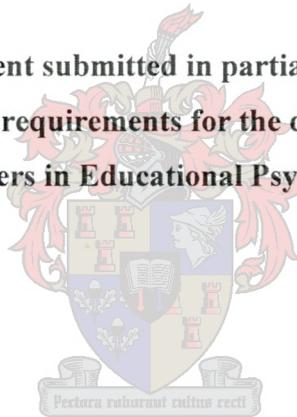


**GRADE TWELVE LEARNERS'S  
EXPERIENCES OF AN NGO'S LIFE SKILLS  
PROGRAMME.**

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**at the**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

## **SUMMARY**

After the apartheid regime of the white minority was dismantled, a new democratically elected government took power for the first time in the history of South Africa. This newly elected government brought new curriculum policies that have completely changed the education system in the country. Among was the Curriculum 2005, which used outcomes based education (OBE) for as the organising principle.

The aim of this study is to gain insight in to the experiences of Grade 12 learners who attended a Life Skills programme run by Association for Educational transformation (ASSET). ASSET is a non-governmental organisation that provided supplementary tuition to Grade 11 and 12 learners in the Khayelitsha and Langa Centre.

The research methodology was a qualitative case study of Xhosa-speaking boys and girls who were between seventeen and twenty-one years of age. The participants were selected from learners who lived in Khayelitsha and who are attending the Life Skills programme at the centre.

The methods used during data collection were interviews, note taking and a literature review. The data analysis was done by using a procedure of content analysis where manageable units of data were coded into categories and themes. These themes and categories were interpreted and matched with the relevant literature.

The findings of the study suggest that the Life Skills programme run by ASSET helped learners in acquiring life skills that may help them to handle challenges they may face. The learners interviewed for the study indicated that the programme had helped them to deal effectively with challenges such as teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and relationships. In addition, the learners suggested that the programme had expanded their knowledge about careers, tertiary institutions and the field of work. The findings of the study will be used by ASSET for further programme development.

## **OPSOMMING**

Nadat die apartheidsregime van die wit minderheid afgetakel is, het 'n nuutverkose demokratiese regering vir die eerste keer in die geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika die mag oorgeneem. Hierdie nuutverkose regering het nuwe kurrikulumbelid bepaal wat die onderwysstelsel in die land heeltemal verander het, en onder andere Kurrikulum 2005 en uitkomsgebaseerde onderwys (UGO) vir skole ingesluit het.

Hierdie navorsing ondersoek die lewensvaardigheidsprogram vir graad 12-leerders wat deur ASSET by die Khayelitsha Sentrum bedryf word. Die doel van hierdie ondersoek is om insig te kry in die ervaring van graad 12-leerders wat die lewensvaardigheidsprogram van ASSET bygewoon het. Nadat die apartheidsbewind van die wit minderheidsgroep ontbind is, het 'n nuutverkose demokratiese regering vir die eerste keer in die geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika aan bewind gekom." Die ondersoek is belangrik omdat dit leerders sal help om lewensvaardighede te verwerf wat hulle kan help om vraagstukke wat met MIV/Vigs, persoonlike probleme, misdaad en geweld, armoede, tienerswangerskap, verhoudings en beroepskeuses verband hou, te hanteer.

Die navorsingsmetode was 'n kwalitatiewe gevallestudie met Xhosasprekende seuns en dogters van tussen sewentien en een-en-twintig jaar oud. Die proefpersone is geselekteer uit leerders wat die lewensvaardigheidsprogram by die Sentrum bygewoon het, veral dié wat in Khayelitsha woon, omdat hulle die Sentrum maklik kon bereik.

Die metodes wat tydens data-insameling gebruik is, was onderhoude, aantekeninge en literatuuroorsig. Die data-analise is gedoen volgens 'n prosedure van oop kodering waartydens hanteerbare data-eenhede volgens kategorieë en temas gekodeer is. Hierdie temas en kategorieë is geïnterpreteer en met die literatuur vergelyk.

Die navorsingsresultate dui daarop dat die lewensvaardigheidsprogram wat deur ASSET bedryf word, leerders gehelp het om lewensvaardighede te verwerf wat hulle kan help om uitdagings te hanteer. Die leerders met wie daar vir die ondersoek onderhoude gevoer is,

het aangetoon dat die program hulle gehelp het om uitdagings soos tienerswangerskap, MIV/Vigs, dwelmmisbruik en verhoudings doeltreffend te hanteer. Verder het die leerders aangedui dat die program hulle kennis aangaande beroepe, tersiêre instellings en die wêreld van werk uitgebrei het. Voorstelle met betrekking tot die ondersoek is gemaak.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

# **CONCEPTUALISATION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In South African schools today life skills are taught under the umbrella of Life Orientation. Life Orientation encompasses health promotion, social development, personal development, physical development and orientation to the field of work (*Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-9*, 2002:4). In the early 1980s, Life Skills took the form of a subject called Guidance that involved personal guidance, social guidance, career guidance and vocational guidance. Guidance was not given the same recognition by education authorities as examination subjects like Mathematics and History.

As a result, Guidance, which included Life Skills themes, was used by some teachers in certain South African schools to fill up the number of periods for educators who did not have the necessary qualifications and expertise to teach this subject. These Guidance periods were apparently used to fill educators' timetables rather than to provide the necessary life skills. In other schools, Guidance periods appeared to be used to complete the unfinished syllabus in subjects like Mathematics and Physical Science, that were seen as the most problematic subjects due to lack of resources to teach the subjects. Learners also used Guidance periods to complete their homework and as "free" periods. Consequently, because of a lack of recognition of Guidance periods in some South African schools, learners often had trouble in handling life skills.

Issues, such as proper career choices, entrepreneurial skills, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, decision-making skills, lack of social support services and other difficulties affecting learners were never addressed. Curriculum 2005, the new South African curriculum for schools, has come up with a curriculum that includes a new learning area, called Life Orientation, which will deal with social issues that affect learners in schools. These issues include the promotion of healthy child and adolescent development, prevention of diseases, gender equality, good

citizenship, child protection, democracy, values, attitudes, skills about career choices, recreation or physical activity and promotion of lifelong learning (*National Curriculum Statement Grade 10-12, 2004:3*).

This new curriculum is based on Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). In OBE, a learner-centred results-oriented approach is central and learners can learn and succeed. The implications are that learning institutions, such as schools, play a major role in determining the success of a learner (South Africa, 1997a: 7). The objectives of OBE and Curriculum 2005 are to help the learner acquire critical thinking skills, attitudes and understanding. These outcomes will therefore ensure that learners gain the skills, knowledge and values that will enable them to play a vital role in their own success as well as the success of their families, communities and the nation as a whole (South Africa, 1997c:14).

## **1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ASSET PROGRAMME**

The Life Skills programme offered by the Association for Educational Transformation (ASSET) was established in 1982 under the umbrella of the Empowerment Programme (EP) and Learning Development Programme (LDP). It aimed to assist the former Department of Education and Training (DET) to assist African standard 10 learners to pass their Senior Certificate, especially in Mathematics, Physical Science and English. However, restrictive syllabi, inadequate facilities, shortage of books, overcrowded classrooms and lack of well-trained teachers were the major challenges of the organisation (*South African Institute of Race Relations Annual Report, 1996:7*).

Among other Life Skills issues covered by LDP and ER programmes are study methods, problem-solving skills, substance abuse, time management, career choices, teenage pregnancy and decision-making skills. These Life Skills programmes were designed to assist learners to move away from depending on their educators and to realise that they needed to take responsibility for their own education (*South African Institute of Race Relations Annual Report, 1996:8*). Learners who attended the programme were recruited from various disadvantaged schools in the communities of Cape Town.

Grade 12 learners at the Khayelitsha Centre have a selection of nine subjects to choose from, namely English, Mathematics, Physical Science, Accounting, Economics, Business Economics, History, Geography and Life Skills. The LDP and EP emphasises Mathematics, Science and English as the learning areas that are most challenging to these learners, while Life Skills teaching becomes the core subject to all learning streams, for example the Social Science stream, Commerce stream and Science stream.

Life Skills teaching is therefore the corner stone of LDP and ER programmes. The programmes were introduced by Daphne Wilson in 1980. The programmes were funded by Evangelische Zentralstelle Entwicklungshilfe, the German Academic Exchange and later by the German Government through its consulate in Cape Town (*South African Institute of Race Relations Annual Report, 1996*). Themes for the programmes were chosen based on the personal, social and academic challenges faced by learners who attended the programme.

The programme is effective and helpful to learners, especially in Mathematics, Physical Science and the Life Skills programme, which is aimed at assisting learners in social challenges, career choices, health-related issues and other difficulties that are experienced by learners at school.

The *South African Institute of Race Relations Annual Report (1996:6)* also reported that learners who attend the Life Skills programme regularly perform very well in their end of year examinations. Learners, who have attended at least 60% of Saturday classes, achieve for instance a pass rate of 65%. This seems to be a great improvement when compared to the national pass rate for the former Department of Education and Training (DET) schools of 48%. The programme is also cost-effective for learners, because the cost for the programme is R80 per learner for the whole year and it covers registration, tuition and stationery.

Lobner (1997:21) suggested that learners who attended Life Skills programmes received better pass rates at school. The current Life Skills programme assists learners to be able to deal with challenges such as gender stereotypes, reproductive health, violence, prostitution and homosexuality. However, the programme could be more effective if there could be at least two intervals during the four hours of tuition, in order to accommodate different concentration spans

of learners. The programme could also be more effective in subjects like Physical Science and Biology if experiments could be done together with the theory during the year, rather during winter school only.

The programme was introduced in two centres in order to provide supplementary tuition to Grade 11 and 12 twelve learners. The supplementary tuition took place every Saturday throughout the year. Winter holidays and spring holidays were also utilised by the organisation to provide extensive teaching in examinable subjects. Career exhibitions were organised to expose learners to a wide range of career choices (*South African Institute of Race Relations Annual Report, 1996:6-8*).

A centre in Khayelitsha was specifically chosen for the programme because of its convenience to the majority of learners who attended the programme. Public transport was accessible to the majority of learners who attended the programme at the centre. The centre could absorb a huge number of Grade 11 and 12 learners. The centre was about 35 km from the city centre, which made it more accessible to users of public transport as well.

### **1.3 PERSONAL MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

This study derives from my work as a Life Skills facilitator at the centre. As a facilitator of the Life Skills programme, it is always my objective to investigate the experiences of Grade 12 learners who attend the Life Skills programme run by ASSET at the centre.

### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Most learners in schools experience difficulties in their academic work and some of them are not able to perform to the best of their ability. The reason for this could be the lack of Life Skills teaching in their lives. According to the World Health Organisation (2004) learners with great personal, social and emotional challenges cannot perform well at school. Therefore, it is important to provide school children with a Life Skills programme that could help them to cope with the challenges in their lives.

### **1.5 RESEARCH AIMS**

### **1.5.1 General aims**

The general aim of the study is to get insight into the experience of Grade 12 learners who attend the Life Skills programme run by ASSET at the Khayelitsha Centre in Khayelitsha, a township in the Western Cape.

### **1.5.2 Specific aims**

The specific aims of the study is to gain insight of how the experiences of Grade 12 learners who attended Life Skills programmes run by (ASSET) impacted on learners' academic development, social development, personal growth, knowledge about careers, knowledge about health-related issues and other areas pertaining to learners' development.

## **1.6 THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THIS STUDY**

Teaching children life skills could be done within a broader context. Parents, for example, can provide life skills to children, community members can also play an important role in providing life skills to others as well as peers, teachers and community organisations that can all play a meaningful role in providing life skills. For this reason, the appropriate theoretical approach for the current study is an eco-systemic approach.

According to Jordan and Jordan (1998:163), an eco-systemic approach does not only emphasise individual problem, but addresses the problem beyond an individual context. This means that individual problems can be understood in family context, environmental context and school context. This further suggests that teaching life skills to children cannot only centre on teachers alone but has to take into account teaching from a context. From an eco-systemic approach people's actions and levels of reasoning can be understood based on systems theory. For example, if the one system collapses, the other systems will also be affected (Jordan and Jordan, 1998).

According to Smit (1990:365), an eco-systemic approach centres the attention on the relationship between the child, family, community, schools and the national and global economy. All the above contextual aspects play a major role in understanding the child's problems. Family structures and community structures such as the school are very important to any child's

problem. For example, within the family structure, family members function as sub-systems (like parents and siblings, grandmother, grandfather and other extended family members). All these sub-systems affect each other.

This theoretical framework is also supported by social learning theory from Bandura who stated that the environment, people around us, and cognition are the key factors in any human development (Santrock, 1997:44). According to Bandura's social learning theory, people learn by observing what others do and we are cognitively observing the behaviour of others and possibly adopt this behaviour for ourselves ( Santrock, 1997:45).

In addition, Bandura believes that in order for people to learn something positive from any person, for example a young boy may observe his father's aggressive outbursts and hostile interchanges with people; when observed with his peers, the young boy's style of interaction is highly aggressive, showing the same characteristics of his father's behaviour. In the current study, it will be shown that learners will model the good or bad behaviour of their educators, parents, peers and friends. According to the social learning theory, most of what children learn, is learnt in a social context. The social setting in which learners live, work, and play is a very powerful influence on behaviour, attitude, and beliefs about ones environment and the world (Gredler, 1997:275).

The assumptions according to the social learning theory and the eco-systemic theory, on which this study is based, are that a Life Skills programme cannot be implemented in isolation, but should be developed in a social context.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.7.1 Research design**

The research is qualitative and the format is that of a case study (Mertens, 1998:166). The literature review will form theoretical perspectives in the understanding of Life Skills programmes and Grade 12 learners for this case study. Qualitative design was used for this study and that also allows for the descriptions of the process and changes as they become apparent during the research. Thirty-two Xhosa-speaking girls and boys between 17 and 21 years old

participated in this study. They were selected from the Grade 12 learners who attended Life Skills classes at Khayelitsha Centre and consented to be participants in the case study.

### **1.7.2 Case study**

The investigation was conducted by means of a case study. The case study investigation will be the phenomenon of Grade 12 learners who attended a Life Skills programme run by ASSET. Miles and Huberman, as cited in Merriam (1998:27) believe that a case study is a phenomenon in a bounded context. Stake (in Merriam, 1998:28) also states that the case study can also be defined as an integrated system. In this case study, the emphasis will be on thirty-two Xhosa-speaking girls and boys of between seventeen and twenty one years old and who attend the Life Skills programme at Khayelitsha, which is about 21 km from Cape Town.

### **1.7.3 Data collection methods**

Data was collected from learners who attended a Life Skills programme run by ASSET at Khayelitsha Centre in Khayelitsha, a township in the Western Cape. The data was collected during two sessions per group for four groups. The researcher collected the information from the participants. A literature review, semi-structured focus group interviews as well as note taking were used to collect the data.

### **1.7.4 Data analysis**

According to Merriam, the qualitative study does not follow a linear process. The implications are that data collection and data analysis is a simultaneous, ongoing process (Merriam, 1998:151, Mertens, 1998:348). In addition, data analysis was conducted based on the following processes:

- reflection on the part of the researcher during and after data collection; and
- content analysis of the data collected through interviews and field notes.

During data analysis, information was sorted, collected, categorised and systematised within the context of the study so that it could address the research question at hand. The researcher as well as two independent researchers analysed the data independently for themes.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The key concepts relating to life skills as well as various definitions of life skills, from different schools of thought as used in my study, are presented below:

- ASSET is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) which aims to assist disadvantaged learners to pass Grade 12, through learning programmes such as Enrichment Programmes (ER) and Learner Development Programmes LDP.

The organisation was initially known as the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) before it became ASSET in 2003. ASSET also has a Bursary Department that provides financial aid to learners who pass Grade 12, but are unable to fund themselves in furthering their tertiary education. This organisation assists learners who come from various high schools in the disadvantaged communities of Cape Town.

The organisation helps learners in subjects like Life Skills, Mathematics, English, History, Geography, Economics, Business Economics, Accounting and Physical Science. The ASSET Life Skills programme offers topics such as self-awareness, study skills, time management, decision-making skills, substance abuse, career choices, coping with unemployment, sex education, etc. All these skills are offered to learners who attend the Life Skills programme through the (EP) and (LDP) programmes.

- **Life Skills programme**

Life skills can be defined as an educational process that equip learners with skills to deal effectively with their personal growth and social challenges, and to work hard to perfect their skills (Rooth, 2000:166). It refers to a part of the national educational programme that a learner may complete in one school year, or to any other educational programme that members of the Executive Council may deem to be equivalent (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

- **Learner**

*Learner* refers to any person receiving education or who is obliged to receive education in terms of Act No 84, 1996 (South Africa, 1996).

## 1.9 STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

The following gives a brief outline of the research report. **Chapter 1** is an orientation of the study while **Chapter 2** deals with the literature review. The impact of the Life Skills programme offered by ASSET to Grade 12 at high school level is part of the discussion.

**Chapter 3** deals with the research design and research methodology and **Chapter 4** covers the data collection procedure, data analysis, findings, the discussion and recommendations regarding the study.

## 1.10 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

In this chapter a personal motivation, the problem statement, research aims, theoretical approach, definition of terms as well as a structural overview of the qualifying statement about the study, e.g. an introduction to the case study as method of research were presented.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **A REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study of life skills has been of great interest among researchers and theorists such as Rooth (2000), Lobner (1997) and De Lange (1981). Many ideas and concepts have been developed that have led to a systematic framework for understanding life skills. This chapter gives a review of literature related to the research topic. In particular, this literature review will be focusing on the following aspects:

Various definitions of life skills, historical background of different life skills programmes and learners' experiences of these life skills programmes will be expounded. I will also discuss a brief background leading to a definition of life skills by various schools of thought.

#### **2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In South African schools, life skills have been taught differently on different levels. For example, during the apartheid era life skills education in senior secondary schools took the form of career guidance, counselling and vocational training. In addition to that, secondary education has existed as adult basic education and training as well as peace education (Lobner, 1997:10). Before the implementation of Curriculum 2005, Guidance was not taught in most coloured and black public schools in South Africa.

The present formal education system has removed the old curriculum, which was based on apartheid policies, and replaced it with a curriculum that can help learners deal with issues of a diverse country (*Transition Guidelines Curriculum Development*, 2002:1). In order to reach that goal, Life Orientation was introduced in the school curriculum for all learners in South Africa. The main concern of Life Orientation is the social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical growth of learners, and with the way in which these facets are interrelated. In addition, Life Orientation can also equip learners to make informed decisions and enable them to take

appropriate actions regarding health promotion, social development, personal development, physical development and movement and orientation in the world of work (South Africa, 2002:4).

According to the *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12* (South Africa, 2004:4), Life Orientation is aimed at providing learners with skills that will enable them to engage on personal, psychological, neuro-cognitive, motor, moral, spiritual, cultural socio-economic and constitutional levels to respond to the demands of the world, to assume responsibilities, and to create most of life's opportunities. In addition, Life Orientation has been designed to promote knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that may prepare learners to respond to the challenges that face them as well as the challenges they will have to deal with as adults, and to prepare them to play a vital role in society and the economy.

It is also important to note that there is a difference between Guidance and Life Orientation in South African education. Guidance, for example, was a subject taught from Grade 10 to 12 and was not an examination subject, whereas Life Orientation is taught from Grade R to 9 and is an examination subject, which consists of Physical Education, Religious Studies and Life Skills (South Africa, 2002:4). Although Guidance and Life Orientation differ from each other in terms of implementation, the common goal is to assist learners in their personal, social, academic and career development and in their ability to play a useful role in society. This simply means that the new Curriculum 2005 will allow Life Skills education in South Africa to be taught in all schools across the colour line.

Unfortunately, although the newly democratic government and education department have created a curriculum that promotes health education, social development, personal development, physical development and movement and orientation of world of work in schools, there seems to be poor service delivery in some schools. For example, there are schools that still use unqualified educators to teach Life Skills, who have no facilities for HIV-positive people, who do not attend career exhibitions, and where there is no freedom of religion and where corporal punishment is still used to discipline learners. I therefore believe that creating good education policies does not

necessarily mean that they are going to be followed and implemented at all times. Education officials will have to do follow-ups and determine whether policies are applied by everybody.

After South Africa's new democratic government was elected, they removed the curriculum that was based on the racist ideology of Christian National Education, and replaced it with Curriculum 2005 (Harber, 2001:201). This was the first time in the history of education in South Africa that Life Orientation that encompasses Life Skills has been given the same recognition as other examinable subjects such as Mathematics, English and History. This new development will mean that Life Orientation will have its own period every day in the seven-day cycle at school, not once in seven days, as it used to be in the past.

