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"<…> NO ONE TEACHES ANOTHER, NOR ANYONE IS SELF-TAUGHT. PEOPLE TEACH EACH OTHER, MEDIATED BY THE WORLD" (FREIRE, 1972:53)

TRANSFORMATIVE ADULT LEARNING IN NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT. A CASE STUDY FROM SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

New social movements in South Africa could play a prominent role in mobilizing the communities to reflect critically and address the repercussions of the neo-liberal agenda, i.e. perpetuating the exclusion of under-educated adults and provision of poor quality education.

Few studies especially from the perspective of the activists leave a potential research area of a very interesting phenomenon of how people learn while struggling for social justice. Therefore this single multi-site case study based on a social movement cohering around literacy issues in Gauteng, South Africa, aims at answering, what forms of learning and education the social movement encompassed, how did the group conscientization occur and what are the individual transformations.

Semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion were held with 13 learners-activists and 2 adult educators. By applying Mezirow's individual transformation and Freirean group conscientization models the analysis of primary and secondary data, revealed that the engagement in the social movement challenged and changed learners-activists' understanding of educational status within their respective communities. This in turn led to transformative action addressing the problems identified. On the individual level some learners-activists became more tolerant and willing to cooperate with those of different political ideologies, able to tap into community resources. Finally, the potential of social movements as adult learning environments are outlined and directions for future research are offered.

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Foreword

Researching and writing a master thesis is a long, interesting, though sometimes very exhausting process. Along the way that took almost a year from choosing the country where I will conduct my research until the final publication, many people supported me in this process, encouraged not to give up and to strive for perfection. Without them this study might have never seen the daylight. Thus I would like to thank all who were always supportive during the long research process.

Firstly, my sincere thanks to my family, mum and dad, who always encouraged me to have dreams and go for them even if they do not necessarily agree with the path I have chosen. Special thanks to my sister Laura who was a critical reader of several thesis' drafts, self-appointed supervisor, great example and motivator not to give up and do something that really interests me.

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Finally, I am grateful to the community researchers of both sites, Freedom Park and Evaton North (whose names cannot be revealed due to confidentiality), who welcomed me into their community, helped with the research, translation and spent their precious time, sharing their honest insights about their learning, their work and challenges they face. Also my sincere words of appreciation to other CLING members in both sites, who welcomed me warmly into their community, assisted in all the possible ways and became good friends. Indeed, this sincere help allowed me to get to know the struggles that the South African people face. I join you, my friends, in it, and dedicate this work to you, hoping that your achievements will not pass by unrecognized and will assist in bringing the brighter tomorrow for the children and adults with whom you are working.

List of acronyms

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
APF	Anti- Privatization Forum
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
CERT	Centre for Education Rights and Transformation
CLING	Community Literacy and Numeracy Groups
CRs	Community Researchers
EFA	Education for All
EN	Evaton North
EPC	Education Policy Consortium
FP	Freedom Park
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Policy
GOLCOM	Golden Triangle Community Crisis Committee
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSM	New Social Movement
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PoA	Programme of Action
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RQ	Research Question
SOPA	Socialist Party of Azania
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

1. Introduction

The crucial role of adult education in development is widely recognized through a number of international conferences and declarations[1]. They have been reaffirming the basic right of adults to education since 1948 when it was first mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN:1948). Dakar World Education Forum (2000) set six ambitious Education for All (EFA) goals to be met in 2015, two of which are directly related to adult education[2]:

> *3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;*
>
> *4. Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;*
>
> (UNESCO, 2000)

However, the progress of EFA goals, especially those related to adult education, is unsatisfactory projecting their unlikely achievement by 2015 (UNESCO, 2010a:18). Furthermore, the domination of universal primary education in the global agenda, sidelines adult education, which is unfortunate given its possible acceleration to the achievement of all Millennium Development Goals[3] (MDGs), among others contribution to the reduction of unemployment, and promotion of active citizenship[4] (Ibid:20, 43). In addition, the capability approach as a changing paradigm in global development policy advocated by Sen (1999) emphasizes human freedom, in whose achievement adult education can play a prominent role by empowering the individuals and communities to strive for social, economic and political freedoms (UNESCO, 2010a:23). However, adult education receives limited public funding almost in every country of the world; thus it is pushed into profit-driven provision

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[1] UNESCO First International conference on adult education, 1949; Montreal, 1960; Tokyo, 1972; Recommendation on the development of adult education, Nairobi, 1976; Paris, 1985; Hamburg declaration on adult learning, 1997; Dakar framework of action, 2000.

[2] Other EFA goals: 1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children; 2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality; 5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality; 6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (UNESCO, 2000).

3 Surprisingly enough none of the possible MDGs achievement strategies mentioned adult education (UN:2001 cited in UNESCO, 2010a:19) nor MDGs as globally agreed development focus areas refers to improvement of adult education as such.

[4] For example Lauglo (2002:70-72) while specifically referring to adult basic education (ABE) promotion in Africa identifies a number of reasons why it should be promoted: (1) ABE and community schools can mutually reinforce themselves by building the support among adults to send their children to schools as well as boosting their confidence to get more involved in the matters of school; (2) ABE is instrumental in targeting poor, reducing gender inequality; (3) ABE has reported positive effects in involving adults into broadly based civil society thus keeping the governments more accountable; (4) ABE can improve family health; (5) removes barriers for entrepreneurship and improves livelihoods.

by the private sector or NGOs. This has resulted in a perceptual cycle whereby those having received the least education, continue to receive the least. They face various institutional, dispositional and situational barriers refraining them from access to adult education. Thus deepening the marginalization of the most vulnerable populations in society, who could benefit the most from the provision of adult education (Ibid:56-57, 67-68). Though adult education cannot solve all the ills of society, it could be a part of the solution in overcoming the developmental challenges (Rogers, 1992:71-72).

The critical theory shedding light on how "*people accept as normal a world characterized by massive inequities and the systemic exploitation of the many by the few*" (Brookfield, 2005:2) is useful in understanding the neglect of adult education in the global and local agenda. Human resources development theory supporting the economic competitiveness in the globalized world views adult education from the economic angle where it should serve the economic growth and productivity. Radical adult educators and researchers (Aitchison; Baatjes; Baptiste; Foley; Welton, etc.) following the critical theory tradition criticize the human capital theory driven shift of adult education towards instrumentalism as it reduces human beings into mere consumers. It is excessively mechanistic, views social inequalities as unavoidable consequences of the only legitimate social institution, free market, (Baptiste, 2001, cited in Baatjes&Mathe, 2004:396-397) thus exacerbating the societal inequalities and destroying the natural environment (Foley, 2001:81). Therefore critical theory offers an alternative, i.e. popular education tradition, aiming to involve people in critical analysis of the social issues that they address inequalities and injustice (Foley, 1998:140), which is chosen for the overall focus of the analysis.

Certainly focus on one tradition, discount the others. Nevertheless, popular adult education, used interchangeably with the radical education[5] tradition in this study, which is rooted in the anti-apartheid struggles of the South African people (Bird, 1984; Vally, 2007), could play a prominent role in mobilizing the South African communities to critically reflect and address the repercussions of the neo-liberal agenda, i.e. perpetuating the exclusion of under-educated adults from meaningful democratic citizenship (Baatjes, 2002; Baatjes&Mathe, 2004) and schooling crisis (Vally, 2009) (for further information refer to 2. Background section). Inevitably, radical adult education focusing on social justice and collective action embrace education and learning related to social movements (Foley, 1998). The New Social Movements (NSMs) in South African post-apartheid context are defined as "*those groups,*

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[5] "*Radical education is generally taken to mean critical and emancipatory education <...>*", implying that it makes judgments about injustice and tries to address its fundamental causes, also aiming to free people from oppressions and take control of their lives (Foley, 2001:72).

community based organizations, and individuals that in different forms and expressions challenge the post-colonial and neoliberal political and social order" (Etzo, 2010:567). This study aims to analyze adult learning in the social movement in South Africa cohering around literacy. Adult learning, which occurs both incidentally and through the planned educational intervention in a social movement (Newman, 2000:267-268) is of particular interest as there is little research on the issue, especially from the perspective of the participants (Foley, 1999:134, 140, 143).

Thus the purpose of the research is to analyze how adults learn while participating in the social movement especially focusing on their individual and collective transformation, i.e. group conscientization. The overall research purpose is accompanied by the number of sub-questions breaking the research into subtopics for examination (Creswell, 2007: 109):

1. What forms of learning and education the social movement encompassed?
2. How did the group conscientization occur?
3. What are the individual transformations that the social movement encompassed?

The "how" question and a particular social movement case suggest single in-depth case study approach to qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2007:73; Yin, 2003:6), with the research aiming at generating knowledge useful for both the academic purposes and the community members involved in the movement (Chesler, 1991 cited in Leonard et al., 2006:116). The research examines the adult learning through a case study based on Community Literacy and Numeracy Groups (CLING), a participatory action research (PAR) project, which is a particular form of popular adult education, deriving from the same foundation of political solidarity with the popular groups (Torres, 2005). It is a method of investigating one's own reality and applying the gained knowledge to change that reality (Brookfield, 2005:26). Though CLING is a PAR project initiated by the external actors to the community, by uniting the community members to strive for improving literacy in the community perpetuated by the neoliberal agenda, it falls under the definition of the social movement provided.

The study is guided by the principles of the critical theory, i.e. particular political analysis criticizing the commodity exchange economic system, aims at generating transformative knowledge. It is also normatively grounded (Brookfield, 2005:23-29). Those principles are also expressed in the models of Mezirow and Freire applied in this research. Finally, as Creswell (2007:15) emphasized, the particular worldview is reflected in the way the qualitative study is conducted and written up.

The study is structured in a following manner: background section, which outlines, how neoliberal South African policies affect education and the rise of NSMs. Later the research design and the tools applied for analysis are explained in the methodology and analytical framework sections. The analysis section deals with the data analysis by answering the research sub-questions. A summary of the results, general conclusions and recommendations for future research are provided in the final section of this thesis.

2. Background

The following section frames the research by providing background information and shedding light on neoliberal political agenda characterizing post-apartheid South Africa, its influence on education and the emergence of NSMs.

South Africa, which emerged as a democratic country in 1994, on the one hand is highly prized as a successful model of the Third Wave of democratization with relatively peaceful transition, free and fair elections, vibrant media, strong constitution and independent constitutional court (Madlingozi, 2007:78). On the other hand, the post-apartheid government lead by the African National Congress (ANC) is to be known as "*the first government to ever voluntarily seek the help of the World Bank to design and impose a structural adjustment programme on its people*" (Bond 2000; Marais, 2001 cited in Desai&Pithouse, 2004:241). This short section does not aim to analyze the multiple factors encouraging the South African government to embrace the neoliberal political agenda (interested reader can refer to the studies of Ballard et al, 2005; Madlingozi, 2007), but rather to outline how the Growth, Redistribution and Employment (GEAR) policy unveiled in 1996 with the focus on privatization, cuts in government spending, trade liberalization and creation of social justice through economic growth (Madlingozi, 2007:79; Ballard et al, 2005:616) affected the South African communities and emergence of NSMs. The neoliberal restructuring has intensified the problems of unemployment, poverty and inequality, with the GINI index being situated at 58, making South Africa one of the most unequal nations in the world. Poverty rates are also found to be increasing, with population rates of those living on less than $2 and $1.25 per day having increased by 42.9 % and 26.2 % from 1993 to 2000 respectively (World Bank). Scholars reassert that the racial apartheid was replaced with the class apartheid (Bond, 2000 cited in Madlingozi, 2007:96) and though the richest income

decile of the African origin is growing[7], "*the racial profile of the poor remains black*" (Ballard et al, 2005:621).

Madlingozi (2007:80-81) ascribes the rise of NSMs in post-apartheid South Africa as a response of the marginalized communities to the neoliberal policies imposed, which increased unemployment and poverty, made basic services, e.g. health, water and electricity, inaccessible to the majority. Though marginalization of the poorest and delivery issues are at the core of many NSMs in post-apartheid South Africa, they are also diverse in the size, tactics, institutional forms and the issues addressed (Ballard et al, 2005:624-625).

