the method over and above the objectives of the central research project.

⁷² Some 6 months had passed since conducting the grassroots comics workshop and my returning to the community to conduct follow-up research.

other words, was it out of a sort of false assertion that the participants expressed their interest in the method, or did they genuinely consider the potential for grassroots comics as a communication initiative within their community. The only way I was going to clarify any of these apprehensions was to find out first-hand from people the community.

In attempting to understand how the participants felt about the method, I first approached the Isibindi Health group. I interviewed Matios, and several of his colleagues who were involved in the workshop, in order to get an idea of how they gauged the success or failure of the comics that they had produced for the community. According to Matios, he received a lot of feedback about the comics from people in the community, particularly the children (Interview #9, June 2011). He even said that some of the children were surprised that the comics had been made by Matios and his colleagues, and had jokingly said that they could also do this⁷³. I found that Matios was especially concerned with focusing more acutely on the children in the community, probably because of the nature of his work, but he made a sound argument for his case in saying that children tend to be more inquisitive about things, and are attracted to things like pictures and images (Interview #9, June 2011). Furthermore, Matios mentioned that he and his group had discussed repeating the method of grassroots comics, but focusing on the children during the school holiday period when the Isibindi playground is most busy (Interview #9, 2011).

Another intriguing point made by Matios was in mentioning the fact that people tend to forget about things when they are not exposed to them over time. He mentioned that in order for the grassroots comics to actually work in practice (and therefore, in the community) they needed to repeat the process from time-to-time, constantly dealing with issues in the community so that the messages stay fresh in the minds of those reading them (Interview #9, 2011). Two of Matios' colleagues reaffirmed this conviction in saying that if something is not constantly present, it is often forgotten, and if they are to use the grassroots comics method again, they will focus on similar issues, and different issues that weren't considered, in order to constantly communicate a message amongst the people in the community (interview #10, 2011).

Matios' colleagues also expressed concern for the children in the community and explained why they felt that they would be a good target for grassroots comics. They mentioned that

⁷³ Which I found very interesting because the children realised the potential that they possessed to produce these types of comics themselves, a central theme underlying grassroots comics (Packalen and Sharma, 2007).

children, (more so than older generations) tend to spend hours looking at pictures and story books, but not reading any words, however, the process does not stop there, because children will often rely on their parents to explain things to them, and therefore 'take' those pictures or images to their parents for clarification as to what is being portrayed (interview #10, June 2011). This transaction reflects an aspect of grassroots comics that I myself had not considered, and may have much deeper implications for the method of grassroots comics as a whole.

It was a little bit more difficult to get feedback from Dala and his group of Red Cross volunteers because, at this point, Dala was no longer working on a stipend received from Red Cross, and had stopped working as a volunteer in healthcare to find another source of employment that was more stable. Finding time to meet with him was therefore difficult as he was constantly busy with personal matters. However, I eventually managed to talk to him, and later to some of his colleagues who were still working hand-in-hand with the clinic as volunteers in home-based healthcare, except now under an NGO named Thabisho.

When asked about the comics, Dala mentioned that a lot of people from the community had come to him and said that he was doing something "convenient for the people" (Interview #10, June 2011). He also mentioned that he had spoken to his colleagues afterwards about what they felt about the grassroots comics, and that they had said that the method offered an easy way to communicate a message because it is not technical, and it can be done in the form of a story (Interview #10, June 2011). However, Dala admitted that "it is difficult for people to change their behaviour", but that he had also noticed people talking about the comics in the community, so the method had been somewhat useful in drawing attention towards issues in the community that are not often discussed or dealt with (Interview #10, June 2011). According to the dominant modernisation paradigm, one of the indicators of development is a reliance on individual behaviour change. However, behaviour change health theories (E.g. Health belief model, reasoned action etc.) often do not make sense in some development contexts (cf. Airhihenbuwa & Obregón, 2000).

When talking with Dala, and also with his ex-colleagues at the clinic, they mentioned that there was also a need to discuss different issues in the community (not necessarily, or specifically health-related) if they were to use this method again (Field notes, June 2011). Furthermore, When asked about their involvement in the workshop, and the production of the comics themselves, Dala stated clearly: "I'm proud cause of my involvement in the

workshop...because we are learning something and we are creating something also," (Interview #10, June 2011); and his colleagues later said that they felt it had been a useful method for helping them with their volunteer work, because the comics could provide the information they could, to a larger audience, and without them being present (Field notes, June 2011).

Some of the most informative feedback I received came from Moshe, a community member who was not involved in the workshop, but had accompanied Matios, Dala and myself in placing the comics around the community. His reflection of the experience was extremely valuable in that he showed an interest in the grassroots comics from a relatively early stage in the research, and was actually responsible for introducing me to Matios. He therefore had a unique perspective from which to draw in explaining the research experience as he encountered it; and equally so in discussing feedback he had received from others in the community.

After being asked if he felt whether the comics had been an effective communication strategy or not, Moshe immediately started discussing, at length, what he had observed and noticed about the community's reaction towards the comics. In one example he referred to a discussion he had had with an elderly gentleman who had asked him about the comics, and what he had thought of them.

I could see he could understand the message he just wanted to find out from me, but when we went in to detail I wanted to find out what did *he* understand from that? And the first thing he said was that sometimes we tend not to speak things out, but the comics itself has got a lot to tell, because people look at it, they see the pictures and they learn from the messages (Moshe; Interview #11, June 2011).

Furthermore, Moshe mentioned that in his opinion, the messages in the comics dealt with some of the silent issues in the community that people tend not to talk about, like alcohol abuse and HIV etc. (Interview #11, July 2011). "You know it's like some people even say, a picture says a thousand words; so the people will see one of those posters and they can get a lot of information from it instead of being told by someone" (Interview #11, July 2011).

In another instance, Moshe mentioned that some of the youth - whom he worked with in doing drama for the community - had seen the comics put up at the Fame general Dealer, and he had asked them what they had thought of those comics. In the interview, he quoted a quirky response he had received from a young girl in his group, where she had said, 'that is the right spot, nobody can just pass and go into the shop without looking at it.' According to

Moshe, the particular comic that this girl was referring to focused on the theme of alcohol abuse [see figure 23] (Interview #11, July 2011). Moshe explains that the same girl later went on to say that there should be messages like that in the community on a continual basis, and in places where the problem is worst, because people cannot avoid the messages that way, and the problem should decrease (Interview #11, July 2011).

After additional discussion, Moshe expressed his own personal feedback about the wall-poster comics, and felt that the major health issues in the community (Tuberculosis and alcohol abuse), were the ones considered by the participants who produced the comics (Interview #11, July 2011). He also went on to say that the younger generation in the community (approximately 16 ó 25 years of age) were the ones that reacted to the comics the most, because they are the ones that "are everywhere, they move around, they are active, and...they are also the problematic group; the ones who are drinking and misbehaving" (Interview #11, July 2011). However, Moshe also mentioned that the benefit of this is that if one can communicate a particular message to this age-group, they will pass it on to others because they are the young and active individuals in the community. In the words of Moshe, "targeting them is like helping others in the community, and reaching the most people" (Interview #11, July 2011).

After being asked about what he felt about the process as a whole, Moshe said:

You know, If I would say it wasn't successful then I'm lying. Because the focus point of the whole thing is to communicate a message to the people, and that was being achieved. Realising from the few people that I have met that have seen the pictures, they can tell me something about those posters. What about the people I haven't met? You know? And they have also seen the pictures; they might have something more to say (Interview #11, July 2011).

Moshe raised an important question here which made me consider the opinions of those people who had seen the wall-poster comics, yet whom I would not get the chance to interview or chat with⁷⁴. Unfortunately this would always be a limitation. However, the feedback and descriptions I did received from the different community members who I was able to interview, or talk to, were extremely helpful towards my inquiry about the impact of grassroots comics in the Khwe community.

⁷⁴ Either due to research constraints of scope or time; or due to barriers of communication.

How does Theory Apply?

The method of grassroots comics is indeed a unique approach towards communication within a local context for the purposes of community outreach and community involvement. However, equally as important is the theoretical discourse underlying the method of grassroots comics. Participatory communication is arguably the most perceptible theoretical approach towards working with the methodology of grassroots comics, although there are other theoretical paradigms that could also accommodate the use of this methodology such as Participatory Action Research, Participatory Rural Appraisal and so forth (cf. Koch & Kralik, 2006; Green & Thorogood, 2004)

Leif Packalen and Sharad Sharma (2007) introduce the medium of grassroots comics as a form of small-group development communication, designed to share common messages amongst people in a local space for the purposes of addressing pressing issues faced by the local community. I reiterate this because the authors stress the changing nature of development communication practices in the world today, and acknowledge the fact that there are many ways to achieve development. Their focus however, is on traditional media and participation in the process from stakeholders in the community. Also, the grassroots comics method is intended more for smaller communities⁷⁵ who are isolated in many ways from the larger world around them (be it through transport, technology, infrastructure etc.). In a move away from the dominant theories of modernisation and dependency, Packalen and Sharma base their methodology largely on the theoretical components of Another development, and to be more precise, participatory communication.

As stated in the theory section, Another Development arose as a result of a growing dissatisfaction with the dominant theories of development and a failure to account for the fact that each and every development setting differs from the next, and therefore requires a unique approach in dealing with communication and development issues. Consequently, academics who supported this view underlined the idea that through participatory communication, "the emphasis is on information exchange rather than on persuasion", as was the case with previous models of development (Servaes, 1996: 16). As participation relies on dialogue and face-to-face interaction, the researcher spends a significant amount of time in the community

⁷⁵ That is to say that their focus is on smaller communities where mass media is often scarce or reflects the ideologies of the masses, as opposed to communication efforts aimed alleviating some of the issues faced by the local population.

getting to know the setting and the people who live in the space being observed or studied. Grassroots comics, as suggested by the name, emphasises a bottom-up approach to communication, starting at the grassroots level, namely, the issues faced by the local community; and focuses on finding a way to communicate these issues to the rest of the community.

Participatory communication focuses "specifically on the communication process in the development context" (Servaes, 1996: 14). Additionally, the perspective on communication has changed in accordance with the changing nature of development theory, and "is more concerned with process and context, on the exchange of 'meanings' and on the importance of this process" (*Ibid*, 1996: 16). This is where information exchange between the researcher and the stakeholders, and time spent in the field observing and attempting to understand the local setting, becomes inherently important in the development context. If the focus of participatory communication is to achieve some form of social change, then the exchange of messages which apply to the local setting constitutes a form of meaning exchange amongst the people in the community. In order for this to occur however, the local population first needs to identify what issues affect the community as a whole, and how best to communicate the resolution of these issues to the larger public.

Through extensive interviewing, interaction, conversation and observation, the researcher gains a better understanding of the research setting and the context of participatory communication. In spending time with the various NGOs and individuals in the community who were open to share information about health issues faced by the community, and some of the reasons behind them, I was able to provide a forum for the participants themselves to discuss ways in which to resolve these issues. That is to say, the potential to do so was always there, but as a researcher, my interest was on facilitating communication amongst the community so that they themselves could identify and address the issues they felt needed attention. The focus of participatory communication is on trust and collaboration, and providing a platform on which the community can share thoughts and opinions so as to collectively address common issues and agree on ways of overcoming those issues.

Development, therefore, is in the hands of the community in that they are the driving force behind their own communication efforts. The method of grassroots comics is merely a catalyst, or 'middle-man' if you were, in that it provides a medium through which to communicate about issues that are 'close to home'. "Development can be nurtured, not

generated" (Kindo, 1987. In Boeren, 1994: 21), which means I, as the researcher, was not bringing about change through persuasion or by 'injecting' my culture, ideals or meanings into the community, but rather, I was exchanging ideas and concepts that could be used by research participants to shape their own development. Boeren (1994: 21) strongly supports the participatory approach to development by stating that, "development should...be understood as the unfolding of what lies hidden within the person or the community." Furthermore, what the researcher can do is, at best, create an environment that stimulates participatory communication; but it is up to the participants to determine the planning and execution of development activities (*Ibid*, 1994: 22).

In order to foster an environment of participation and collaboration in terms of addressing and communicating about various health issues, I decided to approach those community members actively involved in healthcare, as they possess far greater knowledge about the problems faced by the community than myself, or any other outsider for that matter:

Communication constitutes an indispensable part of participatory approaches. If development is to have any relevance to the people who need it most, it must start where the real needs and problems exist, i.e., in the rural areas, urban slums, and other depressed sectors. People living in such peripheries must perceive their *real* needs and identify their *real* problems. To a large extent, these people have not been able to do so due to a lack of genuine participation in development strategies ostensibly setup to ameliorate their problems (Melkote & Steeves, 2001: 338).

Communication comes from the ideas expressed by community members themselves as opposed to the development practitioner or researcher. Through collective reflection and horizontal communication⁷⁶ the realities and needs of the community are identified and can be addressed.

A problem with a participatory approach towards development however, is the fact that one cannot plan a course of action or agenda that is to be followed when applied to a particular context. "Rigid and general strategies for participation are neither possible nor desirable...It is a process that unfolds in each unique situation" (Servaes, 1996: 23). That is not to say that the researcher should not have an idea of what they are doing in a particular setting, it is simply stressing the fact that for genuine participation to occur, one cannot prescribe how that unfolding should occur before they have developed a relationship with, and understanding of,

⁷⁶ As opposed to top-down communication where information is often received from an authoritative source, horizontal communication relies on information being exchanged amongst community members as a means of coordinating their activities.

the community and setting in which they are working. To be able to prescribe an agenda or strategy for participatory communication is the exact opposite of what genuine participation aims to achieve. There is no room for the opinions and agendas of the community members as research parameters and protocols are set in place by the researcher, and are therefore not open to manipulation on behalf of the participants themselves. According to Melkote and Steeves (2001, 338), "Alternative, Bottom-up communication strategies have often turned out to be mere clichés, lacking in substance." To elaborate, often communication strategies claim to be participatory in nature, but are simply masked as participatory in order "to make target audiences 'feel' more involved and, therefore, more acquiescent to manipulative agendas" (Servaes, 1996: 23).