This situation has been foreseen by other stakeholders in the education fraternity. For example, in the De Lange Report of 1949 the importance of making provision for guidance in primary and secondary schools was highly recommended by the commission. In 1981, the De Lange commission also recommended a great need for Guidance in schools (Le Roux, 1985:40-41). This positive view about implementation of Guidance in South African schools was a great concern to many people who are dealing with education policies.

In this regard, the newly elected government has played a meaningful role in designing a curriculum that has met the holistic development of learners' social challenges, personality and intellectual, emotional and physical development and the way in which these facets are interrelated. Life Skills will also enable learners to make informed decisions about themselves and the environment. Learners will also be encouraged to obtain and practice life skills that can help them respond to challenges and assist them in playing a visible and responsible role in the economy and in society.

Rooth (2000:45) differs from the view that Guidance is substituted by Life Orientation in Curriculum 2005. She believes that Guidance and Life Orientation are two different things in South African schools, because Guidance was used by the apartheid regime to indoctrinate pupils with its racist and discriminatory laws and to create cultural division along racial lines. She further emphasises that Life Skills Education was never part of the Guidance curriculum during

the apartheid regime. Consequently, children who had challenges that required Life Skills support were never helped, and learners who showed potential at school could not achieve their objectives due to a lack of life skills training.

On the other hand, Lobner (1997:1) believes that Guidance was aimed at helping children to cope with the demands of their society and to survive within the labour market. To achieve this objective the government trained Guidance teachers who had to create opportunities for learners and who had to help the learners challenge any attitudes that might limit their individual development. In addition, the post-apartheid era has seen different groups and institutions being involved in Life Skills teaching. In the post-apartheid era, public and private employment counselling services, Guidance teachers in schools, public and private vocational training centres, NGOs, the service corps and universities are therefore now providing Life Skills services. The understanding of what Life Skills covers, differs from one organisation to another (Lobner, 1997:7).

I fully agree with the view that in the past Guidance was used for the wrong purposes by the apartheid government, although it is important to understand that the entire education system in black schools was used to fulfil the needs of the white minority and not only Guidance, as Rooth (2000) states. In addition, the Life Skills syllabus in South African schools – both black and white – today encompasses a variety of themes, which were not in the Guidance syllabus in the past, due to discriminatory laws. For example, life skills themes such as substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and others are now part of the Life Skills syllabus. This was not the case in the past. Learners who encountered such problems were therefore removed from the school system and referred to reformatories.

### **2.3 LIFE SKILLS AS A CONCEPT**

There are various schools of thought about what a life skill is and what it encompasses. Because these definitions vary, it is essential in any life skills-related study to use a clear operational definition. Various definitions that have been proposed and that have elements considered relevant for this study, are reviewed in the following paragraphs.

According to (Rooth, 1995:6) life skills can be defined as essential skills that make life easier and which help learners to behave in a certain way, cope with life challenges and helping them in translating what they think, feel and believe into action. This view of life skills received tremendous support from organisations such as the Career Research Information Centre (CRIC) (1995:78), and yet although CRIC supports this definition, it emphasises specific life skills themes such as writing a CV, interviewing skills, job hunting and other employment-related skills.

Rooth (2000:33) also believes that life skills education focuses on human skills that can help individuals to deal appropriately with the demands and the challenges of their lives, e.g. unwanted pregnancy. The Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPSA, 2000:2) sees Life Skills as a learning area that helps young people to develop a sense of confidence, boosting their self-esteem and enabling them to handle issues like pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and STDs. There is consequently consensus that Life Skills education improves personal development, social development and physical development.

Mental Health, a unit within the World Health Organization, suggests that Life Skills education is designed to facilitate the practical use of an individual's psychological skills in a cultural and developmentally effective manner to contribute to promotion of personal and social development of health and social problems, and protection of human rights (Department of Mental Health, World Health Organization 2004:2). In particular, Life Skills education, as examined in this thesis, encompasses HIV/AIDS, substance abuse-related topics, teenage pregnancy, relationships, social challenges, career opportunities and violence (Department of Mental Health, World Health Organization, 2004:6). Frost (1991:40) postulates that Life Skills can be defined as a system which can equip adolescents who come from poor families, dilapidated homes and poor education systems with practical skills, which will help them to make ends meet and develop their personal characteristics. In other words, life skills should not only be seen as a learning area that can only equip individuals with personal skills, but also with skills to deal with their families, communities, peers and challenges in their school work.

Frost (1991:219) suggests that Life Skills can be seen as a system that can help adolescents in developing skills like goal-setting, behavioural change techniques, coping with anxiety, developing verbal and non-verbal communication skills, initiations of social interactions, social communication skills and assertiveness skills. In Life Skills education, learners are taught life skills within themes such as relationships, sexuality and substance abuse, voting, community involvement and future careers. In all the above-mentioned definitions, it can be seen that concepts of life skills emphasise on a number of broad aspects of being a human, which include personal development, physical development, health-related issues and community development. These issues form a framework within which the current study is done.

#### **2.4 LIFE SKILLS AS PREVENTATIVE MENTAL HEALTH**

The World Health Organization has agreed in the meeting that was held in Geneva that, in order to promote health and to prevent unwanted health problems, the following is necessary:

- to integrate the curriculum with Life Skills education in schools;
- to provide assistance and training to support the advancement of Life Skills education for the promotion of the healthy psychological development of children and adolescents;
- to develop Life Skills education as an essential component of health promotion in schools; and
- to promote Life Skills education through the channels of the WHO's Schools Health Initiative.

#### **2.5 LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMMES**

Life Skills programmes consist of clusters of themes such as HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, substance abuse, relationships, career choices and entrepreneurial skills. These life skills programmes take into account the needs of the community learners they serve. The programmes usually help learners to deal effectively with the problems experienced by a certain group of people or a specific community or institution. According to Inter Agency Meeting (2004), Life Skills programmes tend to be designed in accordance with specific factors, such as the cultural background of the target group, social expectations, government policies and the demography. Although these programmes may be implemented separately, they are often interrelated. For example, some Life Skills education

programmes emphasise particular problems affecting children, such as gang violence in schools, substance use, poor academic performance, dropping out of school. Other Life Skills programmes focus on career choices, mentoring, entrepreneurial projects and decision-making skills. Life Skills programmes exist in different forms and each unique characteristic has been discussed in literature. We will later review some of the proposed programmes highlighted below critically.

### **2.5.1 A national programme for adolescents**

The National Programme for Adolescents was developed in South Africa by the Department of Health and Education. The goal of this Life Skills and HIV/AIDS education programme for Grade 8 to 12 is to increase knowledge, to develop skills, to promote positive and responsible attitudes and to provide motivational support to learners (Peltzer, 2003:350). Expected outcomes of the programme are as follows:

- To demonstrate a clear and accurate understanding of sex, sexuality, gender and sexually transmitted diseases;
- To critically identify ways in which HIV/AIDS and STI cannot be transmitted;
- To identify sources to access and mobilise assistance within a community;
- To identify and evaluate the effectiveness of HIV/STI prevention methods;
- To critically evaluate reasons and methods for having protected sex when or if sexually active, and respond assertively to pressures for unprotected sex;
- To accept, cope and live positively with the knowledge of being HIV-positive; and
- To understand the grieving process and cope with loss.

There have been some difficulties in implementing this programme, especially in some black schools in South Africa, because some educators often lack adequate knowledge of HIV/AIDS (Peltzer 2003:351). Among educators who have sufficient knowledge about the diseases, some feel uncomfortable teaching these issues to learners, especially themes that deal with safer sex and homosexuality. However, the same programme works well among secondary school teachers in Texas in the United States of America. Their lessons about HIV/AIDS were developed by educators themselves, rather than relying on peer facilitators. Most educators were self-taught with no formal training at all. The programmes worked well because teachers who had knowledge about

HIV/AIDS, felt comfortable about presenting information to learners and about supporting HIV/AIDS education in schools.

### **2.5.2 Outreach Life Skills programme**

Another Life Skills programme that has been successful in South Africa, is the Outreach Life Skills Programme. This programme was presented by the Cape Technikon's Department of Student Counselling to previously disadvantaged schools, such as Thandokhulu High school in Mowbray, near Cape Town, as part of an HIV/AIDS awareness week in schools.

The programme included various activities, such as the widely popular drama called *How does HIV/AIDS invade the human body*. Poems were used and a workshop on abstinence was also held. This programme was appropriate for young people, although it needed extensive formal learning and had to be presented by well-trained facilitators. For this reason, the programme can be used only by people who have higher learning and extensive training; it is not suitable for people from poor-resourced communities or those without any formal education.

### **2.5.3 Career services and the Guidance programme in schools**

The Department of Education and Labour initiated this programme through Career Services and School Guidance that focused on Life Skills counselling for groups, the distribution of information through the mass media and training of teachers and group leaders. The programme is also responsible for the curricular development of Guidance teachers (Lobner, 1997:11). The programme was successful in all twenty presented cases. During the evaluation of this programme, ninety nine percent of the participants stated that the programme assisted them in developing self-counselling skills.

### **2.5.4 Enrichment programme for Grade 12 learners**

The programme was presented by the Institute of Race Relations as an enrichment programme for Grade 12 learners (Lobner, 1997:11). The programme offers Grade 12 learners information regarding field of work, and they learn about one's aspirations, how to make decisions, which qualifications are needed and how to acquire them, how to gather information, how to write CVs and apply for jobs, how to deal with obstacles and how to cope with unemployment. Participants also

learn how trade unions operate. Furthermore, the programme focuses on self-awareness, confidence building, communication, relationships, study skills, time management and study methods. The programme was developed after a realisation that it is not enough only to provide learners with the addresses of companies and bursary institutions during career exhibitions. Learners also need to find out more about themselves and their abilities. To address this problem, the organisation has included themes such as decision-making skills, communication, information about the labour market and self-knowledge in their Life Skills programme (Lobner, 1997:11-12).

### **2.5.5 Lead the Field Africa programme**

This programme has been used successfully in areas that were dominated by wars and refugee problems. The programme is aimed at empowering its beneficiaries to find out what they want and helping them to identify a way to achieve it. Various skills training institutions have used this programme successfully. The programme provides vocational guidance addressing the issues of trauma, aggression, cultural differences and lack of motivation as regards refugees (Lobner, 1997:11). The programme also provides skills that will help refugees to prepare for their repatriation in order to help rebuild their countries of origin, providing them with skills that may help them to become self-supporting.

