

REASONS BEHIND DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL IN PHILIPPI.

KETHI WANGECI NGARI

HONS. DEVELOPMENT STUDIES – SOCIOLOGY

SUPERVISOR: Dr Mercy Brown-Luthango & Jonathan Grossman

SUBMITTED October 2013

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.



UCT KNOWLEDGE CO-OP

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research project will focus on the challenges of education in the Philippi region in relation to dropping of high school. We can make assumptions about some of the reasons contributing to dropping out; for one the schools may have limited resources that become a barrier to learner success. Secondly there could be a lack of financial resources and third, depending on the economy of Philippi, many may find that there is a lack of opportunity's for school graduates within Philippi, etc. The main goal of this thesis is to find out what are some of the reasons that high school children drop out of school. To try and find out some of the reasons why high school children drop out, we interviewed different people who are associated to high schools in the area to hear what they know to be some of the reasons that pull student s out of school. These interviewees included Non-Government Organisation (NGO henceforth) officials, school principals and school learners.

From literature read for this thesis, it became clear that school children dropping out of school is a pertinent issue in South Africa and Cape Town for that matter. The research within Cape Town regarding this is mostly geared towards so-called 'coloured' schools, with a lot of the factors that influence dropping out being in one way or another related to gang involvement or gang violence. From scholars such as Anderson, in the so-called African schools there is less of an issue of dropping out more than there is one of repeating. This reasoning does not however seem to be in line with some statistics and especially within Philippi as we will see in the section where we give some profile information of Philippi using the South African Education and Environment report. This means that there could

actually be a dropout issue in Philippi and maybe other 'African' townships as well. The question and the question then becomes what are the factors that lead to dropouts?

RESEARCH QUESTION

The central research question for this thesis research project is: - Based on the views of people who work directly with education; such as teachers, NGO's and students; what are the reasons behind dropping out of high-school in Philippi?

WHY PHILIPPI

In hopes of making my thesis practical I took up a project that was advertised by the Knowledge Co-op in the University of Cape Town. The Knowledge Co-op links students and staff to different community projects making the connection between the community and the University skills much easier. I applied for one of the projects they had up that was affiliated to an NGO in Philippi doing various projects to tackle the various issues that children have within the area that interferes with their learning. The NGO is called Amandla and is a community geared NGO that interacts with the community in helping them to improve the various issues around education in the area. The NGO looks at the different issues that tie with education at all levels; from pre-school to high school. In their project on the website they said that they were interested in issues around dropouts in the area and after a short meeting with the head of the NGO I modelled this research around what the reasons for dropping out are within the Philippi area.

Philippi is according Anderson (et al.) one of the larger townships in Cape Town covering a vast distance (2009:4). Just like many of the townships in South Africa, Philippi

has to grapple with issues including the lack of education, violent crimes, substance abuse and so on (Anderson(et al) 2009:2). For such a vast township there is very little available about the education crisis especially in terms of dropouts in the area and that makes it a subject of interest. The other reason that the location interested me was the fact that not much research geared towards education in Phillippi is available especially research that has to do with the issue of dropping out of school, and especially high school. Amandla has taken a keen interest in investigating and coming up with ways to improve or begin to get rid of the various issues that affect school children. One of the main issues they expressed has to do with children dropping out; and so in an attempt to have something that the NGO can use; this report is interested in hearing from different people - teachers, students, principals and NGO workers - what the reasons are behind High School children dropping out of school.

Profile of the Phillippi Area

The South African Education and Environment Project on Phillippi (SAEP henceforth) give a conclusive profile/ mini-census report of the Phillippi community. It details the various other things apart from education like households, employment, etc.; however their main focus is on education and academic programmes. The SAEP had implemented many of their programmes in support of education to Phillippi but found that due to the expansive nature of Phillippi's population and the lack of demographical information of the area; there is a hindrance to their education support programmes. They then came up with this profile report as a mini-census report on the Phillippi population. In their statistics they found that the population in Phillippi was 110,321 people 94.7% of who are black, 5.7% of who are coloured (Anderson, Atari (et al.) 2009:13). Therefore it would be safe to say that the population is majority 'black'. Below is a table detailing the information of how far in school the population (20+ and not the current school population) have reached.

No Schooling	Reached Grade 1-6	Reached Grade 7	Reached Grade 8-11	Reached Grade 12	Bachelor's Degree
8.61%	18.17%	8.82%	43.34%	17%	0.31%

*The Information on this table is taken from the SAEP report by Anderson, Atari (et.al) (2009:17).

