

FORMATION OF YOUTH GROUP FROM
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK
PERSPECTIVE: A NAMIBIAN CASE

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ABSTRACT

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The starting point for the thesis was to elucidate the process of forming a youth group from a community development work perspective, in line to my own experiences and involvement, in Namibia. In addition to theoretical explorations and contextual backgrounds, the study also examined challenges in forming and conducting the youth group.

The methods of this qualitative study included procedures of forming a youth group from community development work perspectives. They were exposure, open interviews, investigation, as well as observation. The study described development and evaluation of the youth group. Youth group meetings were very important practices to 'reach out' youths with new ideas.

The meetings and gatherings provided a safe and friendly place where youths could come to be with friends, share their lives and learn from each other. The community could thrive with a couple of committed members in a group. The study was limited to access and use of preventive youth work, which was attained by strengthening and examining values and ideologies by community experiences. The preventive youth work in this study referred to HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives dealing with cross-gender relations and associated constructs.

The main results of this study were evident measures to start a youth group in South African contexts. This study, however, has developed skills important in community practice which can also be a useful tool as a handbook for professionals. In conclusion, a youth group carried out from community development work perspective supports their interaction and learning social skills. Furthermore, it provided youths with group skills and supports participation.

Key Words: youth work, HIV-AIDS, community, Namibia, community development work, qualitative research

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1 INTRODUCTION

The aim for the thesis stems from my own involvement in forming a youth group in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, during my international placement in 2009. Basing on the Namibian experience, I use the case study to describe the formation of a youth group (see chapter 3) that took place in its cultural context. The work methods used during the process offers insights into community development work.

This study report summarizes the results of a study conducted by me as a volunteer for CUAHA (Churches' United Against HIV and AIDS) in Namibia. The volunteer work was organized so my involvement in Namibia met requirements for my international placement during the third year of my studies.

The study includes a summary of the project, operational concepts, methodologies and findings which are followed by an analysis of implications of the study. The implications are associated to youth work in a HIV AIDS affected area from community development work perspective.

In recognition of the fact that youths and children represent a still-neglected face of AIDS in Namibia (Kirimire, 2009), the goal of the study was to ensure support and prevention for youths affected by HIV/AIDS by strengthening the community understanding and scientific evidence base for community actions.

The case study (chapter 3) reveals professional skills used during the process. The skills used there were gained during my studies in the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences at Degree Program in Social Services (DIAK/DSS). The literature review frames the study within appropriate operational concepts and academic discourses on cultural perspective, Social Risk (stigma) and Realistic Evaluation (see figure 1). Moreover, the study highlights the importance of the youth work from community development work perspectives.

In the study, there are necessary evidences to guide community-level responses of youths in a community affected by the HIV/AIDS. Moreover, it ensures external support for community responses involving youths as “part of the solution” in the community. We worked on strengthening the capacity of youths to meet their needs. This support was provided by discussions, trainings, meetings and visits. One of the study’s major principles was to recognize that youths are capable of playing a leading role for change in their own lives and in their families and in their communities. Participation, involvement and outreach were important elements of the study.

CUAHA is an international voluntary organization that works in areas from advocacy to capacity building of different projects in churches and communities in its partner countries. Partnerships with Church councils are also vital. It functions in 14 different East and Southern African countries and also in Finland. It works jointly on areas of capacity building of Churches through integrated, community-based programming in people infected and affected by the HIV AIDS (Kirimire, 2009). This case presented in this study is the first preventive youth project of CAUHA. The focus of the study is raising up general awareness among urban youths in order to ensure the effectiveness of external support for community responses. The study entertains youths as “part of the solution”: a community response that strengthens the capacity of youths to meet their own needs in their own context.

This study will be a tool for my own use and other professionals working on the field when starting or/and working with youths.

1.1 Background

I reached Namibia in a capacity of a volunteer trainer from Helsingin Diakonia Institute (HDI) to work for its sister organisation Churches United Against HIV and AIDS in Southern and Eastern Africa (CUAHA). The volunteer work was organized so my involvement there met requirements for my international placement during the RRP (Role, Relationship and Power) study module. Initially, my assigned role was to ‘mentor’ the HIV-infected group called Ambassadors of HOPE -Health, Opportunity, Power and Employment (see appendix 1). However, it did not work out. In fact, I

realised that the group did not really exist. When all efforts to revive ambassadors of HOPE failed, we (me and my supervisor Merab Kirimire- national coordinator of CUAHA, Namibia) sat down out of frustration. I told Merab that my plan was to do something meaningful and I wanted to do something with youths. Together, we agreed to establish something new during these three months and make CUAHA more visible at the local level i.e. in Windhoek. So we decided to develop a youth HIV-AIDS preventive project in Katutura region of Windhoek with an idea of training youths (see.3 for detail).

The beginning of this study coincided with Namibia's general elections. The media carried political debates of Namibian youths being severely exposed social problems like teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, increase of crimes, drugs, suicides, alcohol and above all the HIV-AIDS. Merab's experiences and results from her social researches also supported the ongoing media debates. A need to work with youths was felt. She inspired me to work with youths. Together, we decided to start a new project which dealt with the history of CUAHA. Its original targets had been a preventive youth work. It was planned to be achieved by forming and training a youth group. During the process, after brainstorming and assessing the situation, we decided to begin a youth group. Community development approaches were adopted to develop the group (see chapter 3.1).

HIV and AIDS have drawn global attention to development workers since the virus was first discovered in 1981. Since then, it has remained a serious global challenge. Millions have already lost their lives and other millions are infected by the deadly virus and live with feelings of guilt and denial. The disease is clearly seen as a threat to the stability of many nations affecting the most productive members of the society. Being a global phenomenon, HIV/AIDS is the most prevalent in the developing countries with the spread reaching pandemic proportions in most parts of the African continent. (Agyei-Mensah 2001, 41.)

Namibia is one of the countries where the impacts and effects of HIV and AIDS have reached to emergency levels (UNAIDS). It has dropped country's life expectancy from an average of 60 years in the 1990s to the current all time low of 42 years of age in

2008. According to reports, some 15,000 Namibians die to full blown AIDS every year with prevalence rates of 26 percent among youths(UNAIDS).

According to HIV Sero-Sentinel Survey sources in 2002 (most recent), Namibia has one of the world's highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates with some 23 percent rising to 43 percent in some regions. Approximately 230,000 people are living with the HIV/AIDS in Namibia today (UNAIDS). Life expectancy has dropped to 42 years from 60 in one decade. The number of orphans and vulnerable children have risen to 80,000 and it is expected to rise up to 250,000 in 20 years time when 40 percent of children will be orphans. (Nangula, 2010, 17.) At this situation, the churches and other organisations have to take responsibility.

After days of homework and brainstorming, we approached Emanuel Lutheran Church youths in the beginning of October in 2009 and called for a youth meeting. The youths were introduced CUAHA and our vision/mission. Moreover, they were oriented with our motive and the idea behind the meeting. Furthermore, we stressed the role youths have in protecting the spread and prevention of the HIV and AIDS in the society which is rampant. CUAHA members also expressed CUAHA mission to address issues of teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, and rampant increase on rapes in the society, killings, drugs, suicide and alcohol. Expressing the fact that dreams of our young people have been curtailed, it was the need of the hour that our motivated youths work for social problems in joint efforts. We told the youths that formation of a youth group was an opportunity to grow and learn together about the community we lived in. We also heard what they had to share about their social problems in groups. It is good to break people up in small groups to discuss their experience of the issue (Ahmed, Finneron, Miller, Singh 2006, 10-171).

It is important that our youths can analyse the existing social problems. It is important to readdress social moral values on grounds that life is a wonderful gift that it should be honoured, protected and promoted (Grace, Care and Justice, 2007, 11). From the beginning, we intended to develop a model-youth-group and mobilise them later so as to train other youths as well. We started sessions with an idea that social problems including the HIV and AIDS are not always consequences of misuse of actions.

During this project, we desired to ignore issues of condoms use and abstinence to the youths as we thought these issues were much talked in the society with fewer results to control the HIV/AIDS. We did not want to engage ourselves in debate that is going on between churches and other religious groups. Our belief was that the high school graduates and the university students, whom we were working, could very well think for themselves regarding the mentioned issues i.e. condoms use and abstinence. Rather we decided to focus on gender, sexuality, leadership and advocacy. More would have not been possible to reach in the short period of three months. In addition, I will explain how the group developed after I left Namibia on the basis of a little information I have received from them.

1.2 Aims of the study, motivation and relevance

From the very beginning I was sure to develop my Namibian involvement into a thesis and set goals for it. When planning a thesis the goal must be defined first, as well as the way in which the work is integrated into professional practices.

The objectives of this study were to identify, categorize, and prioritize a general set of factors for construction of a youth project with community development work perspectives targeted to the awareness of the HIV/AIDS spread in Katutura community of the Namibian capital, Windhoek. Moreover, the study is intended to complement the existing but very limited youths preventative projects into the identification of such factors and to serve as a stepping stone to the identification and establishment of yardsticks which could be used by construction practitioners on all projects in the future.

The knowledge learnt during this study can be added to the existing body of knowledge on youth work in community development. It will help professionals to develop adolescent-centred projects in communities. In doing this, different theoretical

frameworks used during the process are looked into and analyzed alongside the youth group formulation in the city of Windhoek.

The other idea of this study is also to underline the practical measures of starting and working with youth groups in a given community. I also intend to share my experiences via this study on how to form youth groups and involve them in creative works by uniting theories, information and knowledge, learnt in real life. Motivation for this study is my passion for community development work. I wanted to make use of the professional knowledge I have gained at the Degree Program in Social Services in Diaconia University of Applied Sciences DIAK-DSS and Oslo University College-MIS. Also my short experiences of involvement at Oxfam and Bernados in Manchester England and different volunteer commitments in different places have shaped my motivation. Since I started my DSS community development degree in September 2006, I got involved and interested in issues regarding youths, immigrants, other under privileged groups and their integration and empowerment in different societies. I have realised how important it is to pay attention to youths, who are also our future.

The youth work project we initiated in Namibia clearly covered different elements of youth work in community development. According to experts youth work involves: focusing on young people (Jeffs 2001: 156), emphasizing voluntary participation and relationship (Jeffs 2001, 156), committing to association (Doyle and Smith 1999, 44), being friendly and informal (Henriques 1933, 60), and acting with integrity, being concerned with the education and, more broadly, the welfare of young people (Smith 1988, 33). As I was assigned to 'mentor' the youths, among other tasks, I was clearly involved with all the elements stated above (see appendix 1).