### **2.5.6 The standard for effective servicing programme**

The Standard effective servicing programme is focused on training students or youth in effective learning efforts that may help them to do better at school, enable them to see opportunities in life and to take risks (Payne, 2000). Learners are, for example, encouraged to initiate their own projects at school without the involvement of an educator. They have to provide the objectives and the planning of the programme and also have to evaluate the programme critically. The programme allows learners to be prepared to take risks, engage in logical planning and learn from their mistakes.

### **2.5.7 Life Skills Learning Programme and Support Group**

The Life Skills Learning Programme and Support Group is a type of programme that may assist children in problem areas such as bereavement, depression, assertiveness training, and also deals with children with special problems, parenting skills, parenting for adolescents mothers, special training for law enforcement officers, preparing young people for marriage and marriage enrichment

(Candotti, Mason and Rampal, 1996:120). According to the *HIV/AIDS Education Resource Guide* (1999:234), programmes such as the Life Skills Training Programme and Support Group enable children to cope with difficulties of unwanted pregnancy by providing them with the necessary information about the reproductive system. However, this programme seems to be too general, as the designer of the programme apparently did not take into consideration that the programme may not be appropriate for all groups of adolescents across racial lines. Aspects such as social background, culture and individuals beliefs are core aspects of human-related programmes.

### **2.5.8 Assertiveness Training Programme**

The Assertiveness Training Programme is aimed at increasing self-esteem by teaching young people how to overcome their learning inhibitions and how to reduce anxiety in interpersonal relationships (Albert and Emma, in Candotti, Mason & Ramphal, 1996:126). In addition, assertiveness training may assist children in developing other personal skills, such as communication skills, conflict management, stress prevention, relationship skills, human rights awareness, prejudice proactivity and assertiveness (Rooth, 2000: 41). This programme seems to be appropriate for young people across the board, although it will need to be conducted by people who have received extensive training. This implies that the programme cannot be used by people in general and those without formal education.

### **2.5.9 Specific Skills Training Programme**

The Specific Skills Training Programme assists young people in developing specific skills, like communication, reflective listening, and strategies for expressing disapproval of other's actions. Learners may acquire skills to express their needs, opinions and desires effectively and more confidently (Candotti, Masson & Ramphal, 1996:128). This programme also encourages learners to develop positive thinking about them, to improve their communication skills and to believe in their own worth. This may help children to improve their relationships with peers, siblings, teachers, and parents and not be easily offended by negative comments and prejudice. The programme enables learners therefore to be assertive, proactive and able to state what they want (Rooth, 2000:41).

The programme can be used by parents at home, educators at school, peer facilitators and councillors and it is also cost-effective. Teachers, who use the programme may help learners to improve their

communication skills, reading skills, writing skills, listening skills and critical thinking skills (Burkil, Corey, & Healey 2000:15).

#### **2.5.10 The Evolution of Life Skills Training Programme**

The Evolution of Life Skills Training Programme equips young people with coping skills so that they do not drop out of school. The programme assists young people who do not possess any skills or qualifications needed in the field of work. This is accomplished by providing learners with trade skills, such as plumbing, masonry, electrical and carpentry work, training in auto mechanics, catering, industrial sewing, tailoring, child care and quest house assistance (Frost, 1991:45). Programmes such as this one assist young people in developing awareness opportunities in areas like career choices, self-employment, exploration, community involvement, confidence building, group work and cooperation, respect for the dignity of self and others, self-awareness, self-sufficiency and tolerance (Rooth, 2000:13). This kind of programme also introduces young people to different levels of jobs, such as untrained jobs, basic skills jobs, and specialised jobs in the formal sector (CRIC, 1995:61). According to Van der Wal (2001:207), life skills programmes help young people to develop entrepreneurial skills. It encourages young people to utilise their personal energy by initiating and building an enterprise or an organisation rather than watching and waiting for the government to do something for them.

#### **2.5.11 Adolescent Parent Development Programme**

The Adolescent Parent Development Programme teaches young people, in particular adolescents, about life and the contribution they can make to improve their lives. In addition, the programme teaches adolescents about the importance of giving love, receiving love, care and attention before they begin parenthood (Frost, 1991:41). The programme therefore prepares disadvantaged adolescents for life so that they can make a meaningful contribution to their personal development and community relationships. The Adolescent Parent Development Programme also provides young people with parenting skills and skills for coping with life's challenges, such as morality, early pregnancy, substance abuse, personal responsibility and decision-making (Frost, 1991:54).

According to Rooth (2000:31), these life skills programmes assist learners in developing skills to cope with challenges and demands of adulthood, and to prepare them to handle problems such as

divorce, disintegrated family structures, child abuse, and unemployment. She adds that life skills programmes assist young people in dealing effectively with challenges such as criminal life style problems, lack of positive role models, a marginalised existence, post-traumatic stress disorder, racism and substance abuse. These life skills programmes assist adolescents in making their transition to adulthood easier and less traumatic.

### **2.5.12 Ruth Motrichard Services Programme**

The Ruth Motrichard Services Programme takes about three months and its major objectives are to provide young people with self-awareness skills, like a feeling of identity, security, discovering personal strengths and weaknesses, and developing a sense of community involvement as well as the concept of caring, sharing and belonging (Frost, 1991:52). This life skills programme enables young people to understand and cope with concepts such as empathy, self-esteem, depression, stress, victims versus survivors, anger management, crime and laws, success in life, tolerance, dysfunctional homes, problem-solving skills and managing life. The American Community Corrections Institution (ACCI) cites this that life skills programme assists people, and in particular adolescents, to overcome negative thinking and self-defeating behaviours. It also helps young people to deal effectively with challenges that include substance abuse, low self-esteem, anger, hopelessness and helplessness and many other defeating thoughts and behaviours. According to Van der Wal (2001:207), providing learners with personal skills such as confidence, creativity, listening skills, handling of stress, and conflict and time-management skills, can help them in their lives. He further believes that life skills themes, such as improving self-image, can also help learners to develop a positive mental attitude towards themselves and their working environment.

### **2.5.13 Deeper Understanding of Self Programme**

In the Deeper Understanding of Self Programme, learners are taught the importance of proper nutrition in their bodies, emotional traumas, alcohol and drug abuse, symptoms of insecurity, complexes, anti-social attitudes and depression. However, themes like infatuation, sacrificial love, and selection of a partner, relationships, family planning and sexuality are also part of the programme (Frost, 1999:53). Van Rooyen (1999:12) also notes that adolescent problems regarding aspects such as self-worth, values, feelings, relationships, peer pressure, sexuality, spirituality, lack of knowledge

about proper nutrition and love relationships can be eliminated through a life skills programme by providing them with information related to these problems.

#### **2.5.14 Manchester Progression of Teamwork Programme**

This Life Skills programme provides young people with skills that enable them to work as teams rather than as individuals. Team effort can also help learners to develop their interpersonal skills and tolerance, their ability to work towards a common goal, and to develop good human relationships with others (Van der Wal, 2000:207). According to Rooth (2000:110), learning that takes place through group work, enables learners to help each other in school and to learn from each other. Learning in groups therefore helps learners to prepare for a democratic lifestyle and promotes the empowerment of learners. This life skills programme may encourage learners to work cooperatively or jointly with others. Learners are also taught to compromise and to work with large numbers of people (Rooth, 2000:110-112).

Life Skills programmes that take place in groups also help learners to start valuing their classmates, to respect their peers knowledge and to recognise the importance of sharing knowledge with others (Rooth, 2000:114). In addition, these programmes help learners to develop confidence and positive self-esteem within themselves. They improve learners' verbal skills, other communication skills and their relationships with others (Rooth, 2000:14).

#### **2.5.15 Study skills, young adults, Employee Performance Appraisal Programme**

This programme aims at assessing learners' attainment of the learning outcomes of the Life Skills programme. In this programme, learners were given a compilation of pictures and concepts representing the different skills included in the Life Skills Learning Programme. The pictures and concepts acted as the stimulus instruments. The programme can help the learner to attain knowledge and skills in a relatively short instructional period. Van der Wal and Van der Wal (2003:2-9) believe that this programme can be used effectively for learners at school, because it can help the learners to integrate knowledge and skills. The learners will, for instance, be able to understand a concept, be able to apply it and transfer the knowledge to another context. For the current study, this implies that learners who have attended a Life Skills programme will be able to use the skills that they have attained in their personal context.

### **2.5.16 Teaching life skills associated with the real world**

The programme was introduced at Smithers Secondary School in Toronto Canada. Its objectives were to investigate the potential of outcomes-based education by beginning with qualities we hope to find in well-educated adults. The programme teaches students to measure stock snack, and then apply their skills in the community. Schneider (2004: 1) reports that the programme trained learners in various community activities, such as cleaning up after special events, producing Christmas ornaments, birdhouses and weather vanes, running popcorn and hot dog services for events like school parties, and opening a new business. Programmes such as this one can be used effectively in developed countries and with learners who have already attained skills. However, it may be difficult to use this programme in countries facing high rates of unemployment and illiteracy.

### **2.5.17 Youth Development in Schools Programme**

The Youth Development in Schools Programme is aimed at providing adolescents with life skills for successful transition to adulthood, and social, moral, emotional, physical and cognitive competence (Peebles, W. 2004:1-3). In addition, the programme focuses on the prevention of specific problems, such as adolescent pregnancy, gang violence, and drug abuse and entrepreneurial projects. Although this programme helped the majority of adolescents, it has been seen by others as incompatible with the focus of the school syllabus, and perceived as too focused on issues regarding social control. Apart from that, this programme may be suitable for the South African context, because of the high focus on social problems, political differences and economical challenges that face the South African youth.

## **2.6 OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMMES**

According to Frost (1991:40-42), there are instances where the above-mentioned life skills programmes have failed or where they were not successful, especially in Third World countries, like Trinidad, Tobago, India and the Caribbean states. Teaching life skills to groups of young people who come from a background of dilapidated homes, poor family structures, lack of professional support, a poor system of formal education, criminal lifestyle attraction, environment challenges, lack of financial support from the government and lack of human resources becomes a fruitless exercise at times.

These life skills programmes cannot fully prepare children who are born under such conditions for the life of work. Life skills programmes on themes such as self-image, self-confidence, attitudes among students, and family relationships were once presented in the Trinidad Islands to groups of students. These groups were tested by questionnaires at the beginning and the end of the three-month programme (Frost, 1991:63). The results of the study suggested that the life skills programme influenced certain areas of the lives of the people taking part in the study and also brought some radical changes in people's self-awareness and significant changes in the attitude of the young people (Frost, 1991:125).