The numbers in the table, show the state of education in the area and though it is too early to make assumptions that there is a significant number of children that are dropping out of school, there is still clearly something going on; whether it is as a result of repeating or not. What this thesis is interested in finding out is whether we can say that these numbers reflect a dropout rate according to some of the people interviewed; and if there is a significant issue around dropping out, then what reasons according to the interviewees exist as to why school children drop out of school.

CHAPTER 2

DISCUSSION OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section highlights the literature that was engaged with throughout the research process. There does not seem to have been much research done in the area of factors that lead to dropouts done in South Africa and because of this, the literature used in this thesis either prior to the data collection or during the data collection is not vast; however the literature that we will discuss ties in well with the objectives of this study and will be echoed throughout this thesis report and captures the issue of dropout's thoroughly. This chapter is split into sections; first we will have a general overview of various studies that have been done on dropouts; we will then progress into the literature that focusses on particular factors that influence dropouts in township areas within and outside of South Africa. With this in mind we will then divide parts of the literature discussion according to those factors that we will discuss throughout this thesis report.

2.2 GENERAL OVERVIEW

According to Graeme Bloch one of the reasons that there is a crisis in the education system is because about sixty to eighty per cent of the schools in South Africa can be considered dysfunctional (2009:17). One of the reasons that the educational system has been studied and scrutinized is because it is believed to reproduce certain inequalities. One of the highlighted inequalities are between schools that have students from the upper and middle class and schools that have students from lower/working class families. By the working class or lower class individuals we are specifically referring to those who live in townships and go

to township schools. Bloch states that the education system reproduces inequalities and just continues to define the difference between the 'have's' and the 'have not's'; and many children find that the education system tends to fail and exclude them rather than include them (2009:25). Continuing with his theme of inequality, Bloch highlights that while the former model-C schools usually produce good results, "rural and township schools overwhelmingly survive through sheer will and the force of good and committed teachers..."(2009: 59). Even though there are those teachers who are very dedicated to their students in the township, Bloch finds that in many of these 'second economy' (schools that cater for the lower class) schools, teachers tend to spend substantially less hours on the job (Ibid). Bloch uses the phrase 'second economy' schools to emphasise that these are the schools in the poorer areas of the country as well as the poor quality schools (Bloch 2009:60). One of the clear repercussions of the inequalities of the school system is the fact that "over half of the children who start school never get to the end, with grade nine being a major point of dropout" (Bloch 2009:59). This point that Bloch makes does not mean that the 'better schools' (outside of the township) do not suffer from dropouts, but that in the township schools dropout levels are significantly higher and that there are various factors specific to these 'poorer schools' that lead to dropping out.

2.3 FACTORS THAT LEAD TO DROPPING OUT

Gangsterism & Delinquency

According to Bloch one of the factors that lead to dropping out within townships is gangsterism. What Bloch says is that there is definitely social pressure and a level of attraction that comes with joining a gang. Bloch is specific in saying that for boys, it reaches a point that joining a gang becomes more attractive than going to school (Bloch, 2009:79). In

another article on *Building Education Beyond Crisis*, Bloch quotes a statistic that about fifty per cent of learners do not make it through the education system and dropout well before getting to grade twelve and matriculating (no date: 3). This statistic is in reference to those who live within the townships and in abject poverty and are thus marginalised by social inequality in South Africa He says that “education is contributing to marginalisation and inequity rather than social advance and cohesion for many and especially the poor and the rural” (Bloch (no date): 4). Moving away from townships for a while, Bloch talks about those in the rural areas and in rural schools and that more than half of the cohort that starts school, never get to the end (Bloch (no date): 4). This is Bloch’s take on the education system and he does a lot of research around the crisis of the education system and why it fails learners.

Abbott, Hill (et al), conduct a study in the United States around the various factors that lead to dropping out. Two points relevant to this thesis or that the authors make is first that deviant behaviour especially with regards to peer pressure leads to dropping out and secondly that low academic performance also leads to dropping out (Abbott, Hill, (et al) 2000). The authors came up with the hypothesis based on the issue of deviant behaviours and the various connections that are drawn between deviant behaviour and dropping out; especially when peer pressure is added to the equation (2000:570). In connection to the theme of gangsterism, Abbott, Hill (et.al) find that delinquency and deviant behaviour from early on can eventually lead to dropping out (Ibid). This hypothesis was derived from the literature they read about dropping out during their research; this literature that they refer to points to a relationship between delinquency and dropping out of school (Abbott, Hill, (et al) 2000:570). In connection to the notion of peer pressure, the authors found that friends can influence each other negatively especially in having an influence on how their friends do academically or pressure them to join some delinquent group (2000:570). This is an interesting factor because from my interview with the principals of one of the schools, what emerged was the issue of

gang involvement from the high school children, which is enforced by peer pressure and the boys' eagerness to join especially when the academic system is not working for you and you keep failing academically. This launches us into the idea of academic failure leading to dropping out.