According to Vally (2007:41) though "*<…> radical education praxis has been weakened, it still exists, and its centre of gravity has shifted to the NSMs post-1994*". Indeed, popular adult education in South Africa emerged in the thirties and resulted in a number of leaders from the night schools for black South Africans conveyed by the Communist party and sporadically by the trade unions (Bird, 1984). It re-appeared in the late sixties with various NGO, church, universities and students adult education initiatives mobilizing people for anti-apartheid struggle. However, the prominence that radical adult education gained in the eighties diminished in the years of democratic South Africa with adult education undergoing formalization, instrumentalism, and downsizing of NGO capacity (Aitchison, 2003a).

The instrumentalism of adult education and schooling further marginalizing the poorest communities is closely related to apartheid legacies and neoliberal political agenda characterizing current South Africa. First of all, one of the means of South African apartheid state to sustain the domination of the white minority group was centrally controlled separate education systems for different racial groups aiming "*to prepare Blacks, Coloureds, Indians, and Whites[8] from a very early age for their separate and different roles in society*" (Hopfer, 1997:46). Bantu education act that came into the force in 1953[9] was designed to teach black population of the white superiority, enforce obedience, acceptance of allocated social roles, with the poorly financed schools and inferior curriculum. Low quality of education coupled with unaffordable schooling, schools becoming the site for liberation struggle resulted in the estimated rate of 50 % illiterate adults in 1990 (McKay, 2007:287-288; Hopfer, 1997:47; Baatjes, 2002:3). Since 1994 a number of literacy campaigns aimed at "*breaking the back of illiteracy*" (Asmal, 1999a, cited in Aitchison, 2003a:161) failed (Baatjes,

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[7] The richest income decile of the African origin grew from 9% in 1991 to 22% in 1996 (Ballard et al, 2005:621).

[8] The racial groups used for separation in the apartheid state, still widely spread in South Africa.

[9] Bantu education act was replaced by the Education and Training act in 1979 and according to Aitchison (2003a:14) was less suppressive on non-formal education for blacks.

2008:218; Baatjes, 2010) and though the percentage of the adults without complete basic education slightly decreased (from 50 % to 48 %) between 1996 until 2001, the actual number increased by 1.4 million adults requiring adult education provision (Aitchison&Harley, 2004 cited in Baatjes, 2008:209).

The research has proved that adult illiteracy mirrors wider disadvantages: the illiterate adults are more likely to be living in poverty, geographically disadvantaged areas, e.g. slums, rural settlements, belong to minority groups, to be female, to be either unemployed or working in informal/ agricultural sector (UNESCO, 2010b:99-100; Baatjes, 2008:216). In addition individuals having least education continue receiving least thus deepening their marginalization (UNESCO, 2010a:67-68).

Indeed, given the above shortly described historical legacy, adult basic education (ABE) is at the centre of adult education in South African legislation. Despite ABE being only one component of the larger adult education context, adult education in a more general sense have been dropped off the legislative agenda since 1992 (Aitchison, 2003a:2; Aitchison, 2003b:8). Despite strong and enabling Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)[10] legislation (Rule, 2006:118), it is underfinanced[11] (Baatjes, 2008), becomes further formalized (Baatjes&Mathe, 2004) and subjugated to maximizing the economic growth thus loosing its emancipatory powers (Aitchison, 2004; Baatjes&Mathe, 2004; Rule, 2006; Baatjes, 2008). Given the unemployment statistics in South Africa, that fluctuates between 23 % and 25 % from 2009 to 2011[12] (South African statistics), and legislative framework suggesting skill development leading to employment[13], it is important to understand that ABET in its current form and economic situation can do very little to improve the competiveness of adult learners in the labor market. Bhola (1997, cited in Aitchison, 2004:530) claims that portable skills learned through the adult training programme are of no use if there is no entry to labor market, which is further supported by the statistical data, which suggests that even matric[14] results are no longer much of the value in the labor

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[10] "The Constitution of South Africa (1996) uses the term Adult Basic Education (ABE) and documents in the early 1990s tended to use this formulation. Later documents, reflecting an official preoccupation with linking Education and Training, included a "T" for Training, and ABE became ABET" (Rule, 2006:115).

[11] Though the spending on ABET since 1995/6 has increased by about 33% each year, by 2003 only 2% of the total Department of Education (DoE) budget was allocated to ABET; external donor funding has declined (Baatjes, 2008:219).

[12] Some sources refer to 40% unemployment in 2003 (McKay, 2007:289).

13 South African Qualifications Act (1995); Skills development act (1998); Skills development levy act (1999); Adult basic education and training act (2000); Further education and training act (2006)

[14] Matric exams finalize the further training education and training cycle, i.e. grade 12. Basically it is the high school graduation exams.

market[15] (McGrath&Akoojee, 2007:423).

Furthermore, the increase of the actual number of under-educated adults points to the challenges the formal schooling system faces (Baatjes, 2008:211). It is characterized by poverty affecting education, fee-free schools that are not virtually free, growing disparity between schools in rich and poor communities, poorer students excluded from higher education due to inadequate financial aid scheme, little access to libraries and promotion of the reading culture, inadequate school feeding scheme, unsafe transport, lack of teachers, little opportunities to develop artistic skills (Vally, 2009), which severely affect the schooling of the children from poor communities. GEAR policy means marketisation of education, cuts in government spending thus passing most of the education expenditures onto students and their parents. This creates further disparities between schools in rich and poor communities, where the latter do not have means to supplement the meager government spending (Vally, 2007:48-49).

To sum up, the instrumentalist ABET, continuous educational inequalities influenced by the macroeconomic government policies in South Africa further perpetuate marginalization of the poorest South African communities, which is being addressed through the rising NSMs (Baatjes&Mathe, 2004:415; Vally, 2007:49; Ballard et al, 2005:623-624).

3. Methodology

This research is a multi-site case study, with the data collected from adult learners-activists acting in Freedom Park (FP) and Evaton North (EN) (Gauteng Province, South Africa) CLING groups. The case of CLING is used instrumentally to illustrate the adult learning process (Creswell, 1998:62) with the embedded analysis of individual and collective learning units (Yin, 2003:42-45).

CLING seeks to mobilize the communities in support of literacy and numeracy by applying PAR methodology: the community members work together with the adult educator/ university researcher in analyzing the community needs and designing the activities that support literacy education (CERT, 2010:10). Although CLINGs operate in five disadvantaged communities in Gauteng, Limpopo and Eastern Cape provinces, due to time and budgetary constrains only two sites in Gauteng were chosen. Nevertheless, the chosen sites in FP and

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[15] *"<…> only 36% of matriculants can find employment; whilst another 19% go on to further or higher education"* (McCord&Bhorat, 2003; Kraak, 2003a cited in McGrath&Akoojee, 2007:423).

EN are the only two urban CLING groups and though they differ in degree of organization and activities run (CLING biannual report), they are more similar than other sites.

Several forms of data collection were employed, such as document analysis, interviewing, and observational techniques (Creswell, 2007:129; Yin, 2003:83). Thirteen adult activists-learners were purposefully chosen based on the criteria (Creswell, 1998:119) of their active and lengthy involvement in CLING. At least one semi-structured interview was conducted with ten informants and a focus group discussion was held with three other informants. Two semi-structured interviews were carried out with adult educators, Vanessa Francis and Makoma Lekalala, who were involved in the process. Other sources of information, i.e. reports, minutes of the meetings, observation of the programmes running, and CLING members meetings were used. Multiple sources allowed triangulation of the information thus increasing the credibility of the research (Bryman, 2004:274-275).

The data analysis was conducted parallel to data collection with further questions deriving from the initial analysis which were then introduced in the second round of data collection. While developing the interview guides, the analysis of the data was kept in mind: possible codes to be applied for data analysis, following theoretical propositions and case descriptions as analytical strategies as suggested by Yin (2003:109-115). The collected data was aggregated into different learning outcomes' categories, and then grouped into the overarching themes, which were compared and further generalized based on already published literature on adult learning (Creswell, 2007:164).

The validity of the case study was established with the data triangulation and establishment of the chain of evidence (Yin, 2003:35-36; Bryman, 2004:275). The issues of external validity especially in a single case study, as rightly acknowledged by Yin (2003:37), is difficult to overcome, however, this study provides a clear analytical framework which can aid replication studies, thus adding to the overall external validity of the study. Moreover, the consultations with the scholar, Ivor Baatjes, involved in CLING process increased the external validity of the study (Creswell, 2007:208). In order to increase the reliability of the study, the approach of doing a case study is documented (Yin, 2003:38; Bryman, 2004:275) by explaining sampling strategies, using theory as guidance, transcribing interviews, identifying and making available questionnaires and other sources of evidence. For the purposes of conformability, my worldviews are stated and relevant data analysis procedures are applied (Bryman, 2004:276; Creswell, 2007:208).

The consent to conduct the research was acquired from all individuals involved in the process. The purposes of the research and the procedure were clearly explained to each informant assuring confidentiality and protecting the anonymity of the individuals (Creswell, 2007:44) thus the names of the informants quoted are changed and in some quotations only limited reference information is provided to ensure that the identity of the informant is not revealed.

Research of learning in social movements is subject to several limitations. Firstly, it is related to reflection of the participants involved, which in isolated form is hard to provoke given the multiple experiences in personal and social lives shaping their worldviews (Lovett et al, 1983:73). Secondly, the transformative learning aspects are restrained by the hardships the research subjects face in articulating what they actually believe instead "*what they think they believe*", and the observatory methods in this case are rather limited (Mezirow, 1991:221). Moreover, the meaning of words is rarely the same for research subjects and the researcher (Ibid). Furthermore, the complexity of the transformation processes analyzed (Foley, 1993:33) makes it hard to identify them in just two months spent within the field setting, which limits the analysis to the most apparent insights.

Finally, the statistical data used, e.g. adult illiteracy, EN and FP household baseline survey, is highly unreliable and differs depending on the source referred to (Baatjes, 2008; CLING biannual report). In addition, it is hard to obtain the most recent and reliable statistical data, thus it is used cautiously in the study.

4. Literature review

The rise of NSMs in South Africa is well documented and analyzed. Studies outline the typology of NSMs, issues addressed, diversity of organization and tactics, and relations with the institutions in the civil society (Benjamin, 2004; Greenberg&Ndlovu, 2004; Ballard et al, 2005; Naidoo&Veriava, 2005; Desai&Pithouse, 2004). To a certain extent all these studies attribute that the rise of NSMs is caused by the worsening poverty and inequality, which is continuously perpetuated by the neoliberal government policies. Among all, the study of Ballard et al (2005) is the most comprehensive by situating South African NSMs in a concise framework: it emphasizes the reactive nature of NSMs to the local and global economic and political situation, innovative character, diversity in issues addressed and tactics used. Furthermore, the study acknowledges that most NSMs have a sufficient base of material and

human resources to rely, which is contrary to the romantic image of NSMs as the spontaneous grassroots appraisals. Most interestingly, tactics of the movements range between in-system collaborations on the one extreme with the out-of system adversarial relations on the other side of the continuum (Ibid:629) with the latter challenging and shifting the unequal power relations especially on the local level (Etzo, 2010:577). Finally, scholars (Etza, 2010; Ballard et al, 2005) conclude that NSMs provide an opportunity to consolidate South African democracy.

Still I did not come across to any study on adult learning in South African NSMs except for a few studies coming from other countries. As Walter (2007:249) rightly points out, theorizing on adult learning in NSMs increased, however, few empirical studies have been conducted. Foley (1999) developed a framework of learning in social action based on case studies in developing and developed countries concluding that emancipatory learning occurred in all situations thus enabling to unveil and lift the various oppressions, though, he also acknowledged that learning is rather a complex phenomena influenced by various political and economical factors. Crowther et al (2007) discusses the popular education examples in Scotland as an opportunity to democratize democracy, also theorizing popular education and NSM. Walter (2007) concluded that the philosophy, practices of learning and education, and concrete actions in Clayoquot Sound Rainforest protection struggle provoked the transformative learning on individual and collective levels, identified several incidental learning outcomes deriving from the perspective of the activists involved.

Despite the above mentioned studies, one can find examples of popular education and social movements throughout the world, for example Antigonish movement in Canada, Scandinavian study circles, Highlander Folk school in USA, Freirean critical literacy initiatives in Latin America and post-colonial Africa, black consciousness movement in apartheid South Africa (Lovett et al, 1983:4-6; Newman, 2000:268-271). Some studies also focused on informal learning aspects in community development projects, workplace and other organizations as spaces for this type of learning (see Foley, 1993:22 for a review of this literature). As few of the studies actually analyze the learning aspects from the perspective of the participants in those movements (Foley, 1999), it leaves a potential research area of a very interesting phenomenon of how people learn while struggling for social justice. The research process also has a potential to empower the activists by making them articulate their learning achievements through their involvement (Opie, 1992, cited in Scheyvens&Leslie, 2000:127).