Frost (1991:45) further reports that an evaluation of a life skills study conducted in third world countries revealed that some students who attended an average of three-month life skills programme, did not show any change of attitudes towards family responsibilities, male or female sex roles, drugs, political orientation and civic responsibility. This seems to suggest that life skills programmes fail in other instances.

Other literature indicates that the same programmes that failed in some areas were implemented successfully in other situations and circumstances. Lobner (1997:8) reports an interesting intervention programme designed for a "... *prime target group for Life Skills training in South Africa*". The training programme also targeted groups who had been out of school due to the boycotts in the apartheid era. It is important to note that these groups were comprised of people from different ethnic groups, educational and rural/urban backgrounds, and included boys, girls and people with disabilities. This programme is regarded as one of the most successful South African programmes and was used during the struggle against apartheid. Another successful programme was the new Skills Development Programme that was designed to help youth offenders who committed minor offences and those who might be referred to the life skills training of Youth Empowerment Schools Against Crime (YES). In this programme, the women were given training in the framework of an outreach-training programme and trained in the management of development (Lobner, 1997:8).

According to Rooth (2000: 31), Life Skills prevention programmes have been successfully used in various situations. For example to help adolescents to deal with social challenges such as demands

from school, depression, a marginalised existence, post-traumatic stress disorder, poverty and sexual abuse. This suggests that some programmes can be used effectively whereas others cannot.

Van der Wal (2001:207) reports on an interesting intervention programme designed to help adolescents to overcome self-defeating behavioural problems and disruptive behaviour. This type of intervention includes improving self-confidence, listening skills, communication skills, handling of stress and creativity. Van der Wal believes that educators who have learners who display self-defeating behavioural problems and disruptive behaviour can be trained to help learners use their natural strengths and overcome self-defeating behaviours. Some life skills programmes equip adolescents with skills like goal setting, coping with anxiety, verbal and non-verbal communication, initiation of social interactions, social communication skills and assertiveness (Fields, 2000:219). Because of these skills, adolescents at school will be able to deal with their emotions, build constructive relationships and trust and commitment. In addition, life skills, including skills such as study methods, enable learners to reach their academic goals, while communication skills help learners to understand reading, writing numeracy and other challenging subjects to children (Roots, 2000: 39) (b).

Other intervention life skills programmes help learners at school to develop skills, such as study skills that enable them to understand subjects that were traditionally regarded as difficult and complex (Hodgkinson and Wright, 1999:6). Using life skills in teaching methods therefore helps learners to change the model of learning, to improve their performance and to allow them to be taught in their own context, e.g. a teacher could use examples that learners can easily relate with, when teaching Mathematics. There are life skills intervention programmes that work effectively when it is implemented in a group situation (Rooth, 2000:110). Rooth adds that the learning that takes place during group work enables learners to help each other and to learn from each other.

Consequently, intervention programmes that are effectively implemented in groups prepare learners for a democratic lifestyle and promote the empowerment of learners. It helps learners to value their classmates, respect their peers' knowledge and to understand the importance of sharing knowledge with others. In Curriculum 2005, there are many life skills intervention themes, such as substance abuse, health education, HIV/AIDS, relationships, human rights, careers, teenage pregnancy and

nutrition. A teacher support team (TST) and a multidisciplinary team, which consists of a psychologist, nurse, occupational therapist and a teacher, also play a vital role in the new curriculum (South Africa, 2003: 6).

Although these intervention programmes can be used effectively, it is important to note that some cannot be used effectively in a South African context, because of the language barrier, cultural differences, a lack of resources, and illiteracy. For example, some HIV/AIDS intervention programmes cannot be implemented effectively in certain areas in South Africa, like the rural areas, because of these barriers. Other programmes cannot be implemented effectively in South Africa because of their Euro-centric theoretical framework.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

There are various life skills intervention programmes, as discussed in this chapter. Although these programmes were designed for different purposes, different people and different places, they all have a common objective, which is to equip individuals to face the challenges in their lives. The World Health Organization (2004:13-23) evaluated the various diversion rehabilitation programmes of life skills in action, life skills training workshops and life skills for vulnerable children and adolescents. In all three programmes, about 98% of the respondents found that the programmes assisted them in improving their skills in various sports activities, coping with difficult circumstances in their lives and improving their communication skills.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the research design and methodology of the study. The research process centred on sampling, data collection methods, data processing techniques and methods of data interpretation. Reliability and validity as well as ethical issues will be also discussed.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The research is aimed at evaluating the experiences of Grade 12 learners who attended a life skills programme run by ASSET at Khayelitsha Centre near Cape Town. The central focus of this study is the experiences of learners regarding life skills topics or themes offered by ASSET, such as HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, relationships, substance abuse, career choices and study methods as it mentioned in Chapter One. Thirty-two Grade 12 learners aged between seventeen and twenty-one years were used for this study. The researcher wanted to find out what the experiences were from the learners who attended the programme runs by ASSET.

#### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design refers to the overall plan or blueprint according to which information is assembled, organised and integrated to result in a particular end product. The type of design used is informed by the worldview of the researcher, the nature of the research problem, the question it raises and the product desired (Merriam, 1998:3; Mertens, 1998: 160). The nature of the research question as discussed in Chapter One, has resulted in a qualitative, contextual, descriptive research design. The research strategy used is general qualitative studyS. According to Mertens (1998:159-160), qualitative research refers to research that is designed to provide an in-depth description of a specific phenomenon. It is research in which data is collected in words rather than numbers. Qualitative research is also used to express what the researcher has learned about the phenomenon.

However, according to Mertens (1998:160) and Merriam (1998:07), qualitative research is concerned with the study of a phenomenon in the subject's natural settings as it is lived and experienced. Babbie and Mouton (2001:278) also see qualitative research as the type of study that focuses on a study of human action in its natural setting, but adds that it is a detailed description and an understanding of phenomena within the relevant context.

According to Goetz and Le Compte (as quoted by Merriam, 1998:8), qualitative research focuses on the process of meaning and understanding of the product of qualitative study in which descriptive words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what the researcher has learned about the phenomenon.

Some principal aspects relevant to this study are the following:

- since the main objective of qualitative study is to understand a situation, qualitative research was considered a suitable choice for the purpose of this study;
- qualitative study takes place in the real world in which the phenomenon occurs (Merriam, 1998:7). The current study was based at the site of learning, namely the educational centre, to gain insight into the meaning revealed by the participant's world (Merriam, 1998:6; Berg, 1995:7);
- data was collected in the form of words rather than numbers, and that became appropriate for my study;
- qualitative study is inductive in nature. The study is focused on the formation of concepts and abstractions (Merriam, 1998:7; Mertens, 1998:160-161) and
- the researcher is the key instrument for data collection and data analysis (Merriam, 1998:7-9; Mertens, 1998:175). The data collection methods used in the current qualitative research were interviews, literature review as well as note taking.

This study is contextually based in a centre in Khayelitsha near Cape Town, which provides extra tuition every Saturday to Grade 12 learners. In the centre, learners have a selection of nine subjects to choose from, namely English, Mathematics, Physical Science, Accounting, Economics, Business Economics, History, Geography and Life Skills, as mentioned in Chapter One. The centre provides teaching mostly in Mathematics and Physical Science as the learning areas that were identified as those most challenging to learners. In addition, Life Skills becomes the core subject to all learners who attended the programme. The centre recruits Grade 12 learners from the disadvantaged communities around Cape Town. In addition, ASSET records revealed that in 1995 the matric results showed that at least 60 percent of learners who attended the centre achieved a pass rate of 65 percent.

This descriptive research aims at evaluating the experiences of Grade 12 learners who attended the Life Skills programme run by ASSET at the Khayelitsha Centre. The focus is on their experiences regarding the following themes formulated in the ASSET programme:

- issues regarding relationships;
- pregnancy and sexuality issues;
- gangsterism and violence in the learners' communities;
- study methods and career assessments; and
- decision-making skills and entrepreneurial skills.

### **3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.4.1 General qualitative study**

The general qualitative study can be seen as a process that carries both the unit of study and the product. According to Merriam (1998:34), a general qualitative study can be defined in terms of the unit analysis, the process of carrying out the investigation and the end product.

##### **3.4.1.1 The unit of analysis**

The unit of analysis, for example the general qualitative study, is a defining characteristic of this research method. The general qualitative is defined as a bounded system, a single entity, and a unity around which there are boundaries. One must, for example, clarify who is part of the boundary and who is not (Merriam, 1998:27; Mertens, 1998:167). This general qualitative study

focuses on description and explanation. The centre of attention in this study is a group of Grade 12 learners between seventeen and twenty- one years old. The case study is well designed, which makes it impossible or difficult to separate the phenomenon's variables from its context. (Merriam, 1998:29). The phenomenon of a group of Grade 12 learners who attended the life skills programme at the centre is seen within the context of the holistic system within which they live, share ideas, support each other and learn from each other. Hence, it becomes difficult to understand the phenomenon without considering its context.

The Khayelitsha Centre is the facility that accommodates learners from various disadvantaged schools from communities around Cape Town, as mentioned in Chapter 1. In order to avoid overcrowding and to maximise the quality of teaching delivery, it was decided to limit registration to 1 250 learners (*South African Institute of Race Relations Annual Report, 1996:8*). Teachers who teach at the surrounding schools are also used to teach at the centre.

#### **3.4.1.2 The process**

This case study is defined as a process to describe and analyse the unit of analysis in qualitative and comprehensive terms (Wilson, 1998:29). Harber and Van de Ven (in Merriam, 1998:30) defined the case study as holistic, grounded and exploratory. The case study is also described as particularistic, which means that it focuses on a particular situation, event, programme and phenomenon (Merriam, 1998:29).

#### **3.4.1.3 The end product**

The end product of a case study can be described as a thick description of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1998:29). According to Wilson (in Merriam, 1998:29-30), this thick description can be achieved when the researcher uses prose and literary techniques to describe, elicit images and analyse situations.

#### **3.4.2 Sampling**

Since it becomes difficult for the researcher to gather information or data in a large population, a sample is used to represent the large population. In this study, a purposive sample was used to gather sufficient data for the study (Babbie & Mouton 2001:66). This type of sampling is suitable

and appropriate when the researcher has prior knowledge of his/her participants, elements, and the nature of the research aims. According to Merriam (1998:61), purposive sampling is suitable and appropriate for qualitative study, because it depends on the availability of the participants. Furthermore, in purposive sampling the researcher wants to acquire understanding and insight of a particular phenomenon. It therefore becomes important for the researcher to select rich information from rich cases that the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998:61). Purposive sampling was suitable for this study, as the researcher knew the subjects, because he taught them at the centre.