Academic Failure

As mentioned in the previous section Abbott, Hill, (et al) write about the *Predictors of High School Dropouts* in the United States of America. They state that poor academic performance is one of the factors that lead to dropping out; this is “because those children who are more academically successful may be less likely to drop out” (2000:570). In the section where they test their theories the authors found that one of the major predictors of dropping out happens to be academic achievement or just doing well in school (Abbott, Hill, (et al) 2000:572). The issue of failure seems to be one that is more universally applicable because even in the South African case Graeme Bloch comments that over half of the students in the Township and rural schools are not making it to the end due to academic failure and poor performance (Bloch 2009:59). From one of my earlier interviews with a member of the Schools Develop Unit in the University of Cape Town, one thing that they mentioned was that students drop out early because they are underperforming in school and failing. This ties in with the Abbott, Hill, (et al) notion that academic achievement; low grades and failure may lead to dropping out (Abbott, Hill, (et al) 2000:572). In a couple of other articles I found that some authors like Anderson find that children are not really dropping out of school but repeating grades which is why when we look at the statistics it may seem that children are dropping out when they actually are not.

Repeating instead of Dropping Out

Within the South African context, authors like Anderson (et al.) who researched on the *Causes and Consequences of The Schooling Outcomes in South Africa*; find that the problem with South African schools is not that the learners are dropping out, but rather that there is a high repetition rate which is why the numbers look as if they are dwindling. Anderson, et al., found that the disadvantage of township schools in South Africa is repetition. What they argue is that the reducing numbers were not necessarily as a result of dropouts as we would assume but a reflection that it takes Africans in the disadvantaged schools much longer to finish school (2001:7). Anderson (et al) even say that school enrolment in African disadvantaged schools is actually ninety seven per cent; this would mean that most children are actually in school which goes against the argument that the school enrolment statistics that highlight numbers dwindling are representative of a dropout rate.

Baine and Mwamwenda also comment on the issue of repetition due to high failure rates in African disadvantaged schools (1994:120). This article is an old one and reflects upon a time during apartheid (or maybe just after). It may still be relevant especially if we bring up the issue of a lack in quality education. Just like Anderson, Motala pushes forward the idea of repetition rather than dropouts. Motala believes that it is a problem that is tied with the lack of quality education (1995:162). These studies offer another dimension to the dropout debate which should include the retention issue. In response to this idea of repetition, this premises that dropouts and repeating can be linked in the same argument and that even repeating can be a factor that causes dropouts.

Methods on How to Study Factors That Influence dropping out

Hunt (2008) looks at dropping out of school. Hunt comments on the methods that one should probably think of using when doing research on the reasons behind dropping out of school. He comments that statistics and the quantitative side are good for highlighting, in numbers and proving that dropping out is an issue; but while this is good it should in a sense be used to enhance the qualitative. For this thesis the statistical evidence that I will be using is not to marry quantitative and qualitative methods but to use these quantitative data statistics (that we will relay in the next section) to show the numerical realities around dropouts and to then enrich the qualitative side which is focused on the factors that lead to dropout. Qualitative research looks at the process of dropping out and the reasons why learners drop out which is more important and would complement the highlighted numbers (Hunt 2008: 1). His various research questions include: “what processes are involved in dropping out of school? ...what processes can work to mitigate against dropping out? ...and where are the gaps in research around dropping out of school?” (Hunt, 2008:4). Hunt’s take on dropping out of school is a very interesting one and highlights the importance of looking at school dropouts as a process rather than just an event (Hunt, 2008:5). The point of seeing dropouts as a process rather than an event is about seeing it as a “series of interacting issues and events which vary according to social context, individual circumstance and expectations around education” (Hunt, 2008:5).