Citing reports Shejavali (2008, 17) presents five most social challenges which are prevalent in the Namibian society. They are HIV/AIDS (prevalence average 19.7 percent), alcohol and drug abuse (More than half of Namibia's adult population consumes an average of 10 liters of alcohol in a weekly basis), Orphans and vulnerable Children OVC (due to HIV/AIDS and other factors the OVC in Namibia is on rise. Since 2004, 142777 OVC were registered), Poverty (35 pc live under 1USD a day and

56 pc live under 2 USD a day) and unemployment (36.7 percent in 2004). Moreover, crimes and drug abuse are on increase.

In reference to contexts mentioned above, we believed that there was a huge importance and relevance to focus and concentrate on youths so that each individual youth and their collective responsibilities for tackling the existing social problems. The study will be an example on the area of work among youths, from the community development work perspective of our understanding. In the DSS degree program, the study program emphasizes that communities themselves control pace and manner of social change. Community development work is defined as helping groups and communities to analyze their situation and take action for change, development or transformation. Local (user) participation is understood as vital for their own empowerment (Addy, 2008).

1.3 Significance of the project for community development

Since the 1980s, government organizations, NGOs and Churches have been addressing the crisis of the HIV and AIDS. This study is a small example how one can use professional expertise and experiences in initiating a youth project. The project reflects on ideas such as reaching youths in Namibian context.

This study addresses to those professionals who want to work with youths and share different ideas so as to combat the social challenges (mentioned in 1.2) existing in the society. Also, the study opens ideas on how interested organizations could get involved with starting youth projects. Moreover, it also provides interested students and other professionals with information about the Namibian society. The activities organized (see chapter 3) for the group are good ideas for professionals working with youths. The study can be implemented in different ways, for example, in education trainings, churches and other volunteering work organizations as a training material.

Our initiative was to bring together, in one place, the community development perspectives shaping how we could approach with preventative measures to those

affected by the disease but not yet infected. To this, we included preventive and advocacy measures, among others, in local settings. It may be noted that in the DSS degree program, we focus on Community control and local participation which is understood as empowerment. In our understanding, community controls the pace, shape, and manner of social change and decision making. (Addy, 2009). These elements are taken into clear consideration in the process of this study.

This study will be a helpful resource among those who have been involved in the work of community development in light of the youth empowerment. As the youth group started in the Emanuel church and supported by Church affiliated organization, the youths shared some ideas of diakonia as well i.e. living with, walking with, touching, understanding, sharing, caring, and struggling alongside each other (One Body, 2005). These ideas include pursue of...justice, equality and liberation for those who have been infected and to those who have been affected by the deadly pandemic (One Body, 2005).

1.4 Study limitations and structure of the study

Since this study only examines and explains initiative to develop and work with a youth group (project) in a certain place, it cannot claim to offer an overall analysis and reconstruction of community development ideology on youths. Working with the youths where no structural frameworks exist was complex. Because of the very limited time and scope of my involvement, I had greater challenges. Fortunately I made priorities clearer so as to provide for a realistic unit of analysis and relating them within the given framework of the community development work studies. Owing to the time constraint and an end to my mandate, I am no longer involved with the youth group. Despite these limitations, the study will provide a contribution in areas of forming a youth group within the makeup of community development work ideas.

The structure of the study is presented according to the following outlines: i) introduction and background ii) key concepts and theoretical framework iii) description of case iv) project (case) analysis v) conclusion with its implications for community development

Chapter one presents introduction, reason for this inquiry and other background information on the topic. The following chapter outlines key concepts and theoretical framework of the study. Chapter three presents the case study. It is dedicated to the ways of how the case was formed. Chapter four analyses the project. In chapter five, main conclusions are including its implications for community development and suggestions for the future studies.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND KEY CONCEPTS

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present three operational perspectives to explain and discuss the nature of the case study which is presented in chapter 3. The three operational perspectives are Cultural consensus analysis (CCA), Social Risk (stigma) and Realistic Evaluation (see figure 1). Noteworthy, these theoretical perspectives are presented in the context of community development work.

This study limits its cultural perspective and understanding to Cultural consensus analysis (CCA) which I simplify as cultural homogeneity analysis. It is a method used by anthropologists to identify groups with shared values (Smith, 2004, 19: 514–518). Later, it applies evaluative theories to explain the nature of the work. Realistic evaluation, a new evaluation methodology developed by Pawson and Tilley (1997, 60–77), may best explain the phenomenon in this project.

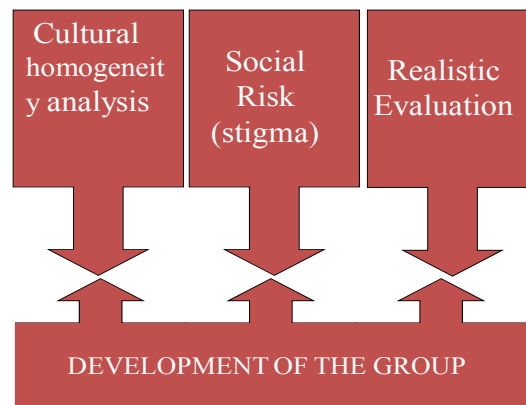


FIGURE 1. Theoretical framework of the study

The study shows homogeneous perspectives on socio-cultural, economical and political levels considering the context and nature of our work. With this aim in mind the study

constitutes a theoretical basis to understand the process and the conditions of individuals as a group in community. As the study presents a descriptive observation it may help to develop and understand learning environments in different settings, as well as an educative tools that support the group work process.

Moreover, the definition of risk is used to explain the perception of the problem in the youth work discourse. Mary Douglas (1992, 2, 30-40) is the main theoretician in this discussion. Here I identify the relationship between some of the difficulties faced in starting a youth group in the context I was involved in and the perception of group risk in cultural discourse. Concepts of stigma and purpose of community development work will be discussed.

2.2 Cultural homogeneity analysis

Cultural homogeneity analysis can be a tool used by experts to identify and study groups with shared values. Theoretically it can be based on Kroeber's discussion of "systemic culture patterns" and their meaning. (Kroeber, 1984, 65.) The homogeneity analysis is used by experts to study cultural consonance across a variety of contexts. In line to the theoretical framework, this study also assumes that cultural knowledge is shared and is systematically distributed. Group affiliation is inferred by similarity of response to a set of meaningful actions and statements. To measure homogeneity, one may have to answer important question of ethnography: who agrees with whom about what and to what degree. (Handwerker and Borgatti 1998, 569.)

Following ethnographic involvement in the group, this study identifies the culture as having a group with shared values. An analysis of these shared values suggests specific and pragmatic understanding to improve group functioning. Furthermore, I will review conditions under which cultural elements enhance from work group functioning. The study shows homogeneous perspectives on socio-cultural, economical and political levels making it possible to define a sound and clear vision that allows considering specific social aspects and nature of our work. Thus, the study constitutes a theoretical basis to understand the process and the conditions of individuals as a group in

community. So I limit my cultural perspective and understanding to a group with shared norms, values, beliefs, procedures which in effect bind members together. (Smith, 2004, 33.)

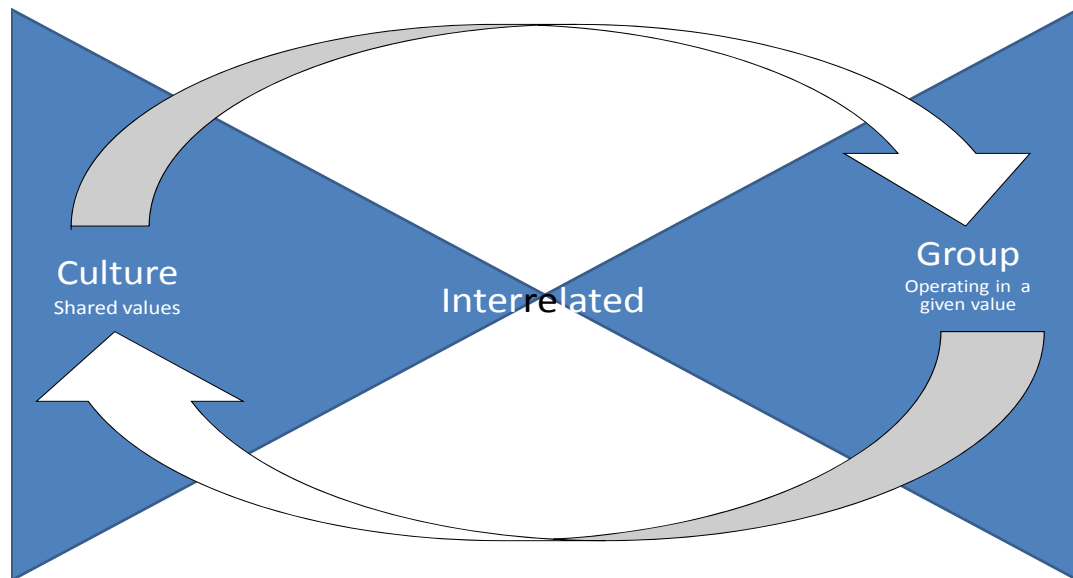


FIGURE 2. Cultural homogeneity analysis

Two important aspects of cultural knowledge that Smith (2004, 27) emphasizes which are very important from this study point of view are that cultural knowledge is (1) learned from and (2) shared with people. Shared knowledge is very powerful because when enough people share a set of beliefs, people behave as though these beliefs were obvious facts (D'Andrade 1987a). The figure 2 explains interrelation between groups (operating in a given value) and culture (shared values) as discussed earlier in this chapter.

This study broadly applies to include collective systems of meaning and expression such as gender, class, political inclination and religion, all or any of which may be significant in shaping empowerment relations in any one community development context.

There is a lot of discourse regarding cultures and community development. Many experts articulate culture as dynamic and multi-faceted, various aspects of culture and identity often remain compartmentalized. (Harrison et al., 2000, 17-22; Schech and Haggis, 2000, 44.) I agree that there is an immense need for global development initiatives to acknowledge and deal comprehensively with the complexity of community differences (Morgan, 2001, 13) and that culture refers to the web or collective matrix of influences that shape the lives of groups and individuals (Corin, 1994, 7). As Corin would put, the lives of groups and individuals include social institutions, systems of norms, beliefs, values and views of the world. However, my involvement in Namibia was limited to a small section of individuals with shared realities.