5. Analytical framework

This study is an analysis of transformative adult learning in the social movement occurring incidentally and/or facilitated by the radical adult education methodology. The learning is viewed through the lens of experiential adult learning. Learning is analyzed through individual transformation and group conscientization models.

5.1. Popular[16] education and social action

The popular education concept was historically significant in the social movements around the globe aiming at combating poverty and marginalization. It was a part of liberation struggles and social change (Newman, 2000:268-271).

Popular education in this study 'borrows' the definition from Popular Education Forum for Scotland and defines it as an educational practice, which:

- *Is rooted in the real interests and struggles for ordinary people;*
- *Is overtly political and critical of the status quo;*
- *Is committed to progressive social and political change*

(Martin, 2007:4)

The popular education is characterized by the **curriculum** deriving from the actual experience and interests of the people involved in the struggle; **collective pedagogy** aiming at empowering groups rather than individuals; promotion of action and reflection, attempting to connect education and **social action**; encouraging **'bottom-up'** development and participants becoming 'subjects' and not 'objects' of change (Martin, 2007:5; Kane, 2007:55- emphasis by the author).

As mentioned previously, popular education embraces education and learning associated with social movements and catalyses them by addressing the issues of social justice (Foley, 1998:140; Martin, 2007:5). The educative nature of social movements is intrinsic as they "*help to prepare people for change (or for resistance to change) by challenging (or confirming) the ways in which they think and feel and act politically*" (Martin, 2007:10). Though social movements are mostly identified with the political left, progressive values and emancipatory goals, they do not necessarily always entail those values therefore sustaining privilege and domination (Holford, 1995:97; Martin, 2007:14).

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[16] The Portuguese term "educação popular" usually gets lost in the direct translation to English giving the understanding of populist education. Instead, popular education is connected with the education of the popular classes, e.g. people who are poor, working class, unemployed (Kane, 2007:54). The term "popular education" is used in Romance-speaking countries, whereas the same meaning is applied by using a word "folk/ Volk" education in Germanic- speaking countries (Westerman, 2000:555).

CLING groups analyzed in this study choose community as its basis for operation, though it should be noted that the concept of community is rather ambiguous (Newman, 1983; Clark, 1987; Galbraith, 1990). Firstly, it is "*a value-laden term that evokes a variety of descriptions by a diverse range of individuals*" (Galbraith, 1990:3), which is clearly reflected by Newman (1983) providing six common interpretations of community equating it with the working class, quiescent poor, disadvantaged, the society, 'the whole community' and 'acceptable community'. As there is no satisfactory community definition, with community entailing multiplicity of interests, adult education implies the work with groups representing minority interests. Still despite the vagueness of the concept, the community education is widely used in various contexts, especially in conjunction with popular education (Tight, 2002:66). Lovett et al (1983:36-40) distinguished community education models into community organization, community development, community action and social action models[17] reflecting different views of the world and the role of education in the social and political change, with the last two describing models within radical adult education tradition. **Community action** combines community education and community action viewing the latter as an educational process in which the participants can raise consciousness on societal arrangements influencing local problems. It views the community as a base of action and education, attempts to (re) create alternative institutions on the local level. The weaknesses can be found in a relatively big emphasis on local solutions instead of social movements, focusing on the process rather than the content, therefore offering 'second' class education. **Social action** focuses more on society, expands the community to the working class, advocates a more structured and systematic educational process, and aims at locating the local problems into the wider political, social and economical environment. The model is criticized for creating an educational elite, which does not involve many of the community (Ibid). It must be noted that Lovett et al (Ibid:109; Mezirow, 1991:210) are rather critical towards the local activism as the significant change could be achieved only by reforming the entire economic system. Definitely other categorizations of the community education are possible (see Martin, 1987:20, 24). However, as mentioned previously since the focus of the study is radical adult education, the analytical framework is rather restricted to the conceptualization of various alternatives within.

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[17] **Community organization** is based on delivery of the various educational resources for meeting local interests and needs, usually appoints community educators, combines methodologies from all types of education. It hopes that the participating individuals will contribute to the own development and community. The model has been criticized for encouraging personal development, but, in general, leaving the issues of community unresolved. **Community development** is based on adult educators providing support, resources to various community stakeholders and viewing community education as leading to joined efforts of various stakeholders to solve local problems. The model is criticized for trying to solve local problems thus leaving the root causes untouched (Lovett et al, 1983:36-40).

5.2. Experiential adult learning

Previous research has revealed that people participating in social movements "*learn new information, skills, further clarify their values, beliefs, and attitudes; and deepen their sense of self-identity*" (Boggs, 1986; Foley, 1991; Kastner, 1993; Scott, 1992 cited in Kovan&Dirkx, 2003:101), learn to understand and resist social control (Foley&Flowers, 1992 cited in Newman, 2000:271). However, social movements are not the only learning environments, as adults learn continuously throughout their lives within formal, non-formal, informal education contexts[18], willingly or unintentionally (Rogers, 1992:9-11). The continuous learning is fostered by the occupation, changing social roles, occurring new interests and embraces changes in various learning components, i.e. knowledge, attitude, skills, understanding and behavior (Rogers, 1992:12). Learning may occur in 3 domains, i.e. instrumental, communicative, critical or emancipatory[19], suggesting, "*different mode of personal learning and different learning needs*" (Mezirow, 1981:4), thus implying different forms of delivery, e.g. incidentally or through informal, non-formal and formal education (Newman, 2000:267-268). Though Foley (1999:3) claims that social movements seldom use formal and non-formal education, most of the learning ingrained in action is not recognized as learning.

Experience is a valuable part of adult learning: adults bring in their own experience into the learning process; it also forms a part of the learning process as in the case of situated

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[18] Formal, non-formal and informal education is defined according to a framework suggested by Rogers (2004), where with the help of the group dynamics and organizational development theory these different types of education are placed on the contextualisation continuum. Thus **formal education** entails education which is highly decontextualised, not adapted to the individual student participants; **non-formal education**- is partially de-contextualised, and partially contextualised (flexible schooling); whereas **informal education**- highly contextualised, individualised and small-scale (participatory) (Rogers, 2004:260-261). For the purposes of analysis the provided definitions, that are, indeed, different from more recognizable definitions of UNESCO, OECD, etc, which defines formal education as schooling and refers to other forms of education as anything else what falls out from the formal schooling system, were chosen in order to overcome constrains related to those definitions. Firstly, within the suggested framework there is a clear conceptual difference between informal education and learning, with other definitions implying that it is the same process (OECD, 2007) or even omitting it (UNESCO, 1997). **Informal learning** refers to incidental learning gained from experience, participation in the community life, through work or family activities (Foley, 1993:21-22), whereas informal education covers "*all the many individualised contextualised learning programmes on a small scale which are created in a fully participatory way with the different groups of learners*" (Rogers, 2004:260). Secondly, this framework allows overcoming the 'conceptual' inferiority of non-formal education that views it as a lesser alternative to formal education (Rogers, 2004:156-157) and does not really maintain the relevance with the school reforms (Torres, 2001:50 cited in Rogers, 2004:236), diversified approaches of teaching/ learning within formal schools, diverse education providers and other institutions' provided service that could be considered as formal schooling (Rogers, 2004:240-241).

[19] **Instrumental learning** is directed towards the control and manipulation of the physical environment; specifically towards gaining empirical knowledge and skills for constructing systems and making them work. (Rogers, 1992:12; Mezirow, 1981:4; Newman, 2000:272) Instrumental learning in social action is concerned with the practical information and skills, how to use the existing structures to bring about the change, oppose more practical and obvious oppression (Newman, 2000:272-273). **Communicative learning** is related to personal relationships, people's interaction and interpretation of the social norms. People "*learn to solve problems through exchanging ideas and opinions, through reflection and insight, and by seeking consensus*" (Newman, 2000:273; Rogers, 1992:12). In social movement this learning domain is connected with the understanding of values, motives, background of the people involved or opposing the action (Newman, 2000:273). Finally, **emancipatory learning** domain refers to personal growth and understanding of oneself, e.g. psychological and cultural assumptions influencing the way one sees and acts in the world (Rogers, 1992:13; Newman, 2000:273). "*In this domain we learn to solve problems by a form of self-reflection that may transform our whole way of thinking- our perspectives. In this kind of learning we can learn to see through ourselves, and so may be enabled to understand others as well*"(Newman, 2000:273).

cognition (Merriam&Caffarella, 1999:222, 247). The 'collected' experience can become a basis for future learning as the learners connect their current learning with the previous experience to foresee future implications. The model of Barnet (see figure 1) illustrates the process.

Figure 1: Barnet's experiential learning model
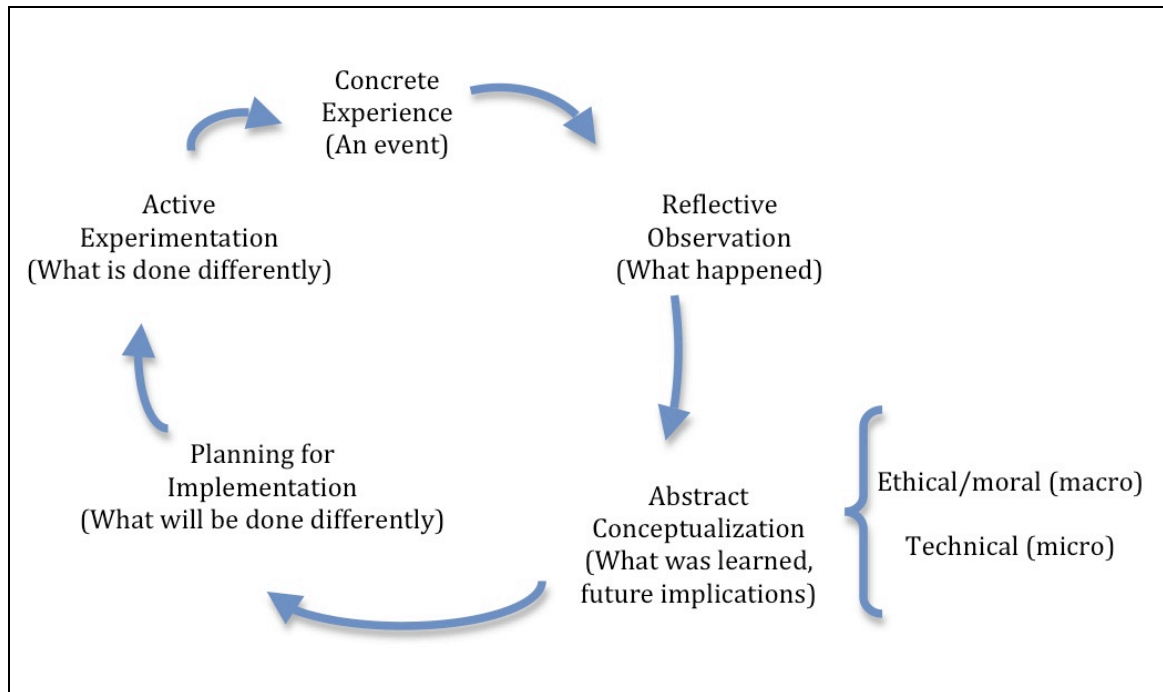
Source: Barnet, 1989:4, cited in Merriam&Caffarella, 1999:225

The learning is viewed as a cyclical process with a concrete experience fostering the reflective observation followed by the abstract conceptualization, planning for implementation and active experimentation, which leads to new set of experiences to be reflected on, thus the cycle continues. However, not all experiences educate as this type of learning requires certain abilities: openness to new experiences, reflective skills, analytical abilities, decision-making and problem-solving skills to turn the new ideas into practice (Kolb, 1984, cited in Ibid:224).

The situated cognition as part of experiential learning unites the learning process with the situation in which it is occurring (Ibid:241). The focus from reflective practice occurring in one's mind is shifted towards the external settings in which the experience is deriving from (Young, 1993, cited in Ibid:241). In other words, situated cognition can be understood as 'learning by doing', which is shaped by the social, physical situations and experiences that the learners find themselves in. Furthermore, situated cognition challenges the notion that

learning is individual, emphasizing the interaction between the learners and the social environments (Ibid:240-243).