The reason that this is a beneficial article for this report (thesis) is that it would suggest that there is not one particular factor that leads to dropping out in the Philippi area and that the stories that lead to dropping out vary depending on the context and the individuals. This suggests that there are multiple reasons that school children drop out whether it is academic failure or deviant behaviour. In the rest of this report I will show how

the different categories of people interviewed had similar and varying ideas and experiences related to dropping out. Hunt generally looks at various variables or factors that could lead to dropping out such as financial issues, children entering the workforce early to add to the income of the household, migration (moving from place to place and this school to school until one gives up all together), orphan hood, health, teenage pregnancies among other factors (Hunt 2008:5). The variables discussed by Hunt were the grounds that some of the interview questions were based on as we will see in the following chapter attempting to leave room for different variables/ factors to emerge. The point that Hunt is trying to emphasise is that there is a big picture when you look at school dropouts that depends on a lot of things and factors depending on things like context.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

3.1 METHODOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

This section gives a short discussion of the theories that informed the methods used for the data collection phase and the analysis phase of my research. The central research question for this research is: Based on the views of people who work directly with education; such as teachers, NGO's and students; what are the reasons behind dropping out of school in Philippi? From the research question itself it is clear that the research is geared toward a qualitative approach; this we get from the part of the question that asks what people's views on dropouts within the Philippi area are. According to Babbie and Mouton, qualitative research is about studying human action from the "perspective of social actors" (2001). This means that research that asks what people know about a certain subject is geared towards a qualitative approach. It is important to highlight the research question in relation to whether the research will be quantitative or qualitative because as Marshall says "quantitative and qualitative research methods should be determined by the research question" (1996:522). Qualitative analysis is also focussed on the theoretical considerations that are drawn from the research that is done. That being said it is important to consider the methods you will use for the data collection and the analysis of the collected data; beginning with sampling.

Sampling is an important part of the data collection phase because it gives an idea of the generalizability of your work. That being said sampling in qualitative research is purposive (Coyne 1997: 627). Purposive sampling is about "The researcher actively selecting the most productive sample to answer the research question" (Marshall 1996: 523). In line with qualitative research methods, the sampling method represented more of a purposive sampling technique, specifically using the snowball technique which is about using

respondents to put you in contact with other respondents, and once they are interviewed they are then asked to propose other people who could be appropriate for interviewing (Johnson & Reynolds 2006:226) as well. The next part that made up my research design was the interview section.

In qualitative research the interview is one of the main data collection tools. That being said due to the nature of my research question which is focussed on people's views on school dropouts I used semi-structured interviewing techniques. This meant that I had a couple of guiding questions for each interview but the point was to probe the interviewee for more information. According to Marvasti, these types of interviews are also referred to as open ended interviews which allow for a "more fluid interaction between the researcher and the respondent" (2004:20). The guiding questions are not there simply to give direction to the interview but to allow the respondent to give their own story (Marvasti 2004: 21). The interview questions were first coined using various ideas from the literature that pointed towards certain things, however, the interview questions also evolved as different themes started to emerge from the interviews.

The last and most conclusive section in the methods was the analysis and the way that is was carried out. Another feature of qualitative research is that the methods of data collection and the analysis section have a link/relationship in that the analysis can influence the direction that the collecting of data takes. Punch talks about this connected approach of the analysis and the data collection phase where you collect a little data in the beginning, you analyse this data and that ultimately influences when you go out to collect the data again. In other words what begins to emerge influences how the data will be collected (Punch 2005:159). This means that continuous analysis was a big part of the methods of data collection. As we will see when we discuss the methods section further, even with the interview questions, there was an appropriation of the questions as themes started to emerge

from previous interviews. The research questions were also fed by the method of analysis that I wanted to use which was coding the data. Coding breaks down the data and as we will see in the analysis, breaking down this data helps to illuminate what the different categories of people have to say about dropping out of school. This will be discussed in further detail in the analysis section of this thesis report.

3.2 SAMPLING METHODS

3.2.1 Selection of Schools

One of my first aims was to figure out what part of Philippi I would focus on and which schools would make up the sample. Just to reiterate from the introduction chapter, Philippi is a vast Township that does not have rigid boundaries that show where Philippi starts and where it ends. I focussed on areas that fit into Ward 34 and seem to make up a section of Philippi and selected schools that catered for these areas. Some of the areas in Ward 34 include: Browns Farm, Kosovo and Samora. Selecting the schools utilised the snowball sampling method which influenced which schools I was able to get contact to. The snowball sampling technique had to do with the Schools that Amandla (NGO) had contact with but began with a school that the first person I interviewed from the Schools Development Unit had contact with. My first sample school was Sophumelela Secondary School which I got contact to through the aforementioned interview and the second school was proposed by the principal of Sophumelela and I got contact to the school through Amandla. The second sample school was Zisukhanyo Secondary School. After the decision was made about the two schools the next part within my data collection phase that is important to mention is interviews; who were my respondents?