In connection to what has been said, this study involves in understanding cultural perspectives the Namibian youths over rising HIV/AIDS infection and risky sexual behavioural contexts. When one refers culture as ‘shared norms’, it obviously leaves a powerful rubric for evidence about HIV transmission there. In Namibia, we set a youth group with a target of an AIDS prevention motives. The formation of the youth group was our initiative for the AIDS prevention project. We, thus, worked on prevention through which possible threats of the spread of the fatal disease were organized in reference to our culture. The elements of ‘cultural beliefs’ functioned in AIDS propagation as an object and target of our project. Such a belief was avoidance of the use of condoms or having sex with a virgin will free the sick from the sickness. Transformation on behaviors of youths and ourselves on issues stated above were our aims to prevent youths at risk for HIV transmission.

Moreover, AIDS prevention generates for its subjects a permanent ‘care of the self’ (Foucault 1984c) that is carried out by way of questioning cultural values that one has been living with but may be threat to people’s wellbeing. In this regard, I think, youths were involved in the different moves: (1) an argument, in which everybody realized themselves as a person at risk; (2) a clear identification of themselves as individuals in the group with a culture that threatens them with specific conditions of HIV risk; (3) specific cultural habits that put one at risk of HIV transmission; and (4) a reform of the

relationship between them and their culture so as to reduce cultural risk on spread of the HIV-AIDS. This was achieved by following several discussions and participation in trainings.

2.3 Realistic Evaluation

"Realistic evaluation" is an evaluation methodology developed by Pawson and Tilley (1997). A basic premise of Pawson and Tilley's approach is that 'evaluation seeks to discover whether programs work' (Pawson, 2003, 72). Different from previous evaluation methodologies those have tended to focus primarily on the outcomes, the Realistic Evaluation approach is critical of experimental approaches to evaluation. This approach to evaluation is strongly influenced by the fact that people are a critical factor in any intervention in a social context and that it is the people that cause the program to work, not the program itself (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, 204). Realistic evaluation stresses the need to evaluate project measures within their "context," and to ask what "mechanisms" are acting to produce which "outcomes". In other words, Realistic evaluation questions which mechanisms are activated through the program, in what circumstances and with what results but not merely the theories underlying the programs. (Pawson and Tilley, 1997).



FIGURE 3. Realistic evaluation of CLEY, Pawson and Tilley (1997).

Pawson and Tilley opine that programs are theories which can be put as 'If we provide these people with these resources it may change their behaviour' (Pawson and Tilley, 2003, p. 472.) This means the approach for evaluations are to identify resources and approaches supporting possible changes in a certain situation. These approaches deliver some level of practicality to an experimental study of the type of group that we started. The members' overall performance as a group is coordinated in all characteristics. Participants' performances in different programs may be seminars, small group discussions, trainings and so on. The effectiveness of the study is judged on the basis of analysis of overall activities carried out among individuals between the groups. Pawson and Tilley point out some of the difficulties associated to interpretation of analysis of such studies, which are linked to the methodologies associated to the study.

According to them, one of the biggest problems is that we often tend to expect same level of impact on every participant in the group which is a bit problematic. However, Pawson and Tilley (1997) point out that each individual participating in such groups come with different outlooks, perceptions and skills to the group creating different contexts. Due to the same phenomenon, the project is likely to wield different effects on different individuals. Stressing on the need to evaluate project measures within their "context" and "mechanisms", the produce different "outcomes" on different individuals. This study, however, exposes project outcomes rather than differential effect on an individual. Moreover, no use of the statistical processes is used to evaluate outcomes.

In this context, the project and the factors underlying the project go hand in hand. The factors are conceptualized in terms of contexts, mechanisms and outcomes. Contexts are the settings within which programs are placed in i.e. Imanuel Lutheran Church, Windhoek. The factors are members' motivation, organizational contexts and social structures that they live in. Mechanisms are the way people work within the project to produce the desired outcomes i.e. trainings and seminars. In this study, the task of Realistic Evaluation is to describe which contexts are most influential in bringing the mechanisms that result in the desired outcomes.

2.4 Risk in a cultural discourse

Risk in cultural discourse has evolved over the past few decades. Now, it is an important framework for understanding how groups in society cope regulating risks. The study examines the theoretical roots of cultural discourse, tracing its passage on risk, and explores its connection to the context in Namibia.

Here I employ the definition of risk in a cultural discourse and I draw primarily on the work conducted by Mary Douglas on the key concept. The anthropologist Mary Douglas is probably the most established anthropological writer on risk. She defined the concept of risk in broader cultural context of fear of dangers in science, technology and environment in contemporary Western societies and the concept of pollution in non-Western societies. (Ho Ming-Gung 2003.)

Mary Douglas has repeatedly challenged the ontological status of risk as an objective measure (Douglas 1966, Douglas 1970). She has redefined risk as socially constructed within particular historical, geographical and cultural contexts. According to her people select their awareness of certain risks to conform to a specific way of life, which is associated with a set of values and beliefs. In addition, individuals perceive and interpret risk in their own context and reality whose particular social forms influence what they come to perceive as risks (Douglas 1992, 32).

Douglas uses the concept of risk establishing and maintaining cultural boundaries. Douglas argues that the gap between rich and poor encourages the poor to be blamed for the spread of infections as though poverty and risk taking were choices in life that people make voluntarily. That risk categorization would leave AIDS patients segregated, marginalized and discriminated against. (Douglas 1994.) This argument is closely connected with the concept of stigma, which can have a negative effect on

AIDS surveillance in the countries, including Namibia. The following paragraphs discuss the topic of stigma.

From the previous overview (see 1.1) of the HIV and AIDS in Namibia, we find that youths have been identified as a risk group for HIV and AIDS. It is important to understand the consequences of this identification and how does it affect the prevention policy of HIV and AIDS there.

2.5 Stigma

Stigma is the phenomenon whereby an individual with an attribute, which is deeply discredited by ones society, is rejected as a result of the attribute (Goffman, 1963). It occurs when an individual is identified as abnormal to a set of unwanted characteristics, for example HIV/AIDS, mental illnesses, disability etc. It is a distinguishing mark of social disgrace which is barrier to recovery and wellbeing for people with unwelcomed and unwanted characteristics.

Different sources on the topic suggest different forms of stigma: perceived, internalised, enacted, symbolic and instrumental. Concerning HIV/AIDS, perceived stigma refers to people living with HIV awareness of negating societal attitudes, reduced opportunity and negative social identity (Berger, Ferrans & Lashley, 2001) Internalized stigma includes negative beliefs, views and feelings towards HIV/AIDS and oneself (Lee, Kochman, & Sikkema, 2002; Mak, Poon, Pun, & Cheung, 2007.) Enacted stigma encompasses acts of discrimination toward PLHIV, such as violence and exclusion. (Herek, Capitanio, & Widaman, 2002; Nyblade, 2006.) Symbolic stigma refers to othering, blaming and shaming of groups associated with HIV/AIDS (Deacon, 2006; Herek, Widaman, & Capitanio, 2005). Instrumental stigma has been described as measures taken to protect oneself and one's health. (Herek et al., 2005.)

2.6 Community development work

A 'one-size-fits-all' understanding of community development is unlikely (Addy, T. 2009). This chapter examines the semantic evolution of the term 'community development' and defines it. Moreover, it also highlights the purpose of community development. According to experts, community development has acquired different meanings, theoretical grounding, and practical applications, with change in time across countries. Starting from a focus on traditional societies up to the 1960s, it has moved to a focus on social and/or civil-rights movements up to the 1980s, and further to a focus on the modern middle class from the 1990s (Mfaniseni, 2009). However, the reality is that the concept is not so static but changes its meaning and understanding as to certain political and social contexts one refers to.

Up to the 1950s and 1960s, there was a common sense assumption that Community Development as a process of change was anchored in a geographical area, with a defined identity and a set of common values and practices. (Mfaniseni, 2009, 23.) Mfaniseni citing Stacey (1969, 135) notes that in the ideal typical community, the sense of belonging was said to be associated within the social relations within the particular geographic area.

Often characteristics like geographical location, identity, and common interests are associated with traditional communities. In traditional communities, the communities living in certain location share resources and common-hood. Such common-hood, according to Mfaniseni, 2009 is defined by shared moral values, where (within strong families and through effective parenting) social and civic obligations are learned, and self-reliance, mutual aid, and volunteering are practiced as a constituent form of identity. He adds as identity, as being an expression of common interests, since such communities were associated with socially cohesive systems, so much so that their way of life was perceived to be sociologically functional, at least in rhetoric. The FCDL taster defines communities into three different categories i.e. by geography (streets, an estate, village, an area), by identity (by disability, culture, ethnicity, sexuality, religion)

and by interests (by leisure interests as sports, activity (-ies) as interests on environment and conservation) (FCDL taster-II, 2009).

Understanding of community development work may be important as well. It is in my opinion best defined as (see FCDL taster-II, 2009) collective efforts to bring about social change and justice by working with communities (as defined in previous chapter) to- identify their needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities, plan, organise and take action and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the action all in ways which challenge oppression and tackle inequalities.

Bringing understanding nearer to the DSS degree program, community development work may be reflected as a people-centered participatory practice and philosophy. It can be stated as:

‘Go to the people,
 Live among them
 Learn from them
 Plan with them
 Work with them
 Start with what they know
 Build on what they have
 Teach by showing
 Learn by doing
 Not a showcase
 But a pattern
 Not odds and ends but a system
 Not to conform but to transform
 Not relief but release.’ (Compton, 2001.)

There are some negative discourses regarding community development work as well. Some experts opine that the term has been used across continents to repress and divide people using generic terms like ‘Indian community’, ‘Colored community’, ‘immigrants’ ‘White community’, and ‘Black community’, etc., to coincide with its

labels for ethnic groups as to emphasize difference and to justify separate development rather than empowering people in its true senses. (Ramphela and Thornton 1988: 33.)

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained operational concepts used in this report. Moreover, I explained the relationship between the risk and with the HIV AIDS. I have wished by that to give an explanation for the need to outreach the youths with the grave social need. Also, the study discusses about different cultural perspectives, risk, stigma, community and community development in a cultural discourse and how that affect HIV AIDS spread in Namibia.

I am looking through the next chapter to describe the case of the youth project we started.