In order to analyze experiential adult learning occurring through the involvement in a social movement, Mezirow's individual transformative learning model and Freire's group conscientization models are applied.

5.3. Individual transformative learning

As already mentioned in 5.2. Experiential learning section, experience is a valuable source in the adult learning process (Merriam et al, 2007:144). Indeed, Mezirow (1990a:5) argues that especially in adult learning process, reflection on the prior learning, i.e. experience, aiming to verify whether the previous learning is relevant in current circumstances is more important than building new perspectives. Thus transformative learning is mostly connected with the critical reflection validating or changing the previous learning.

Critical reflection is a unifying component in both Mezirow's and Freire's models applied despite the different focus of it (Merriam et al, 2007:140-141): Mezirow focuses on individual level, whereas Freire emphasized the collective. Critical reflection as defined by Mezirow (1990a:12) aims at *"challenging the validity of presuppositions in prior learning"* which problematise internalized and taken for granted social roles, expectations, ways of acting and leads to transforming them thus perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1981:6-7). Perspective transformation as a key concept in Mezirow's theory is similar to Freire's notion of 'conscientization': both derive from critical reflection and for further validation needs the action connected (Freire, 1972; Mezirow, 1990b). Furthermore, dialogical action is indispensible in the process of unveiling the oppression in Freire's theory (Merriam et al, 2007:140) as well as dialogue is inseparable from perspective transformation serving as verification of one's new reality (Mezirow, 1990b:364; Merriam et al, 2007:138).

Transformative learning of the individual occurs in so called 'frames of reference', which are the assumptions, through which adults understand their experiences. They are culturally influenced, uncritically acquired in childhood through socialization and (un) intentionally learned. For example, through the 'frames of reference' lenses adults distinguish the ugly painting from the beautiful; understand the meaning of a parent. These 'frames of reference' limits perceptions, cognitions and feelings thus adults often reject the ideas failing to fit their preconceptions and discard them as nonsense (Mezirow, 1990a:3; Mezirow, 1997:5-6).

'Frames of reference' constitute of habits of mind and points of view. "*Habits of mind are broad, abstract, orienting, habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting influenced by assumptions that constitute a set of codes*" (Mezirow, 1997:6). They can be cultural, social, educational, economic, political, and psychological (Ibid:6). From habits of mind specific points of view derive, which are "*sets of immediate, specific beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and value judgments*" (Mezirow, 1997:6; Mezirow, 2000:18, cited in Merriam et al, 2007:133). For example, habit of mind could be ethnocentrism, and attitude that one's group is superior to the other, with the specific beliefs one may have about the people outside his/her own group forming points of view (Merriam et al, 2007:132-133). It is easier to change points of view than habits of mind, as one is more aware of the former; also points of view are more subject to feedback from the others (Mezirow, 1997:6).

Transformative learning occurs when there is a transformation of habit of mind or accumulation of transformations of points of view with the critical reflection facilitating the process (Ibid:7). Mezirow (1991:167) says that transformative learning is:

> *The process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting upon these new understandings.*

Critical reflection may occur while reading a book, hearing a point of view, engaging in task-oriented problem solving, critically reflecting on own ideas (Mezirow, 1997:7). In addition, challenging situations in the community action, culture of learning and internalization of the lessons learned can encourage critical reflection (Lovett et al, 1983:74).

Perspective transformation occurs when one encounters different 'frames of reference' or experiences a 'disorienting dilemma', e.g. HIV positive status, when old ways of dealing are not sufficient anymore thus causing critical reflection and transformation (Mezirow, 1990a:13-14). A person does not make the transformative changes as long as what he/she learns fits comfortably in the existing 'frames of reference' (Mezirow, 1997:7). Furthermore, Mezirow (1991:223) admits that not all learning is transformative as it may just add new knowledge or new 'frames of reference' or as several studies show it might occur without critical reflection and mindlessly assimilating new ways of thinking (Merriam, 2004:66).

Initially Mezirow's transformative learning was made of 10 steps (Mezirow, 1981:7), which Cranton (2002:65-66) presents as a non-linear processes combined of 7 learning facets: **an**

activating event (disorienting dilemma) which does not fit in the existing 'frames of reference'; **recognition of underlying assumptions** that were uncritically assimilated; **critical self-reflection**; **openness** to alternative viewpoints; **recognizing and exploring alternative perspectives**; **revising** assumptions; **acting** based on the revisions.

Mezirow (1990b:363) argues that the individual perspective transformation must occur before the social transformation can succeed, with the individual transformation entailing action, which often means the collective political action. Furthermore, though Mezirow's theory embraces the transformation of epistemic, psychological and sociocultural distortions, only the latter can lead directly to social action (Mezirow, 1991:211) thus restricting this analysis.

Mezirow's individual transformative learning theory rests on rationality which is a Western concept reflecting the dominant white male middle class culture (Merriam et al, 2007:150-151), with empirical studies confirming that perspective transformation can be also influenced by intuition, affective learning, extra rational influences, feelings (Taylor, 1997:48). Furthermore, it does not address the varying nature of a 'disorienting dilemma', significance of the context. Few published empirical studies limit the theoretical debate (Ibid.), thus restricting the analysis of factors influencing the transformations in this particular case study.

5.4. Freirean group conscientization model

Freire's educational theory connects both the personal and social transformation (Merriam et al, 2007:140): it emphasizes the critical reflection on one's position in the society and power within (Walter, 1999:35) aiming to view the world holistically, analyze the root causes of injustice and act based upon that. Freire viewed the world as divided between dominant and dominated groups, so called minority-ruling group of the oppressors and the majority consisting of the oppressed, with the latter living in systematic oppression. The term oppressed was criticized for its vague definition (Freire, 2004:89), though it entails various disadvantaged groups, i.e. sexual, ethnic minorities, the poor, while the oppressors could portray elite, with Freire rejecting the universalized forms of oppression and refusing to reduce the oppression only to a class struggle (Mayo, 1999:68-69).

Freire argued that the oppressed live in a mythical society promoted by the oppressors, which allow sustaining their powers by advocating the world as fixed, "*something to which*

human beings[20], as mere spectators, must adapt" (Freire, 1972:109). Status quo is maintained by the myths channeled and internalized by the oppressed: "*the oppressive order is a 'free society*'", education is universal right, though few Brazilian children entering the primary education ever reach university, oppressors are industrious whereas the oppressed are lazy, and naturally inferior to the former (Ibid:109-110). Having internalized the myths, the oppressed develop a dual relationship with the oppressors: they want to resist but are also afraid of freedom or the consequences the resistance can bring, e.g. blacklisting, loosing a job (Ibid:22, 114). Thus the system of oppression can be understood as so called 'culture of silence' preventing the oppressed from questioning the world (Mayo, 1995:365).

Freire argued that the education in the hands of the oppressors is used as a tool to domesticate the oppressed through so-called 'banking education'. The very nature of 'banking education' reflects the oppressive society by emphasizing the division between the knowledgeable teacher and ignorant students, where the latter have no control over the learning process or the contents thus the process of education undermining the creative powers of the students, stimulating credulity, thus serving the interests of the oppressors (Freire, 1972:45-59). 'Banking education' aims at maintaining the division between the 'knowledgeable' and 'ignorant', i.e. oppressors and the oppressed, denying the dialogue between the educator and the student (Gadotti, 1994:52-53). The knowledge, which is truth only for the oppressors, isolated from the reality, is deposited into the minds of the students as the money is deposited into the bank (Freire, 1972:45-47) thus ignoring the fact that knowledge is a social construct acquired through interaction with other people and is born creating it as subjects, inventing and re-inventing the knowledge themselves (Kane, 2001:37).

With such an analysis of the world, it is clear that Freire perceived education as politically subjective action (Freire, 1985:12, 102), which aims at 'conscientization', the development of the critical consciousness, which would empower the learners to unveil the oppression and mobilize for liberation through transforming the oppressive structures (Freire, 1972).

Thus the method of Freire was built on horizontal dialogical relationship between the teacher and the students[21]. The learning process is based on cognition and not on

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[20] Originally in the Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire, 1972), the term 'men' was used to describe people, human beings, etc. However, Freire was criticized widely for not being explicit that men also involve women thus writing in a sexist language, therefore as suggested by Freire himself, the sexist nature of his language in citations was changed by the author of this paper (Taylor, 1993 cited in Kane, 2001:49; Freire, 2004).

[21] Even though Freire emphasized the dialogical process between the teacher and the students, in responding to the criticisms of the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he claimed that they are not equal as the former posses the authority "*through the depth and*

transmission as in 'banking education' summarizing the problem-posing education as a process where: "<...> *no one teachers another, nor anyone is self-taught. People teach each other, mediated by the world*" (Freire, 1972:53). According to Freire this problem-posing education would stimulate the critical reflection on reality and action based upon it and foster the creativity (Ibid:53-56).

The ultimate aim of problem-posing education is liberation, which should derive from the 'conscientization' of the learners. 'Conscientization' is a process where the oppressed would start perceiving themselves as subjects of change reflecting critically on the causes of oppression and considering the possibilities of action for change (Kane, 2001:39-40). The process of 'conscientization' is a gradual movement from magical to critical consciousness, where in the former the people are not questioning, the responsibility of the world is given to external forces, whereas in the stage of critical consciousness the person achieves in-depth understanding of the forces shaping his/ her life and takes an active stance in transforming the world into more just (Merriam et al., 2007:141). Indeed, the 'conscientization' term emphasizes the inseparability of action and reflection as if otherwise in Freire's words (1972:60) it could become mindless activism or empty verbalism.

Freire (Ibid:42-43) emphasized that the liberating practice should involve the political action *with* the oppressed (original emphasis) instead of carrying it *for* them (original emphasis) as only the former is the authentic transformation. The liberation action involves the discovery of the oppression among the oppressed followed by the commitment to transform it through praxis (Ibid:30-31). Only the oppressed have the power to implement the liberation action freeing both themselves and the oppressors (Ibid:21). Indeed, as the oppressors are not interested in changing the system (Ibid:47) and only the oppressed are the powerful ones, the liberation becomes a struggle, as freedom is not acquired as a gift (Ibid:24). Freire (Ibid:21-25) advocated the authentic revolution where the oppressed would not simply switch roles with the oppressors (which sometimes happens as it is the model of humanity that is ingrained among the oppressed), but the action that would destroy the division between the oppressed and the oppressors thus achieving the humanization of all people.

To sum up, firstly the individual must eject the oppressor living inside him and unveil the oppressive system he/she lives in through the dialogical action with the others bringing

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breadth of knowledge of the subject matter that they teach" (Freire, 1995:378 cited in Mayo, 1999:67) stressing that the authority should never transform into authoritarianism (Ibid:66-67).

him/her to 'conscientization' and, in order to pursue further the act of liberation (as action and reflection cannot be separated (!)), the individual must connect and engage in the struggle with the others (Freire, 1972; Gadotti, 1994:50-52). Thus the model outlined by Freire presents 2 levels of transformation:

> *The community is transforming itself into a powerful actor, capable of garnering resources for local benefit; at the same time members-of-the-community are transforming themselves from bystanders into actors in and through this process (Rocha, 1997:38).*

5.5. Operationalisation

The analytical framework aimed at providing the reader the common 'theoretical lenses' that are being used in the following parts of this thesis. To sum up, by fostering the critical reflection among the learners-activists popular education facilitates the understanding of the oppressive systems, mobilizes for social action to lift the oppression. In this particular case, learners apply radical adult education principles while engaging in the social action; it is also applied in the external educational interventions. As the curriculum of the popular education is based on the experiences deriving from the engagement in the struggle, adult experiential learning guides the analysis of how adults learn in the social movement. It emphasizes both the reflection of the previous learning experience and learning through experiencing. Mezirow's individual transformative learning and Freire's group conscientization models provide a framework to analyze the outcomes of the experiential learning. The data collected is viewed through the lenses of those models in particular searching for the critical reflection and the associated action that shows individual or group transformation. Indeed, the occurrence of the critical consciousness or individual transformation is hard to identify, because its development is both complex and fragile (Foley, 1993:33), therefore the models provide a framework guiding the data interpretation thus leading to conclusions about conscientization or individual transformation.

Finally, this thesis focus on the learners-activists in the social movement rising to unveil and change the systemic oppression imposed on their communities through the neoliberal policies. As social life is a complex phenomenon, multiple oppressions exist even within the communities analyzed, nevertheless, the scope of this work does not allow addressing those underpinning issues.