3.2.2 Selection of Participants

I prioritised to interview School Principals, teachers, students doing their matriculation and some NGO officials. The reason I wanted to get perspectives from these different people was to get more of a rounded perspective on the reason behind school dropouts from the various sources. Also kept in mind was the analysis technique of coding that would prioritize and categorise the different factors that influence dropping out. However, as the data collection phase continued and different ideas started to emerge, the prioritised interviewees changed because of the direction that the interviews started to take.

NGOs

It was clear after my first interview with the member of the Schools Development Unit, I realised that if I did not focus on NGO's that looked specifically at dropouts then I might end up with more of personal or speculated views on dropouts and education rather than views which were based on experience from working with dropouts. The only interview with a member from an organisation that could maybe fit into this category was the one with a member of the Schools Development Unit at the University of Cape Town. After this interview, he directed my attention to interviewing people more affiliated to the schools rather than NGOs because they (student, teacher & principals) probably know more about the subject; unless I could find an NGO that worked specifically with dropout is the area, which I did not. After this one interview, my interviewees thus consisted of principals from both of the sample schools as well as the school children/ learners from the schools.

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND LEARNERS

Choosing the principals was based on the sample school; that is they came from the two sample schools (Sophumelela and Zisukhanyo). The interviews with the principals directed me towards interviewing the school learners. One of the things that the principal from Zisukhanyo High School said was that the students probably know more about the reasons why learners dropout seeing as they are the ones who face these pressures. This made it imperative to interview the learners who were my last interviewees. Getting into contact with the student would be through the permission of the principal.

I had to request permission from the principal of Zisukhanyo regarding when was best to come and interview some children. I chose to do it in the school and during school term due to easy access to a venue and it would be easy to gain contact with the children in school. The principal also made it clear that it would be much easier if I did my interviews on the last day of term so that I did not disrupt their learning time; so I scheduled the interviews for the last day of school. On the last day of term in Sophumelela secondary school, I managed to get learners from grades nine and ten, and from Zisukhanyo I managed to interview students from grades eleven and twelve. The selection of the participants was random, and consisted of asking students whether they would want to be part of the research as they came to collect their report cards. The interviews with the school children were done on the same day (at both schools) with my morning spent in Zisukhanyo and my afternoon in Sophumelela. The emerging ideas from the interview with the school children from Sophumelela made it imperative to have a follow up interview with them again which was at a later date when school re-opened.

Interviewing school children however comes with an ethical dilemma of an unequal relationship between the researcher and the school children. This was imperative to keep in mind when interviewing the school children. Marvasti states that as a researcher you have to be very aware of the unequal power structure between you and the children and we “have to take care not to exploit the inherent advantages when dealing with children and adolescents” (Marvasti 2004:25). It became extremely important to make sure that the interview questions with the children were therefore not leading or exploitive, which we will expand on further when we discuss the interview questions with examples from the transcript.

3.3 METHODS USED DURING THE INTERVIEW PHASE

As stated in the methodological section my interviews took less of a structured prescribed approach with a few general guiding questions to steer the direction of the interview. With the interviews with the principals I prepared a few guiding questions as listed below to guide the interview:

1. In general what do you think of school attendance and school dropouts in Philippi? Or in the Township?
2. What are the reasons that cause school learners to drop out of school? Academic? Non-academic?
3. What grades do learners tend to dropout the most? Why?
4. Could you tell me a little bit about repeating? Or retention of students?

I tried to keep the guiding questions as broad as I could to try and get the interviewee to talk more and then I could pick up from things they say to probe more on certain things. This meant that the direction of the interview was not rigid to focussing on the guiding

questions because one question asked could lead to new things emerging. An example how the guiding questions helped to work towards probing can be taken from the interview with the Principal from Zisukhanyo; this excerpt from the transcript is taken from the beginning of the interview:

Wangeci: What is your take on dropout rates generally speaking?

Respondent: Yes we do have, ehm dropouts but it not that much in our school, I would say. And in certain categories I would mention one category is the issue of pregnancy; two it's an issue of gangsterism and number three it's an issue of the movement of communities from one area to another.

Wangeci: Movement? Hmm, maybe you can speak a little bit more about that?

Respondent: Yes, I will expand on all of these three categories. I mentioned the one on teenage pregnancies, gangsterism and the movement. Now the pregnancies, it's not that much although it is there, uhm maybe we will have three or two per year with the girls because they will become pregnant; and as much as the school does not bar them from coming to school they decide on their own that because now I am pregnant I will stay at home and then continue in the following year. So it is not that much.

Wangeci: And they still come back?