3. DESCRIPTION OF CASE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the report of the process how the youth group was initiated. Firstly, the chapter describes what the aim of the project was. Secondly, the chapter presents the methods used in carrying out the project and how the youth group started and an analysis of ways starting a group. In addition, the chapter gives information on how ethics, validity and limitations have influenced the study.

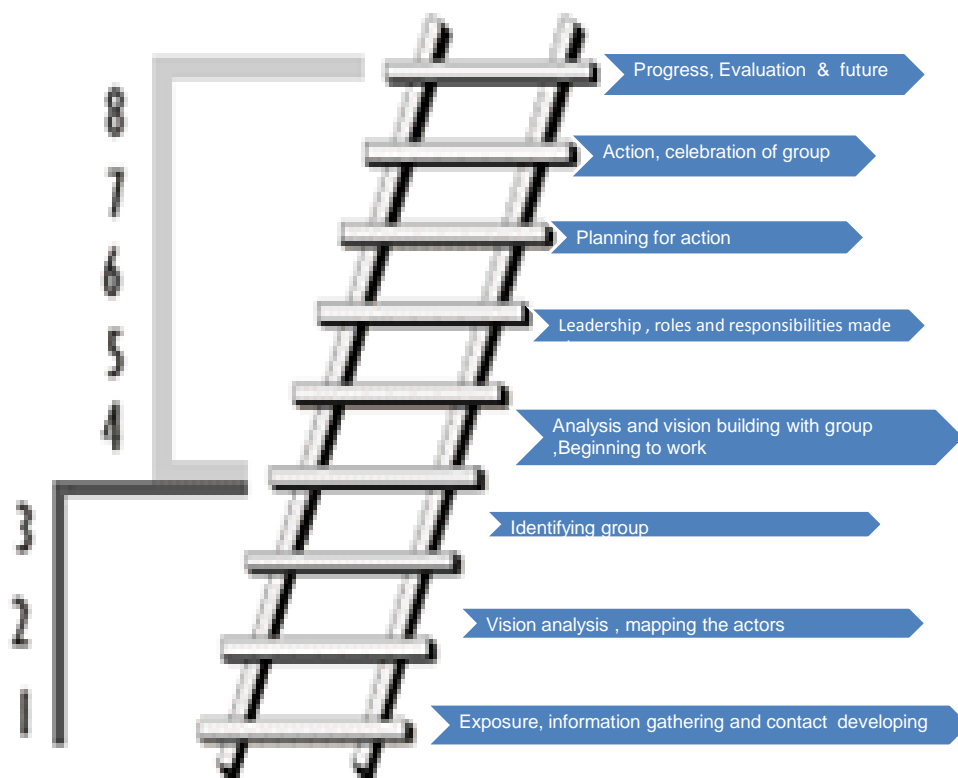


FIGURE 4. Process of the Case study from exposure to evaluation and beyond. Adapted from Addy Tony (2009). The ladder idea was taken from Roger Hart (1992)

Noteworthy, the example of community I was involved may be referred as modern middle class group in the Namibian context with shared resources and commonalities (please see chapter 2) shaped and constrained by the geographical and cultural features.

3.2 Background and orientation

My arrival in Namibia was at the most critical phase of CUAHA, Namibia. The Namibian office had been shifted to South Africa and there were no projects at the moment. There was not an office to work. Despite the catchy role and vision of the CUAHA in its website, I found, the people involved with the project from Helsinki to Windhoek in total confusion.

The need for the project was identified together by me, the CUAHA volunteer, and Merab, the CUAHA coordinator. During the first stage of my volunteering period, we carried out a feasibility study and the financing of the project which was included in the CUAHA budget.

Little mistrust erupted between the organisers and the pastor of the congregation to use his congregation members to form the youth group. I think the pastor thought that our motives to begin a youth group in his congregation were not clear. However, we moved on with our idea of starting a group. The congregation was chosen as the base of the project and talks with the Church leadership were held. During the meetings necessity for the project were discussed in a transparent way. 'As we did not have any hidden agendas', the pastor finally gave us the permission to use 'his' youths and the church premises for the project. After all the efforts, exposure visits, brain storming, meetings we started the youth group.

Initially, the context of my assigned role was to mentor the HIV-infected group called Ambassadors of HOPE (see appendix 1). However, it did not simply work out. When all efforts to gather ambassadors of HOPE failed, we (me and my supervisor Merab Kirimire- national coordinator of CUAHA, Namibia) sat down out of frustration. Together, we agreed to establish a vibrant CUAHA during the three months and make it more visible locally in the Namibian capital, Windhoek. So we decided to develop a

youth preventive program in the region of Katutura in Windhoek with an idea of forming and training youths.

The project started with brainstorming session between only two staff members in the national secretariat on CUAHA Namibia. The staff consisted of Merab and myself. Merab was (still is) a national coordinator while I was a volunteer worker for three months for my international placement. A very experienced person, Merab had long experiences with working with youths, street kids and human trafficking. I was there to support her with the CUAHA business.

The first need was to facilitate the new idea, project concept and strategy. For achieving those, we sat many evenings and arranged orientation session for ourselves. We oriented ourselves on prevention strategy against promulgation of HIV and AIDS among other social problems. Then we started the field observation, exposure to Katutura area. Exposure visits were important as information we had of the area were not enough to start working in the community with youths. Moreover, it was important to grasp the community perspective and understanding of the situation as they were on how they think about their own situation and of their environment. We conducted many exposure visits to the capital's Kattura region. Finally, we set Kattura Imanuela Lutheran Church as a base to start the project and discussed working relations with the youths and their Church. The focus on such a preventative work did not really seem to be in a place in Namibia. The focus on youths, we thought, was extremely important.

3.3 Relevance of the project

This study also focuses on a small-scale evaluation of a small youth group in a small region of a Namibian capital, Windhoek. In this chapter, I illustrate shortly the relevance of the project and how we applied concepts belonging to community development work.

Starting of a youth group has always been linked with social/ community work. If we take a look at the focus of preventative measures to combat social problems including HIV and AIDS in Namibia, most of the working organisations, if not all,

have low or no focus. (Kirimire, 2009).

With the HIV and AIDS pandemic posing severe threat to country's wellbeing, it is increasingly urgent to address the importance of preventive measures to protect lives. In the midst of mushrooming of organisations and their focus on use of condoms for decades, it should be evident that there is a need to bring youths together and launch preventive, advocacy, and other guidance for youths in local settings who are living on this challenge.

Researches tell that Namibian HIV and AIDS scenario has not changed despite many efforts by the international/ national efforts (Nangula, 2008). The question is what will happen if the spread of the HIV and AIDS continues with same average? Unless HIV and AIDS prevention policy changes, the occurrence rate will at least stay the same, if not rise.

These theories help in an understanding the nature of social problems including HIV and AIDS in Namibia. Only when we understand the nature of the problem can we find appropriate solutions. These solutions may include reaching the youths with commitment to working collaboratively with communities in ecumenical, interfaith, governmental and civil society partners through assistance with HIV and AIDS control policy and ask ourselves which mechanisms are activated through which program, in what circumstances and with what results but not merely the theories underlying the programs.

The study shows the socio-cultural perspective making it possible to define a sound and clear vision that allows considering specific social aspects and nature of our work. With this aim in mind the study constitutes a theoretical basis to understand the process and the conditions of individuals as a group in community. As the study presents, a descriptive observation it may help to develop and understand learning environments in different settings, as well as educative tools, that supports the group process.

3.4 Youth orientation meeting

After series of homework and brainstorming, we contacted pastor a and a youth of the Church and told them about our wish to start and train youths and requested them to spread the words that we wanted to meet interested youths. We told them that we would visit the Church after the worship service on one Sunday.

Thus, on October 8, 2009 we went for a youth meeting with some snacks after the Church service. Sixteen youths studying in different higher educational institutes in Windhoek (between age of 16-23) participated.

We introduced the CUAHA and its vision/mission to them. Moreover, they were oriented with our motivation behind the idea of the meeting to begin a group. The role of on protecting the spread and preventing the HIV and AIDS in the society was also discussed. CUAHA members (Merab and myself) also expressed that awareness among youths would address issues of teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, and rampant increase on rapes in the society, killings, drugs, suicide and alcohol. Expressing the fact that dreams of our young people have been curtailed, Merab added that it was the need of the hour that our motivated youths work for social problems in joint efforts. The group was made clear that it is not only formation of a group but also an opportunity for all its members to contribute in the society that we live in. We made it clear that we were ready to facilitate the organisation of a youth group but the whole process has to be led by them.

Meanwhile, Pastor of the Church who was informed about the meeting and our motives Rev. Nelumbu shortly visited the group meeting and welcomed us and our mission. He, however, expressed concern that the group shall not conflict with the Church values and aspirations of their parents.

All the participants expressed their willingness to contribute time and efforts in the group. It was decided that the group, initially, meets once a week on Sunday after the worship service. The weekdays were thought not to be appropriate owing to the fact that most members were students. It was agreed that the size of the group should be

within 10-15. Youths were encouraged and expressed their willingness to form the group and agreed to meet the following week.

We also conducted group interview with the participants. Powell, 2002 believes that during a focus group interview participants hear and interact with each other and the leader, which yields different information than if people were interviewed individually.

The purpose of focus group interview was to develop a broad and deep understanding on their insights, responses and opinions. (Powell, 2002, 16.) We did not make that meeting long. We ended the first meeting asking the youths to come with their wishes and desires next Sunday in the same venue and time.

3.5 Youth meetings and birth of a group

Upon meetings the youth group couple of times, the group formed its name as CLEY (CAUHA-Lutheran-ELCIN-Youths), code of conduct, elected leadership and its form, among others. The form of the leadership, the group decided, was rotational-group-leadership which meant everyone will get chance to lead the group.

Our task as facilitators of the newly developed youth group was to develop something new within already existing structures. As a student of Diak DSS who was volunteering there, I also wanted to use some of the ideas I have learnt in my degree program. As to their wish, we together started a group with volunteer members and provided them with introductory workshops on volunteerism, leadership, and community etc so as to help them understand the concept of community work and voluntary work.

We engaged them in group-works which are effective tools of empowerment. In the group, the group members clearly had chance to meet regularly and discuss about their own concerns and situations. Butler and Wintram (1991, 34) believe that, a group can be

- a source of immediate support, of friendship, where the knowledge that a meeting will take place regularly provides a safety net in itself;
- a place to recognize shared experiences and their value;

- a way of breaking down isolation and loneliness;
- the source of a different perspective on personal problems;
- a place to experience power over personal situations with the capacity to change and have an effect on these. (Butler & Wintram 1991, 77.)