The following sections start with context of the case that also partially answers the first RQ on the forms of learning and education in the social movement. The following 6.2. section

aims at analyzing how the group conscientization occurred with the final section focusing on answering the third RQ on individual transformations that the social movement encompassed. The summary of the results, implications for future research and concluding remarks are provided in the final section.

6. Analysis

6.1. Contextual aspects of learning

Mezirow's individual transformation theory is criticized for omitting the contextual factors, i.e. individual's biographical history and socio-cultural factors, which shape the nature of the transformative learning (Merriam et al, 2007:149). Indeed, Foley (1999:9) argues that satisfactory learning in social movements connects learning and educational interventions with the broader analysis of political economy, discursive practises, ideologies, and micro-politics as illustrated in figure 2.

Figure 2: Factors influencing learning in social action

Political economy		Micro-politics
Educational interventions	**Learning in social action**	
Learning	Discursive practices	Ideologies
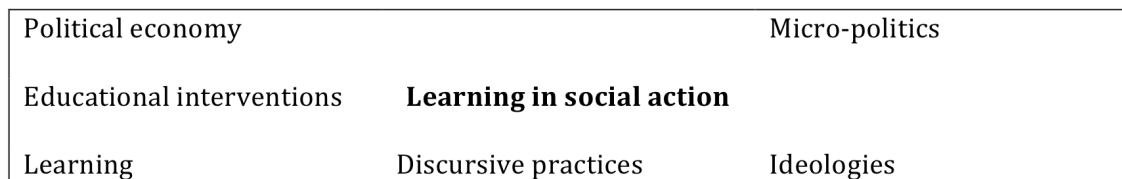
Source: Foley, 1999:9

Therefore to address the criticisms of the Mezirow's theory and include the factors shaping adult learning in social movements, the political economy of the neoliberal agenda was shortly described in the background section. The micro-politics of the communities where the research was carried out are described in the context section, thus situating the case (Creswell, 1998:61) and lying ground for analysis how the understanding of the contextual factors influenced the group conscientization process.

6.1.1. Context

The analyzed social movement, i.e. CLING groups, function in FP and EN communities, in Gauteng, South Africa. FP is a semi-formal settlement on the south-west boarder of Soweto, Johannesburg, which was founded in 1993. It is a mixture of Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses and informal housing. EN is situated in Vaal triangle, close to Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark towns, the area (distinct to semi-formal

settlement of FP) compromises of RDP, bond houses and shacks. The community in Vaal, appeared to be highly organized, with many community initiatives and dynamic young people, and for the project purposes was intentionally paired with FP, which was a newly organizing community showing some level of dynamism (CLING biannual report).

The community mapping and household baseline studies[22] (see table 1) revealed that both communities differ in the levels of education, employment and participation in literacy activities. There are two public primary schools in FP with the nearest high school three to five kilometres away. Primary schools' classrooms are overcrowded; school-feeding scheme is available to certain ethnic groups only. Pupil dropouts were identified as a major issue, only social sciences are promoted. Furthermore, learners are not active in their mother tongue; it is prohibited to attend classes if they come without a uniform even if the school fees are paid. Forty Vaal triangle primary and secondary schools lack stationery and textbooks, home language classes are overcrowded, and teachers have difficulties in implementing the curriculum (Ibid).

FP is characterized by the high percentage (47%) of those over 18 who did not complete schooling and are not enrolled in any course, the majority of the respondents have primary level education whereas in EN most of the respondents have completed high school or post-secondary education. Moreover, though seemingly more educated members of EN community participate in literacy activities more often (30%) as compared with FP respondents (18%), participation in literacy activities on at least weakly basis in EN and FP is rather low, respectively 20% and 7% of the respondents[23].

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[22] Conducted by the Community Researchers (CRs) in each site.

[23] Some of the data captured during the household baseline survey could be questioned for reliability as it seems not making sense (CLING biannual report), thus the statistical data revealing that from 419 respondents in FP, only 18 are employed whereas from 428 in EN 89 are employed, is not cited and discussed further in the main body of text, though it could outline the poor socio-economic conditions in FP community.

Table 1: Household baseline survey data from EN and FP

|	Evaton North					Freedom Park				
	Male		**Female**			**Male**		**Female**		
	22		64			38		62		
Total no of respondents	428					419				
Total no of households	86					100				
Employed& enrolled in school, too young to be enrolled (%)	62%					50%				
Over 18 with no completed schooling, not enrolled in any course (%)	13%					47%				
Highest education in the household completed	Pri-mary	Some secondary	Completed high school	Post secondary	N/A	Primary	Some secon-dary	Completed high school	Post second-dary	N/A
	5	25	33	22	1	43	34	13	2	6
Participate in literacy activities	Yes (%)		No (%)	N/A (%)		Yes (%)		No (%)	N/A (%)	
	30%		56%	14%		18%		65%	17%	
Participate in literacy activities on at least weekly basis	20%					7%				

Source: based on the baseline survey data (CLING biannual report)

It was concluded in CLING biannual report that access to literacy materials and programmes is almost non-existent. There was no meaningful ABET programme until Kha Ri Gude literacy campaign (launched in 2008 (Kha Ri Gude information)) and until CLING came in there were no libraries within easy reach of the community (CLING report, 2008). Though limited data it outlines poor schooling conditions, little literacy training opportunities, completion of low levels of formal education, high numbers of school dropouts, high unemployment, that do affect the participation in literacy activities (Lekalala, Francis).

Community mobilization to CLING groups supporting literacy and numeracy activities started in 2007 with the project introductions to different structures in the community, e.g. CBOs, churches, crèches, schools, and local government structures, and presentations in the community meetings. Community researchers (CRs) were identified based on previous work with Anti-Privatization Forum (APF) and knowledge about the communities. The project staff trained CRs, and they together with Education Policy Consortium (EPC) adult educators played a leading role in mobilizing the community members and organizations to join the CLING groups. At the start of the project, representation of the community at large within CLING group was highly emphasized, though currently there are rather individual community members present in the structure on both sites who feel that they can offer something to the community (CLING biannual report). Each CLING group has a programme

of action (PoA) with R5000[24] per annum provided and stipends for two CRs paid on each site for five years (Gardiner, 2010). CRs act as full members of CLING, they are elected in the governing bodies of the structure, but they also conduct the research on behalf of the project (CLING biannual report). Figure 3 summarizes the specific characteristics of CLING.

Figure 3: Community Literacy and Numeracy Groups (CLING)
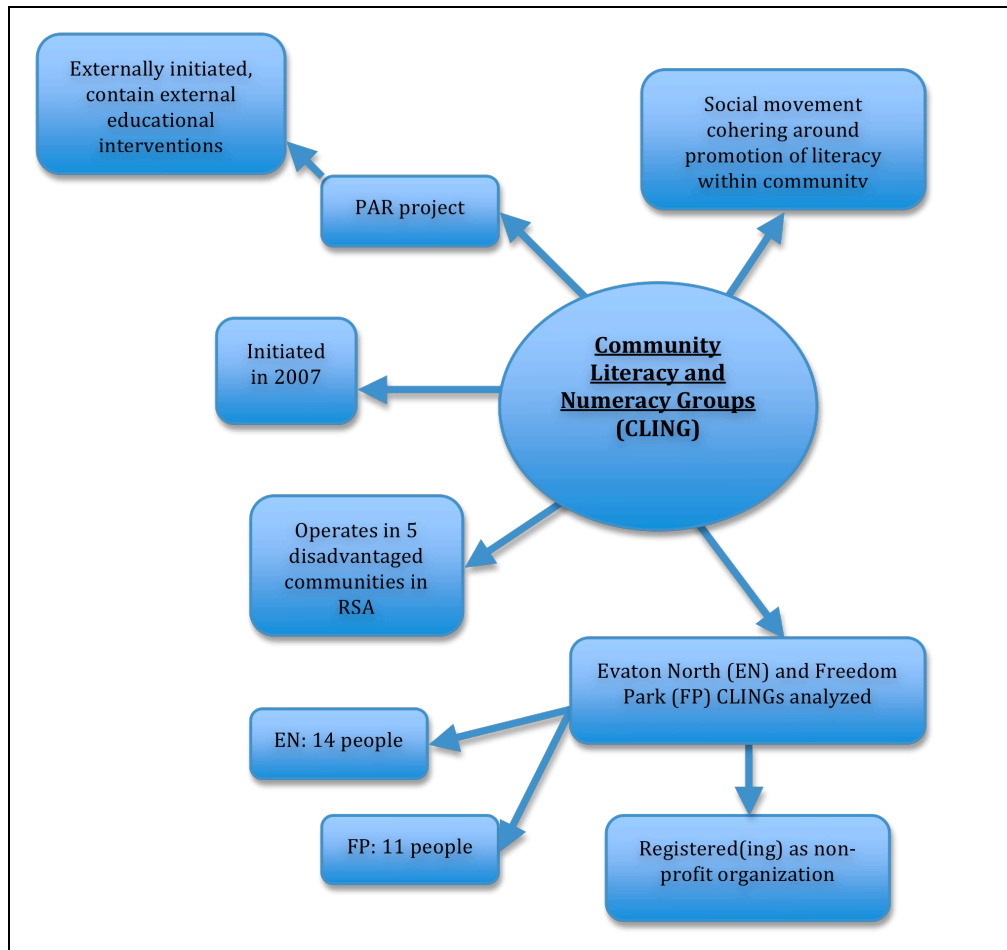
Source: author's creation based on CLING documentation

The following Programme of Action (PoA) was developed in FP: building the community library, Saturday classes for children, edutainment, i.e. hip-hop sessions and videos, ABET classes (promotional leaflet of CLING in FP), whereas CLING in EN focuses on supporting Early Childhood Development centers (ECDs) and ABET programmes, encouraging elder people to attend ABET classes, temporary library, linking resources within community (Sehlolo, Paki).

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[24] It is approximately 505 Euros (XE currency conversion information).

6.1.2. Adult learners-activists

The distribution by gender of the learners-activists interviewed is presented in the table below.

**Table 2: Learners-activists' distribution by gender**

	Freedom Park	Evaton North
Female	3	4
Male	3	3
Total	**6**	**7**

From the thirteen learners-activists interviewed, they all differ in terms of their previous involvement in the community. First of all, only two female informants, Adawa and Desla, were not previously involved in the community structures and Tutu was involved only as an educator in Kha Ri Gude literacy campaign. Six other informants, among whom four are the CRs, were involved in the community not only through political organizations of APF, GOLCOM or SOPA, but also other structures. Fola, Furaha and Sipho were involved in the local governance structures focusing on basic service delivery, housing and youth, the elderly, children and disability in the community. Shani is an active volunteer and a pastor.

6.1.3. Learning and educational interventions

In order to ease the analysis, despite the acknowledged complexity of the transformative learning process (Foley, 1993; Newman, 2000) with multiple factors shaping it (refer to 6.1. section), the combination of the experiential learning in CLING was organized into a simplified scheme below.