A literature review was used during the study to identify what is already known about the topic from previous research. This formed the cornerstone on which this study was constructed. The following criteria were identified and used to select the sample:

- Grade 12 learners who attended the life skills programme at the centre;
- aged between seventeen and twenty-one years; and
- learners who live in Khayelitsha were given preference, because they have better access to public transport in order to get to the centre.

### **3.4.3 Methods of data collection**

Data collection methods prevalent in qualitative research are interviews, surveys, questionnaires, documents, and observation. It is also important to note that the methods of data collection are determined by the nature of the research problem, the purpose of the study and the nature of the sample selected. The methods of data collection used in this study, were the literature review, note taking and interviews.

#### **3.4.3.1 Literature review**

The literature review was used as a data collection method in order to study previous literature about the study. The literature review formed an important part of the research process. According to Mertens (1998:49), a literature review can be defined as conceptual ring in an area and the data-based studies. In addition, this literature review will also help the researcher to detect what is known and not known about the subject (Mouton, 2001). In the current study, the

literature review has helped the researcher to form a frame of reference for the research while the data was being collected, processed and interpreted

### **3.4.3.2 Interviews**

The major objective of interviews is to gain special information from interviewees (Merriam, 1998:71). In the current study, semi-structured focus interviews were used to acquire information.

#### **3.4.3.2.1 Focus group interviews**

Focus group interviews were conducted to acquire specific information from the participants. In the current study, interviews were conducted with four groups of eight members each. Each group had four boys and four girls. This type of interviewing technique has helped the researcher to ask direct questions to the group and to receive direct responses from the participants. This interaction has also helped the researcher to elicit opinions from the participants. Focus group interviews can also help the researcher to obtain information on aspects the researcher cannot directly observe, such as feelings, attitudes, thoughts, intentions, and past events that preclude the presence of the researcher. The researcher played a vital role during the interviewing process. The focus group interview provided the opportunity to have direct contact with the respondents and to ask them direct questions. The researcher also had the opportunity of writing down responses of the participants word for word. These were later transcribed. The direct interaction between the researcher and the participants allowed the researcher to raise disagreements and agreements on certain issues (Mertens, 1998:174).

#### **3.4.3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews**

This type of interview allows the researcher to prepare a set of questions in advance, change the way they are worded, provide explanations, to omit particular questions which are not relevant to a particular interviewee, or to include additional ones (Babbie and Mouton 1999:238). Semi-structured interviews allow for more flexibility and adaptability as new data emerges (Merriam, 1998:72).

### **3.4.3.3 Field notes**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, note taking was used to gather information about the mood of the participants during tape-recorded interviews.

### **3.4.4 Data analysis**

Data analysis can be seen as the process of selecting, sorting, discarding and organising data in order to make sense of it and to draw conclusions and to verify the data (Merriam, 1998:156; Berg: 1995:175). Data analysis is also seen as a process of making meaning from raw data and it is also the stage in the research where the content of interviews and field notes are analysed by the researcher (Merriam, 1998:160; Berg, 1995:174-197). In the current study, the content analysis method as suggested by Merriam (1998:159-160) was used.

As mentioned in Chapter One, qualitative research is an ongoing process. The data analysis in this research is also ongoing and taking place as part of the process during which the researcher deals with emergent data. According to Miles and Huberman (1994:249), qualitative data analysis is a process consisting of the following stages –

- data reduction;
- data display; and
- conclusion drawing.

These three processes run concurrently throughout the research process. In this study, the researcher started the process of analysis during the literature review and continued it upon reflection during and immediately after data collection, during the transcription process, during the analysis of the transcriptions, the presentation of the data and the discussion of the findings. The researcher also compiled notes during tape-recorded interviews. The data analysis in this study was based on the content analysis method presented by Berg (1995:174-192) and Merriam (1998:15-160). The data was analysed for both manifest and latent messages and the implication is that both the messages physically present and the researchers interpretation of the underlying meaning were analysed. An independent decoder was used to authenticate these messages. The following steps were implemented:

- the tape-recorded data gathered from the focus group interviews was transcribed word for word;

- the transcriptions were read repeatedly for understanding while keeping the research questions in mind;
- the process of open coding was implemented. This means that the data was broken down into units of meaning from the transcriptions. These units were then thoroughly scrutinised and compared for similarities and differences. Sentences or phrases that were understandable without additional information were identified on the data source (see Appendix B). These units were listed and during this process, themes started to emerge and tentative themes for further analysis were considered.
- the data were arranged according to themes (Appendix C). The information gathered from interviews, field notes and recorded interviews was compared for consistency or differences. After the categories were constructed, they were given names based on the literature. Where a category was not mentioned in the literature as a consequence of its particular relation to the South African context, the researcher provided a name. An independent person was asked to verify the categories. The meaning of the data in each category was interpreted by the researcher and presented in the form of an accurate description. The categories were clustered into patterns to describe the findings.

### **3.4.5 Validity and reliability**

Babbie and Mouton (2001:119-122) suggest that to enhance the validity and reliability of any study the researcher must be trustworthy to professionals in the applied field and must always respect the ethical procedures of the profession. In order, therefore, to make it a point that the process of validity and reliability was attained in the current study, careful attention was paid to the conceptualisation of the study and the way in which the data was collected, analysed and interpreted (Merriam, 1998:199-200).

Other authors believe that there is no single commonly accepted standard for ensuring the validity and reliability of qualitative research. Some even use different concepts and identify credibility, transferability and dependability as concepts that go with internal validity and external validity in other forms of research (Lincoln & Guba, in Martens, 1998:181).

### **3.4.5.1 Credibility (parallels internal validity)**

According to Mertens (1998:181), credibility is attained by using a method that can evaluate the validity of research findings. In the current research, credibility was attained through the use of triangulation, member checks, persistent evaluation and declaration of researchers' biases.

- **Triangulation**

The process of triangulation allows the researcher to check information that has been gathered from various sources (Mertens, 1998:183). In this study, triangulation was obtained through –

- making use of interviews, note taking and literature review;
- multiple data analysis, namely the researcher and the independent decoder. The researcher first transcribed the interviews, and identified meaning and consequently patterns in the data collected using the content analysis method. The analysis was then checked by the independent analyst; and
- research biases.

At the beginning of the study, the researcher discussed the motivation of the study as well as the reasons for using a purposive sample for the study.

### **3.4.5.2 Transferability (parallels external validity)**

External validity refers to generalisation of results for other situations. The objective of a qualitative study is to avoid the generalisation of findings, and to present a unique, detailed description of a phenomenon. In other words, to avoid any transferability of the study, the researcher must provide a “thick description”, which is an extensive and careful description of time, context and culture.

The following strategies were applied in this study:

- thoroughly checked, detailed descriptions were provided so that any one interested in transferability should have a solid base of information on which to build his/her judgments; and

- a detailed description of the systemic context was made available so that the readers can compare it with theirs.

#### **3.4.5.3 Dependability (parallels reliability)**

Dependability refers to the consistency of data. A detailed description of the data collected should therefore be made available so that the person interested in dependability can evaluate whether the data makes sense or creates meaning. The following were used to attain dependability in this study:

- description of the investigators position (researcher); and
- triangulation in terms of multiple methods of data collection.

### **3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), ethical consideration is associated with morality as both deal with matters of right and wrong. During the current study, the researcher has therefore taken into consideration certain ethical issues, such as voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality and reporting. These ethical considerations will help to enhance the professional standard of the research while maintaining the reliability and validity of the study.

- **Voluntary participation**

The respondents were informed about the motive for the study, and they were told that they should be aware of the fact that they might be required to reveal personal information about themselves, information that might be unknown to their peers, family or the community (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:523). The group members were also informed that it is their democratic right not to take part in the study. The study continued with eight members per group.

- **Anonymity and confidentiality**

The participants were told that their identity would be protected, which means that the names of the participants and the information they have shared will be kept confidential. As the study was based on focus groups, respondents shared their

information without mentioning their names or addresses, or showing their identity documents or other identification.

The results of this study seem to suggest that learners have benefited from the Life Skills programme offered by ASSET. Most of group one to group four members reported that the ASSET programme equipped them with skills to handle challenges such as unwanted pregnancy, substance abuse, relationships, study skills and career opportunities. Learners who attended the Life Skills programme and who participated in the study showed confidence, courage, proactivity and a willingness to take risks. The study seems to suggest that the Life Skills programme taught them entrepreneurial skills and how to make use of business opportunities. Career opportunities, entrepreneurial skills, pregnancy, and substance abuse became the dominant themes in the study. There seems to be consistency between their career choices, entrepreneurial skills and study skills.

### **3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the research methodology for the study was discussed. The chapter also explained how the researcher used qualitative methods to his study, focus group and content analysis to acquire information from the subjects. The principles of reliability and validity in the study were also discussed. Ethical issues, such as anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent and the research relationship became part in the discussion of this chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This is the concluding chapter of the study and it will focus on the discussion of data collection, the method of data analysis and the findings that emerged from this process. The interpretations and discussion of the findings will bring together the different sources of data discussed in the data collection. Patterns and problem areas relevant to Chapter One will be discussed. To conclude the chapter, recommendations and limitations of the study will be discussed.

#### **4.2 PROCESS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

As was mentioned in Chapter Three, the process of data collection was conducted through interviews, other literature and note taking. The data were collected at different times over the period May 2003 to July 2003. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants from Grade 12 Xhosa-speaking learners who attended a life skill programme run by ASSET at the Khayelitsha Centre.

##### **4.2.1 Interviews**

Four interviews were audio-taped and notes were made during each interviewing session. Four boys and four girls aged between seventeen and twenty-one years old were interviewed from each of the four groups. The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed word for word and the four interviews were reconstructed from field notes. These interviews took place at the centre where these learners are currently attending the life skills programme run by ASSET.