In the case of grassroots comics, the medium serves as a catalyst to aid in the process of participatory communication. By providing participants with a means of organising their ideas into a narrative form, and a forum in which to do so (in the workshop itself), they discuss and share ideas about how to deal with problems in the community that need to be acknowledged at the grassroots level, or where the source of the problem lies. This does not remove the general public from participating in the process, however, as the themes and issues discussed in the workshop are also reflections of the opinions and attitudes of the local community, either from the volunteers' experiences in their work with the community, or through discussions and interviews with various community members. Translating what issues are present, and how to cope with various health issues in the form of a narrative, carried out in the format of a wall-poster comic, constitutes the practical nature of grassroots comics.

Genuine participation calls for an exchange of ideas and information between community members, "They need to set the communication agenda, get access to communication media and become managers of communication processes" (Boeren, 1994: 22). The method of grassroots comics allows community members to do just this. The *agenda* is identifying and collectively finding a way to deal with a particular health issue, the *communication media* constitutes the grassroots comics as a medium for communicating the message, and the *communication processes* are the actual placement of the comic messages in and around the community, and the reception of these messages by the local public.

Many scholars and practitioners over the past three decades have favoured active participation of the people at the grassroots, yet this concept has often been problematic in

development discourse as there are varying degrees and definitions of participation. In fact, the over-arching field of development "is so value-laden that any examination of its derivative concepts, such as development communication, must guard against facile notions of 'progress'" (Servaes, 1996: 21). Both Servaes and Tehranian put forth the idea that "theoretical considerations should have a practical application in policy and plan making" (Servaes, 1996: 21). In other words, participatory communication approaches should not disguise their agendas with false notions of 'development' or 'progress', but should instead involve community stakeholders inherently in the communication process, from the initial research phase, through the subsequent stages of design, implementation and the evaluation of the development project itself.

Participation can be seen as a goal within itself, but can also be encouraged as a means of achieving a particular goal. In order to illuminate the term 'participation' as it applies to this research, I reflect on a combination of typological descriptions of the term. The two typologies of the term which I found to be most encompassing of participation in a grassroots comics initiative were 'participation by collaboration' and 'empowerment participation' as posited by Mefalopulos and Tufte (2009: 5-6). The former refers to what has been discussed above about incorporating stakeholders in the research project, requiring "an active involvement in the decision-making process" which "incorporates a component of horizontal communication and capacity building among stakeholders" (*Ibid*, 2009: 6). The latter refers to the situation whereby "primary stakeholders are willing to initiate the process and take part in the analysis. Ownership and control of the process rest in the hands of the primary stakeholders" (*Ibid*, 2009: 6).

Both descriptions differ in that in the former instance, ownership and directorship of the project are not in the hands of the stakeholders, and although they may actively participate and contribute to the process, the goals and outcomes of the initiative are usually controlled by external facilitators. Although the term 'empowerment' may be somewhat problematic within development discourse, in this instance it refers to empowerment through ownership and control of the process or initiative. I may have initially facilitated the role of liaison between key participants, and introduced to them the medium of grassroots comics, however, there was a significant change of attitude amongst the participants once they had engaged in the grassroots comics workshop. Instead of feeling as if they were going to be lectured about how to achieve effective communication in their community, the participants realised the potential for what they themselves were engaged in; the forum for expressing their opinions

and collectively discussing community issues in an attempt to communicate these issues to the larger community. Control of the process at this point rested entirely in the hands of the participants. My role as researcher shifted from facilitator to participant-as-observer (Merriam, 2009: 124). Elements from both typological descriptions presented above reflect a more accurate perception of participation as it applies conceptually to this research.

Defining methods towards achieving participation tends to become problematic in that no consensus exists around a common definition for participation, and the approach differs depending on the perspective applied (cf. Mefalopulos & Tufte, 2009). Through the utilisation of grassroots comics, and in working with community members throughout the many stages of my research, it became apparent to me that the participation can be understood from a number of different perspectives, each with a different method for achieving development goals. It was rather difficult to formulate an explanation of the various aspects of participation that I found to be of particular interest to this study, therefore I found Mefalopulos and Tufte's description of the different methods of participation to be of excellent use in describing my own examination of the research setting.

Firstly, I was shocked to find out that the health services⁷⁷ that were available in the community, were not being used by some of the community members who required them the most; either because of ignorance towards certain issues or as a result of some surviving stigma about the mistrust of Western medicine. Participatory communication should serve as a catalyst for "providing basic services effectively" (Mefalopulos & Tufte, 2009: 5). One of the central themes chosen by the participants in the grassroots comics workshop addressed the state of TB, and other diseases in the community, and the reluctance of some of those who suffer to seek help or advice from the local clinic. An issue directly addressed in a number of comics that were produced in the workshop.

Additionally, I noticed that through actively participating in the research process (and taking in to account that this occurred over a long period of time) there were times where I noticed a correlation between examples of what participation is 'supposed' to achieve - as espoused by various academics in the field of development - and what was actually happening 'on the ground' in my particular research setting. Mefalopulos and Tufte (2009: 5) speak of

⁷⁷ i.e. Health services offered by the clinic, or by a respective NGOs working with health issues.

participation as a method for "pursuing advocacy goals" and also for "monitoring progress towards goals." Whilst working with participants in this research project, I observed the phenomenon whereby the ideals of the various NGOs I was working with were being adapted by participants to the medium of grassroots comics, and the messages portrayed in those comics. In other words, Red Cross's concern for home-based healthcare inspired those participants who worked for Red Cross to focus on patients who refused to seek healthcare from the clinic, and motivated them to design a message that would address this issue. If participatory communication is to serve as a method for 'pursuing advocacy goals', then the method of grassroots comics can be considered a useful tool for achieving participation through a practical medium.

Furthermore, reflection on the communication process and the monitoring of progress in a participatory project can be difficult to observe or record in its entirety, mostly due to the fact that this would require a community wide evaluation from the scale of individual households to the larger implications of the project as it applies to the community as a whole. Nevertheless, as far as I was able to, I observed that certain participants who were involved in the research process (at any particular stage) acted as 'monitors' towards the research process, asking others about what they thought about various issues faced by the community, gauging which messages were relevant and which were not when it came to the grassroots comics, or discussing amongst each other the possibilities of extending this method beyond the confines of this research alone, and utilizing grassroots comics for their future endeavours in dealing with development issues in the community. It would be safe to say that these participants were "monitoring" the research process as it took place, and in a sense evaluating their progress towards their goal of alleviating particular issues faced by the community.

Participatory communication implies a different role for communication from what was conceptualized and operationalized in the modernization paradigm (cf. Melkote & Steeves, 2004: 250). As opposed to having a predetermined role for development and a top-down strategy for communication, the participatory approach favours "user-initiated activity at the local level...for successful village-level development" (*Ibid*, 2004: 249). Whilst it may be easier to formulate the approach in theory than to implement it accordingly in practice (cf. Boeren, 1994) it is important to remember that participation, that is genuine participation, should be a process of empowerment where "individuals are active in development programs and processes; they contribute ideas, take initiative, articulate their needs and problems and assert their autonomy" (Ascroft and Masilela, 1989. In Melkote and Steeves, 2001: 337).

It was through participation and observation (at an early stage of research) that I was able to establish an idea, if even a general one, about the state of health in the Khwe community, and the relevant stakeholders involved in health outreach. After introducing the idea of grassroots comics to the participants involved in the workshop, I was amazed to see how this practical approach provided a forum for those participants to discuss community problems, and take the initiative in directing the communication process towards addressing these problems. The participants themselves determined the process of dissemination and decided on particular community 'hot-spots' where the comics were to be placed, thus the participants had taken full control of the communication process and no longer relied on any information or advice I had to offer. I could never have accounted for, or planned for what happened throughout this research as the initiative was largely determined by the community members themselves, and those participants who were actively involved in the production and distribution of the grassroots comics.

Limitations to this study

Throughout this study I was constantly aware of potential circumstances that might have obstructed the research process. Although the ideal situation would involve encountering no limitations to research whatsoever, this is seldom the case. Firstly, this study does not imply a generalisation for the application of grassroots comics in context, nor does it imply that the outcome of utilizing the method will be the same for all instances where grassroots comics are used for the purpose of participatory communication.

In other words, the methods used to achieve community participation in this study, and the results received from the research process itself, do not necessarily reflect a universal understanding, or suggested framework, for grassroots comics in context. This research does however, support the notion that the medium of grassroots comics may provide a worthwhile platform for participatory communication interventions in local communities. Especially in isolated communities such as the Khwe community, where local development is far less supported than larger, national government and political agendas.

In discussing limitations, some of which encountered in this research include: *the standardisation of time, targets, and schedules; levels of involvement; the researchers role; and evaluation of communication intervention*. The purpose for grouping various limitations is not specifically to review hindrances encountered during research, but also to draw attention to the fact that there are further implications to this research which could not be

considered, yet would possibly reflect an even broader understanding of the topic. Nevertheless, these limitations could serve as significant considerations for conducting future research into grassroots comics.

The first grouping of limitations are described as *the standardisation of time, targets, and schedules*. The standardisation of time refers to the nature of research projects as often being governed by a time-table which people in rural communities are not quite familiar with. For example, research deadlines need to be met at certain dates, yet community members are often not aware of these deadlines, or the fact that the researcher needs to conduct their research within a certain time-frame. This is particularly problematic in research focusing on community involvement, because effective participation often requires extended amounts of time spent in the subject community. Although I spent three years visiting the community on a semi-regular basis, establishing relationships with community members and conducting research, I felt that I could have spent even more time in the community than what I was able to spend in learning even more about the Khwe peoples.

The *standardisation of targets* encompasses having to constrain research goals, dealing with particular issues in the community and therefore, by extension, selecting target participants in the research process. The goal of this research is in providing a case-study⁷⁸ for grassroots comics in context, not to provide a prescribed method of how to implement the use of grassroots comics. Furthermore, the overwhelming amount of community issues to be considered required that there be a focus on specific issues in the community, namely health and well-being. As a result of focusing on particular issues in the community, target groups and individuals were selected to participate in certain aspects of research based on their knowledge of those particular issues.

The *standardisation of schedules* refers to the idea that the researcher and the individuals in the community work according to different conceptions of time, and therefore there must always be significant leverage to account for routines, rituals and social customs⁷⁹ in the community. To use an example, there may be instances in which the researcher and a community member agree to meet at a specific time, but when the time comes to meet, the

⁷⁸ This research may not reflect a case study by the text-book definition of the term, however, as discussed in the methodology chapter, this research is aimed at providing a case-specific analysis of the use of grassroots comics in an effort towards participatory communication.

⁷⁹ Birthdays; marriages; funerals;

community member is late due to differing conceptions of punctuality; or because of other obligations that took precedence over the meeting. This can prove to be somewhat troublesome when research is governed by time constraints.

Limitations involving *levels of involvement* arose at various stages throughout the research process. In one particular instance, a whole group of volunteer peer-counsellors who were going to participate in the grassroots comics workshop, decided not to join at the last minute for no explainable reason. In another case, after continuous efforts to establish an interview with a certain SASI worker who was involved with health outreach in the community, I was met with constant excuses, and eventually got the impression that I was being avoided which ultimately prevented me from ever actually conducting the interview. On the other hand however, there were also those whom I would have liked to involve in the research, namely the volunteer health workers from the !Xun side of Platfontein⁸⁰, but could not because of the scope of this study.

In mentioning limitations regarding *the role of the researcher*, I refer to two distinct issues which require further clarification of my role in the research process. The first is the fact that upon entering the community, I was not a health or development professional, but a scholar interested in understanding the communication intervention of grassroots comics in the Khwe community. Therefore, I did not possess any professional skills in the fields of public healthcare or development communication, and chose to focus on general health and well-being in the community instead of any health issue in particular.

Also, the method of grassroots comics is intended as a medium for participatory communication within a community context. In my role as a researcher I focused this study around the idea that, "for many health issues social factors⁸¹ are important" (cf. Griffiths, 2009: 20), and the aim of grassroots comics is to address social factors hindering community development. This research therefore focuses on *health* in no descriptive detail as far as medical discourse applies, and relies solely on the information provided by community members and other health professionals when referring to health issues in the Khwe community.

⁸⁰ The neighbouring community to the Khwe who shares the land of Platfontein with them. The population of the !Xun is roughly three times larger than that of the Khwe community, hence a focus on the smaller of the two communities for reasons of confinement.

⁸¹ According to the author, these include 'poverty', 'personal relationships', 'the community context' etc. (Griffiths, 2009: 20).

The second issue is that I was merely an observer and facilitator of communication amongst community members and participants, and was not imposing a model of communication on the community. Therefore key decisions involving the practical element of this research were made by participants and co-ordinators of the NGOs I was working with, and because of my socio-cultural predispositions, I often perceived group decision-making processes of when to meet, what issues to discuss, and where to place the finished grassroots comics as long-winded and drawn out as opposed to my strict understanding of the time-constraints governing these decisions. However, this can be commonplace in the community setting, and participants are not expected to adhere to the deadlines of the researcher in participatory research that focuses inherently on community involvement. Therefore I often had to readjust my research schedule to suit the requirements of the participants in the research process, even if those requirements included extra time I could sometimes not afford⁸².

Lastly, limitations associated with the *evaluation of the communication intervention* include aspects of the analysis phase which may have obstructed further research. This refers to things like barriers of language and culture between the researcher and community members; sample-group size limiting the amount of feedback, and who it comes from; and the ever-present issue of time necessitating a particular method of analysis etc. To simplify, I could not provide a completely comprehensive analysis of all the factors involved in the evaluation stage of the grassroots comics, as doing this would have required that I spend significantly more time⁸³ in the community, conducting continued research on a greater scale than that necessitated by the focus of this particular research.