Respondent: Yes they still come back. We had two this year that were pregnant but they are still continuing with their studies. Number two is the issue of gangsterism which is the one that is the key. It is the major one. You will find that it is rife in the grade nine's that is where you get the bulk. And here the number I would put it at five to ten per cent of the grade nine's. This year we have about two hundred and eighty one grade nine's so ten per cent is twenty eight. Because what happens is that learners are afraid to come to school, because you will find that this area is fighting with that area. Like here we are serving Samora, Kossovo, the other side we call it Philippi and Brown's farm. And you find that the gangsters when they fight; Kossovo is fighting against Samora and then all these learners are coming to this school. Now if there are those fights, because they stab, they murder they kill each other, so the parent decides to take them to Eastern Cape. Because most of them come from the Eastern Cape and so the parents decide to take them back to the Eastern Cape rather than lose their kids. I would say that in that sense that is where we get the bulk, in the other grades it's not that much. But it is only the grade nine's. And you will find that when these learners are coming from Primary because if you are in grade nine this is your second year in the high school. So they started this thing in the primary school and brought it here (Appendix 2: Transcript 1).

The above is just an example of how the guiding questions are there to stimulate the interview but once the interview started the point was to let the direction of the interview flow out of what the interviewee was saying. However, even if the flow of the interview was not rigid, I maintained a checklist to make sure I got all the information I needed. My checklist included:

- Dropping out in the school concerned
- General view of why dropouts is more prevalent in the township
- Particular grades that learners dropped out
- Main factors that lead to dropping out
- What role does repeating a grade play in the area of drop outs?

3.3.1 BEHIND THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I chose my checklist and guiding questions based on the literature discussed in the literature chapter. The question on dropping out linked to township life was drawn from the article by Graeme Bloch where he finds that there is inequality in the education system especially for those in townships and rural areas. He found that “over half of the children who start school never get to the end, with grade nine being a major point of dropout” (Bloch, G 2009:59). Another guiding question is: what are the reasons why school children dropout? This was influenced by an article by Hunt who tackled questions like “what processes are involved in dropping out of school? What processes can work to mitigate against dropping out? ...and where are the gaps in research around dropping out of school?” (Hunt2008:4). His take on dropping out of school highlights the importance of looking at school dropouts as a process rather than just an event (Hunt, F. 2008:5). This is an important point for this thesis

because the focus is on the things that lead to dropping out or the process leading to dropping out as opposed to just focussing on the fact that children dropout.

The last guiding question was based on the issue of repetition. This was first influenced by my first interviewee who said that one explanation of the dropping numbers of students as you go higher in the grade is repetition. His argument was that the numbers reflected repeating of grades rather than a huge dropout rate. Anderson (et al.) confirms this and says that the problem with South African schools is not that the learners are dropping out but rather the problem is that there is a high repetition rate which is why the numbers look as if there are dropouts when in fact there might not be. Anderson, et al, found that the disadvantage of African schools in South Africa is repetition (Anderson 2001:7).

3.3.2 GROUP INTERVIEW WITH LEARNERS

I appropriated a number of the interview questions based on the fact that I was interviewing school children now; and on the fact that a lot had already began to emerge from the other interviews and I could base some of the questions on these ideas that began to emerge. On the day of these interviews I had a guide with me provided by Amandla (NGO) to help me around the Township. At the first school (Zisukhanyo), I managed to get three girls and one boy. Speaking to them, it seemed that they were more comfortable with having a group interview rather than one on one interview sessions. This meant a group interview with the four students.

The advantage with group interviews is that the respondents work off what their fellow respondents talk about which can work better towards a flowing interview. I started the interview by going round in a circle with each question I asked but as the interview went

on I realised that now I did not have to go round in a circle because the learners were more than eager to answer the questions, and were working off each other's answers. In group interview the "participants have the opportunity to elaborate on each other's answer's to produce richer data" (Marvasti 2004:24). An example can be taken out of the transcript of the interview with the four school children from Zisukhanyo. At this point in the interview, the direction had veered to Model C schools and whether they suffer from dropouts like in the Township.

Babez: I do not think that they have the problems that we are dealing with because model C schools, or umm here at the township that we face. First like I have said there is the gangsters and in model C schools there are no gangsters, but here at our schools there is gangsters, there are learners who will shout at teachers and all that stuff but in the model C schools, ah! There is nothing like that; if they do that (shout at the teachers) they will be punished but here if they will be punished they will still do it next time and they will do it with two other people like some of us even shout at our mothers our parents. Even if I was raised by a single mother, I would start asking questions if I am drunk and stuff, I will start asking my parents why did he go and why did he do that stuff, umm, I will be aggressive to her. But in the model C schools, I do not think they have what we have.