The first group (Group1) was interviewed and asked about their experiences in the life skills programme run by ASSET. They were, for example, asked them in which way the ASSET programme contributed to their understanding of life skills, how the programme influenced their knowledge about relationships, substance abuse, decision-making and time management and how it influenced them in their academic performance and career choices. As mentioned in Chapter

One, the main focus of the life skills programme was to assist learners to acquire the following skills:

- skills that can help them to cope with the demands and challenges of their daily lives, e.g. coping with academic challenges and the demands of adulthood, handling problems such as divorce, disintegrated family structures, child abuse and peer pressure and criminal life style attraction;
- skills that enable them to compete in the labour market, by providing them with information about entrepreneurial skills and career opportunities; and
- skills that enable them to deal effectively with health related issues, such as HIV/AIDS.

See Appendix A for examples of pilot questions presented to the interviewees.

The reference in brackets below refers to the number of the groups interviewed by the researcher e.g. (G-1) refers to Group One.

Group One (G-1) was first interviewed at the centre for the first time. There were eight members in the group, four girls and four boys. The group was asked about their experiences in the Life Skills programme run by ASSET. The questions were on the following themes.

- *labour market*: entrepreneurial skills, job hunting and CV writing;
- *human relations issues*: relationships, crime-related issues, and child abuse; and
- *health-related issues*: unwanted pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse.

#### **4.2.2 Field notes**

During the tape-recorded interviews, field notes were compiled. Information regarding emotions, facial expressions, and emotion (crying, raising the voice, and personalising certain issues) were observed during the interviews. In addition, the physical state of the interviewing room, such as the sitting arrangement of the interviewees and their listening style were also observed and recorded as field notes.

### **4.2.3 Data analysis**

During this stage, the data analysis was analysed by using aspects of content presented by Merriam (1998) and Berg (1995) as was discussed in Chapter Three. The transcribed data was open coded. Themes were singled out and categories constructed and coded. Categories were clustered. Other categories that were identified were named based on the theoretical orientation of the study, concepts presented in the literature review, and the researcher's orientation was also taken into account. The categories that emerged were coded by means of cues in order to facilitate analysis and interpretation. The list of categories and codes appears in Appendix D.

These categories were then recorded in the form of tables. This process will help the researcher in facilitating integration and with the discussion of findings. (see in Appendix E).

The results of the study were presented, analysed and interpreted in the Introduction. Findings were summarised and the conclusion and recommendations were discussed. The experiences of Grade 12 learners who attended the Life Skills programme run by ASSET were part of the discussion.

## **4.3 FINDINGS**

Through the research methods used in this study, the following findings from the research facilitator were gathered.

For example in the chapter, the researcher discussed the main findings of the data analysis and relates these findings to aspects of the literature review in Chapter Two. Findings of this study will be discussed below within an eco-systemic theoretical framework. The experiences of learners who attended the Life Skills programme run by ASSET at Khayelitsha centre were therefore based on the following patterns:

- HIV/AIDS, decision-making skills, teenage pregnancy, and substance-related disorders;
- relationships with others, parents and the environment;
- labour markets, career choices, job hunting, CV writing, employment agencies, entrepreneurial skills; and

#### **4.3.1 Theme 1: Learners' decision-making skills**

G-1 believed that their experience in the life skills programme run by ASSET was empowering and that it helped them in developing their confidence, taking informed decisions under pressure and making decisions independently and not influenced by friends or peers. G-2 stated that their experience in the programme had helped them in adopting a culture of consultation before taking any decisions that would affect their future. In addition, G-2 emphasised that the programme had taught them to acknowledge that long-term decisions, such as choosing a career, selecting subjects, changing subjects, terminating a pregnancy and disclosing your HIV status necessitated professional advice. Furthermore, G-3 and G-4 stated that the life skills programme had taught them to consider the advantages and disadvantages before making any decision. One learner stated that the programme had not only helped her to make decisions but also to be responsible for whatever decision she makes.

#### **4.3.2 Theme 2: Learners' awareness of HIV/AIDS**

G-1 and G-2 stated that before they joined the ASSET programme their knowledge of HIV/AIDS had been minimal and that they had not taken it seriously. They believed that the HIV virus could not be contracted by the people close to you like your friends, peers, family members, relatives and teachers. They added that a person could not be HIV-positive if he/she looked nice, looked healthy and fat and dressed nicely. Some members in G-1 and G-2 confessed that they were not using contraceptives during sexual intercourse. They stated that attending the ASSET programme had been an eye-opener to them. It made them realise that AIDS is a reality and that it kills. According to G-3, the life skills programme did not only help them regarding HIV/AIDS, but also gave them the opportunity of learning about other sexually-related diseases such as STI, drop, syphilis and female discharges. G-4 indicated that they had also learned about the myths and beliefs about HIV/AIDS, e.g. believing that if one shared the same chair with an HIV-positive person you could be infected, and that having sex with a virgin could cure one from the virus. It is important to report that the topic of life skills stimulated emotions in some members in all four groups.

Some members were shy during interviews and some were enjoying the topics. Learners who come from the former model C schools (that means schools from the white communities) put the responsibility with the victims. For example, three learners stated that most people who are HIV-positive had been prostitutes before and had many boy friends. However, boys put the blame on girls for spreading of HIV/AIDS in the country. A group of learners who were in their twenties felt that the issue of HIV/AIDS was caused by various factors in South Africa, e.g. poverty, unemployment, rape, cultural beliefs and lack of proper knowledge. These learners reported that they were members of the Treatment Action Campaign organisation (TAC) and that they had joined the organisation after the HIV virus had killed members of their families.

#### **4.3.3 Theme 3: Substance abuse**

Learners from all four groups reported that they sometimes drink alcohol, smoke dagga and use drugs, but were not addicted to any of them. Others reported that they had friends and family members who were using drugs and who had difficulties to quit. In G-1 learners reported that they were using drugs for fun and to please their friends and these learners said they were not aware of the danger of using drugs. Some G-1 members reported that they wanted to experience the feeling of being in a different mood. According to G- 2, G-3 and G- 4 members, the ASSET programme had taught them to see the bad side of using drugs, how to stay away from drugs, how to handle friends who use drugs, and how to teach other people to stay away from drugs. G-2 saw the mass media as a contributing factor to drug abuse in our society.

The groups felt that themes such as drug abuse needed to be extended in their schools and that is not should taken for granted that everybody knew about drugs. The groups also felt that there should be a strict law that would regulate the selling of drugs to people, especially to the youth. In addition, the groups believed that awareness of drug abuse should start in pre-primary school and be made compulsory in all public schools. Although these learners came from different schools, they all believed that drugs were a serious problem to the youth of South Africa; therefore, the government should play a meaningful role.

#### **4.3.4 Theme 4: Teenage pregnancy**

In this theme, the researcher received most responses from interviewees in all four groups. Some learners expressed themselves confidently, others were defensive, personalising the issue of teenage pregnancy and others took it as an issue that was limiting women in exercising their human rights freely. In G-1 and G-2, there were teenage mothers who were emotional about the issue and putting the blame on their parents. G-4 believed that the reasons for the high rate of teenage pregnancy were that topics about teenage pregnancy were included in the school curriculum. G-3 said that through the ASSET programme, they realised that poor communication between a parent and child and peer pressure could increase the high rate of teenage pregnancy.

The groups agreed that the ASSET programme had assisted them in a better understanding their reproductive systems, menstruation cycle, the responsibility of young mothers and the importance of using contraceptives, and said it had told them about various places that deal with teenage mothers. In G-1, two teenage mothers confessed that they got pregnant during their first time of sexual intercourse and that they knew little about contraceptives. Boys felt that it was the responsibility of the girls to control pregnancy; therefore, boys should not be blamed.

They added that the African culture of forcing a boy to pay the damage of a pregnant girl, and forcing him to leave school and work for the child was unfair to the boys and needed to be abolished. In contrast, girls believe that both girls and boys were responsible for the high rate of pregnancy, because it took both a boy and a girl to make a child and the boy should not continue with schooling while the girl was raising a child.

#### **4.3.5 Theme 5: Relationships**

Relationships, especially love relationships, was also a topic enjoyed by the learners. G-1 learners reported that they had always thought that the concept “relationship” only referred to love relationship. G-2, G-3 and G-4 believed that the ASSET life skills programme helped them in building good relationships with their peers, teachers, parents, adults and friends in their communities.

In G-1, group members said that the programme taught them to maintain relationships with other people across the racial line. This could be made possible by respecting other people's culture, rights, language and geographical area. In G-4, a learner reported a bad relationship between her and her father. She described her father as an insensitive, arrogant and heartless individual. Boys stated that it was not only their responsibility to initiate a love relationship with girls; girls should also do it. However, girls believed that asking a relationship from boys would lower their dignity and make them cheap. Two learners who were between seventeen and eighteen were shy about the topic and reserved their views.

#### **4.3.6 Theme 6: Careers**

Career choices also became an exciting theme for the learners, because many of them were concerned about their future careers. Some learners in the groups reported that they knew little about careers, especially in the field of science. However, G-1, G-2, G-3 and G-4 said the ASSET programme had helped them with the necessary information about career opportunities.

In addition, they believed that the programme helped them to know about various career opportunities, such as science studies, health science, medical, commercial and technical studies. In G-3, learners reported that the programme had helped them to know about other options if one did not qualify for university, and such options included going to technical colleges, business school, learning entrepreneurial skills and going to employment agencies. Learners also reported that they had learned how to apply for financial assistance from organisations. The life skills programme related to careers could also assist young people in developing entrepreneurial skills and self-employment strategies.

#### **4.4 DISCUSSION**

The majority of learners who participated in the study felt that the ASSET programme was necessary for all the young people in South Africa. They also believed that the life skills programme was relevant as regards the daily challenges they were experiencing, and themes in the programme should be included in the school curriculum. Learners reported that the issue of HIV/IDS was very important and it needed to be presented to pupils across the colour line. They

strongly believe that teaching people about HIV should start in pre-primary school and should be made compulsory in all public schools.

Learners from township schools felt strongly about the urgent implementation of an HIV awareness programme for children. There was a huge debate about encouraging people to disclose their status. Some felt that when people disclosed their status it would encourage others to do the same and HIV people would be easily accepted by their families and the community at large.

Regarding substance abuse, the participants felt that it was also a great challenge to the youth, the same as HIV/AIDS. They suggested that a substance abuse programme should also be included in the school curriculum. Teaching children about substance-related disorders should also begin in primary schools. Most interviewees suggested that the government should play a meaningful role in controlling substance use in children. Applying heavy fines to those who sell substances to children, was also a major concern for the participants. Participants also suggested that it was important to provide young people with skills that would enable them to stay away from drug users.