After some time of working together, we officially launched our activities with starting a pilot project called CLEY (CUAHA Lutheran Emanuel Youths). This pilot project included fifteen individuals—all local and community based. Now, as planned, the volunteers have started forming similar groups to other places of Namibia (see figure 5 and appendix 5).

It is very important work in Namibia as most organisations still do not believe how important, serious and competent youths can be. But I do believe that youths need to be the focus in any society so as to participating more effectively in both drafting the means and addressing the solutions to the existing social problems. In any given society, young people participating and exercising responsibility is essential not only because they will be the beneficiaries and the leaders in the future but also because so many of them are already playing decisive roles within their own communities. <http://www.infed.org/youthwork/b-yw.htm>

The initial idea was that CUAHA together with the CUAHA-Lutheran-ELCIN-Youth (CLEY) group will design a way to support other young people and encourage them to live a positive and responsible life. As a starting point, we began to train the CLEY who will then begin to work with other youth groups in Katutura region of Windhoek and in the north to trigger their life motivations. The pioneer CLEY, we thought, will turn out to be a youth movement for establishing a model for HIV and AIDS preventative methods, among other social problems that go together.

CUAHA Namibia Secretariat worked during the month of September in identifying the youths who could be trained on issues on leadership, human growth, behavioural changes, relationships and social values- among others.

During various seminars, our main themes and objectives were to enable the participants to understand:

- What/ why youth group?
- Philosophy and implication of youth group & Mobilization
- Principals of youth group
- Techniques of Social Organization
- Role of a youth Organizer in community
- Qualities of a good leader
- Effective Leadership
- Community Based Organizations [Structure, Functions and sustainability]
- Basic Income Grant as a tool for Social empowerment
- Communication in social organization.

Motivate the participants to reflect and undertake self-analysis of their attitudes and behaviour towards their respective roles in the development process. In each session, almost all i.e. 13-15 participants attended. Sometimes guest speakers were invited.

As we sat with the youths, we planned everything together. While the necessary financing will be done by the CUAHA secretariat, I was assigned to plan the future together with the youths. Together, we did all the necessary planning of way forward. We prepared the calendar with themes of the training and future of the organisation.

Regarding management of the project, the cost of the project remained very minimal. It was covered by the CUAHA Namibia secretariat. We used the Church premises for our meetings and I purchased light snacks for each meeting which was later reimbursed to me. As mentioned before, the team consisted two CUAHA staffs including me and the 15 youth members. The team was supervised by me, youth mentor and the CUAHA national coordinator, Merab Kirimire.

3.6 Aim and process

The aim of the project has always been to support youths find ways in difficult circumstances and encourage them to live a positive and responsible life. The project

has three parts. The first is to train the youths on issues on human growth, leadership, behavioural changes, relationships and social values- among others.

The second part is that the trained CLEY members begin outreach work and train other groups in other regions (see appendix 5) in Namibia. Transparency was very vital. Before, we involved the youths in outsourced trainings, for example, we informed their guardians and seek their permission (see appendix 2).

The third aim is to support skill development and income generation projects trainings. Such project, however, is yet to be developed. It was agreed to design support skill development training and income generation projects. Such project, however, was yet to be developed. But, CLEY has started forming groups in other parts (please see Appendix 5)

In setting aims and processes we chose a participatory action planning so as to find out the possibilities, potentials and to determine the implementation strategies. Primarily, the youths together identified the problems they have, formulated plan to combat those problems and start working on them, whereas, CUAHA remained as facilitators. The community development process starts by analysing the community needs and strengths, it proceeds to mobilise people and resources, who together identify the problems and make an action plan to tackle the problem, thereafter carry out the action and reflect upon the action taken and make a new plan (Tiikkainen & Piirainen 2007, 18).

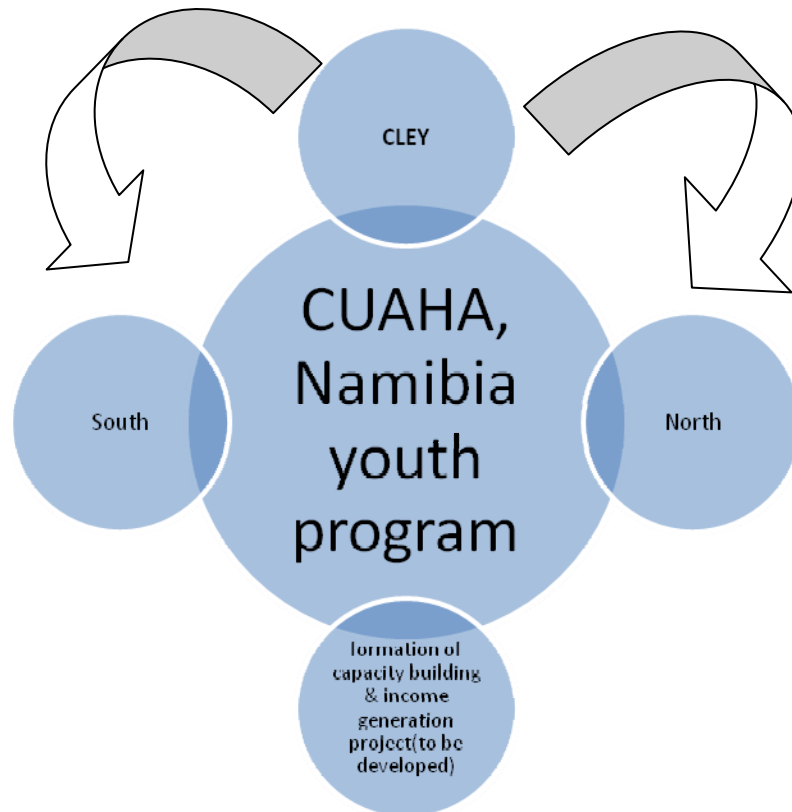


FIGURE 5. Youth project: Aim and Process

The messages from the national coordinator and a group leaders tells that the CLEY is on its track as it was planned (see app E & F.)

3.7 Group activities (in brief)

As mentioned in chapter one, the failure of reviving Ambassadors of hope gave birth to idea of starting a youth group. With little available resources we decided to train youths within the existing structures. Instead of trying to cure social crises, we thought it was important to build a society capable of ‘preventing’ these breakdowns altogether by influencing future decision makers, i.e. youths, and enabling them to think socially responsible.

As said, we managed to involve the youths from the very beginning on issues they were interested in. We strongly believe that youth have the maximum potential to bring about changes in their society via local settings. Via CUAHA, we seek to meet this goal

and reach out to the youths, thereby creating a significant base of sensitive, well-informed youths who can contribute to society in different ways.

After series of meetings, we offered a range of programs to the young adults. They include social skills development, leadership, sensitization to social issues, as well as opportunities to participate in volunteer efforts through debates, radio, music and creative writing, simulation games, and adventure activities. Major issues we shared together are listed below. The following table summarizes CLEY's calendar before I departed Namibia.

TABLE 1: CLEY Calendar, Fall 2009

Date	Activity
1. 8.10.2009	Meeting to establish the group
2. 18, 25.10	Meeting to establish name. Getting to know one another!
3. 01.11	Seminar on leadership, code of conduct
4. 08.11	Sharing and consolidation of the past meeting, second round of leadership seminar and group elect leaders and decide to stick to rotational leadership, giving chance to lead to everyone.
5. 09-11.11	AIDS trust training on GBV
6. 13.11	Radio Interview of two youths. The group select their two representatives balancing gender.
7. 15.11	Visit to Rehoboth city. They participate in AIDS day commemoration. Local Lutheran parish invite the youth to help them start a similar group with similar ideas.
8. 22-26.11	CUAHA stakeholders meeting
9. 29.11	Composition of a poem for the World AIDS daycelebration in Ongwediva.
10. 02-.06.12	World AIDS day in North. The youths capture the audience in a huge crowd and get applause.

3.8 Group leader tells model of Leadership

‘CLEY Namibia is made up of 15 members of whom 3 are Team leaders who were elected through elections under the supervision of Mr.Beukus (officer in the Council of churches, Namibia) and Prakash (CUAHA volunteer from Finland).

Team leaders were elected as: Chairperson: [REDACTED], Secretary : [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] PRO: [REDACTED] (names hidden for privacy)

A group of team leaders will be elected to serve for a period of 6 months representing a semester twice a year. Our leadership structure is based on Rotational Leadership which allows every group member to have an equal leadership opportunity meaning everyone in the group will have an opportunity to lead.’

3.9 Group formulates own plans for 2010

Just before the group left for Christmas holiday, the team of elected leaders formulated the groups’ plan for 2010 in consultation to the other group members.

<u>Jan</u> Subscription fee: Opening group bank account	<u>Feb</u> Charity work	<u>March</u> Cake sales Raffle tickets Youth concert	<u>April</u> Charity work
<u>May</u> Sports day Youth March	<u>June</u> Charity Work Subscription	<u>July</u> Youth debates	<u>August</u> HIV awareness- Quiz fun day
<u>September</u> Advocacy month	<u>October</u> Charity month	<u>Novemember</u> Advocy	<u>December</u> AIDS week/ other programs

In the plan they also defined the meaning and process of tasks like charity work. Charity work, according to them, 'will include donations (of any kind) and visits to Old age homes, orphanages and hospitals. We believe in giving back to the community we belong to and helping where we can.

Sport Day with the assistance of a charity oriented organization(s). We believe that sport is an essential part in order to get the youth s active involvement in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Youth activities like: youth debates, marches, quiz, and concert to encourage youth participation, will be organised. Advocacy month will include activities of advocating against all social troubles. Subscription fee is a fee that will be made by every member of N\$ 50, at the beginning of every leadership semester. It will be twice a year.

In addition to this we will stick to the outreach and start other youth group in other regions of Namibia. We hope to get continuous moral support from CUAHA Namibia in the future'.

As stated earlier, the need for the project was identified by CUAHA Namibia workers i.e Merab and me, the CUAHA coordinator and the CUAHA volunteer respectively. During the first stage of my volunteering period, we carried out feasibility study and the financing of the project which was included in the CUAHA budget.