Figure 4: Experiential learning scheme in CLING
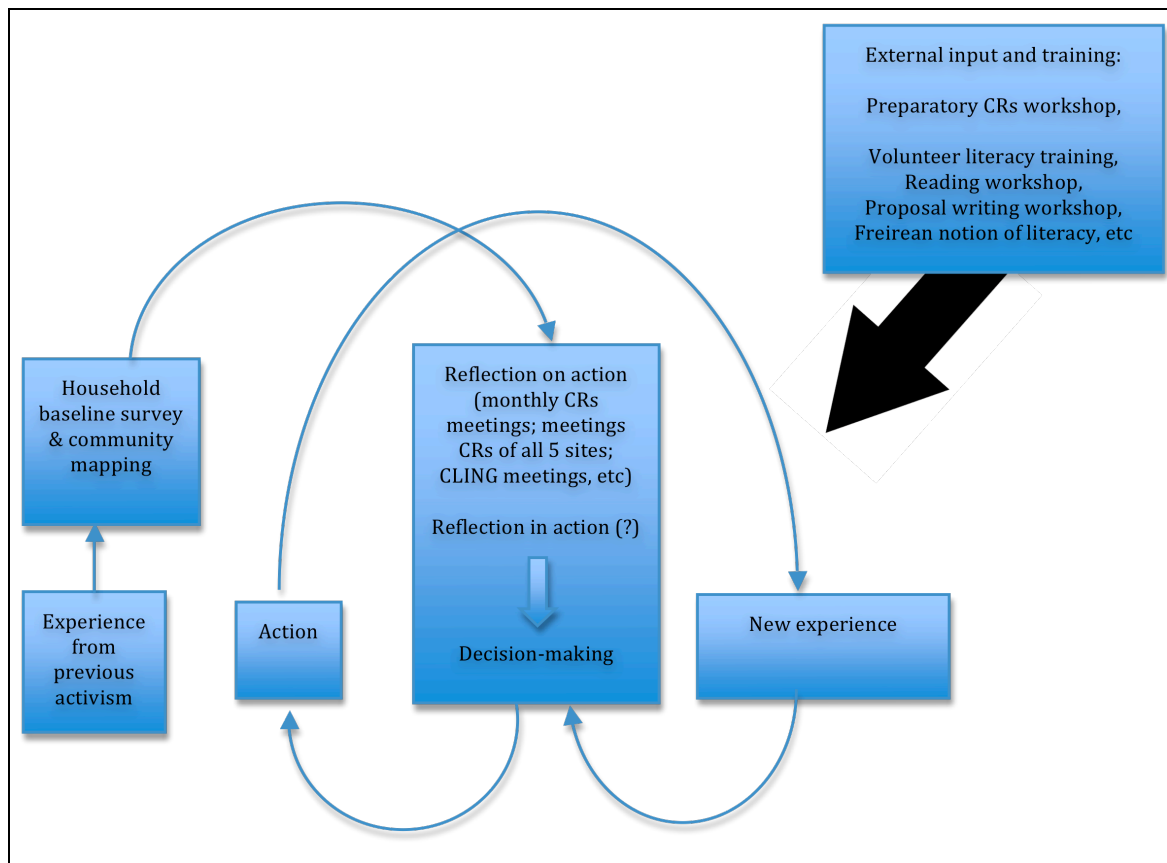
Source: author's creation based on CLING documentation, model adapted from the "Five fold path to development" (Rogers, 1992:144)

Firstly, from the interviews, reports and observation, it is visible that learning and educational interventions ranged from specific training sessions provided by the external actors (see figure 3) to 'learning by doing' followed by the reflection-on-action sessions. CLING, as outlined by Ballard et al (2005:627) is not a spontaneous grassroots appraisal, but a movement relying on the external material and human resources, coming from the involved partners, i.e. Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT) in University of Johannesburg and Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD). They provided the informal educational interventions, based on popular education principles, and facilitated some reflection-on-action sessions. Reflection-on-action (consciously returning to experienced situations to think through and reevaluate them (Merriam&Caffarella, 1999:235)) can be described as reflective monthly meetings of CRs and sometimes other activists from CLING with the adult educators (EPC and CERT) discussing the progress in CLING, problems encountered, ways to overcome them and planning for the future actions; also national and regional CRs meetings. CLING meetings that are held every week in EN and once a month in FP, could be also identified as learning situations with reflection-on-action aspects; still, the involved educators agreed that there wasn't much critical reflection in

those meetings (Francis; informal conversation with Baatjes); my attendance in those meetings, however, was insufficient to make such claims. There is no data confirming or denying the existence of reflection-in-action (thinking on situation once you are in it (Merriam&Caffarella, 1999:236)). From the limited information available, it is visible that the external education and training input was guided by the Freirean notions of critical consciousness, emphasizing the resourcefulness of the communities, outlining the dismal educational situation in the country and organizing for the quality education demands (CLING biannual report; CLING workshop report, 2007; CRs workshop minutes, 2008; FP CR report, 2010).

Though simplifying, it is possible to claim that CLING learning process followed the cyclical pattern. Firstly, as further data analysis indicates learners-activists brought in their multiple experiences from the previous community activisms into the learning process that also affected the learning in CLING. Secondly, the understanding of the existing state in the community was established through the household baseline survey and community mapping, which was followed by the external input and reflection-on-action sessions. All these four elements provided certain experience to be reflected upon, guiding the decision-making of CLING actions and further action that in turn lead to further experiences thus further reflection. Each reflection cycle could be further illustrated in Barnet's individual experiential learning model (refer to figure 1) subdividing the process into concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, planning for implementation and active experimentation thus leading to new experience.

Finally, the following sections interweave how the outlined context, individual characteristics of the activists-learners and the educational interventions shape the learning process in the social action especially group conscientization and individual transformation.

6.2. CLING group conscientization

6.2.1. Conscientization process

The underlying argument of engaging in social action is the process of conscientization, which enables the group to understand that the social action is needed and possible (Foley, 1999:5). Indeed, with the CLING groups both having been established for over five years, it allows presuming that the group conscientization process has occurred there. Although one needs to be careful in making such claims especially taking into consideration that the group is receiving external support such as small amount of money (seed money) to carry the

activities and stipends for CRs (Gardiner, 2010), which could serve as motivation to maintain the group structure. Still only CRs receive their stipends. Furthermore, EN CLING received their seed money payments only for 2007 (informal conversation with EN CRs), whereas FP CRs did not receive any stipends for the entire 2009 (Francis), but both groups continued existing and implementing CLING's PoA within their communities. Finally, FP already registered CLING as non-profit organization; EN is in the same process implying that they intend to continue their work in the community after 2012 when the project funding is over.

The group conscientization process in both sites is analyzed through the cycle of conscientization, i.e. a learning stance, collective and critical reflection followed by the transformative action, as described by Heany and Horton (1990:89-90). CLINGs learning stance in Gauteng started with the recruitment and initial training of CRs, followed by the community mobilization, i.e. project presentations to the institutions operating in the community, introductory community meetings, CLING formalization meeting, presentation on literacy and numeracy, community mapping facilitated by the CRs and EPC educators, Makoma Lekalala and Vanessa Francis by that time (CLING Gauteng report, 2007). The minutes of the initial meetings are not available, thus it is impossible to determine whether the critical reflection started at that point. Still the interview data revealed that the externally planned household baseline survey played a crucial role in fostering the individual critical reflection about the poor education status in the community among some of the activists that are involved in CLING since the beginning and in particular conducting the household baseline survey:

> *Through baseline survey- it was when those things that people cannot read and write became clear, especially the adults. <…> They did not have enough education to fulfill their dreams (Fola).*

> *The time when we were doing our house to house (survey), <…> we realized that there are a lot of kids that never completed their grade twelve. They are just roaming around in the community. <…> The dropouts, I think it's a disaster today. The future of the country as well (Moeketsi).*

Furthermore, when the household baseline survey information was brought back to the community, the results were questioned (CRs workshop notes, 2008), indicating that the community members were not really aware of the poor educational status, which was also confirmed during the interviews with the individual CLING members.

For other members the learning on the poor educational status in their community occurred by implementing CLING programmes themselves (Desla, Samora). Indeed, as Heany and

Horton (1990:88-89) emphasize, the educators' role is limited to helping in revelation of the oppression, however, the conscientization can occur only when "*learners experience and reflect*" (Ibid:88). It implies that the survey (which was conducted by CLING members, but initiated by the external sources, thus considered the external consciousness raising in this thesis) is important. Nevertheless, individual experience, which occurs in the process of the social struggle (Ibid:89), forms the basis for critical reflection and leads to conscientization. The quotes of the activists reveal their increasing awareness on dismal education in public schools and the lack of educational resources:

> *In the community there was no awareness that there is certain knowledge lacking, especially on English. But ever since CLING was there, you could see that there were problems that none of them were aware previously. <...> Children can't read, pronounce what is in the book, <...> they cannot write. When I say mother (in English), they would write it as isiZulu (Desla).*

> *Education was the problem that we used to sweep under the carpet. <...> With the project we highlighted that we need these resources... We don't have a library... enough schools. <...> Now we talk about education... we are realizing that we are having a problem (Samora).*

> *<...> In the public school <...> you find that the learners can speak (English), they can talk and analyze, but when it comes to writing, they are totally backward. <...> We understood that when we tried to assist children- there is a serious problem (Moeketsi).*

Moreover, work with children conducted after school revealed how the lack of feeding scheme affects their learning (Arusi, Sehlolo, Paki, FP CR report) and poor English influences children's performance at school, especially during the final exams that are conducted in English (Desla).

In the process of consciousness raising and provoking the critical reflection, the importance is attributed to the individual reality instead of "*analyses and theories produced elsewhere*" (Hart, 1990:35). Thus though debilitating effects of the apartheid system, high numbers of illiterate adults, growing disparity between schools in rich and poor communities might have been known to the learners-activists (brief information on the external input provided suggest that some aspects were discussed there), they would not be sufficient to mobilize for the process of conscientization (Hart, 1990). Moreover, the context of the community, in which the learners-activists find themselves, facilitates their learning as conscientization occurs among the oppressed/ marginalized groups implying that with no context of oppression, challenging the held assumptions, critical consciousness would not occur.

However paradoxically, critical reflection that leads to critical consciousness, though based on personal experience (Hart, 1990:66-67; Foley, 1993:24), demands theoretical distancing, i.e. "*systematic understanding of the nature and complexity of the entire-power bound system*" (Hart, 1990:35). Previous quotes of the activists, do reveal theorizing on dismal education status in the community, i.e. failure of public schools, little awareness in the community about the education status and resources needed, based on their personal experience gained through engagement in CLING. Nevertheless, it is hard to identify critical reflection occurring only through the engagement in CLING as multiple experiences (among others experiences in personal life, church, political parties) of the activists come into the play (Lovett et al, 1983:73), especially taking into consideration active previous involvement of most of the learners-activists.

Their quotes on individual motivation to act in CLING thus attempting to change the educational situation in the community also illustrate the occurrence of critical reflection:

> *I saw many adults suffering. I want to help older people to read and write especially (Adawa).*

> *I help to keep children away from the street and away from drugs (Tutu).*

> *If people can get education, they can identify their problems. We go to elections, people don't have an idea what is manifesto, and they cannot read the newspaper about the problems in this country. If we can educate, it would be easier for them to take decisions in their lives (Samora).*

> *I am helping the children to get better education (Desla).*

> *This (CLING) programme helps to re-educate the black people and make them look at themselves as perfect human beings (Mfana).*

It is clear that the individual understanding of the educational impoverishment of their respective communities has served as a learning stance fostering critical reflection, which has also driven the activists to join CLING in attempt to change the educational situation, thus engage in transformational action leading to critical consciousness. Still it is important to note that transformative learning is not a linear process with the finite outcome of critical consciousness: it develops gradually in the struggle already begun (Heaney&Horton, 1990:89). Thus the motivation to act in CLING largely reveals the occurrence of the critical reflection with CLING Programme of Action (PoA) and its implementation representing the transformative action. Based on the household baseline survey data (FP CLING meeting, 2009), PoA addresses both the consequences and factors perpetuating the poor educational status, which aims to change them with the erection of community libraries, afterschool support for the learners, promotion of ABET classes, and the struggle to establish grade 1

and 2 ABET classes, that are not provided by the government in FP. Still as mentioned previously the conscientization, fostered by the critical reflection, is an ongoing process.

Conscientization is a dialectical action requiring dialogue to verify one's discoveries (Merriam et al, 2007:138-140). In the case of CLING, reflection-on-action activities might have served that purpose: the notes from the CRs meetings with the adult educators involved and my observation allow claiming that it has occurred there, though there is no data whether the same applies to CLING meetings.

Still I noticed the absence of locating the origins of local community problems in the larger framework of neoliberal policies and how it influences children's poor performance in the public schools available, inexistent and/ or instrumental adult literacy programmes, and the shortage of educational resources available thus further increasing marginalization of the communities. A few examples indicating the increased understanding of how the government works, black working class oppression when pursuing the needs of the community, framing the community needs in reflection of the undelivered services by the government, and debilitating apartheid influences (Sehlolo, Paki, EN focus group discussion, Moeketsi, Mfana) demonstrate that the systemic oppression has been unveiled. It gives ground to conclude the in-depth individual critical reflection and transformation. Having to rely mostly on the individual interviews, as it could not be tested whether collective critical reflection has occurred, the data suggests that critical reflection varies among the learners-activists, though it does not indicate collective critical reflection.

6.2.2. Liberation struggle

The group conscientization process in Freirean words is the action that involves unveiling the oppression and engaging in transformative action, i.e. liberation struggle, as freedom is not acquired by a gift (Freire, 1972:24). Indeed, a social action that aims to help people gain more control over the events affecting their lives, i.e. fight the oppression, contains resisting the social control[25] (Newman, 2000:271), which is the struggle that in itself is a learning site (Foley, 1993). Foley (1999; 1993) acknowledged that this struggle could be ambiguous, i.e. it can be liberating or debilitating.