The reason for discussing the limitations encountered during this research is for the benefit of reflection. If the purpose of this research is to assess the use of grassroots comics as a potential medium for participatory communication in a local context, it is equally as important to consider instances where there is a lack of data in the analysis of research goals. According to Griffiths (2009: 139): "It is very easy to forget where there is a lack of data as we tend to consider what is there rather than what is not there but the lack of data is itself data and needs to be brought into the analysis." Without considering the limitations encountered

⁸² Research visits to Kimberley only lasted a certain amount of time (usually over the space of a week or so) and there were often instances where I would not be able to return to the community for a while. Therefore, not being able to conduct certain aspects of research, at certain stages of the research process, necessitated the consideration of those aspects of research in subsequent visits to the community (sometimes after).

⁸³ This would take some few more years to achieve.

through research, one cannot consider the larger implications of one's own findings, and the insights into the particular phenomenon that their studies might offer.

Implications

When one mentions 'expected outcomes' in the initial stage of their research, or even as early on as the proposal phase, they cannot fully account for what will occur several years down the line; although it is still imperative that one has a particular research goal in mind to drive the research process. One's research findings entails an explanation of how the data gathered relates to one's own theoretical assumptions, and this then constitutes the implications of that research (cf. Biggam, 2008). In post-analysis of the data gathered, there were a number of implications that came to the fore of this research; some of which were discussed throughout this research, and some which arose indirectly - as a result of the nature of the research. It is necessary to first consider some of the more perceptible implications so as to lay a foundation for those that were significantly less apparent or direct.

The use of grassroots comics as a methodology in this research was based on the theoretical assumption that, when applied with a general degree of acceptance to a particular context, the aim of the grassroots comics approach tends to reflect the ambitions of participatory approaches⁸⁴ to development communication. There were numerous occasions in the analysis phase of this research where feedback from different participants and interviewees suggested that this had been somewhat true of the method as they had perceived it within their own community setting.

According to some, the method of grassroots comics possessed a certain creative appeal, and practicality in dealing with issues faced by the Platfontein community. As Matios suggests: "I found it really useful; In terms of health issues I feel it promoted the messages we worked with; I see some changes because of it" (Interview #8, 2011). In a separate interview, Dala seemed to have similar convictions when saying: "You see it is difficult to make people change their behaviour, but there are lots of people talking about those drawings that we did, so I feel it was a success for getting those health messages across to the community" (Interview #10, 2011). In further confirmation of this sentiment, Moshe mentioned that " the comic[sic] itself has got a lot to tell, because people look at it, they see the pictures and they

⁸⁴ To reiterate, this generally implies a particular focus on community involvement, collective identification of issues faced by the community, and encouraging community decision-making authority of the research process.

learn from the messages in the pictures" (Interview #11, 2011). In addition to these explicit responses, there was still further feedback regarding the practical use of grassroots comics in the community, implying that the method does indeed possess a certain practical appeal for the purpose of participatory communication.

Another intended outcome of the research process was to suit the use of grassroots comics to the context in which they were to be used - the Khwe community. This entailed introducing the idea of grassroots comics to the participants in a semi-formal workshop, so that they could grasp the medium, and learn how to produce the comics themselves. The implication here however, was that the participants then actually adapted the use of grassroots comics to suit their organizational goals of informing the community about various health issues that they felt were of particular relevance. Almost all of the feedback I received from the participants entailed at least one comment about the comics providing a platform for them to portray messages that they felt strongly about in their group capacity as volunteers/workers of their respective NGO's, applying the type of work they did in the community to the messages portrayed in the comics.

In his own descriptive account, Moshe shared his opinion about the health messages portrayed in the comics:

You know our major problems are the ones that those posters spoke about; if I can mention one or two, it would be TB and alcohol abuse... I would say I would've focused on those same health-related issues that those participants focused on because those are the major issues here in Platfontein. So I would say they are reflecting the problems in the community (Interview #11, July 2011).

Somewhat less descriptive and more to the point, Matios expressed his own opinion in saying, "I think grassroots comics are useful for me because I feel in this time *it* can be used in terms of health and the children, which is what my group is focused on" (Interview #8, June 2011).

One of the central tenets of participatory communication is an emphasis on the potential, or capacity, for people from the local community to communicate useful information with others in their own local setting. One of the ways that this can be achieved is with some form of group media that is preferably less hierarchical in nature than more dominant forms of media; is more easily accessible to the public; and is designed and controlled by members of the community itself. Therefore, it is important that ownership and control of the communication intervention should rest inherently in the hands of the participants (cf.

Packalen and Sharma, 2007). During the course of this research, not one of the participants involved in the workshop mentioned that they had felt removed from the grassroots comics process. Even those that had little to say about the process referred to the comics as "theirs".

Ndutali Kandere, one of the participants who worked with Isibindi, said : "We were the ones who was[sic] making those comics. In the beginning you showed us how to do it, but then we made those messages in our groups" (Interview #9, June 2011). Both Dala and Matios had made it clear to me that they were proud to be involved in the process, and that they had felt excited about doing something creative and important for the community. In Matios' own words: "I feel proud about them [the comics]. After this time that we did the workshop I got a phone call from the orphanage and I told them that *we* did this workshop, and that *we* are creating a very important message. So I feel it's a little but creative and exciting" (Interview #6, November 2010). It was somewhat relieving to receive this kind of feedback because it implied that the participants had indeed accepted a degree of control over the design and implementation of the grassroots comics in their own community.

There were, of course, shortcomings to this research too, which were noted by some of the participants, and which bare implications for further inquiry into the phenomenon of grassroots comics.

In an interview with two of the participants from Isibindi, I was informed that there were those community members who actually did not care about what the comics had to say, or that even acknowledged the presence of the comics for that matter (Interview #9, June 2011). Naturally, I had expected there to be some form of resistance to the comics by some of the members in the community, but this gained significantly more weight when participants suggested reasons as to why this may have been the case. In the same interview, one of the participants, Anna Kamuti, mentioned that she felt that the older generations had not responded as well as the younger generations to the messages in the comics; either because they were "koppig"(stubborn) or they simply did not care (Interview #9, June 2011). In Moshe's opinion however, "when it comes to the old people, you know most of our parents are illiterate and stuff like that, so when writing in English or Afrikaans, they cannot understand" (Interview #11, July 2011).

The issue seems to have been related to the participants having chosen to use Afrikaans in the comics, because writing in their native language would have been rather difficult, and even more so for others to read⁸⁵. Afrikaans was at least a language that a large majority of the community could speak or write. I am not implying that this was a 'problem,' merely that this was an exception which had to be made with regards to the interests of the community as a whole. What this did reveal however, was that a number of participants had realised that a focus on younger generations in the community would be a more fruitful starting point for the method of grassroots comics if future applications of the method were to be carried out.

It was particularly interesting to hear Matios' opinion with regards to this issue because of Isibindi's particular focus on children in the community. According to him, "they are good targets for these messages, the children, because they...like to see something like pictures and images; and when they see a picture they want to know what that picture is about and try to understand it" (Interview #8, June 2011). One of Matios' colleagues, Anna, mentioned that children tend to be far more "nuuskierig"(inquisitive) than adults, and that children sit with books for hours trying to figure out what is happening in the pictures, or in the story. She then went on to explain that children often take things home to their parents so that they can better explain to them what the pictures are about, or what the story is saying (Interview #9, June 2011).

The interest expressed by participants over focusing on the youth in the community was exuberant. Dala was quoted in saying "we must also look at the young children because they are the future of this community. Also, they are more interested in drawings and stories, so I think they will find those comics interesting, and want to know what it is about" (Interview #10, June 2011). Moshe even mentioned that those youth whom he worked with - in doing drama - responded positively to the comics when he got the chance to discuss it with them (interview #11, July 2011).

The most positive form of feedback came from discussions involving the continued use of grassroots comics as a method of communication within the Platfontein community. Although this may be an intended outcome of the grassroots comics approach (cf. Packalen & Sharma, 2007), I did not fully expect participants to express immediate interest into further

⁸⁵ The participants informed me in the workshop that a lot of them could not write in their native language - Khwedam - they could only speak it; and that the same was true for a large majority of the community as there is, essentially, no formal way of writing their language.

application of the method after I had completed my research. To later comprehend the larger implications of participants' genuine espousal for the medium of grassroots comics, was truly enlightening.

Matios mentioned on several occasions that he was intent on using the method of grassroots comics again within his own organisation, and with the support of his colleagues. "I think I am going to use this again. I put the other comics down by the office there were we can use them as an example if we do this again" (Interview #6, November 2010); "we always talk about doing those comics around holiday times when the children spend a lot of time on our playground" (Interview #9, June 2011). He also recognised the need to keep repeating the method if it is to remain an effective form of communication: "I think we should do another one of those workshops again sometime because I see people are starting to forget about those comics. So I feel, maybe, that we need to keep doing this so that it is always fresh in people minds" (Interview #8, June 2011). Matios's colleague, Anna, also mentioned that people often forget things if those things are not always present, and that they needed to account for that fact that the comics could not last forever. Therefore they should tackle those same issues, and others, using the method of grassroots comics again, so that they can constantly communicate a message (Interview #9, June 2011).

In some instances the method was even being considered outside the confines of this particular research. Moshe had not participated in the workshop, or the production of the comics, yet had had made specific mention of using this method in a campaign he was planning with colleagues of his in the community: "We want the youth in the community talking about some of these issues that affect the community, and the idea of having drawings as a communication component is something we would not have done before, but we see now that it is useful for communicating those issues". When asked if he was really considering using grassroots comics as a method in the campaign, he replied: "Yes, we definitely are" (Interview #11, July 2011).

Dala's unemployment at the time of my last visit to the community was discouraging to hear. However, his position regarding the use of grassroots comics remained somewhat inspiring. As he expressed in his own words, "if I continue working in the community I will use *it* again. I also wanted to arrange a meeting with the Department of Health to tell them about this method so we can do a project together using those drawings. So I hope we will do it again" (Interview #11, July 2011).

Furthermore, I spent significant time in liaison with Dala, and the nurses at the clinic, about the possibility of Dala providing his skills as a translator in converting the information in some of the posters in the clinic, into languages the local population was more likely to understand. Although both may have done so in separate interviews, Sister Alexander and Sister Olifant uniformly expressed the need to relate the generic posters regarding health-related information⁸⁶, to the people in the community; and that this would only be done by translating those posters that were being displayed, into the relevant languages of the people who frequented the clinic (Interview #1, 2010); (Interview #7, June 2011).

The problem with this was that the nurses had approached several translators on previous occasions, and asked them if they could assist with translation, but had been charged exorbitant amounts of money to do so, therefore they had given up on the idea. In mentioning to the sisters that Dala could possibly provide this service without asking too much of them, I was asked to approach Dala and see if he would be willing to do so. Upon my last visit to the community, and in my last meeting with him, Dala mentioned to me that he had spoken to the sisters in the clinic, and that he was going to help where he could in translating some of the posters (Field notes, July 2011).

⁸⁶ Posters issued to the clinic by the Department of Health.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This section will consider the research objectives of this study, summarise the findings of this research and recapitulate conclusions based on research findings. The two chapters dealing with research analysis were lengthy and require being summarised. Furthermore, this section will also reflect on the research methods and how the research was undertaken. The purpose of this conclusion is to structure an abridged description of the research process which reflects whether or not certain research objectives stated at the start of this research have been met. Limitations, implications and the overall value of this study will also be considered.

The literature review pertaining to this research identified the ambiguous nature of development communication in context, and focused particularly on the use of print media as a practical means of promoting participatory communication amongst members of a subject community. The literature also highlighted the fact that development communication relies on the participation of the subject community, and linear, top-down models of development cannot be applied as a template for achieving change across different socio-cultural environments. Therefore, the method of grassroots comics is explored as it offers a distinctive approach towards development communication in context. The method has achieved some level of success in practice and this is becomes more evident through a discussion of certain case-studies presented in the literature section of this dissertation.

The aim of this study is to discover the relevance of grassroots comics as a practical and accessible method of community-based development communication. Furthermore, it is the participatory and community-driven characteristics of grassroots comics that are of central importance to this study. In an effort to avoid being too broad, this study focused specifically on health-related issues affecting the Platfontein community, and how these issues could be addressed using the method of grassroots comics. The overarching theoretical framework provides a summary of how the field of development communication has changed over the years, and how aspects of this can be observed by considering the historical background of the !Xun and Khwe Bushmen communities. The theory section also considered the relationship between contemporary theories of participatory communication, and the theoretical principles which guide the use of grassroots comics.

Methods adopted in this research were chosen for their particular relevance in helping understand the research environment, and for the purpose of recording and analysing research

results. Sampling techniques were based on purposive sampling, and in particular, the non-probability technique of snowball sampling which focuses on the sample's close relationship and understanding of aspects in the community which are of relevance to the objectives of research. The sample chosen in this research consisted of home-based and child health care workers, nursing staff and certain members who were involved, in some way or another, with overall healthcare in the community.

Findings and research conclusions

Through interacting with community members and through observing certain practices and behaviours which were common in the community, I was able to identify and analyse issues which were pertinent to this particular study. This included interviewing key-informants about the nature of healthcare in the Platfontein community, and observing the work some of the participants performed in their capacity as healthcare workers. Additionally, the method of grassroots comics entails a practical component of conducting a comics in which stakeholders in the community come to understand and utilize the medium of grassroots comics for the purpose of communicating and alleviating common issues experienced by the community as a whole.

The workshop conducted in the Platfontein community, which consisted of Khwe community members, yielded fascinating results which illuminated research findings. Firstly, the method proved to be attractive to the participants to the point that they became actively involved in the production of health care messages relevant to their particular community. Aside from a few minor obstacles, the intended outcome of involving community members in the formulation and production of grassroots comics messages was achieved. A number of participants reflected on the value of the grassroots comics workshop in providing a platform for community issues to be identified and discussed at a public level.