3.10 Main stages of implementation

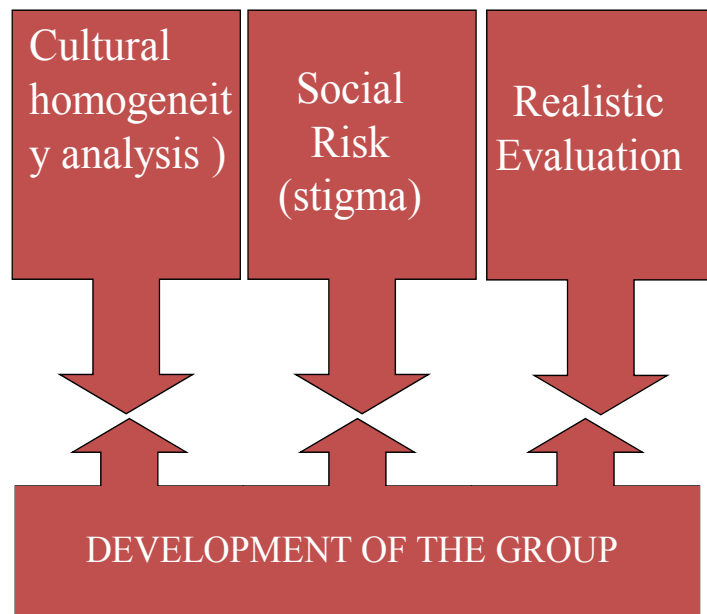
The largest part of the project is actual implementation of the works planned. In a project like this, it includes commitments of sticking to plans made. So, after the planning of the future we conducted stages of a project implementation: The major part of a project implementation was carried out in 3 stages:

1. Starting and building of a new group.
2. Carryout planned activities
3. Continuation of the activities

4. PROJECT ANALYSIS

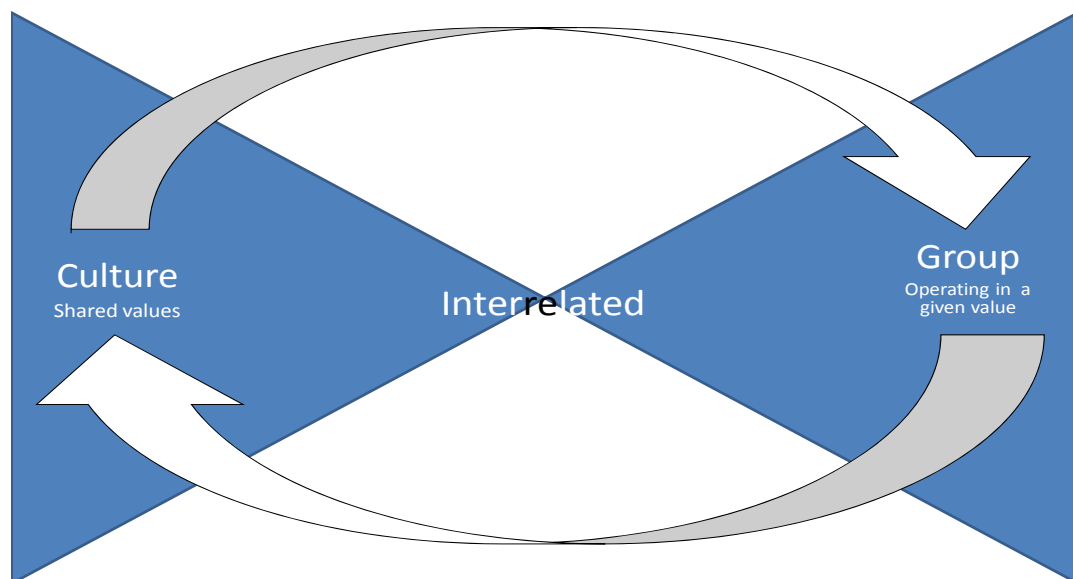
4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will bring the figure 1 from the second chapter and present the theoretical perspectives so as to operationalize the concepts into the study. I will do it referring them to my ethnographic involvement and observation. The three operational perspectives are Cultural homogeneity analysis, Social Risk (stigma) and Realistic Evaluation (figure 1). Noteworthy, these theoretical perspectives are in light to community development (see chapter 2.6) work.



4.2 Cultural homogeneity analysis

As mentioned earlier, Cultural homogeneity analysis identifies groups' cultural consonance across a variety of contexts. As shown in figure 2, this study also assumes that cultural perspective and understanding to a group with shared norms, values, beliefs, procedures which are interrelated and in effect bind members together. Cultural knowledge is shared and is systematically distributed. Two important aspects of cultural knowledge that Smith (2004: 514–518) emphasizes are that cultural knowledge is (1) learned from and (2) shared with people.



My observation of the group during that short period identified three different homogeneous perspectives on socio-culture, economic and political levels which binded the group which in effect functioned well: i) the homogeneity cultural perspective (Oshibhambo language as mother tongue, Christian religion and Obhambo

ethnicity), ii) the economic perspective (all members were from middleclass families), and iii) the political perspective (almost all had same political inclination). These perspectives influenced how the group expressed and managed tensions related to culture, stigma and other social issues. Racial identity as a group, the members had the similar sense of humor, felt respected and valued by their colleagues. These perspectives could be interpreted as the meaning and implications for how well the group and its members functioned. Moreover, these perspectives on homogeneity had been very useful in motivating the group for the integration-and-learning perspective provided the rationale and guidance needed to achieve sustained and shared benefits.

My involvement in Namibia was limited to a small section of individuals with shared realities i.e. ethnically, socially, linguistically etc. I will elaborate the different homogeneous perspectives on socio-culture, economic and political levels with examples.

I will begin from the homogeneity cultural perspective. In addition to members hailing from Namibia, all were members from Obhambo ethnicity. High school graduates, everyone spoke English. Moreover, they shared Oshibhambo language as their mother tongue. Mostly they spoke in English but when there came a slight chance of misunderstanding, they just changed the language. According to my observation, many possible misunderstandings were avoided by the mother tongue they shared. The common mother tongue provided them with common sense of humor. Often, they cracked jokes I did not understand (and they did not translate). The jokes would turn the bored group lively. I witnessed how important it was to be able to share a certain level of language confidence in a group.

Other homogeneity cultural perspective was Christian religion they shared. All were Lutherans and belonged to the same Church. They started the group meeting with a prayer. They even came from same geographical area and were familiar to one another in a way or the other. They would even pray for their families and friends facing certain difficulties. They would also pray for their community. In this way, one could see the sense of belonging among and between the members.

The economic perspective is also worth mentioning. On informal discussion and home visits, I realized that all members were from middleclass Namibian families. One of the parents was working, in most cases.

Finally, I want to highlight the political perspective. I was there during the presidential and general elections. When we were having group meeting, political mass would pass along the highway through our meeting place. Then, I remember, political discussion would erupt. I asked them their political inclination. Almost all, I realized, would come from the largest political party of Namibia i.e. SWAPO. The reason of their inclination, according to them, would be that SWAPO freed Namibia and they would also tell me that to be Obhambo is like to be a SWAPO. Some would say, the Namibian trinity was SWAPO (party), ELCIN (Lutheran Church) and Obhambo (largest ethnic group). This feeling provided them with security and oneness in the context I was working.

To add to my short observation, these perspectives influenced how the group expressed and managed tensions related to culture, stigma and other social issues. Racial identity as a group, the members had the similar sense of humor, felt respected and valued by their colleagues. These perspectives could be interpreted as the meaning and implications for how well the group and its members functioned. These homogeneous elements had been very useful in motivating the group for the integration-and-learning perspective provided the rationale and guidance needed to achieve sustained and shared benefits.

4.3 Realistic evaluation

As mentioned in 2.2, realistic evaluation stresses the need to evaluate project measures within their "C" "context," and to ask what "M" "mechanisms" are acting to produce which "O" "outcomes" (Pawson and Tilley. 1997). In other words, Realistic evaluation questions which mechanisms are activated through the program, in what circumstances and with what results but not merely the theories underlying the programs.

In this chapter the realistic evaluation is used as a tool in project report. Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors that influence group's success and also the success of the project. The approach explores contexts, mechanisms and outcomes of programs, so that the particular characteristics of a setting are accounted for in drawing conclusions about program effectiveness in relation to community development work as discussed in factors of success 4.8.

To this end, I explain the realistic evaluation via the following image. I will also elaborate the contexts, mechanisms and outcomes of the study as well. Within their "context," "mechanisms" and "outcomes", I have developed a reformed realistic evaluation adding another measure of "threats" in figure 5.



FIGURE 3. Realistic evaluation of CLEY, Pawson and Tilley (1997).

This study (see figure 1 and 2) is set in the real life of group practice and focuses on the implementation of community work strategies in forming a group. Realistic evaluation takes into consideration the in-built assumptions underpinning the mechanisms (which in the case of the study are the discussed in chapter 3), the context within which this takes place (in this case 4.2), and the outcomes that occurred (as a result of the

relationship between the context and mechanisms). This study views these relationships and processes and the links so as to inform these relationships that take place within a shared process of critical evaluative reflection of our own work. The study has developed a reformed realistic evaluation adding another measure of "threats" in fig 4. Threats are used to highlight difficulties and pressures in the framework project operated.

In relation to the diagram, Cs Ms and Os identified in the literature in figure 7 (p, 44) are taken to be features of our case. As far as the study could determine, the contexts are factors that appeared to be characteristic of the more group and our learning environments. Where features are identified as mechanisms, they are the strategies we seem to have used within the group to support them in a day-to-day basis. As implied in the study, the study used a degree of interpretation in the analysis of the study findings. The outcome of this research provides information that may lead to the realization of the program pattern, with an increased understanding of how the program actually worked and works in relation to community development. Moreover, the study reforms Pawson and Tilley (1997) realistic evaluation with a need to add "T" "Threats" as an important element for realistic evaluation.

Following on from this reasoning, the "T" "Threats" represented in figure 7 (p, 44) provides a 'space' for analysis. It is important that a Realistic Evaluation also focuses on particular threats and hardships one might come along as a basis for discussion in order to generate more finely-grained CMOs, based on understanding of the day-to-day working of their group. In addition, the framework provides in the Table below could also act as a starting point for a further, detailed Realistic-orientated review in the area of group work, with a view to further validating the analysis.