Among the participants, young girls felt that talking about their love life with their parents, teachers, adults and professional people could lower the rate of teenage mothers. They also emphasised that including topics such as teenage pregnancy in the school curriculum could play a meaningful role in preventing teenage pregnancy. Teaching young girls about the reproductive system, the use of contraceptives and making these available were also points raised by the participants.

The participants further felt that young people needed to be exposed to various career choices. According to the interviewees, teaching learners about careers should also start in primary school. They believed that attending career exhibitions should be made compulsory. Learners suggested that young people should also be encouraged to select subjects that would help them to get jobs after they have completed school and would help them to create jobs for themselves and others.

It emerged from the study that the life skills programme run by ASSET had changed learners' attitudes about people who were HIV-positive. This view was backed up by all the group members who were asked if the programme had influenced them about the HIV/AIDS issue. It became apparent that learners in G-2 and G-3 perceive the HIV virus as any chronic illness such as diabetes and high blood pressure, after they had attended the ASSET programme. From all four groups learners reflected that the ASSET programme had helped them to plan their time effectively and to use effective study methods. Some learners indicated that they did not have well-researched and empowering life skills topics in their schools. Learners strongly agreed that the programme assisted them in mastering English as a language needed in the school.

The participants mentioned that they found the life skills programme to be very valuable with regard to the field of work and opportunities in tertiary education. They further mentioned that the programme had helped them to be aware of various career choices, e.g. courses in the field of science, the field of commerce, social sciences, engineering, technical education, and had provided them with a list of companies in South Africa.

The participants said that teaching young people about relationships was good, because it would help them to value other people's beliefs, culture, religion and political orientation. It could also enable them to relate well with their parents, teachers, peers, and friends. With regard to the experiences of Grade 12 learners who attended the life skills programme at the centre, the researcher found that approximately 100% of the participants were helped by the programme in various ways. They were helped by the programme in expanding their knowledge regarding health-related issues, socially-related issues, careers, study skills, relationships and substance-related disorders.

#### **4.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

There are various limitations regarding this research on the experience of Grade 12 learners who attended the programme run by ASSET at the Khayelitsha Centre, because the format of the research only focuses on thirty-two Xhosa-speaking learners aged between seventeen and twenty-one. The research does not cover all Grade 12 learners who are doing Life Skills in the whole of South Africa and the results cannot be generalised to include all Grade 12 learners.

#### **4.6 IMPLICATIONS**

The implication of this study is that the programme has helped learners in their personal growth, e.g. making firm decisions for themselves, building good relationship with peers, parents, teachers and making responsible decisions. The findings also show that the programme has taught learners to know more about sexual-related issues and substance abuse.

According to the findings, the ASSET programme empowered learners with skills that would help them deal effectively with adolescents' challenges, such as teenage pregnancies, substance abuse, sexual abuse and the attraction of a criminal life style. The programme also helped learners in career fields by providing information about various career fields, the labour market, and knowledge about entrepreneurship.

#### **4.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Life Skills education should be implemented in schools in collaboration with other NGOs for the advancement of life skills education;
- the development and implementation of a long-term and holistic life skills curriculum in schools should be promoted and should not only rely on the policy;
- health and social problems, including substance use, adolescent's pregnancy and violence in schools should be prevented;
- there should be support of life skills initiatives for children who do not attend schools;
- livelihood skills, such as crafts, money management and entrepreneurial skills should be promoted in schools;
- advanced teacher training is required to promote the implementation of life skills programmes at schools;

- life skills themes, such as teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, career choices, relationships and crime, should be included in the school curriculum and should continue from grade R to 12 and the officials should see to it that is implemented;
- school nurses and social workers should visit the schools at least once a month for cases that need medical attention and to attend to learners who have emotional problems;
- young girls should be taught and encouraged to use contraceptives to prevent teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS and STI.
- career options and career exhibitions should also be introduced at primary level;
- learners should be taught about substance abuse by both the parents and the teachers and it should be included in the school curriculum;
- building good relationships with other children, parents, peers, other cultural groups and racial groups should be encouraged learners from an early age and should be include in a school curriculum;
- respect and tolerance of other people's cultures, religion, environment should also be encouraged in children and should be part of the school curriculum; and
- learners should be taught how to make decisions independently and responsibly.

#### **4.8 CONCLUSION**

The apartheid government did great damage to the education system in South Africa. One of the learning areas that were heavily affected was Life Skills education. In the past, Life Skills education was not given the same recognition as other examinable subjects such as English, Mathematics and History. As a result, Life Skills is taught in some schools in South Africa by teachers without proper training, as is the case with other learning areas. Because of this poor

recognition of Life Skills education by the education authorities, learners tend to experience difficulties in the following areas:

- subject choices
- career choices
- drug-related problems
- health-related problems
- teenage pregnancy
- criminal life style attraction
- school dropouts
- poor academic performance

The findings of this study seem to suggest that all of the above challenges faced by adolescents can be addressed through Life Skills education. The ASSET programme can therefore be used effectively in eliminating youth challenges across the colour line.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Interview schedule**

Before the beginning of interviews, the researcher started with pilot questions. These questions helped the researcher to gauge the standard of questions used for the study. The researcher also explained the motives, objectives and the importance of voluntary participation and confidentiality to the study to the participants.

### **Examples of questions asked during the interviews:**

1. What have you learned from the life skills programme run by ASSET?
2. In what way has the life skills programme helped you to understand your peers, teachers, parents and other people in general?
3. How has the programme influenced your attitude about teenage pregnancy?
4. How has the programme influenced you about HIV/AIDS?
5. How has the programme influenced the way you think about your future career, job opportunities and tertiary institution?
6. In what way has the programme helped you to understand issues such as substance abuse?
7. Has the life skills programme helped you in using your time and your study methods effectively?
8. Would you like to tell me anything else about the way you have experienced the life skills programme run by ASSET?

## **APPENDIX B**

An example of the initial stage in the data analysis. The transcribed data was open-coded and notes were made on the data.

### **Interview with (G-1)**

In (G-1) I interviewed four Xhosa-speaking girls and boys who were between seventeen and twenty one years old. In the interview, I used simple English in order to be understood by second language speakers of English.

#### **Researcher: Question**

*How has the life skills programme influenced the way you think about your future career, school, situation at home and your peers?  
seriously and use contraceptives during sexual intercourse.*

**G-1: Ans**      The programme helped me to expand my knowledge about careers and helped me to relate with my peers, parents and teachers very well.

#### **Researcher: Question**

*In what way has the life skills programme helped you in understanding issues such as HIV/AIDS, substance abuse teenage pregnancy and substance abuse?*

*Helped me to know my reproductive system very well*

Helped me to know the bad side of using drugs.

Teaches me to deal effectively with peers who are on drugs.

**G-1: Ans**      The programme helped me to take the issue of HIV/AIDS very seriously

**Researcher: Question**

*In what way has the programme influenced your decision-making skills?*

## APPENDIX C

An example of the data being combined according to themes

### **Career opportunities**

- ASSET programme expands my knowledge about career choices (G-2, G-3 and G-4).
- The programme helped me to know various options if I can not qualify for university entry requirements (G-3)
- ASSET helped me to know about career opportunities in health science, commercial and technical studies (G-3 and G-4)
- Improve their knowledge about careers (FN).
- HIV/ AIDS and teenage pregnancy
- Before we attended the ASSET programme, our knowledge about HIV/AIDS was very minimal (G-1 and G-2)
- The programme helped us to take the issue of contraceptives very seriously when we are doing sexual intercourse (G-1 and G-2)
- This programme helped us to understand our reproductive system better (G-1 and G-2)

### **Relationships**

- Before I attended the programme the relationship between my father and myself was

very bad, but now it has improved because I adjusted myself to his arrogant behaviour and insensitivity (G-4).

- The programme helped me to understand the concept of relationship in a broader context (G-1)
- This programme helps us to make good relationships with our peers, teachers and parents (G-1, G-2, G-3, and G-4)
- The programme helped us to understand other people across the colour line (G-1).
- Learners indicated that the ASSET programme was very helpful to them (F.N)

**APPENDIX D**

Assigned category codes, category information and clustering of categories into patterns.

**LEARNER-RELATED FACTORS**

Category codes	Category names	Clustered into pattern
L.1	Help them in careers choices and entrepreneurial skills	
L.2	Sex-related issues, e.g. HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy	Leamer-related factors
L.3	Relationships	
L.4	Peer pressure, e.g. substance abuse	

**GROUP/PARTICIPANT-RELATED FACTORS**

G-1	Good experience from life skills programme run by ASSET
G-2	Helped by life skills topics, e.g. careers, drugs and relationships
G-3	The programme played an important role in changing their attitude about HIV/AIDS
G-4	Their relationships have improved after they have attended the programme
G-1	The programme changed their attitudes about teenage pregnancy
G-2	Helped them in understanding their peers; better relationships
G-3	Helped them to understand their parents better
G-4	Helped them to relate well with their educators
G-1	Improved their time-management skills.
G-2	Improved their academic performance
G-3	Improved their study methods

G-4	Knowledge about entrepreneurship
G-1	Helped them in understanding a variety of job opportunities
G-2	Helped them in CV writing
G-3	Helped them to improve their self-esteem

### **SOCIALLY-RELATED FACTORS**

S.F1	Life style attraction
S.F2	Poverty
S.F3	Divorce

**APPENDIX E**

**LEARNER-RELATED FACTORS**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>G-1</b>	<b>G-2</b>	<b>G-3</b>	<b>G-4</b>	<b>F.N</b>
L.1 Career choices					
L.2 Sexual- related issues					
L.3 Entrepreneurial skills					
L.4 Peer pressure					

**GROUP-RELATED FACTORS**

<b>Category</b>	<b>G-1</b>	<b>G-2</b>	<b>G-3</b>	<b>G-4</b>	<b>F.N</b>
C.1. Good experience from the programme					
C.2. Helped in careers, drugs and relationships					
C.3.Changed their attitude about HIV/AIDS					
C.4.Relationships					
C.5.Attitudes about teenage pregnancy					
C.6.Understanding their peers					
C.7 Understanding their parents					
C.8 Relate well with teachers					

C.9 Good time management					
C.10 Good academic performance					
C.11 Good study methods					
C.12 Good entrepreneurial skills					
C.13 Understand job opportunities					
Help in CV writing					

**SOCIAL-RELATED FACTORS**

<b>Category</b>	<b>G.1</b>	<b>G.2</b>	<b>G.3</b>	<b>G.4</b>	<b>F.N</b>
Life style attraction					
Poverty					
Divorce					