Feedback on the success of the grassroots comics was sought through interviewing key-participants about their experiences of the process, and what their opinions were or what they observed regarding the reception of the grassroots comics by the general public. Follow-up research revealed that a significant amount of community members understood the messages portrayed in the comics and reacted them, whilst there were still those community members who did not react to the comics at all. Certain participants also identified the fact that communication strategies which promote behavioural change through media often require a long time in order to reach the larger public, or to achieve any level of success, and that in

order for the comics to promote change in the community, there is a need to keep the method consistent within the context of the community. This means tailoring the method to suit the socio-cultural environment in which it is to operate, producing comics relevant to that environment, evaluating the reception of the comics by the public, then repeating the method based on the analysis of the evaluation. Thus keeping the method flexible with the changing nature of the community itself. There were several participants who stressed the value, and the need, to keep utilizing this form of communication within the context of Platfontein community.

Among other findings, it was noted that the wall-poster comics produced by the NGO workers seemed to have been more alluring to the younger generations in the community, because of the visual appeal of the comics. However, there were also positive comments about the reception of the comics from some of the elderly members of the community. Furthermore, it was identified that the method of grassroots comics provided a means with which to discuss some of the silent issues in Platfontein including sexually-transmitted diseases, alcohol abuse, T.B. etc.

Implications

There was significant feedback to support the idea that the method of grassroots comics does indeed provide a unique and creative approach for the purpose of participatory communication in the Platfontein community. According to a number of participants, the method of grassroots comics possessed a certain creative appeal, and practicality in dealing with issues commonly faced by the community; which is a guiding principle of participatory approaches to development.

Additionally, one of the central tenets of participatory communication is an emphasis on the potential, or capacity, for people from the local community to communicate useful information with others in their own local setting. Feedback from key informants and research participants revealed that those involved in the production and dissemination of the grassroots comics had indeed accepted a degree of control over the design and implementation of the method within their own community. Some of the participants even expressed their intentions to make further use of the method of grassroots comics in order to address similar issues, as well as issues which were not dealt with, in the context of the Platfontein community. Furthermore, participants also commented on the potential for grassroots comics to provide a platform in communicating (on a public level) about non-

health related issues in the community. This included issues regarding education, religious tolerance, cultural representation, etc.

Overall the method seemed to have achieved a reasonable level of success within the Platfontein community, and within the scope of this research. Suggestions from participants, however, implied that future implementation of this method should be driven by a focus on the younger generations⁸⁷ in the community due to their inquisitiveness and because of the obvious reason that this group of people make up a large part of the population of the community, and are essentially the future decision-makers when it comes to matters concerning the community.

There were also, however, limitations to this research which had to be accounted for in order to confine the scope of analysis. Some of these limitations include the standardization of time, targets and agents which refers to the nature of research projects as often being governed by a time-table which people in rural communities are not quite familiar with and therefore adjustments to research objectives have to be made in order to accommodate these differences . Various other limitations which were accounted for included the level of involvement on the part of the subject community, referring to the fact that not all community members had the chance to participate in the research, either due to time-constraints or research focus. Furthermore, the evaluation of the communication intervention (the grassroots comics) was also dependant on sample groups, and the feedback of particular individuals who were close to the project itself.

All of these limitations are somewhat interconnected in that they all bear weight on each other in some way or another. For example, the fact that research is governed by timetables and deadlines means that research goals and sample groups will be chosen in order to compensate for these constraints. Additionally, levels of involvement will have to be limited, and therefore the analysis of results will wield only what can be accounted for through research findings resulting from a particular focus. However, the limitations encountered through this particular research are mentioned in order to point out areas of recommended attention in future research. Although this study is not intended to provide a suggested model for using the method of grassroots comics in practice, the evaluation of the limitations

⁸⁷ Individuals aged from 16 - 25, according to the description given by Moshe (Interview #11, 2011).

encountered during research, in conjunction with research findings, contribute to a more informed understanding of the method when applied within a real-world situation.

In essence, this research has provided more of a case-study of the use of grassroots comics for the purpose of health communication in a localised community setting. The analysis of research findings revealed the practical and appealing qualities of using grassroots comics as a method for participatory communication within the context of the Platfontein community, and uncovered areas of research where attention needs to be given if the method is to be used again to address similar, and different, issues in the community.

This research was extremely enlightening and worthwhile. Although conducting the research entailed a large degree of continuous assessment regarding research objectives, finding the appropriate times to meet with participants and compensating for time delays and constraints when certain research objectives were met with obstacles, the outcome of the research proved to be informative towards my specific inquiry, and the method (or medium) of grassroots comics appeared to have been received rather positively by the Khwe. The outcomes of this research will hopefully contribute to the work of other researchers and institutions seeking to study, or adapt, the use of comics in the domains of development and communication.

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Downloaded 22 October 2011

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Appendix 1: Research trips to Platfontein Community:

June 2008

16 - 19 February, 2009

3 - 7 May, 2009

22 ó 25 June, 2009

6 ó 11 September, 2009

15 ó 19 March, 2010

2 ó 7 May, 2010

7 ó 16 November, 2010

23 June - 3 July, 2011

Appendix 2: Participants in the Grassroots comics workshop, held on 11 November 2010

Group one:

Fernando, Maria.

George, Berlina.

Kaganga, Ezalina.

Kamuti, Anna.

Kandere, Ndutali.

Manu, Donea.

Shikamo, Kapante.

Shikamo, Kasera.

Sibongo, Dala.

Group two:

Andre, Jamba.

Dala, Marienda.

Frans, Saku.

Kwengu, Sabina.

Nj'ira, Maria.

Samba, Cecilia.

Shoti, Noria.

Sibongo, Matios.

Appendix 3: Interview 1

Date: 04 - 05 - 2010 **Interviewee:** Sister Alexander **Interviewer:** Andrew Dicks

Interviewer: OK, so basically who are you and what do you do in the clinic?

Sister: I am sister Alexander I am the clinic manager here. The staff that we've got here, we're three registered nurses, one staff nurse, one data capturer, an admin clerk and then two cleaners; oh and four VCT counsellors. They are the counsellors that counsel the patients for HIV and other sicknesses because they are not allowed to test the patients themselves. We are doing the testing and they do some counselling.

Interviewer: A few months ago when I was here i saw some Red Cross people coming in the clinic...

Sister: Oh yes, and then we've got uh, there are about sixteen of them, they are home-based health-care workers, and they really helped us a lot. There are ten from the !Xun side and six from the Khwe side. Now like our ARV patients, our patients that are HIV positive, you know that treatment is very expensive. So they help us to go and check on those patients, do they take their tablets? at the right time? The dosage is divided amongst two to three tablets a day, so they must make sure every day that the patient is taking their medication. And not only that, they also assist with T.B. or child sickness; they must check all that, and if they see that someone is very sick then they come to the clinic and report it to me, then usually I get in

the car and I go with them to the specific house or where the patient is. Then I see if the patient must come to the clinic and get help or if I can treat them there. Or if there is a patient that needs to be dressed but can't because they are too sick, then I often help with that otherwise you have people who don't keep themselves clean and just lay in one spot all day and wet themselves or even worse. So there is also that problem. Sometimes if I am not here then one of the others sisters will help, but most of the time it is me that is going out.

Interviewer: In your opinion, what are the primary health concerns of the people visiting the clinic?

Sister: OK we did this, we have allocated different days for different health issues. So they way we work is that on a Monday we deal with patients who have high-blood pressure, diabetes, you know also flu or some other virus. Then on Tuesday we have our immunisation program, for the children. But we said to the people, look it's not that we are going to chase them away if they come on a Monday with something different, like being assaulted or if they are burn-victims or things like that, we see them and we treat them if it is serious because they don't want to go to Kimberley Hospital if they have been assaulted or are seriously ill. We must do everything ne. You see it's because they don't have transport or health insurance, so they can't afford a hospital, so we will do what we can to help those people. So they refuse to go t the hospital and they say, "No sister, you can do it. Do it here." And most of them, they have no income so they depend on their grants, a lot of them don't have jobs and it is a big problem in this community. We've been to many NGO's and had meetings, and everybody is promising and promising, but nobody comes back. These big name shops and managers, we've suggested opening something like that up here, like Pick n Pay and Shoprite ne, then there will be jobs for people in the community, people don't have to travel back and forth to town to shop and so on. So then to carry on, Thursday we have our T.B patients, but we generally deal with T.B. everyday due to the fact that patients are defaulting. You know most of them, especially the men, go out to work on farms in other regions like Durban, Joburg etc. they go to get income because there is no work for them here, you see they come for treatment for a month or two, then they think they feel better and they think they're cured. That's why we say they are defaulting. Then they go back to the farms, without telling us, and their treatment is meant to last for six months if they are T.B. patients, but they feel better so they just go. You know I always tell them if you decide you are going back to the farm you must come and tell me, I won't shout or be cross if you want to go and receive an income, I can't say no. But at least come tell me so I can print you a letter with your results and everything and you can go to the nearest hospital or clinic where you are so you can continue

with your treatment, but they don't do that. And then on a Wednesday we travel out to another farm, to a clinic there. We have a sister there who does antenatal, that's now all the pregnant ladies who need to be tested and counselled etc. so that's what we do on a Wednesday, and all the other farms around that district have people coming to use the clinic and make use of its services. The sister who was here before I started began this work on the farm, so I just continue with it, providing our services for those people. When we go on the Wednesday though we have one sister here who also does antenatal for the people in the Platfontein community, so we do have someone who stays behind and works in the clinic in case there are serious injuries or if there are ladies here who require the antenatal treatment. Then on a Friday we have our family planning, and you know these people did not want to make use of this family planning, because the husband's say no, they don't want to use this family planning, they want to have many children. You know a lot of these people are unemployed, they have no money and they have four or five children who they can't take care of.

Interviewer: So you yourself are not from the community?

Sister: No, we are all coming, all the nurses, from Kimberley. Only the data-capturer, the two cleaners and the VCT counsellors are from the community. The rest of us travel here every day and go home to Kimberley at night.

Interviewer: Do you think the clinic is well-equipped enough? In terms of staff, funding and medical supplies etc.?

Sister: The staff, we do not really have enough people. You see other clinics have about ten to twelve sisters, we only have three. But, like I say, we do whatever comes our way so if there is a campaign we will do it, because we take our home-based care-workers to help us and there is also the Isibindi group that we work with, and we have never had a problem with these groups. They are really helpful. But the stigma around this community is a major issue.

Interviewer: What stigma?

Sister: Some people don't want to come and receive treatment, and even if they are tested and they test positive for HIV or for T.B., they don't come to receive treatment. You know, they also say that we do not keep their files confidential, and that we speak about them, which is not what's happening here. Also there is a huge problem with alcohol in this community, and you know when they drink alcohol they just speak out and don't think about what they are saying, they don't care, so this is when they blame the clinic for these things. They think the clinic is not here to help them but to create problems for them. But that is not everybody.

Interviewer: In terms of funding and medical supplies?

Sister: No our medicine is usually stocked up very well because if it is not delivered to us, I go and fetch it from Kimberley myself. We order from Artilitek, from the main depot there. We order from there and they deliver the supplies weekly otherwise, like I said, I go and fetch it if they can't deliver. There's not really a problem with medical supplies?

Interviewer: And who funds the clinic?

Sister: The Department of Health.

Interviewer: And you have no issues in dealing with the department?

Sister: No, No, No... We don't have a problem with department. If I need something I will request for it from the department, and they will supply it. It's just maybe the staff, I wish we could have a few extra hands to help with some of the work in the clinic.

Interviewer: Do you think there are people who prefer traditional treatment over receiving treatment or health support from the clinic?

Sister: You know previously, these people had to walk five kilometres from the community to where the clinic was. It was further down the Barkley West Road, on the old Platfontein farm. So it was quite a walk and we only had a few visits there because a lot of people at that time preferred their own methods of dealing with illness. They didn't believe in western medicine and making use of the clinic. But even now we have some cases where people prefer their own way. Recently we had a burn victim who we treated, and we applied dressing to her burns and told her to leave the dressing like that and give the burns time to heal. When we came the next morning to see how she was doing she had removed all the dressing we applied and she had put her own stuff, her medicine or whatever, she had put that on instead. It is a bit better now than previously, you know we used to struggle with people making fires in their homes and children getting sick from the fumes and whatever. We warned the people against this and told them to rather make their fires outside because it is a lot safer, and now we get a lot less problems coming from that.

Interviewer: Do community members pay a consultation fee?

Sister: No, they receive consultation for free.

Interviewer: Do they pay for their medication?

Sister: No, everything is free. It's supplied by the department of Health.

Interviewer: Does the clinic offer any external support to the community in terms of outreach programs or things like that?

Sister: Yes, on a Friday we have a few different specialists who do field-work in the community. People like speech-therapists, physiotherapists, and all these sorts of professions, they come to the clinic and do work with those who require their talents. The

nutritionist also comes every Tuesday, and a Doctor comes in on Mondays for two-three hours.

Interviewer: Do you think the location of Platfontein affects, in any way, the well-being of the community in terms of health?

Sister: You know, from their point of view, I'll say the toilet systems they have here are shocking. It's not a bucket system, It's not a flush system. It's a system where they must put their waste in sacks, they put these bags in their toilet, and then every few weeks they dig a hole in their yard and they take those sacks out of their toilet and put them in the hole, and then cover that hole. And that is really where you get a lot of diseases and illnesses coming from. You know I've approached so many different people, including the municipality, and every time I go to them I say please can you people do something to help with this problem, even some form of waste removal or something. But nobody does a thing, the municipality does not come and remove waste from here like they do in other suburbs or communities. The people in the community are left to dispose of that waste themselves and most of them do it incorrectly, they burn it or bury it in their yard and it never really goes away.

Interviewer: Do you feel that the people within the community actively seek health advice from the clinic, or do they prefer taking care of themselves?

Sister: No most of them come and seek advice here. It's become a lot better, really. You do get some people who also travel to the Kalahari because there are traditional healers there. Also people travel to Namibia to do the same thing, mostly in December.