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[25] Social control entail brute force, voluntary submission in exchange of the institutional membership or hegemonic control, which is Freirean words is the mythical society, when 'commonsense' mythical truths favoring one group over the other are channeled and become internalized by the oppressed (Newman, 2000:271-272; Freire, 1972:109-114).

In fact, throughout the transformative action in which CLING's activists engaged aiming to lift the oppression by improving the educational situation in their respective communities, they encountered various obstacles. Among many of them, just a few will be mentioned to illustrate the process. For instance, CLING members in EN, are involved in the process of acquiring the land for the library. It is a long bureaucratic process, but with little avail as Sehlolo describes:

> *We struggle to get a land for the shack library, <...> we are renting. <...> But if the government should have said: that's the vacant land... We have identified a number of land that is vacant. <...> But for us to get to a relevant person, that's when the problem comes. <...> We go to the ward councilor, ward councilor says: write letter to a man, who is from department of land <...>. We write a letter to that person. And then that person says: but no, write a letter to a treasurer.*

The obstacles met on the way resulted in learning, as to how the government departments function, reflection upon the racism that black working class South Africans face "*as the colour of the skin makes the difference and makes the things move faster*" (EN focus group discussion). CLING in EN have not acquired the land yet, but are relying on renting a shack in the community.

Whereas FP activists before starting their learner support program tried to engage with the schoolteachers and learn about the syllabus, which would allow CLING members to support the learners with their schoolwork more effectively. Nevertheless, the attempt resulted in no success with the teachers being afraid that their jobs 'might be taken away'. Currently the activists are relying on the information provided by the children in order to teach in line with the syllabus (Tutu, Samora).

These examples illustrate the obstacles that the activists encountered while struggling for social justice. In no way it entails that the described obstacles were the only ones as short time in the field allowed just getting a glimpse of the multiple struggles with the government and the educational structures unwilling to (facilitate) change; also diverse conflicts within CLING structures that could also facilitate the learning process (Foley, 1993). Though the struggle is subject to various setbacks and obstacles, still it results in personal experience fostering the critical reflection on the oppression leading to transformative action, which results in new experience to be reflected on thus the experiential learning cycle continues. The above given examples show the liberating effects of the struggle as the activists by encountering the obstacles, changed their approach, i.e. renting out the library space in EN, relying on the information the children provide in FP. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that reflection on lack of material resources and

know-how, difficulties in engaging greater numbers of community members in the activities permeating the data deriving especially from FP (Samora; FP CR report, 2010; Francis) illustrates debilitating effects of the liberation struggle.

Lack of know-how points to another aspect of the liberation struggle, i.e. the feeling of inferiority common among the oppressed, which changes once the oppressed engage in the action ejecting the oppressor from within and transforming the oppressive system (Freire, 1972:38-41). Interviews revealed the increased individual self-confidence of the CLING members emerging through actively changing the educational situation in the community. For example, Fola from EN, who belonged to the representative steering committee in the community previously, claimed that through her involvement in CLING, she gained self-confidence allowing her to engage with the different stakeholders on equal grounds defending the case of the community. The shyness of Moeketsi and Adawa from FP shrank during their involvement in CLING (Lekalala, Adawa); Moeketsi, Mfana, Samora identified their growing confidence to teach adults. The above given examples demonstrate the increase of confidence at the individual level. However, the lack of know-how, focus on the obstacles met (EN focus group discussion; Samora; FP CR report, 2010; Francis) point to little collective confidence in both sites.

6.2.3. Instrumental learning

Both Lovett et al (1983:145) and Mezirow (1991:210-211) attributed the importance to the instrumental learning as a preparation for the social action enabling the activists to engage in lifting the oppressive situation. Several education activities (described in 6.1.3. section) took place throughout five years. Most of the learners-activists participated in the volunteer literacy training (ran in FP in 2009). The learners-activists requested this training recognizing the lack of skills to run the Saturday classes (FP CR report). After the training CLING activists reflected that their knowledge on ABET programs increased, subsequently the training provided the learner-activists with the ideas on how to better engage in educational activities with children, and also how to approach the teaching of adults and children differently. Overall this increased learner-activists confidence to teach adults (Fola, Desla, Samora, Moeketsi, Mfana). Furthermore, especially FP activists who are directly involved in the teaching of the children observed the difference in running the classes after the training:

> *It's easier to work now, to understand if kids are listening to us, if they have any problems. <...> Previously we did not have any teaching experience, and also we started to make our teaching in line with the syllabus (Samora).*

The reflection on learning from this particular program seems to be richer among the respondents in FP, which could be explained by the fact that they attended all the training workshops that were held in their community, whereas EN respondents participated there sporadically. The need to find funding for transport could have influenced the irregular attendance of activists from EN (Francis).

Other learning in the instrumental domain, acknowledged by the activists, was gained by doing, e.g. knowledge on school syllabus thus increased ability to assist children with their schoolwork (Arusi), ideas of different methodologies to enhance children's reading skills (Tutu). Finally, though only the CRs were trained on data collection and reporting for the university, several respondents in FP emphasized their confidence in organizing door-to-door campaigns, data collection, report writing, conducting the meetings, as those were the activities they were doing in CLING (Moeketsi, Tutu, Samora).

The quick look to the data reveals that richer instrumental learning was identified among the FP activists. On the one hand, it could be explained by the fact, that although respondents in FP, were previously involved in the community activism, they participated sporadically or did not hold any significant power positions in the community structures, and lacked the know-how (FP CR report, 2010). In contrary to that of the EN, thus FP CLING activists gained copious instrumental learning by doing. On the other hand, Foley (1993, 1999) noted that most of the learning occurring in the social struggle is incidental, embedded in other activities and might be not articulated as learning by the respondents. Indeed, CLING members established the community libraries, run afterschool activities, edutainment sessions, and fundraise, which they were not doing previously. Therefore it provides evidence that the activists learned through the situated cognition setting (initiated by themselves or EPC educators), however, do not fully recognize it yet.

6.2.4. Commentary

Data analysis reveals movement towards group conscientization both in EN and FP. Firstly, it was ascertained by the occurrence of the individual critical reflection, which was fostered by the understanding of the educational deprivation in one's respective community through personal engagement in CLING, external awareness raising and reflection-on-action sessions. Importantly, data also reveal that the understanding of the poor performance of children at schools, lack of feeding scheme affecting the learning, little educational resources within easy reach of the community, debilitating effects of the apartheid

education to adults of today, resulted in the necessary theorizing thus framing and understanding the deprivation of the community, i.e. oppression, in a broader setting.

Furthermore, multiple experiences from previous activism and other social life aspects of the learners coming into the play, as this learning is contextual, make it hard to determine the critical reflection occurring only through the engagement in CLING from the data available; it is presumed that this also contributed to critical reflection. CLING PoA addressing factors and consequences, perpetuating the educational situation, is treated as the reflection of the transformative action indicating the final step in the group conscientization process.

For the purposes of the analysis, the conscientization process was simplified by dividing it into the learning stance, critical reflection and transformative action. However, data confirm it is complex and contradictory process with multiple experiences shaping the critical reflection, leading to transformative action, which further generates experience to be critically reflected upon and leads to other transformative action. Indeed, engagement in action, i.e. liberation struggle, creates experiences to be reflected upon thus either leading to liberation or debilitation as some examples in this work have shown. To sum up, group conscientization and as this particular case proves is not a finite outcome that derives from the social action, but rather an ongoing process occurring in the social action. Learning associated with the group conscientization resulted in copious instrumental learning; though the achievements of activists prove rich instrumental learning, much of this learning is still unrecognized by the activists themselves.

Finally, identification of varying levels of individual critical reflection and transformative action indicates the movement towards group conscientization. Still having to rely on individual interviews with only limited available data on collective aspects of conscientization, e.g. collective critical reflection and confidence, it restricts the understanding of the group conscientization process. Moreover, Mezirow (1990b:363) claims that the individual perspective transformation must occur before the social transformation can succeed, thus the limited data allows presuming the ongoing individual transformations leading to critical collective consciousness in Freirean words, which, nevertheless, should be addressed in a research conducted after some time.

Lastly, the nature of CLING action attempting to (re) create alternative institutions at local level, reflection and focus of the community rather than working class allows for CLING to be placed within community action model as defined by Lovett et al (1983:38).

6.3. Individual transformation of CLING members

6.3.1. Accommodating the political differences

Lovett et al (1983:74) acknowledged that one of the factors fostering critical reflection in the course of action is the activity that "*challenges the normal course of things*" or in the words of Mezirow (1991:168) a 'disorienting dilemma' that challenges the established personal perspectives. Thus one of the observations deriving from the interviews with CRs both in EN and FP was their acknowledgement of engaging in working relation for the first time with the members from different political groups and especially with the members of the ANC. It's important to note that the political ideas of CRs and especially members of the ANC differ: two CRs are active members of APF, which is in opposition to the neo-liberal policies of ANC (Benjamin, 2006:75; Naidoo&Veriava, 2005:41). Other two CRs belong to SOPA, which advocates the proletarian revolution and was created in response to ANC promoted domination of white South Africans (SOPA information). Unfortunately there is no data revealing what restrained the activists from working together previously. Throughout the community mobilization process (Lekalala) and seemingly through the entire CLING activists' interaction with EPC educators, the CRs were encouraged to create CLING as a representative community structure and work with those who differ politically (CLING workshop report, 2007; FP CLING summary report, 2008), which could have served as a challenging action.

The experience of working together with the members from different political groups fostered CLING learners-activists to reflect on their own political beliefs and how they differ:

> *You find ANC, SANCO there (in CLING) and then the political issues differ. <...> One is to learn to understand how people think, from other parties (Paki).*

> *You start to learn the way ANC members think, to relate how they analyze things (Samora).*

Mezirow's theory provides tools enabling to explain learning caused by this challenging action and related reflection. It outlines several processes of learning occurring in the 'frames of reference', i.e. elaboration of the existing points of view, establishing new points of view, transforming points of view and transforming habits of mind. With the elaboration of the existing point of view, one seeks for further evidence supporting the held belief;

whereas establishment of new points of view means creating new points of view about the new phenomena supporting the existing habit of mind. Transforming points of view and habits of mind is related to critical reflection. Transforming points of view allows changing points of view based on certain experience thus becoming more tolerant to new phenomena. Continuous transformation of points of view can lead to perspective transformation. In the transformation of habit of mind the generalized biases are transformed through critically reflecting on them (Mezirow, 1997:7).

Thus the following quote of the activist from FP exemplifies how engagement with the politically different groups fostered the critical reflection and enabled not rejecting contrasting ideas immediately as unworthy as the established 'frame of reference' would guide (Mezirow, 1997:5), but rather understanding the political differences and ability to learn even from the political opponents:

> *As an activist you confine to the programme you are doing, you are not much involved with the community at large. You have certain thinking and the more you become involved; you become more open, more involved and debating, transparent. <...> Once you actually start to be more involved with the other people, you do not necessarily need to accept other people's ideas, the more you become involved, you start debating and you understand that you learn something from them and they learn something from you. You start to accept different people and accept for what they believe (Moeketsi).*

This quote points to transformation occurring, but I would not like to conclude that it has resulted in the perspective transformation. Because though activists claim to be working with the members from different political groups, the core of FP CLING, which is combined of mostly apolitical and SOPA members, proves otherwise thus rather indicating the individual transformation of the point of view.

Whereas in other case, the challenging action lead to the elaboration of the existing points of view as the following quote of the activist in EN illustrate:

> *They (ANC members) just come down and believe that through negotiations they can achieve. This is how they believe even though it takes longer. What I have learned... that they will forever support their organization, no matter who is doing right or wrong (Paki).*

Reflections of the other CRs also reveal that the common working process lead to the elaboration of the existing points of view about politically different groups and especially ANC (Samora, Sehlolo).