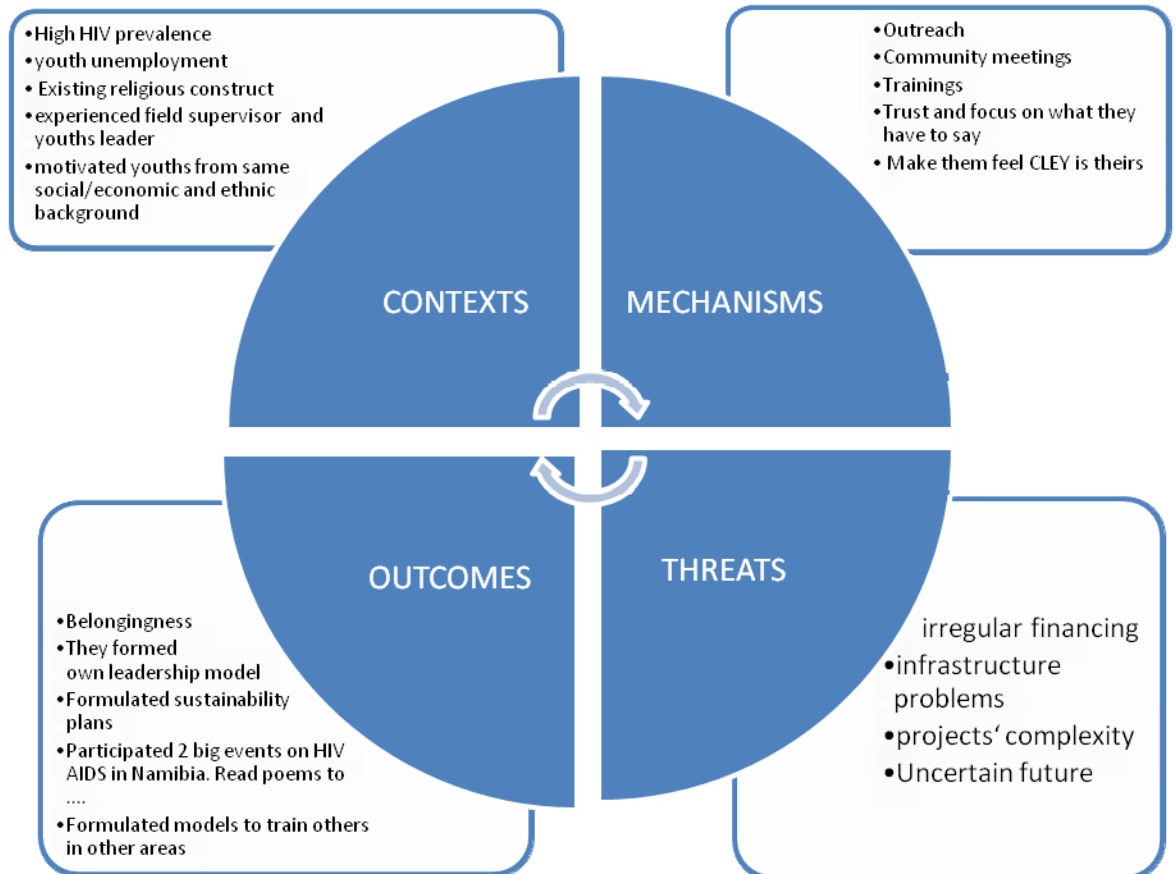


FIGURE 7. Reformed Realistic evaluation with an important element i.e. threats added to Pawson and Tilley (1997)

4.4 Social Risk and stigma

So far youth projects on HIV-education focus largely on individual responsibility. They often fail to address adequately other aspects of HIV-related social risks in social contexts. As discussed in chapter 2, Mary Douglas has defines risk as socially constructed within particular historical, geographical and cultural contexts. According to her people select their awareness of certain risks to conform to a specific way of life, which is associated with a set of values and beliefs. According to her, individuals perceive and interpret risk in their own context and reality whose particular social forms influence what they come to perceive as risks. (Douglas 1992, 32.)

Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted during the fall 2009, I examined the association between HIV-related social risks (unsafe drug use, unsafe sex, and gender relations) and stigma. HIV prevention projects must pay due attention to the specific contexts of drug uses, unsafe sex and gender relations.

In connection to different experts suggesting different forms of stigmas as discussed in 2.6, my ethnographic fieldwork observation reveals that high stigma levels were consistently and significantly associated to lack of social support, poor physical health, poor mental health, lower income and younger age. The complexity of defining HIV-related stigma in part stems from its interaction with structural inequalities and discrimination by social processes that are not always integrated into stigma measures focusing on the individual (s). (Campbell & Deacon, 2006; Parker & Aggleton, 2003.) HIV-related stigma may also be compounded by negative societal attitudes toward route of HIV infection (e.g. sex work, injection drug use etc.)

Stigma is one of the foremost threats in health prevention and promotion programs implemented globally. In Namibia, efforts to reduce stigma now are very important in promoting treatment for those already infected and in preventing further spread of the disease. During my observation, I witnessed different levels of HIV-related stigma as to how one perceives stigma. It more or less depended upon individual's own HIV-related experiences, cultural beliefs and knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The youths I was working with presented the social stigma against HIV positive people, among other social beliefs, as 'something that should not exist in their society'.

The attitudes that create stigmas in the society, according to the youths I was involved with, are usually associated with local belief systems that HIV is caused by deadly germs which are connected to sexual immortality, alcoholism, drugs, homosexuality and punishment from God for sins committed. My observation suggests that stigmatizing attitudes were prevalent in most group members, despite relatively high levels of exposure to the HIV/AIDS epidemic meaning many of their family members or relatives were infected by the virus. Some of the members expressed some level of

blame or negative emotion while some admitted to keep themselves away from people with the HIV. The youths were, however, aware that stigmatizing is wrong and bad practice. I believe the level education they received must have affected in ways how they thought. Noteworthy, all the group members were high school graduates with some enrolled in different faculties of the local university.

But often they judged people with HIV negatively and distanced themselves socially from HIV infected people. Despite my efforts to find reasons behind such negative stigma, I failed to do so. Ruggiero and Taylor (1994, 46) suggest that a shared and well-defined stereotype is typically considered when evaluating a community's response. I leave this statement for discussion or further research.

As Niehaus, 2006, 7-17 would put, some youths agreed to the fact that HIV/AIDS in the Obhambho community was associated with issues of death, moral judgement, religious punishment and a failure to follow cultural traditions, as has been identified in other African communities. Everyone shared experiencing cultural or individual stigmatising behavior in their community and society in general.

The boys accused the females and other people with less education and as having more stigmatising attitudes while the girls blamed the men as carrying stigmatising attitudes. The thing which made me think is that most youths I met indicated of having some stigmatising attitudes towards people with HIV in their own communities. They, however, described their stigmatising attitudes as 'subtle forms of avoidance' which I think is a harmful behavior which needs change. To address this issue, we held a workshop as well.

Despite various limitations, we worked some important implications for addressing AIDS-related stigma. There is a larger need of working on making youths and communities understand of what contributes to AIDS-related stigma and its adverse consequences to the communities in general.

Cultural beliefs are difficult to change overnight; efforts aimed at increasing HIV related awareness could change the level of stigmatising attitudes. On meeting some

HIV-infected individuals, they expressed that their HIV status remain secret owing to the stigmatising attitudes prevalent in the society. But they said that the pressure of not being able to disclose their status is stressful that the level of guilt is high.

Observational study of stigma present in the society that shapes decisions to conceal or reveal HIV status was also made. The negative consequences of concealment were harsh. The negative consequences resulted to loss of social support, persecution, isolation, loss of job and other problems accessing healthcare services. So, with our youths during the project, we associated with the guiding principles of the community empowerment aspects, rather than focusing simply on the negative consequences of disclosure.

The coordinator of CUAHA Namibia and my supervisor Merab Kirimire often opined that though stigma is a complex phenomenon imbedded in human communities significant progress has been made in addressing discrimination against HIV/AIDS in Africa. She often told me that a more committed political response to HIV, development of systems of care and treatment and media coverage of community actions of caring for people living with HIV is the way to change the perception that communities carry towards the HIV.

With my short involvement in Namibia, I returned with a perception that HIV epidemic, stigma, and especially moral judgement, is still a factor that can undermine the efforts to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS in Namibia. There exists high level of perceived community stigma that can inhibit the behaviour of HIV-infected, affected and HIV -free individuals. To combat this social risk which we call stigma, personal interactions, exposures and educational trainings are necessary.

4.5 Factors of success

I think the CLEYS have started from a youth group and turned to a youth movement in Namibia (see appendix 4). Though not much could have been done in couple of months, we focused on participatory and community based learning, we took critical

approach to social analysis while training the youths, development of reflective practice and transformational leadership. With the national coordinator, Merab Kirimire, we also had social analysis and participatory research via the method of exposure. Before we started the project, we went to see the community of our youths in their local settings and did some community mapping which helped us a great deal.

Developing a new youth project is a complex and dynamic process which involves identifying and conveying actual needs and requirements accurately. Moreover, there are many limitations inhibiting its effectiveness.

Following series of discourses with the youths and other people involved in the process, I have collected some and very important factors behind the success of the youth project we initiated. The success factors include human-related factors, process-related factors, input-related factors, and output-related factors meaning open and effective (clear and precise) communication from both sides, formulation of clear intention (motive) and objectives together. I can firmly say that these sets of critical success factors can serve as a checklist for professionals while constructing or developing similar projects.

To elaborate further, a good planning is important. We were aware that a valid and realistic time-scale is important, detail resource requirements, keeping the whole group focussed and aware of project process.

Team motivation by involving them throughout the project by planning frequent milestone to help them feel they are making progress. Communication is one of the key factors. It helped the group to locate where our strength was. Also, discussing the weaknesses openly but without causing damages in the group process was important. To be able to say 'no', an important element in group process, is often essential. In fact saying no is an important step in reducing the damages caused by bad stress.

We never promised anything that we could not deliver. We also were very clear about the financial situation for the youth project from the very beginning that we didn't have so much money but the idea is to learn to gather how to combat the social problems

fighting the society and the youths will outreach other youths in their society formulating other groups. That, according to some, provided them with 'clearer motive and hopes to be leaders'.

Applying these simple techniques helped us avoid many common problems that befall many projects. The key remained good communication. However, the human factors were- the whole group belonged to same age group, same ethnic group with common language, common social status, common religion, political inclination.

One of the reasons behind the success might be the firmly grounded Christian values that the group members had. I am, perhaps, wrong to draw it as a possible evidence for the success of the group. The group, however, referred their values as being very close to 'Christian love for social justice and solidarity', 'people participation and ethical practice'.