Sino: Well I disagree, Well I think they do have it

Wangeci: drop outs?

Silo: Yes, but because there are children from the Townships who go to model C schools, they come with that behaviour of the Townships and do stuff there so they do have it.

Wangeci: what behaviour?

Sino: Like maybe smoking in school or drinking in school or bad behaviour like talking whatever you want talk to the teacher

Babez: Aloku, that's why I said that they will do it but they get punished when they are caught, but when they do get punished they will not do it again because they have learned their lesson. You see that's why I was saying that.

Zozo: Uh, in model C schools there are children who are pregnant, so they do drop out of school. So it is similar to ours because they have students who are pregnant and have to drop out of school . SO yeah

Sino: It's just that here in the Townships it is more likely to happen

Babez: Also in model C schools they take you out when you are pregnant but here in these schools they do not take you out. (Appendix 2: transcript 2)

The example above highlights the advantage of group interviews that once started and flowing need little influence from the interviewee.

What significantly emerged from this interview that affected the direction of my other interview in Sophumelela was that the girls kept emphasising that dropping out was more of a boy's problem than a girl's one. This shifted my target interviewees to boys in particular in the next school (Sophumelela Secondary School). For this interview we (my guide and I) kept it to boys only. We initially chose four boys to interview; the choice was subject to those who were willing to be interviewed. The four boys who agreed were from grade nine and ten. As the interview went on, we had four more boys join us for this interview.

3.4 LIMITATIONS & REFLEXIVITY

Interview Via Translation

One of the main limitations to the collection of data especially the interviews with the school children has to do with having to conduct interviews via translation. On the day of the interviews with the school children, I had a guide to help me around the area; however my guide's role changed quickly to that of a translator. During the group interviews with the boys from Sophumelela I emphasised that we would run the interview in English. This emphasis on English became a real barrier because the boys were struggling to express themselves, which was evident through long pauses in between questions and one sentence answers to some of the questions I asked. We therefore had to resort to interviewing via translation. This

meant that my guide became the translator. Throughout the interview the guide would translate the questions to Xhosa and then translate what the boys were saying into English again, for the sake of the recording. This of course means that there could be appropriation of the answers on the part of the translator resulting in some things being lost in translation.

The other issue with the interview especially with the boys from Sophumelela was that they kept increasing as the time went on and because we were in an open classroom it was hard to control who came in and out of the room; even though it may have been too big a group by the end the advantage was that only about four of the boys actually spoke and contributed to the discussion which worked well.

Reflexivity

As I reflect upon the whole process, and especially the interviews that we had to conduct via translation I realised that quite a bit of information could have been lost in the interviews. During the interviews I noticed that the guide and the boys would have their little discussions before the guide went ahead to translate what the boys were saying. The first thing that comes to mind is all the information that was lost, but this is not the only problem with the whole process. Another one of the other issues that comes in with appropriation; which draws on the fact that I now did not have control over what was being said or what was being translated to me. The issue of appropriation is as a result of the fact that the guide was not translating word for word of what this boys said but I would argue that he was most probably giving a version of what they said in English, due to the difficulty of hearing and remembering word for word what the boys said. Often his translations would begin with; ‘what he is speaking about is...’ That being said, changing the interview into Xhosa changed the flow of the conversation from what was awkward at first into a better flowing one. The

boys became more than willing to contribute to the discussion which was an advantage and gave me more data to work with.

In retrospect it would have also probably been a good idea to go back to interview the girls from either or both the schools with a female guide and seen what that would have done to the direction the interviews were taking.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Data analysis should be an on-going endeavour during and after doing the research. Miles and Huberman put it well when they emphasised the importance of early data analysis which helps the researcher continuously think about the existing data and generate new strategies to collect new or better data (1994: 50). Keeping this in mind, throughout the data collection phase I would journal right after each interview as a way to draw out things that were emerging and then using that and the listening of the recordings to appropriate my interview questions slightly so that I know what things to focus on while interviewing. The next phase in my analysis was the transcriptions phase where I began to notice more things beginning to emerge even more and the direction that most of my interviews were taking.

The analysis of the data collected was done through coding which involves a close reading of and the breaking down of the interviews into various themes. I began to take a closer look at the data, draw out patterns and making conclusions about certain things which is part of the coding technique. The coding phase makes up the main part of my analysis and had to do with organising the information using comparisons and contrasts and organising the data to draw out various patterns and meanings (Burns 2000:430). For the analysis through coding I adopted the Miles and Huberman approach of first and second level coding; using the Nvivo software. First level codes using the Nvivo software are the free nodes and the tree nodes make up the second level codes. The second level codes are the codes that I then used as the main themes from the interview phase, with those being the main reason why school

children dropout of high school. The themes will be discussed more descriptively in the Findings chapter.