Interviewer: Do you promote health through the use of brochures, pamphlets or posters at all around the clinic?

Sister: We've got some posters and things on the walls you know, but we asked a translator in the community to translate the messages into their own language and he wanted to charge us something ridiculous so I said no, because it is for his own community. You know like issues dealing with diarrhoea and washing of hands, and handling of kids, you know these minor things just to get them started, but he said to me No, he wants some money.

Interviewer: Do you think that a community based outreach program, in the form of promotional material, would benefit the community in promoting health?

Sister: Yes that's why I said to you now, I wanted to translate those posters, because I think it is useful have these messages that people can see for themselves, and they are simple and easy to understand so a lot of the little things we have to explain to each and every person can be explained to them in those posters while they wait in the front.

Interviewer: Is there any particular concern regarding health that you feel needs attention within the community?

Sister: You know what I would really say issues concerning the children, the HIV and the T.B. and that we can handle because we are getting through to the community about these issues, but the problem is really with the children. There are lots of parents who neglect their children. We even have a feeding scheme where families can come and get porridge and things like that, but people don't do it. We can't force them to take it, but we are doing it for free and it provides them with a meal, still they don't come. There are a lot of people who make use of this feeding scheme, but still there are lots those families who need food, but don't come. I've even seen people drinking at the shebeen with young children on their backs, but they just sit there talking and drinking. You know last month we had five children who died at the hospital, within two days, all between the age of six months and five years of age. There is an entire ward at Kimberley Hospital that is kept for Platfontein patients, and most of the time there are children in there being treated for something. There is also a problem with children who run away from the hospital so we make the mother or father go with them to stay with them there, but some of them don't do it. They just leave their children alone there. I think the problem comes from there being no interpreters there, so the doctors and patients can't communicate properly with one another, but these kids, really I feel sorry for them because they can't understand either and they are just left there alone while their parents are still in Platfontein drinking.

Myself: I think that's pretty much all the questions I have to ask for now. But thank you so much for your support sister Alexander, it has been really helpful and insightful.

Sister: Well you are welcome, and if you are ever around here you must come in and keep in contact with us.

Appendix 4: Interview #2

Date: 05 - May - 2010
Dicks

Interviewee: Mario Everisto **Interviewer:** Andrew

Interviewer: Hi Mario, we have met before but I am not sure if you will remember me as I was with a rather large group of students from UKZN; nevertheless I am sure you will be able to assist me in answering a few questions about SASI and its involvement in health related issues in the Khwe community. I have established contact with Matteus and the

Isibindi Health Group, and also with sisters from the local clinic whom I believe have a close working relationship with the Red Cross organisation. Could I ask you introduce yourself and explain what it is you do in SASI?

Mario: My name is Mario Everisto. My portfolio at SASI is dealing with culture and education and I am busy with a new programme which deals with culture and health, so I am preparing the peer-educators who are about to undergo a training which will start on Friday.

Interviewer: By saying the "peer-educators," who are you referring to?

Mario: They are the volunteers who we train at SASI to go out into the community and help with different community issues. I am also new in this programme because I haven't dealt with any health programmes in the past. Noria and Nicodemis were involved with life-course programmes and also with health programmes. This is my first time.

Interviewer: Ok I see, because I spoke to Cayla at SASI's Kimberley office and she informed me that either Billies or yourself would be useful to talk to concerning health in the community, and considering Billies is always rather busy I thought I would take the opportunity to talk to you. Not to worry though because I am rather new at this myself so I am also learning, but I just basically wanted to establish a relationship with myself and those involved in health support in the community so that I can understand what the problems are concerning health from the point of view of those inside the community. So i just have a few simple questions I would like to ask is that's alright?

Mario: Ja, no that's fine.

Interviewer: Firstly, what does SASI do in the community and what is the purpose of the organisation?

Mario: SASI provides programmes in the community, like development of languages between the !Xun and Khwe, health programmes where the peer-educators come in, livelihood programmes, eco-tourism programmes like 'Footprints of the San', and then arts and crafts programmes. And, um, what SASI is trying to do is to empower community members to do things on their own.

Interviewer: So basically to give them the support to make use of their own abilities and talents in order to empower themselves as you've said?

Mario: Ja.

Interviewer: In your opinion, what are some of the major health concerns faced by the community that you can think of off-hand?

Mario: I would say T.B. and possibly HIV AIDS are the biggest concerns. Alcohol abuse also plays a major role in the community, but I would say that everywhere in South Africa it

is one of the biggest problems. Things like rape and assault also happen but people are too afraid to report if these things have happened to them. There have been some people who have come to SASI offices who have had enough of their partners either raping or assaulting them, and then we have people here who can offer them guidance and support, but this doesn't happen often.

Interviewer: Does SASI actively seek health or development assistance for the community from outside organisations for their support in activities such as outreach programmes or workshops etc.

Mario: Ja, most of the time, because SASI is an NGO so we can't do everything by ourselves and so we have to ask for support from some government departments and other organisations for their support with certain programmes. Like for instance, with alcohol abuse. We do not have an extra person in the office who can deal with these issues so sometimes we get people to come from Kimberley, like SAMCA, to do workshops.

Interviewer: Professionals?

Mario: Professionals yes, so that's what we do most of the time. We get support from groups who can help with these issues.

Interviewer: So do SASI employees themselves assist with any health-related issues or interventions in the community.

Mario: We do sometimes but not all of the time, depending on what the programme is.

Interviewer: You mentioned that SASI employed volunteer peer-educators. Do they work with health-related issues?

Mario: Ja, they go out into the community to help people who are looking for guidance or support. They are people who live in the community too so they understand the problems of others very well.

Interviewer: Do the community leaders assist in managing issues within the community relating to health and development, and are they aware of the problems within the community regarding these issues, or is it purely SASI who deals with these kinds of issues.

Mario: I would say that they are aware of the processes that take place in the community and some of them are even involved with health issues because the leaders have a committee that was established two years ago where community members and leaders come together to discuss community related problems. So if there is a problem with the way the clinic is running, or there are other issues that need to be discussed regarding health in the community, the committee members come together to discuss what it is they can do to solve the problem, and prevent it from happening again in the future. The committee is a combined

committee with people from Red Cross, community members and some of the cultural leaders.

Interviewer: Is SASI involved in the work done by the Red Cross and the Isibindi health group, and does SASI offer any assistance with the work that these two groups do in the community?

Mario: I would say we are partners. Red Cross actually started coming in to the community in 2005, and before it became Red Cross at that time it consisted of young groups of people who worked for SASI in doing door-to-door campaigns regarding health issues and dealing with problems like HIV AIDS and that kind of stuff. Then the Red Cross organisation approached SASI and offered support in training these groups to inform others about health issues and offer advice for people who do not know what to do when they get sick. SASI agreed that this was a good idea because SASI mainly focuses around development and cultural programmes in the community, not particularly with health issues, so Red Cross [SASI felt] was the right organisation to do that. Most of the youngsters from the door-to-door campaigns ended up working for Red Cross and a lot of them still are. Isibindi, we don't do things that much with. When certain things come up we work together with Isibindi, but not that often because like I told you, SASI does not deal too much with health issues and Isibindi is a rather large group as it is.

Interviewer: Is SASI involved with the community clinic in any way?

Mario: I am not quite sure at the moment. Before the government clinic was here, there was no clinic and people had to travel for long distances to receive medical treatment so SASI decided that this was not going to work because people who are sick cannot travel such long distances to receive health care. They decided to move the clinic from the old Platfontein farm to the new Platfontein settlement.

Interviewer: and SASI was involved with this process?

Mario: Yes SASI was involved and then the health department took over. SASI recognized the need for the clinic being moved closer to the Platfontein community.

Interviewer: Do you feel that there are any problems within the community which could be solved by receiving help from external agencies or organisations outside the community?

Mario: Um, education and school drop-outs. Also housing in Platfontein could be improved.

Interviewer: What do mean when saying the housing could be improved?

Mario: The quality of the housing can be better. When I talk about housing I say I would include everything. Size of the house itself, quality of the work, sanitary facilities and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Do you think the physical location of Platfontein affects the lifestyle or livelihood of the community in terms of where it is situated?

Mario: I would say yes and No.

Interviewer: Why would you say yes?

Mario: I think the location is based at the right place, because Kimberley is next door and you can easily get access to services like police, health-care, shops and things like this. And I would say no because things are supposed to be better here at Platfontein and we still have many problems in the community. The people who have the ideas are right next door to you, but they don't come in Platfontein itself and do things.

Interviewer: So the people who can assist are right there, but they don't involve themselves?

Mario: Yes

Interviewer: Compared to the location at Schmidtsdrift, do you prefer the location of Platfontein?

Mario: Much better than Schmidtsdrift, but some people prefer Schmidtsdrift to Platfontein I don't know why. I think it's because people are not used to a location where there are houses & buildings, electricity, facilities like a school and home affairs; they are used to a simple location with not all this development. I think that most of the youth these days prefer the Western lifestyle so they will say that they prefer Platfontein. It is usually the older generation that prefers Schmidtsdrift over Platfontein because things were less developed there and the community was far away from everything else.

Interviewer: For my last question I wanted to ask, do you think that a community outreach programme like a health promotion campaign would be good for the community?

Mario: Ya, Big time! Uh, the reason I'm saying that is I think a couple of years ago when people were back at Schmidtsdrift the health issues or health problems wasn't that much, and back then we had more support from the outside.

Interviewer: And do you feel that these outreach programmes should be driven by the community, or that external agencies come in and offer support?

Mario: External agencies as well as the community. It is important that we get support from people outside the community because they might have good ideas that will benefit us, but the people who live in the community must also work together with these people so that they can learn and we can start doing things for ourselves.

Interviewer: Thank you Mario, it has been a pleasure talking to you. Thanks for allowing me to ask you a few questions, is there anything else you would like to add?

Mario: No that is fine, thank you.

Appendix 5: Interview #3

Date: 06 ó May ó 2010 **Interviewee:** Matios Sibongo **Interviewer:** Andrew Dicks

Interviewer: What is the Isibindi group and how did it come to be formed?

Matios: Isibindi was focused specially on the orphans in the community, and children who were not attending school, trying to get them involved in school so that they could have an education. So we formed a group of volunteers who would go around to the houses and motivate youngsters who were not attending school to do so. Then we also started working with vulnerable children like those who are abused and malnourished and we are working to help improve the conditions for these children. I am the leader of my group and we meet every Monday to discuss maybe what are some of the issues or challenges in the community that we can help with. I ask what my colleagues have absorbed during the week and what they can share with each other, then I write all this down in my journal, and about every three months when I go to head office I present this to my higher-ups.

Interviewer: So what is the goal of your group within the community?

Matios: Our goals is mainly to educate, or to re-unite the children with the correct education so that we can fight out of poverty and prevent diseases in the community like AIDS and TB.

Interviewer: Who makes up the members of your group and how does one become a member?

Matios: There are about ten or so people who work with me in my group and they are volunteers from the community. There are Isibindi groups all around Kimberley but there are two groups at Platfontein and we are the one the other is the !Xun group but we work together a lot too. We take part in team-building activities where all the Isibindi groups come together and we all share something and learn from each other. *(Also the group has almost doubled since I conducted this interview)*

Interviewer: Are there any health professionals in our group or in your organization?

Matios: Yes there are a few that we work with because we are working with stakeholders like social workers, clinic workers, Red Cross, SASI and people who work with health in the community. Our group is trained to know how to deal with certain issues and health concerns through seminars and training exercises. I also deal with the department of health and the department of justice too.

Interviewer: Are you in any way associated with the clinic, I know you've mentioned already that you are but how often do you work with the clinic?

Matios: Regularly, this is my area. With the social workers and the clinic workers regularly.

Interviewer: What are some of the health or development concerns in the community that are of concern to the Isibindi group?

Matios: Our main concern is I think, mostly education and the health of children. I always focus on what my job is and that is on education because education gives something out, to achieve something or bring yourself out of abuse or sickness, so that is our focus. If you are educated you know about things like diseases and you know how to look after yourself, you also know what is the right and wrong thing to do and also you have a better chance of being employed.

Interviewer: Does your group have any outreach program that informs the community, or offers any advice on how the community can go about relieving its own problems and concerns?

Matios: We always do stuff like that. I've done it a couple of times myself but I also send my colleagues to the radio to broadcast a certain message or inform the community about some of the stuff we have seen as a group and, using the notes and journals that we have, we can share information about thoughts or concerns that we all experience and offer guidance in certain situations.

Interviewer: How do you promote yourselves within the community to create awareness about your group and what your group does?

Matios: We are very motivated and people see this and ask what it is we are doing and then we tell them.

Interviewer: So what do you think are some of the issues the community faces in terms of its own development?

Matios: In my opinion, it would be alcohol abuse. It affects everyone in the community even the children from the school. It's not a wrong and a right thing, but some people abuse it and that is when it is wrong.

Interviewer: So do some of the children also partake in alcohol abuse?

Matios: Regularly, and they don't think they are doing anything wrong.

Interviewer: Do you think the parents who partake in alcohol abuse neglect their children?

Matios: You know those government grants? Some people use these grants to support their alcohol habits and some parents who do this do not worry about their children's education or health.

Interviewer: So do you deal with concerns of alcohol abuse in the community?

Matios: We do, but our first principal is children's school attendance and everything else comes with that because other things are responsible for children not attending school like abusive parents, malnutrition, alcohol abuse, poverty and other things like this.

We create a space for the children next to the school ground where every year or every holiday we do a program which we call the back to school program where we provide a safe environment for the children to play and learn about certain things. We also give them food make sure they are eating something because sometimes they do not eat enough at home. We also visit homes and invite the children to come and join those programs.

Interviewer: Do you think these problems, like alcohol abuse and poverty, affect the well-being of the community?

Matios: That is not my area because I am an outreach worker, I am not a health specialist, so I cannot say how these things affect the community. But I will say, in my opinion, that those things are causing problems for a lot of people who live here.