6.3.2. Changed approach to community action

As mentioned in the profile of the respondents, both EN CRs were actively engaged in the APF, which unites and assists the communities resisting privatization (Naidoo&Veriava, 2005). The activities of APF affiliates differ and combine a range of tactics from institutional to non-institutional/ illegal means of action (marches, pickets, memorandums, negotiations, defiance actions) (Ibid.). The interview with both CRs revealed that within APF they had experience engaging in the non-institutional/ illegal means of action, of what they call the radical approach, to achieving the community development goals and giving preference to it. Nevertheless, one CR also identified the experience with the institutional means of engagement:

> *<…> on APF we would automatically challenge the councilors, to be accountable, to deliver the services promised to the community residents <…> if there is no library, forcefully APF would demand <…> we would go to the street and barricade in the street, <…> toyi- toyi. And we make sure that we get what we want immediately.*

> *I was involved with <…> the water privatization case (in APF) <…> We even went the legal way. <…> If things do not work this way, we open the case for the government- we sue the state (Sehlolo).*

During the interview the activists shared, how illegal means of action would make the demands of the community heard and implemented faster than through negotiations and engagement with the local government, which they experienced through their involvement in CLING. Nevertheless, while acting in CLING they had to apply different means of engagement with the government structures, as they must accommodate the political differences present in CLING:

> *But on CLING I got ANC members that believe that this current government will do changes, <…> so I must be in line with them. As much as they believe in approaching them, going to the meetings (Sehlolo).*

Work together with the apolitical individuals and members from the different political groups, especially with the supporters of the current ANC government, not revealing their activist background (informal conversation with EN CRs), the need to engage in the negotiations with the local government instead of forceful demands might have served as several 'disorienting dilemmas'. Subsequently they provoked critical self-reflection on the 'frames of reference', which refrained from engaging into the institutional means of action (Mezirow, 1991:168), as the quotes of the activists illustrate:

> *I was a very radical comrade. <…> but with CLING I was able to engage with them now. Going to their offices. At first I even didn't care that they full me and say:*

Come, let's sit around the table and discuss that. At first I'd say: to hell with that. But since I am involved with CLING, I say: OK, let me go and hear what they say.

When we started the project, we were radical. <...> We were forever not interested in these meetings.

Nevertheless, further analysis confirm that engagement in the institutional actions rather transformed the points of view of EN CRs as they still believe in the effectiveness of the radical approach with the obstacles encountered in the process (exemplified in 6.2.2. section), confirming their existing habits of mind:

With toyi-toying was better.... <...> As much as we do this way, not the wrong way, the right way- still things don't come along.

As already addressed in the group conscientization section, emancipatory learning can be graphically illustrated in the simplified cyclical models, however, in reality this type of learning is complex and contradictory (Newman, 2000:276) with transformation of points of view guiding the action, with multiple experiences feeding the critical reflection and resulting in perspective transformation. Indeed, the following quotes of the CRs illustrates that learning about governmental procedures (occurring through the engagement in the institutional action), obstacles encountered and the identified transformation of points of view, reflection-on-action sessions with the adult educators (CLING biannual report) resulted in new experience on which the critical reflection on the resourcefulness of the community is based:

I think we have found different ways of organizing in the communities that we are involved. And how to start thinking... deep inside in the community; find the resources inside the community. <...> We say, we cannot engage with this capitalist stuff, but at the end of the day they are living in the community and there are not plenty of ways of raising funds, but to engage with them. <...> You know how are the small businesses in the communities. We have those ideas of socialist cooperatives how things should move, but <...> it's how you work within the system of the capitalist.

I am checking what the options are to address the existing problem. <...> If there is no library, I won't say, let's go to the street and barricade and demand that the councilor must do it. You see, let's check what is within that community, what can we do. We can collect the books door-to door, so we can start our small library.

These quotes reveal two apparently interwoven trends: a start in perceiving the community as a resourceful agent as well as another transformation of the point of view making it more permeable to cooperation with those who differ politically. Indeed, tapping into the community resources, e.g. in creating the library, co-funding the events (Francis), fundraising with local business even though they are of the capitalist nature opposite to the held beliefs (Paki), actually reveals the occurrence of the perspective transformation. As in

the words of Mezirow (1991:167), the perspective transformation resulted in reformulating the understanding about the community as a resource and permitting the cooperation with those differing politically if it allows achieving the community action goals raised.

Unfortunately available data from FP learners-activists does not reveal perspective transformation related to perception of the community as a resource. Nevertheless, their fundraising initiatives for food in local shops for Saturday classes, also among CLING members (Mfana, FP CLING meeting, 2010) may indicate the perspective transformation, which should be tested in the future research.

6.3.3. Commentary

This rather limited analysis evolved around just a few examples of the individual transformation that was the easiest to identify and in no way entail that there are no other individual transformation processes ongoing in both sites. The small amount of data examined in this study limits the analysis just to the identification of some apparent tendencies and clues, which should be tested in the future research.

First of all, as outlined in the methodology section, adults bring in their diverse experiences into the learning process thus it becomes hard to grasp which experiences contributed and how they actually shaped the transformational process (Lovett et al, 1983:73). It was concluded that emphasis on creating CLING as representative community structure, which might have served as an external challenging action fostering critical reflection, resulted in the transformation and elaboration of the existing points of view among CRs with the learners-activists becoming more tolerant to different political ideas, capable to cooperate in achieving the community action goals. Limited data does not allow analysing how previous experiences of the CRs, as community activists and especially within political organizations, which are on the opposite side of the political continuum, influence their current experiential learning within CLING. It just points to the existing habits of mind and points of view, which through the engagement in CLING became more inclusive.

The other observation deriving from the analysis is the transformation of points of view among the EN CRs that resulted in changed means applied to community action. Indeed, as the experience from the institutional approach to community action was subject to obstacles encountered, it lead to further critical reflection and perspective transformation that resulted in perception of the community as a resource which lead to tapping into the community resources.

Finally, it is worth noting that individual transformation seems to be identified the easiest among the CRs, who had substantial experience of previous community activism and definitely engaged in critical reflection sessions, i.e. reflection-on-action with EPC educators. This observation in no way entails that individual transformations did not occur among other learners-activists but it should be addressed in future research, also further developing the transformation learning theory on how the individual biographic history and socio-cultural factors shape the learning process, which Mezirow's theory, omitting the context, does not provide tools to explain (Taylor, 2000a, cited in Merriam et al, 2007:149).

7. Conclusions and directions for future research

It must be admitted that as a pioneering study analyzing transformative learning aspects within this particular NSM in Gauteng, South Africa, it has raised more questions to be addressed in the future researches than it actually answered. Before concluding, on how adults learn while struggling for social justice, it should be kept in mind, that until now there has been limited data available to make firm conclusions about complex transformative learning processes occurring, with the theory offering limited guidance in addressing multiplicity of issues affecting this type of learning (Taylor, 1997).

On the basis of the data reviewed here, it can be concluded that learners-activists engagement in the social movement cohering around literacy issues resulted in the ongoing individual transformations and movement towards group conscientization, and copious instrumental learning which subsequently supported the engagement of the activists.

Firstly, learning of the activists evolved around informal educational interventions, based on the popular education principles and informal, i.e. incidental, learning. The informal educational interventions, combined of the external educational input and reflection-on-action sessions, facilitated the occurrence of the critical reflection, on the dismal education status in learners-activists' respective communities, challenging perceptions held about different political groups and their respective communities. Combination of incidental learning, with multiple experiences deriving through the engagement in action, previous activism and informal educational interventions fostered the critical reflection and lead to ongoing individual and collective transformations. Furthermore, learners-activists gained skills and knowledge from the external educational interventions. This was especially true of

'learning by doing', i.e. addressing problems related to literacy in their communities. However, the learners-activists do not recognize this learning yet.

The identification of the critical reflection and the related transformative action allows concluding the movement towards group conscientization and individual transformations. Learners-activists experience in the social movement challenged and changed their understanding of the respective communities. They deepened their awareness on how poor children's performance is influenced by the quality of education provided in the public schools, how restricted access to educational resources limits participation in literacy activities, how adult illiteracy affects personal life and participation in the social life. Instead of waiting for saviors to come, they engaged in (re)creating the alternative institutions within their respective communities addressing the problems identified. Nevertheless, by bringing forward the community needs, they also experienced that uplifting the systemic oppression is a fight that does not necessarily lead to liberation but also to debilitation which either encourages to find the alternative solutions or demoralizes.

On the individual level at least the CRs became more tolerant and willing to cooperate with those differing politically by placing the community interests first. In addition, their thinking from believing in external support moved to seeking for resources within the community themselves.

Obviously these conclusions show the necessity of future research and highlight some directions. Primarily, limited data on collective critical reflection with rather individual critical reflection among the activists indicates the need of the research addressing the collective critical reflection further researching the occurred movement towards group conscientization. Secondly, the analysis of the individual transformations evolved around the most apparent ones; however, there might be other ongoing individual transformations. Thus it points to a potential research area, which should also address the omissions of Mezirow's theory used in this research, by approaching in a more detailed manner how individual biographic history and socio-cultural factors shape the learning process. Finally, the longitudinal study could also enable access to the existing 'perspectives' and deepen the analysis of the individual learning facets, complexity of group conscientization. Although having said that much more remains to be explored about transformative learning processes in social movements; I do believe that this study laid the ground for future researches on this particular social movement and contributed to a small empirical research body on adult learning in social movements in general.

Finally, there are no magic wand-waving solutions involved in this particular social movement (Gardiner, 2010) while addressing the marginalization of the communities perpetuated by the neoliberal government agenda: the process is subject to conflicts and obstacles. Sehlolo accurately describes it: "*we go one step forward, two steps backwards*". Despite the fact it shows the communities and learners-activists' resilience in finding alternative local solutions and indicates the empowering learning environment for adult-learners activists. Indeed, it is a learning environment where "<...> *no one teaches another nor anyone is self-taught. People teach each other mediated by the world*" (Freire, 1972:53). This learning environment significantly changes the understanding of the learners-activists involved and fosters the ability to pursue social, economical and political freedoms leading to development as freedom as Sen (1999) perceived it.

The overall conclusion of the present thesis is that popular education offers one more route to development. It emphasizes the empowerment of the communities and individuals through learning from own experience, by critically reflecting on how social relations and politics shape one's reality, and that one is capable to become an active agent in transforming it.

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- Samora (Community researcher, Freedom Park), recorded interview, April 10, 2011

- Moeketsi (Community researcher, Freedom Park), recorded interview, April 11, 2011

Focus group discussion

Furaha, Shani and Sipho (CLING members, Evaton North), recorded discussion, April 13, 2011

Annexes

Basic[26] semi-structured interview guide (Freedom Park&Evaton North, Gauteng, South Africa)

1. Involvement in CLING project (for how long are you involved, what is your position)
2. What are the activities FP/EN CLING is doing?
3. Could you please describe briefly what is in the action plan of the community and how the action plan was created? What is achieved from the action plan and what's not, why?
4. Could you please explain briefly from your perspective how the project in FP/ EN was initiated and why?
5. Who are the people mostly involved in CLING in EN, i.e. members of the NGO's, community activists, party members, etc? How did they get involved?

6. Were you involved in the community before? If yes, where exactly you were involved and what you were doing there.
7. Why did you personally get involved in CLING?
8. Now let's look back a bit and please compare yourself as a community activist before the start of CLING and now? Did anything change? What exactly? Do you feel that you

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[26] Note that the semi-structured interviews were conducted with each informant implying the occurrence of other questions during the process of the interview as well as adapting the questionnaire to each particular person and situation.

have grown as a leader/ community activist/ community member during your participation in CLING? If so, can you elaborate?

9. What do you think you know about the community issues, literacy through your participation in CLING that you would not know if you were just living in the community? How did you learn it?

10. Why your participation in CLING is important? What do you feel you bring into CLING process?

11. Did you learn anything through the implementation of CLING activities? What exactly? Are there any specific skills and knowledge you have gained? If, so what are they?

12. Did you participate in the adult literacy volunteer training? If yes? What did you learn throughout your participation in the program?

13. Do you think CLING in FP/EN changed since the initiation of the project? How?

14. Are there any difficulties in implementing the action plan? If yes, what are they?

15. I presume that at the beginning of the project, you did the stakeholder mapping, could you please identify the main stakeholders? Do you think the relation with the stakeholders in the community changed since you got involved in CLING? What exactly (how)?

16. How do you see the future of FP/EN CLING?

Focus group discussion guide (Evaton North, Gauteng, South Africa)

1. Were you involved in the community before? If yes, where exactly you were involved and what you were doing there.

2. What do you think you know about the community, literacy, etc that you did not know before your involvement in CLING?

3. What have you learned throughout your involvement in CLING?

4. How do you think you can improve the project in the future? How do you see the future of the project?