As mentioned before, we focused on participatory and community based learning. On bringing participatory and community based learning into practice, we faced challenges as well. Some of them were changing our (youths and workers) mindset about how something should work or how should they be. Many youths were passive and did not actively participate. It was important to get different thoughts out on the table and to have the youths interact. Other challenges were finding time in the busy schedules of the students and to develop new skills to work as part of a group: listening, talking, questioning, being patient and gaining consensus. To address these challenges, we had some sessions on topics such as: how effective groups work; effective communication; keeping on task; reaching to aims and disagreeing with minimal discomfort. Most importantly, it was very important to make them feel that they owned the group. We were able to make them feel that they owned the group by letting them decide what they want to do as a group. Nothing was imposed to them from workers.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The primary aim in creating this thesis is to share the pedagogical methodologies used to begin a youth group. Most of the skills and methods were from perspective of community development that I learnt during my study program in DIAK/DSS. The DSS study program emphasizes that communities themselves control pace and manner of social change (Addy, 2009). Community development work is defined as helping groups and communities to analyze their situation and take action for change, development or transformation.

Practitioners, advocates, and researchers are responding affirmatively to the view of young people as competent community builders and problem solvers. (Finn & Checkoway, 1998, 43,335-346.) A year has passed now since we started the youth project in Namibia. The CUAHA for the first time in its history adopted the principles of positive youth development in their approach to delivering community-based services and helping adolescents replace risk-taking behavior with asset-building experiences. As a result, the project continues to document optimistic outcomes as youth-serving idea to a healthy adulthood (see appendix 4,5).

The youth project has much to contribute to process of developing the capacity of youths. Different programs such as trainings, visits, exposures, speech offer a unique opportunity for youths to strengthen personal assets while also fostering external connections to family, school, and neighborhood. Despite homogeneity of the group that took a toll on issues related to diversity, they were involved with other ethnic groups as well. This was done by, for example, inviting experts belonging to other ethnic group than the youths to carryout workshops. Those various involvements provide the youths an alternative outlet for creative expression and contributed to the building of core developmental assets (e.g., self-esteem, respect to diversity).

Furthermore, the thesis introduces community development work methods for professionals working for youths. Social/community development workers have to be able to encourage youths to become a fully participant and responsible citizens in community. In addition to professional skills from my studies, my supervisor's and my own life and work experiences in different places have contributed a great deal for this project.

During the process, not only have I become familiar with another way of working but also I have understood the great need of preventative youth work which is largely overlooked in Namibian context (Merab, 2009). There lies no doubt that youths are our future. They hold huge potential for an upbringing of a healthy community. Unfortunately, the youth focus on combating social problems, including fire spread of HIV and AIDS in Namibia, is negligible.

This report is a response to the fact that the society has been neglecting the youths. Youths must, altogether, be in limelight for development of any nation. Therefore, communities need to understand and work in order to build a healthy society via their youths.

During this process of this thesis, I have been equipped with some professional tools for community development. I think I became more of a community development worker in real terms. I gained skills for ethnographic observation and multicultural communication. I learnt to communicate with young and people and structures around them i.e. their family members (that included little children to old grandparents), church leaders among others. In addition, I learnt the skills to create a comfortable atmosphere when handling with people of different back ground.

As I come to an end of the thesis, I find the objectives set to this study have been met. The objectives were to identify, categorize, and prioritize general set of factors for construction of a youth project with community development work perspectives targeted to the awareness of HIV/AIDS spread in Katutura community of Windhoek. The knowledge learnt during this study can be added to the existing body of knowledge on youth work in community development. It will help professionals to develop

adolescent-centred projects in communities. In doing this, different theoretical frameworks used during the process are looked into and analyzed alongside the youth group formulation in the city of Windhoek.

This report is not a handbook as such. However, as there is a great need for practical books with essential tools, this study can be helpful as resource for professionals working with youths. This thesis is useful tool for organisations that are willing to enter Namibia with social and community development projects. It gives an overall idea on how to reach the youths. It also gives more information about the present situation of young people in Namibia.

Reflecting on my own learning processes during the process, I found an aspiring community development worker in myself. Working for an INGO, I also got knowledge regarding cultural and economic advantages and disadvantages for aid links- inequitable distribution of aid, rights abuses, and corruption that results from the over reliance on aid income and the, arguably, unrealistic nature of aid policies.

Important learning was to understand myself in relation to my ability to work and cope with people whose ways, values and lives are different than mine. While doing this report, I realised the complication of Namibian society. Though Finland and Namibia are both largely Lutheran countries supposedly with similar Christian values, they are very different.

Conducting the project was very interesting as well as challenging. I was often in between the separate demands of the youths and my supervisor. It provided me with maturity to work in between the system world and the real world. The experience provided me with the sure feeling that I could handle youth project in any given international settings and work as to the local need and settings.

When I started to write the report, I could notice that I could use the tools learnt during my studies i.e. exposure and ethnographic observation, among others, and put them into practice and reflect them in the report.

When I was working with the youths, I got substantial information about Namibia, its history, families, parenthood, social problems, its youths- their settings, needs. And, I developed my own way which I call it tools to work with them. In addition, the period has given me ethnographic tools to conduct a study and materialise into a report.

Looking back, I feel privileged to have initiated the group process and led it on the basis of ideas I have learnt as a professional. Some of the seminars I led were on issues of leadership with focus on transformational leadership, Basic Income grant and what it meant to Namibia from my perspective, Community Based Volunteer and choosing their leadership and on the basis of transformational and rotational leadership. I also participated the world Aids day celebration to Rehoboth and Ongwediva with the group. In Ongwediva national event against HIV/AIDS, the group recited a poem to huge mass in presence of the country's first lady. The group was clearly an attraction in the both events which made us all feel proud.

I, however, had to leave the group activity as my tenure of my stay in Namibia ended. The idea was to train this group and make them train others in different part of Namibia. Now, their work has begun, measured against the huge social problems faced by the country. I recently (February, 2010) got an email from Merab about the development (please see appendix 5).

Steps need to be taken to move an overall field of youth development from professional point of view. This thesis clearly points to the need for greater educational opportunity, increased support for professional development, clear standards for ethical and professional work among youths. I hope HDL and CUAHA Namibia will stress on need to research-based pedagogical guidance and best practice lessons for community youth development than focus on international seminars to dignitaries. A comprehensive, accessible system for training for youths, I think, is more beneficial for youth development than sticking to old fashioned development work.

Last but not the least, the creation of this thesis was a process of my involvement in Namibia. It is certainly useful to the professionals who aim to go and work in communities, families and individuals to Namibia or Namibian society or to countries with similar social settings i.e. Southern African countries. This product may very well be used as resource book or an educational book by organisations or by individuals.

I would be very glad if this report could be used by professionals interested in youths so as to make a little bit of differences in lives of youths. With this, I continue to work with the youths.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Informed Consent

**C U A H A**

Churches United Against HIV & AIDS in Southern and Eastern Africa, Namibia Chapter No. 8, Wyday Court, Maraboeweg,
Hockland Park P. O. Box 4833, Windhoek, Namibia

The Chief Immigration Officer,
Immigration,
Ministry of Home Affairs,
Independence Avenue, Windhoek.

14 September, 2009-

09-16

Dear Sir,

RE: Visa Application for Mr. PRAKASH CHANDRA DHAKAL studying in Finland –

[REDACTED] *(removed to maintain privacy)*

I have the honour and privilege to introduce to you, the above mentioned Nepali Student Mr. Prakash Chandra Dhakal, of the University of Applied Science, Diak, Jarvenpaa, Finland, who is due to arrive in Namibia on 24 September 2009 for a 3 months

mentoring of CUAHA Ambassadors of Hope youth for a period of 3 months from the time he arrives on 24 September to 24 December 2009.

During his stay in Namibia, Mr. Prakash will be hosted by myself and will be working directly with [REDACTED] (*removed to maintain privacy*) to develop and design a vibrant and viable Ambassador of Hope program which will help and support young people living with the HI Virus to mentor and encourage others living with the Virus to live positively and responsibly, while encouraging others youths to avoid the infection and remain safe healthy and useful citizens. During his stay he will have mentored 10 Namibian youths who will then continue the mentoring process.

I will therefore be grateful if you could most kindly, avail him the visa to facilitate his entry and stay in Namibia for the 3 months mentoring period.

Yours in service,

[REDACTED] (*removed to maintain privacy*),

CHAUA Namibia Coordinator.

APPENDIX 2: Invitation



C U A H A

Churches United Against HIV & AIDS in Southern and Eastern Africa, Namibia Chapter No. 8, Wyday Court, Maraboeweg, Hockland Park P. O. Box 4833, Windhoek, Namibia

Dear parents/ guardians,

Greetings! My name is Prakash Dhakal, a student and volunteer from Finland working for CUAHA Namibia.

This letter serves you as information that your child, CLEY member, is selected to attend Gender Based Violence, Community Based Volunteers training scheduled for November 9-11, 2009 organised by the AIDS CARE TRUST. The session will start from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm. Participants' local transport, meals and other materials will be catered for. The training venue is Katutura Central Community Hall.

In case of queries, please feel free to get in touch.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Prakash Dhakal

CUAHA volunteer, 0814749579

APPENDIX 3: Pictures speak



i) United Against: CLEYS



ii) CLEY youths reciting a poem in Ongwediva on a national event against HIV/AIDS. The group recited a poem to huge mass in presence of the first lady.



pic iii) CLEY united against



Pic iv & v- CLEY youths planning initiating similar youth group in town of Rehoboth. A pastor listens their idea carefully.



APPENDIX 4: progress letter from coordinator

HI PRAKAS-

--- IF YOU SEND ME THE STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER YOU INTEND TO WRITE ABOUT CUAHA-CLEY CONCEPT, I WILL BE ABLE TO IMPUT INTO IT AND MAKE SDUGGESTIONS AND OR IDEAS

--- YESTERDAY WE TRAVELLED TO ROHOBOTH TO FOLLOW UP ON THE GROUP'S PROGRESS

---- FRIDAY WE ARE OFF TO THE NORTH TO START THE NORTHERN ONE

---- WE ARE CREATING A GROUP IN EACH OF THE 13 NAMIBIAN REGIONS.

I EAGERLY AWAIT YOUR PAPER STRUCTURE - IT WILL BE MY PLEASURE TO INPUT

ALWAYS,

21 Feb, 2010