Interviewer: Do you receive any outside support for your group in terms of finance or resources?

Matios: Yes, actually we get some support from Kimberley Welfare. They help us with funds and sometimes we receive some training from the NACW.

Interviewer: Do you receive any community support for your work?

Matios: Yes definitely. This is something I am regularly busy with. Talking with the committee and the leaders of the community about our work. We get some support from those groups.

Interviewer: Do you use any form of media in promoting your program or messages?

Matios: No we do not. We have not used these materials because we are more focused on word-of-mouth, and it is difficult to create something like a poster or a pamphlet because we deal sometimes with children who are very sick with maybe HIV or TB, and those are sensitive issues. So at the moment we are not using them, but I know it might be useful.

Interviewer: Do you get any feedback about the success of your group's work?

Matios: Every month I get feedback.

Interviewer: Who do you get feedback from?

Matios: From my mentors and from the community. Every month I get feedback from my mentors about the job we are doing, after I have sent in my report. But every year I get successful feedback from the community. Maybe at the year-end I get invited by some people

to a braai, they say "You do this ne? You doing something positive for this community." It is always positive feedback from the community.

Interviewer: Well thanks Mattheus, If there is anything else you want to add, feel free to do so.

Matios: I think if you have any more questions that you didn't ask we will always meet again. I am always around keeping busy with this work so you can find me. Now I remember also that this number is Andrew so I know it is you when you call next time.

Interviewer: Ha ha, Ja the last time you never recognized me and I could hear you were confused.

Matios: Ja, I just saw that number there and then I answered and I'm thinking, who is this person that is talking English with me? Then you said "It's Andrew" and I asked where are you from, you said "Durban" then I remembered, "Oh it is Andrew" because I am always getting calls from people so when I knew it was Andrew from Durban I knew it was you, ha ha.

Interviewer: Ha ha, well I will see you soon Mattheus. Take care.

Matios: No you too Andrew, I'm sure we will meet soon.

Appendix 6: Interview #4

Date: 09 - 11 - 2010

Interviewee: Dala Sibongo

Interviewer: Andrew Dicks

Interviewer: I would like to ask you some basic questions about yourself and Red Cross if that is alright with you Dala?

Dala: Ha ha, ja its OK.

Interviewer: Basically, what is it that Red Cross does in the community?

Dala: Home-based care. We work in teams and we just go around in the field, and look around where we can find someone who needs help because you see this community they don't think there's a problem, like the children who might just be laying down sick in the house, maybe kinds of things like that, we're coming in that house and asking them what's the problem. Maybe sometimes people might get T.B. but they don't understand what is the signs of the T.B., kinds of things ja. Then we refer them to the clinic and stuff like that. Even the clinic refers some of the patients to us so that we can come every day to their house to make sure that they are taking their medication like they should and stuff like this.

Interviewer: So you work with people who do not take the initiative to seek medical help themselves?

Dala: Ja these are some of the people we are working with, and also sometimes bed-rendered patients.

Interviewer: What do you do in the case of a bed-rendered patient?

Dala: We get the sister from the clinic to come to the house where the patient is to help them. Because you know why? There is not a lot of staff there, that's why I say we are working hand-in-hand, because if they are not there we are there to also do their work.

Interviewer: So would you say you are sort of "Field-workers" for the clinic?

Dala: Field-workers ja, cause they stay in the clinic. If they know of a patient they say just go to that house to make sure that that patient must clean and rest and must take their medicine. But if the person is too sick then the sister comes and look after them.

Interviewer: How long have you been working for Red Cross?

Dala: I have been working with Red Cross for three years, I was starting as a voluntary worker but now I'm a supervisor for the Khwe community.

Interviewer: Ok. In working with Red Cross what do you feel are some of the major health concerns in the community?

Dala: Challenges would be mostly unemployment. That's a big challenge that we have and you see sometimes people don't have their I.D.'s so it is hard to get medical treatment for them. That's also a big problem that we have. They can't apply for a grant or something without their I.D.'s. That's why people get out and discharged and then get sick and sick because they can't afford treatment and also you know you can't take the medicine if you are hungry, and people can't feed themselves so it is also a problem that we have. Another thing, the people also are going too much to the dumping site, that's also a big problem because you see sometimes people talk about things that you can get there and so other people go and collect food from there, but there is all kinds of bad stuff in that place.

Interviewer: Mattheus told me that some people call the dump the "Quick Spar" as if that is what it is to them. Is that true?

Dala: Ja they say it like this ja but people don't know that it can make them very sick because of the bacteria.

Interviewer: Is alcoholism also a problem in the community?

Dala: Ja, there is that beer what they make here ne, and then people drink too much because it's cheaper. They buy it for 50c for a cup. People do nothing here, totally, there is not a recreation place where people can go out and that's why people think Ok lets go to those

places, and maybe they have friends sitting there, and maybe they come with R5, R5 and they just sit there and drink those cups of beer. alcohol is too much here.

Interviewer: I was talking to the sisters in the clinic and they said that T.B. is a major concern in the community. Is this true?

Dala: Ja T.B. and HIV, because of lack of information. Last week I was in Kimberley hospital, and there was a grandma with her daughter ne, they are in the hospital and they can't communicate with the staff, even the doctor asked them what the problem is and that grandma she didn't understand that so I was asked to go there to translate, and the daughter has actually got HIV AIDS so when the doctor tried to take blood they could not understand. What the grandma was doing was that she was wanting to clean that blood off the patient with her own hands after the doctor was drawing the blood for the test and she can't touch that blood, so I had to tell her not to touch the blood because she can become infected herself. You see some people they don't understand these things and we have to teach these people here about health precautions because people don't care and don't know for themselves what causes sickness and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Following on from what you said, do you think that there is a lack of knowledge amongst the people in the community regarding correct health and prevention practices?

Dala: Ja it is definitely a lack of knowledge because some people here do not know how to correctly take care of themselves, and we need to share this information with them.

Interviewer: So are there any health programmes set up in the community to inform people about basic health-care and disease prevention.

Dala: You see the problem ne, I've been trying, because here in the health clinic the department has a health forum, I was telling them about that problem and I'm still waiting. They have not come back to me. Because I told them that they must come with posters or hand-outs so that they can create some awareness of these problems in the community to teach them sorts of things like simple hygiene, or to share information about how to prevent these diseases or some sort of thing like that.

Interviewer: How long ago did you ask for this support?

Dala: I can't remember exactly how long it was?

Myself: Roughly, a few weeks or a few months?

Dala: Uh uh, after a few months, they never came back to. They promised me a few men will come with the posters and everything and we will meet again at the clinic, and then nothing. They never got back to me.

Interviewer: And were they from the department of health?

Dala: Yes from the department of Health. Because they said also that they have that type of programme in other areas where there are clinics, so they have groups of people in those areas who they teach so that those people can teach others in the community. So they wanted to start something like that in our community, but they never came back to me. You see it will be better with equipment or something which I don't have ne. If there was materials or something that people can see or read then they will understand better because we are not enough people in our group to share information or support for the whole community.

Interviewer: So is Red Cross and NGO or is it controlled by a stakeholder?

Dala: It is a NGO Ja. But we got a letter a few weeks ago saying that the project won't continue.

Interviewer: What, Red Cross?

Dala: Ja Red Cross Ja.

Interviewer: Really?

Dala: Really Ja.

Interviewer: Here in the community?

Dala: Ja here in the community. You see because you know how its working ne? Red Cross is a small NGO here in Kimberley, there is a branch, and nationally in Pretoria is the main branch and they give some little bit, some support to us like money and things. And they don't have enough money now, so they have to close down a few areas and that already affects us because I already got my letter to tell me this.

So they are closing down the Kimberley branch of Red Cross?

Ja, they going to close Kimberley. Even some other small areas. They going to continue to operate from Pretoria and Cape Town, those areas, because they can't keep the smaller areas running.

Interviewer: When is this taking place?

Dala: They said in December, end of December?

Interviewer: So there will be no Red Cross volunteers or supervisors in the Platfontein community?

Dala: Mhmm. But there is some volunteers from the department of health who are interested still in the community and maybe we will do something together with them.

Interviewer: Do you feel that certain programmes start off strong in the community, and then lose support over time? Or how would you describe it?

Dala: You see the community also needs us, they need people who have the knowledge about diseases and health problems. You see when Red Cross first came in here, at that time we did not have a clinic here. There was a mobile clinic, but that was at the old Platfontein farmhouse and people had to walk far there to get healthcare, so Red Cross would help with stuff like this because it was not easy for a sick person to get help if they had to travel far to the clinic.

Interviewer: When did Red Cross start working in the community?

Dala: I think it was 2004, and I was volunteering at that time. Health was bad in the community because people were dying and there was bad T.B. here. You know you can't walk too far if you have T.B. and people were dying also on their way to the clinic. So we would help people to travel to clinic with the bus and then bring them back here. That's why people were very interested and some of them were already talking about Red Cross, and they wanted us to stay in the community because we provided that type of help. They wanted Red Cross to come and have an office here and have more staff to help volunteer.

Interviewer: When I spoke to Mattheus and the sister at the clinic, sister Oelifant I think her name was, they both said that Red Cross does great work in the community. Now you tell me that Red Cross is pulling out of the community, what are you going to do as someone who lives here yourself?

Dala: You see what I'm doing now I'm volunteering to help with things I would do for Red Cross anyway, because of love for the community I will do it. Even late at night sometimes the people in the community will call me to say that someone in their family is sick and I will organise for the ambulance to come and fetch those people and take them to KH. Also doctors from KH will call me sometimes to come and help communicate what is the problem so that they can treat the patient properly.

Interviewer: So now in December when Red Cross pulls out of the community will you continue to do the same type of work?

Dala: I'm just going to do what I can. You see because in this community if you don't have a job, without looking for another job is also a problem, so that why I'm maybe going to move somewhere else so I can get a job, but I will always help in this community if I am here.

Interviewer: How many of you are there that work as volunteers for Red Cross?

Dala: First we were 10 people. And five of us were lucky because they gave us a stipend from the government, the Red Cross. And the other five, they promised them that the next year, when they have the budget, they will also put those people on a stipend. But after a year, another year, they still didn't assist with anything for those people so they decided

themselves that they cannot work every day for Red Cross, so they went to look for other work. You see that's the problem, I am also working with other ladies on this side here.

Interviewer: With the Khwe people?

Dala: Ja the Khwe peoples Ja. And they are also Khwe ladies. I was working with 10 people, but then people left after they didn't receive stipend. I have two who are getting stipend now, but there are another two ladies who don't get stipend.

Interviewer: So there are only five of you working with the Khwe people now?

Dala: Ja, only five.

Interviewer: And there are others who work with the !Xun?

Dala: Ja, also five of them there.

Interviewer: So do you get other people from the community who volunteer to help, or is it just you five who work for Red Cross?

Dala: If you feel you want to volunteer or come learn, then you can come and join with us and help with the work we are doing from door-to-door. But the only thing is people say they are hungry and they don't want to work a job like that if they don't get paid, so they don't want to learn sometimes and don't care for this type of job.

Interviewer: So do people in the community make use of the services Red Cross offers or are you referred to the patients by the clinic?

Dala: Ja there are people who call a lot, sometimes too much. but there are people also who don't know and so they don't ask for help.

Now though I think also I'm not at the moment a positive person because I'm not getting paid for work I'm doing now. I try explain to other people, I know I'm doing voluntary work but don't call me in the middle of the night, each and every day if you need help. They must learn from me, I'm doing something for people over and over again so you must learn and do it on your own. You can't come to me each and every day if you need help and want me to do everything for you, you must learn how to one day do things for yourself.

Interviewer: So do you feel like people abuse your support?

Dala: They use me too much. I was also just telling you now in Kimberley Hospital, they are also always calling me to come and translate for patients from Platfontein. sometimes you feel tired you know. I've got nothing but I do my best each and every day.

Interviewer: Does the hospital contact you because you are a Red Cross Supervisor, or is it because you can speak multiple languages?

Dala: Ja, it's because I can speak my mother-tongue and also Afrikaans and English.

Interviewer: And the other ladies who work for Red Cross, can they speak as many languages as you.

Dala: Ja, they can speak but they are not that good in English and Afrikaans. You see I was involved in the committee of this community, the Khwe council ne. People see me translating and so they recommended me for translating even for the government people. So people always knew I can translate and then even Red Cross and KH knows that I can translate and so they use me for these things too.

Interviewer: So did you also live at Schmidtsdrift too?

Dala: Ja, I was coming from Namibia to Schmidtsdrift and then to Platfontein.

Interviewer: Do you prefer Platfontein to Schmidtsdrift?

Dala: I think Schmidtsdrift is better, because of the nature because there in Schmidtsdrift you were allowed to hunt, and you can to the bush and go fishing and grow your vegetables. But here you can't hunt because there is another man's farm and you can't hunt his animals. Hunger is too much here. The difference though is also there we did not have electricity, but here in Platfontein we have electricity. Also those tents at Schmidtsdrift you would struggle with, the rain would come in and the wind was strong so it was difficult, but here we have housing which is not very good, but at least it is a house you can fit in and sleep comfortable.

Interviewer: And the toilet systems here?

Dala: That is also bad, because the municipality says it takes too long to come and take that stuff, that waste, so you must take it and throw it in your back yard. So now you see your back yard is full of sewage and waste. Sometimes you see some people forget where they buried their last waste, and they start to dig that other stuff up that they buried, and then the wind is blowing and spreading that waste everywhere in the community.

Interviewer: What do you think is the solution to this problem?

Dala: The municipality should come each and every month and take that waste away from here otherwise it just stays here and becomes more and more.

Interviewer: So do you feel in a way that Platfontein has, in a way, been placed here and forgotten about.

Dala: Yes completely forgotten about. I am not in politics, but I was in a meeting with the department of housing one day, and that chairperson he said: "You understand that your name is Bushmen? So why do you need better toilet systems? Because you guys say know about the bush, why can't you go to the bush and use it?" So we must wait and wait because government does not care about our problems, and those things take lots of money to do.

They just think we are in the bush because we have a Plan B or can look after ourselves, you see they talk about us being bushmen and we live in the bush, but you can't find a bush here.

Appendix 7: Interview #5

Date: 13 - 11 - 2010 **Interviewee:** Dala Sibongo **Interviewer:** Andrew Dicks

Interviewer: I would just quickly like to ask you a few questions about the comic workshop, is that OK with you?

Dala: Ja it's OK.

Interviewer: How did you feel about participating in the workshop?

Dala: The workshop was very good because I experienced something that I didn't know and it also learnt* me something to prove in the community, that's why for me especially the workshop was very great.

Interviewer: Did you learn anything useful through the workshop?

Dala: Ja, I learnt something that's why I say it gave me ideas to also maybe get help from government, like maybe when we have a meeting then I will also comment on that workshop and that it is something that we need to do in the community ourselves, and the government must support us.

Interviewer: Did you feel like you were making a difference?

Dala: Ja I think it's a small difference, but it's still something. We need to share those ideas with the other people in the community, and then I think it will make some change.

Interviewer: Did you feel that the workshop was too long or too short?

Dala: No it was not too long I think we all did enjoy it. You see there were some people complaining about how they were tired, but after they were involved in the workshop they said it was nice.

Interviewer: I noticed that. In fact, at the start of the workshop I was afraid many of the people did not really want to be there so I was a bit nervous. After we got to the classroom and started chatting about the workshop though, I noticed people becoming more interested.

Dala: Ja, Ja. I don't know what it is but sometimes people here they don't like doing things with strangers, they think they are always going to get a lecture. But it was very nice.

Interviewer: Was anything unclear or was there something that you didn't understand in the workshop?

Dala: No, everything it was alright. You explained properly, you were quite helpful, you showed us how to do some of the pictures on the board if we didn't know how to draw it; so we learnt it also.

Interviewer: How did you feel when you saw the finished comics placed all around the community?

Dala: I think it's going to be very great, it looks very nice when it is finished. But one thing I need to say; why did you not put one on the tuck-shop here because lots of people come to this shop and if they are here, people will see it.

Interviewer: OK, well I gave a few extra copies to Mattheus to put up around the community and also so that you guys can make more copies if need be. You should ask him for a few and place them up here.

Dala: Ja, I will do that because if I do it*[put up some comics - sic] here, they won't stop me because we are supporting the community and they support us.

Interviewer: Would you use this method again if you were to do a health campaign?

Dala: I'm gonna do it again. I think at the large one, uh, we gonna discuss, in the meeting , this method, then after we gonna see how to operate it. I think we can do our own workshop now cause you showed us that it can be simple, we can teach it to others.

Interviewer: So do you find the method useful?

Dala: It is very useful, that's a great job that we did.

Interviewer: Do you think that your colleagues learnt something from the workshop?

Dala: Yes I think they did. I cannot say what they learnt from it but I think they all liked it and some of my colleagues told me it was very fun.

Interviewer: Do you think the community will benefit from the messages created in the workshop?

Dala: Yes, I think definitely there will be people who will read these posters and benefit from their messages.

Interviewer: Was there anything that you didn't enjoy or didn't agree with in the workshop?

Dala: Nothing, I think everything happened very well so I think there is nothing what we can change, that is a great idea, and we can, um, elaborate on the same ideas and use it on the same level.

Appendix 8: Interview #6

Date: 13 - 11 - 2010

Interviewee: Matios Sibongo **Interviewer:** Andrew Dicks

Interviewer: I would just like to ask a few questions about your experience of the comic workshop if that is ok with you Mattheus?

Matios: Ja that's fine.

Interviewer: How did you feel about participating in the workshop?

Matios: I think I experienced something very different, because it brings different messages in the one workshop, so therefore it brings two messages. The one is when you read them you can capture the message, and the other one that you can get the message through the images as well.

Interviewer: Do you feel as if you learnt anything useful in the workshop?

Matios: I learnt very many things out of this one workshop, it is a very useful resource. The way other people have different ideas but we work together to agree on common issues.

Interviewer: Do you feel the workshop was possibly too long or too short?

Matios: Nah it was too short. Actually we need more time to do this, it is something that we deserve to have with this, but unfortunately we don't have enough time to do it at the moment because everyone is very busy, even myself. I think it was enough time that we can elaborate on this together in the future.

Interviewer: Was anything unclear or was there anything you didn't understand in the workshop?

Matios: No I don't think so myself, everything was very clear. Maybe for some other people it was not because I had to explain sometimes to my colleagues what to do.

Interviewer: Well I'm glad you were there to help clarify for them what we were doing.

Matios: No definitely, I think it is because they are not used to these things where they have to produce something and it confuses some people at first.

Interviewer: How did you feel when you saw the "finished product" after the comics were all put together?

Matios: Ah, very excited. I didn't think it was going to look like this but when I saw the finished comic, I felt a little bit excited. And the way how it changes when the story is put together and printed this way, it looks more attractive like this. I did not think our stories would come out looking like this.

Interviewer: Do you think that the other participants, or some of your colleagues, benefited from this workshop?

Matios: Definitely because some of my team did mention that we have the space and people to do this sort of workshop. I think with the other teams like Red Cross they don't have one place where they can do this sort of thing because they do not have offices here, instead they can promote this idea in their meetings; but we have our offices next to the school where we can come together and do a workshop like this. I think we all learnt a lot.

Interviewer: Do you think the community will benefit from the messages?

Matios: Yes I think it is still early but at the time when I was walking around just now I did think to myself how the message reflects the people.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you made a difference in the community?

Matios: Definitely because when we met and discussed this before I felt like we going to be doing something different, and we did some something very new. I feel also the way how we did something creative, the creativity makes me very excited and gives me different feelings too. I think it will make a difference for someone who does this workshop.

Interviewer: Were you proud about some of the comics you had produced yourself?

Matios: I feel proud about them, after this time that we did the workshop I got a phone call from the orphanage and I told them that we did this workshop, and that we creating a very important message. So I feel it's a little but creative and exciting.

Interviewer: Would you make use of the grassroots comics method again?

Matios: I think I am going to use this again. I put the other comics down by the office there were we can use then as an example if we do this again.

Interviewer: Was there anything you didn't agree with or that you felt negative towards in the workshop?

Matios: Oh no no, everything was new to me and I felt it was attractive. Nothing was negative for me. I feel a little bit full of excitement for new ideas and everything for me was fine.

Appendix 9: Interview #7

Date: 24 - 06 - 2011

Interviewee: Sister Oelifant **Interviewer:** Andrew

Dicks

Interviewer: Sister, after working with some of my initial data, there were a few things that I wanted to clarify that may have been referred to in previous interviews but not discussed in any detail. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?

Sister Oelifant: Ja no that's fine, I will help where I can.

Interviewer: Great. Well my first question is whether you know of any situations in the community where a household is over-populated?

Sister Oelifant: Yes of course! because in a two bedroom house there are sometimes ten or fifteen people. It is over-crowded. You can just go to Kwamama's house, he is the leader, the Khwe leader, there it is bad over-crowding. Do me a favour and go to his house if you have never been and you will see how bad it is.

Interviewer: And do you agree that this is a major problem in the community.

Sister Oelifant: Yes it is a major problem, because here the unemployment rate is high, and there are no houses but families keep getting bigger and the community is becoming over-crowded.

Interviewer: Do you think that this overcrowding affects health in the community?

Sister Oelifant: Yes definitely, because if one person in an overcrowded house is suffering from T.B., it is infectious, and the next person will get infected because they don't get much fresh air into their homes, they just keep the windows closed. We teach them here at the clinic what to do at home but some of them don't listen.

Interviewer: I recall Sister Alexander mentioning that you have several VCT counsellors working for the clinic doing home-based healthcare work. Is this the kind of work they would do?

Sister Oelifant: Yes we have got four of them working for us. You can meet them all today if they are not busy. They try to hide from the weather sometimes because it s cold, ha ha ha.

Interviewer: That sounds like me because I like to hide away from the cold too, but thank you sister, that would be helpful. Returning to the questions, what exactly does VCT stand for?

Sister Oelifant: It means Voluntary Counselling and Testing, and they get a stipend, a monthly stipend from the Department of Health and Right to Care.

Interviewer: Right to Care?

Sister Oelifant: Yes, it is an organisation that works with H.I.V.

Interviewer: So do these VCT counsellors work with you in the clinic?

Sister Oelifant: Yes we work hand-in-hand.

Interviewer: What type of work do they do in the clinic?

Sister Oelifant: They focus on HIV and ARV's.

Interviewer: And do they do home-based health care?

Sister Oelifant: Ooh they are going out all the time. They like to be inspectors also [small chuckle] and go to the houses to see patients.

Interviewer: When I interviewed Sister Alexander, she mentioned that you had a rough agenda that you work to every week, and she mentioned that on Wednesdays you go out to another community to provide ante-natal treatment.

Sister Oelifant: Yes we still do that, and two of us stay behind in the community and carry on treating the patients here.

Interviewer: Where is this other community that they go to?

Sister Oelifant: To OlieRivier, it is a farm about 300km away, and it falls under Francis Baard. They go because there is no clinic there. There is first Windpomp then there is Olierivier, so they must do a long trip and see a lot of patients.

Interviewer: It sounds like you keep really busy.

Sister Oelifant: Ja we are very busy here all the time.

Interviewer: When I spoke with Dala Sibongo in December he informed me that Red Cross was no longer going to operate in the community due to a lack of funding. Is this the case?

Sister Oelifant: No it was just the co-ordinators. I think they could not pay stipends to them any longer, but the Red Cross organisation is still helping us out.

Interviewer: So the Red Cross home-based health care workers haven't stopped working with the clinic, and still do volunteer work?

Sister Oelifant: Yes dear, it's just the co-ordinators. Dala was a co-ordinator. Red Cross stopped those stipends, but those who were volunteering to do the home-based healthcare work still volunteer.

Interviewer: And Dala doesn't volunteer?

Sister Oelifant: No Dala is busy with something else these days. He doesn't do home-based healthcare anymore.

Interviewer: Is there any health issue that you feel needs attention in the community from your experience as a sister in the clinic?

Sister Oelifant: Yes I think I would say the malnutrition amongst the children, it's very high, sky high; and also the T.B.; You see it is because the unemployment rate is so high and people don't get enough food. But I see there is a soup Kitchen being built next to the One-Stop and maybe they will provide food for the community in the holidays or something. There is also a feeding scheme at the school for the children, sponsored by the department of education.

Interviewer: I recall Sister Alexander mentioning that the clinic also runs a feeding scheme, do you still do this?

Sister Oelifant: Yes on a Tuesday we do this. And there is also a dietician named Christine from the Department of Health in Kimberley who comes and helps weekly.

Interviewer: Is this feeding scheme for everyone in the community or certain people?

Sister Oelifant: No, just for the malnourished children and also HIV and TB patients.

Interviewer: OK. I know this next question might be difficult to answer, but approximately how many people attend the clinic on a daily basis?

Sister Oelifant: About two to three hundred people. We are quite busy because in Platfontein there is nowhere to go for health care. You can just come to the clinic or go to Kimberley hospital, which is far away. We are the only place people can go and there are always people getting sick here.

Interviewer: I also recall Sister Alexander mentioning that she wanted to get some of the health promotional posters in the clinic translated in to language of the !Xun and Khwe.

Sister Oelifant: Yes but they refused to translate it because they wanted money. They said they will do it if they earn something out of it. Really, truly speaking, they refused to translate those posters for us unless they got paid.

Interviewer: When I worked with Dala I noticed he is rather multi-lingual, and I was thinking that maybe he can translate some of those posters for the clinic.

Sister Oelifant: Ha ha, Maybe you can ask him?

Interviewer: Well he was very enthusiastic when working in the comics workshop and in helping with research, so I thought he might be the right man for the job because he can speak all the local languages rather well.

Sister Oelifant: Maybe next time when you visit us at the clinic you will go to Dala and say "come, come, come, I've got some work for you!", ha ha ha.

Interviewer: Ya I think I should do that, ha ha. Well Sister, that is all I have to ask, I really appreciate your time and thank you for answering my questions.

Sister Oelifant: No, it's not a problem, anytime you are here you must come and visit us again.

Appendix 10: Interview #8

Date: 27 - 06 - 2011

Interviewee: Matios Sibongo **Interviewer:** Andrew

Dicks

Interviewer: To start our discussion, I just want to ask if you found the comic workshop useful for promoting the issues that you felt needed attention in the community?

Matios: I found it very useful, in terms of health issues I feel it promoted the messages we worked with; I see some changes because of it.

Interviewer: Do you think the community responded to the comics or not?

Matios: Ja I think there were those that responded. Especially when I get the feedback from Moshe, Moshe says there is a lot of people that talk about it, or they get the message out of the comics. Moshe called me and he said "Matios, we must talk about it this more, it's a good thing that we should include in the community in the future."

Interviewer: That's excellent. So did you receive any personal feedback, or did you get feedback mainly from Moshe?

Matios: I got a lot of feedback from Moshe; but especially the children, they came to me and told me "Matios, where do these drawings come from?" I think they saw mostly those ones that we put up in the school, and I told them, "I have done this with my colleagues." Then I think they were surprised that we could do this, and some of them even said they can do this too, ha ha.

Interviewer: Ha ha, well that is the point behind the method, so that anyone can potentially create their own message in the community. Moving on though, have you thought about the possibility of using this method again within your group?

Matios: I think it is useful for me because I feel in this time it can be used in terms of health and the children, which is what my group is focused on. Every monday when we come here together I say to them that we must think of ways to promote health among the children, and we always talk about doing those comics around holiday times when the children spend a lot of time on our playground.

Interviewer: Do you feel that the comics were not successful in any way, or that there was any negative feedback about the comics?

Matios: No I think it was successful, there was nothing I experienced that was negative about these comics.

Interviewer: So there is nothing you feel you would have done differently with regards to the method of grassroots comics?

Matios: The only thing I can think of is, is when you talk about stuff like disease it is a little bit of a tough issue because there are these stigma's around these things in the community. The issue of disease can be very sensitive, and some people might look at the message and not understand what it is dealing with. But, also it can show others in the community that these are issues that we need discuss.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you wish to add about your experience of the research process, like the comics, the workshop, or anything extra that you wish to say?

Matios: I think we should do another one of those workshops again sometime because I see people are starting to forget about those comics because it has been a few months and those comics are not up on the walls anymore. So I feel, maybe, that we need to keep doing this so that it is always fresh in people minds.

Interviewer: That's brilliant, and now that you know how to produce the comics yourself, you can run your own workshop with your colleagues and anyone else who wishes to participate.

Matios: In this way I am comfortable with this method, because it can reflect the concerns of my group and the concerns of the children. And they are good targets for these messages, the children, because they are, umm what's this word, they like to see something like pictures and images, and when they see a picture they want to know what that picture is about and try to understand it and respond to it...

Unfortunately the rest of the interview recording was interrupted by a heavy wind and it is difficult to make out what is said between interviewer and interviewee.

Appendix 11: Interview #9

Date: 27 - 06 - 2011 **Interviewees:** Anna Kamuti & Ndutali Kandere **Interviewer:** Andrew Dicks

Interviewer: I just want to ask you ladies a few questions about your involvement in the comic workshop and what you feel about the method now that some time has passed and people have had the chance to read the comics. Is that OK with you?

Anna: Ja

Ndutali: It's alright

Interviewer: Is it OK if I speak in English? You are welcome to respond in Afrikaans if you are more comfortable with that?

Anna: Ja Afrikaans is better for us, but we understand English.

Interviewer: OK great. Well use Afrikaans where it is more comfortable for you and I will ask the questions in English, is that alright?

Ndutali: Ja that's fine

Interviewer: Firstly, did you find the comic workshop practical in discussing some of the health issues faced by the community?

Anna & Ndutali: Ja

Interviewer: OK, in what way would you say it was useful?

Anna: Ons het in die werkswinkel gepraat van drank misbruik , en dit is nog steeds die ergste, is drank misbruik hier op Platfontein. Maar die probleem het a bitjie verbeter nadat a paar van die gemeenskap het die 'comics' gelees.

Ndutali: Di ander ding is ons het gepraat van daai 'dumping site', daai tiep. Ek sien daar is nog baie, baie mense wat daar gaan; sommige ou mense wat kry nie a 'pension' nie, dis hoekom hulle gaan na die tiep om kos te gaan soek. So daai ding is nie gestop nie, dit gaan nog aan.

Interviewer: So there are still lots of people going to the dump to look for food?

Anna: Jy sien, werkloosheid is hoog in Platfontein en hulle sit al dag met niks om te doen, dis ook hoekom hulle drink so baie en hoekom hulle na die tiep gaan om kos te gaan soek.

Interviewer: So do you think not enough people in the community saw the comics? Or that people did not react to the messages in the comics?

Anna: Ek dink sommige mense het hulle gelees, en daar was mense wat die inligting gekry het. Maar daar was ook mense wat die strokiesprente gelees het wat gee nie om nie. Ek dink meer van die ou mense want hulle is koppig.

Interviewer: So would you use this method of communication again, or do you think it wasn't very useful?

Ndutali: Ek dink ons gaan dit weer doen. Jy sien, mense vergeet iets as dit nie teenwoordig is. Ons moet dit weer doen om dieselfde, en ander probleme, te besreek sodat ons altyd n boodskap kan komuniqueer.

Interviewer: OK, I believe Matios said something similar a few days ago. So if I understand correctly, you are saying that an idea needs to be fresh in the minds of people for it to mean anything, or to have an impact. So if you were to use this method on a semi-regular basis in dealing with community issues, more and more people would react to the messages?

Anna: Yes

Ndutali: Ja, I think so.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you had control over the process? By that I mean, do you feel like you decided what issues to deal with and what messages to portray in the comics workshop?

Ndutali: Ja I think we had control. We were the ones who was making those comics. In the beginning you showed us how to do it, but then we made those messages in our groups.

Interviewer: Great, do you feel like there is anything you would have done differently? Or did the workshop run fine the way it was?

Anna: No it was fine.

Ndutali: Dis wat ek net nou gese het. It was fine the way we did it.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you wish to say regarding the comics or the workshop?

Anna: Ek dink klein kinders, by....fourteen to...down...hulle is nuuskierig so ek dink ons moet op die kinders fokus, groot kinders worry nie eers nie, maar klein kinders hulle gaan stories lees, of boeke gaan sit en lees en hulle sit met daai dinge en wonder wat word daar gepraat of wat gebeur daar. Hulle vat daai dinge, die kinders, hulle vat dit huis toe en hulle vertaal hulle mama of papa totdat hulle sulke dinge kan leer.

Interviewer: So you're saying a focus on the young kids would be more affective at communicating a message, because they are more inquisitive and take those messages home to their parents until they understand what it is saying?

Anna: Ja dis korrek. Kinders is nuuskierig, dis hoekom hulle belangrik is.

Interviewer: I agree. Is there anything else you wish to comment about?

Anna: Nee, ek dink dis al.

Ndutali: MmmMmm

Interviewer: Well thank you very much for your time ladies, I appreciate it greatly.

Anna: Dankie

Ndutali: No, It's not a problem.

Appendix 12: Interview #10

Date: 28 - 06 - 2011

Interviewee: Dala Sibongo **Interviewer:** Andrew

Dicks

Interviewer: How have you been Dala?

Dala: No I'm fine, but I'm not working in door-to-door counselling anymore. My colleagues they are still working as volunteers and receive a stipend from the Department of Health, but that stipend is not enough for me so I am looking for another job.

Interviewer: So what type of work are you looking for?

Dala: Ja, my boss is going to call me because they are looking for another funder and then they will find me another job with health in the community.

Interviewer: OK, well there are just a few questions I have regarding the comics in the community. Do you mind if we talk about that?

Dala: Ja lets talk.

Interviewer: Firstly, do you think that the community responded to the comics?

Dala: Really yes I think they did.

Interviewer: Did you see this or experience this for yourself?

Dala: Ja, even now people talk to me about those comics and tell me, "Dala, that is a convenient thing that you do," so I think it was very useful. Especially my colleagues, because for them they say it is a easy way to speak a message, so they thought it was very useful to the community.

Interviewer: Have you thought about using the grassroots comics method again?

Dala: Ja, definitely if I continue working in the community I will use it again. I also wanted to arrange a meeting with the Department of Health to tell them about this tool (method) so we can do a project together using those drawings. So I hope we will do it again.

Interviewer: Do you think the method was not successful in any way, or that it had any negative affects?

Dala: No I think it was a success. You see it is difficult to make people change, but there are lots of people talking about those drawings what we did, so I think it was a success for getting those health messages across to the community.

Interviewer: Is there anything that you feel you would have done differently in the workshop, or anything that you did not agree with during the process?

Dala: No not different, but maybe if we do it again we will talk about other problems also that affect the community.

Interviewer: Yes, the point of this method is to encourage you and the other participants to keep using this method to confront issues faced by the community. So what you are saying is very important.

Dala: Ja, because I think there are also many other problems that we can talk about in this way.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you wish to add about your experience in the workshop, or about the comics?

Dala: For me myself, I'm proud cause of my involvement in the workshop. From my side I will say thanks very much for the workshop, because we are learning something and we are creating something also. I think it is a useful way to spread a message.

Interviewer: I spoke with Matios and his group yesterday and they were saying that if they do this method again, they are going to focus on the young children because they are inquisitive and are more likely to react to pictures and the messages in the comics. What do you think about this?

Dala: Ja, we must also look at the young children because they are the future of this community. Also, they are more interested in drawings and stories so I think they will find those comics interesting, and want to know what it is about.

An Informal discussion continues for about 10 minutes after completing the questions...

Appendix 13: Interview #11

Date: 01 - 07 - 2011

Interviewee: Moshe Maghudu

Interviewer:

Andrew Dicks

Interviewer: Hi Moshe. If it's OK with you I'd just like to ask you a few questions about the grassroots comics in the community because you were very involved in the research even though you could not attend the workshop.

Moshe: Yes I'd be happy to talk about it.

Interviewer: Firstly, do you think that the workshop that I conducted with Isibindi and Red Cross was helpful in discussing health problems that require attention in the community?

Moshe: I will definitely say it was very helpful. Because you see there are many methods for communicating to people, but those comics that those groups have done are really good I think. Because I remember after we put up those posters, somebody asked me uh "I can see the pictures and I just wanted to find out what these pictures are showing," but I could see he could understand the message he just wanted to find out from me. But when we went in to detail I wanted to find out what did he understand from that, and the first thing he said was that sometimes we tend not to speak things out, but the comics itself has got a lot to tell, because people look at it, they see the pictures and they learn from the messages. There were also some of those silent issues that the pictures portrayed, so for a group of people I think

that those things that we were not discussing, the pictures were portraying. When it comes to issues like HIV or STD's you know our parents tend not to talk about those things, but due to the way those posters work, the information is there, and when someone looks at it they get the information.

Interviewer: This question is along the similar lines, but do you think the community responded to the comics?

Moshe: Um, I remember the ones that were at the shop in front, because we also put some of those posters there. And there were those guys in the distance that saw us putting those there, and the next morning, some of the youth, the group with whom I do drama and stuff like that, I think three of them went the next day to the shop and after coming back I just asked one of them if they saw the poster or not. And this one girl was trying to make a little joke with me and she said: "That was the right spot, nobody can just pass and go into the shop without looking at it" and that we were putting it in a place where it was eye-catching, and I told her that was the reason why we put it there. I just asked her what was the message there, cause if I remember it was this one about alcohol and stuff, and she said that you know if there could be teachings like that continuously into the community it would reduce the alcohol consumption of Platfontein because that is one of the spots where people get beers and stuff like that, and this girl told me that that was the right place where the message needed to be.

Interviewer: So do you think the method should be used again, or on a continuous basis?

Moshe: Yes I think we must use it to make some of the same messages in a different way, because today we can talk about T.B., but tomorrow we can also talk about T.B. in a different way using comics. So I mean the more we change our subjects and stuff like that, the more the usage of comics will be different from the first time. Also target-groups, and let me say, target places, will be different from last time because different messages will apply to different people, and we need to target those places where those people spend most of their time. But I don't mean that doing those comics once is a bad thing because those posters were all over, and a lot of people saw those messages; I even remember my neighbour's child saying: "oh look at those drawings, i like drawings" and it was attractive to him. So I think from my observation it was really good, but it can be used again in different ways.

Interviewer: Do you think that the method wasn't successful in any way, or that there was anything negative about the method?

Moshe: You know what, if I would say it wasn't successful then I'm lying. Ja, truly speaking I'm lying. Because the focus point of the whole thing is to communicate a message to the people and that was being achieved. Realizing from the few people that I have met that have

seen the pictures, they can tell me something about those posters. What about the people I haven't met? You know, and they have also seen the pictures, they might have something more to say.

Interviewer: Do you think anything could have been done differently with regards to the comics workshop? Or from what you observed do you think the participants tackled the major health concerns in the community?

Moshe: I understand your position of not being in the community, but that does not mean that you did not cover those health problems that we have in Platfontein. You know our major problems are the ones that those posters spoke about, If I can mention one or two, it would be T.D. and alcohol abuse, or STD's, and those were the focus points, and those were communicated. So I would not say that, if it was me, I would have done it differently. I would say I would've focused on those same health related issues that those participants focused on because those are the major issues here in Platfontein. So I would say they are reflecting the problems in the community. You know, um, some of us, some of the guys here, we recently talked about starting up those youth activities again whereby the matrics and some of the lower grades come together and we talk about those issues, and it's the same thing, it may be a little different, but I think when we are still coming back to the drawings. When we are going to discuss, I think one of the things that we are going to do is we will have posters that will have some of the readings on it, and some of the drawings on it. So it is a campaign that we are planning still. We want the youth in the community talking about some of these issues that affect the community, and the idea of having drawings as a communication part is something we would not have done before, but we see now that it is useful for communicating those issues.

Interviewer: That's great, so you are already considering starting a communication campaign using comics and drawings?

Moshe: Yes we are definitely. You know it's like some people even say a picture says a thousand words, so the people will see one of those posters and they can get a lot of information from it instead of being told by someone. Especially the youth.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you wish to say or anything that I haven't asked about that you'd like to discuss?

Moshe: I think, if there is anything, I just have thought about this several times, when it comes to the old people, you know most of our parents are illiterate and stuff like that, so writing in English or Afrikaans they cannot understand. But looking at stories whereby the message is carried by pictures and drawings, they might be able to get a message from just

that drawing. So I think if we are to focus on the older generation, I think we would have to make messages that have no words or writing and use only drawings to convey the message.

Interviewer: Which age-group do you think responded to the comics the most?

Moshe: Um, I would say the middle-age. It is not that the others did not respond to it, because remember my wife's mother and the women who lives behind us laughing at the pictures, and they were talking about what was happening. So I know that the older ages responded to it. But why I say the middle-age is the fact that these people are everywhere, they move around, they are very active, and I would also say that they are also the problematic group, the ones who are drinking and misbehaving. So I think that is why I think they responded the most.

Interviewer: When you say middle-age which age-group are you referring to?

Moshe: Approximately from 16 - 25, that age. You see when one communicates to them they will pass on the message to the others because they are young and active in the community so, targeting them is like helping the others, and reaching the most people.

Interviewer: That's an interesting point. Well Moshe, I believe I have asked everything I have to ask. I thank you very much for your time and your responses, they have been extremely helpful

Moshe: No, it is a pleasure Andrew. I think it is great to discuss these things because we need people to understand the problems that we live with here in Platfontein.

Interviewer: I agree, and I wish you luck with your future campaigning.

Moshe: Thank you.