4.2 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

I grouped the transcripts into three sections according to the three different sources interviewed from; NGO's, Principals and Students; so that I handled the interviews with the principals differently from the first NGO interview and the student interviews. This separation was important as one of my research questions had to do with the different opinions of various people from different walks of life (principles, students, etc.). This is not taking away from the fact that there are various themes or codes that were shared by all three categories. It just became important to group these interviews separately for the coding section to see if different things emerged from the different categories of people. The differences and similarities between the different interviewee's responses will be explored further when we draw links from all the different codes that emerge within the findings and discussion chapter. This section however, deals solely with the methods of analysis that I used, by paying attention to the role that journaling played in my analysis and more specifically focus on the Miles and Huberman approach adopted for the analysis of the collected data.

4.2.1 JOURNALING

Burns in his article says that the first level of analysis in research is coding which is about breaking up the data, "into themes, issues topics, concepts and propositions" (2000:432). This coding however is not subject only to when you are sitting down with the

data that you have collected so that you can begin to break it apart, the coding or classificatory process begins and continues all through the data collection process. This is where journaling comes in; after every interview, I wrote out the main things that took place within the interview. Part of my journaling included listening to the interview again to see what themes began to emerge and which ideas sprung up repeatedly. This became a very important part of not only my analysis but also my data collection. As I continued to journal and listen to the recorded interview I would use some of the things that began to emerge from my interviews to alter my interview questions in an attempt to flesh out a certain idea that I did not account for when I was coming up with my interview questions.

4.2.2 CLOSE READING OF THE DATA

Before I actually started coding (into first and second level codes) the transcripts I engaged in reading through the transcriptions a couple of times to see the different things that started emerge from the transcripts. One of the things that began to become clear from reading the transcripts was the issue of safety in schools, which is a theme that was shared by the Principals and the students. It also started to become clear that this issue of safety was tied in with gangsterism and there seemed to be much less to say about school dropouts that were not related in one way or another to gangsterism. Also, reading through the transcripts, gave rise to placing importance on who the interviewees were. This had to do with the different categories of interviewees; from reading the transcripts I could tell that there were a lot of varied responses from the different categories and that coding all the interviews jointly might be a more complex process than coding according to category and then merging the themes. This would give me the chance to compare and contrast the different views and merge the themes that are similar. Reading the data closely began opening up the data to look for deeper

things, rather than solely focussing on the obvious things that I found when just looking through the data less intricately.

4.3 CODING: FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL CODING

To reiterate, the coding of the data for this thesis used the Miles and Huberman approach of first and second level coding. Coding is about classifying data by putting labels onto text passages in an attempt to split the information into various categories (Miles &Huberman 1994:56). Coding can also take place before, during and after data collection making analysis an on-going process. What this means is that we begin coding using our conceptual frameworks via our research questions and other things that could have emerged from the literature read before the data collection phase (Miles &Huberman 1994:57). However once we have the data collected, in order to now classify the data and place it into categories we have to break it apart into fragments. De Wet and Erasmus state that “codes are partly analytical as they link various segments of text to a particular concept” (2005:30). We split these codes into two; first level codes which are highly descriptive codes and the second level code which are more interpretive and inferential.

First level codes break up the data to open up its theoretical possibilities (Punch 2005: 205). I labelled my first level codes based on words or short phrases that summed up certain sections of the interview. Second level codes are the labels given to describe the phenomena and summarize the data. Second level codes are explanatory and inferential and are important for grouping the first level codes (Miles and Huberman 1994: 69). According to Erasmus and De Wet, second level coding involves thematic clustering of the first level codes (De Wet & Erasmus 2005:33). These second level codes will therefore be the main points that we will look at more closely in the next chapter which focuses on discussing the

findings. It is also important to note that I realise that coding is a continuous process that cannot be exhausted. Second level coding sets the “stage for drawing conclusions” (Miles & Huberman 1994: 57). The tree nodes as used by Nvivo denote the second level codes and are the representation of different categories; and in each category there is a name that “defines what the tree is about” (Kelle 1995:82). What we are doing now is therefore using relational similarity to cluster nodes and begin to draw inferences.

Every time I looked at the transcriptions new things continued to develop and more codes continued to emerge out of the data. This means that you cannot fully stress the analysis process to its limit, there will always be more things emerging about the data, or more things that I could have looked at. The next part of this analysis chapter just details the way that I coded the transcripts separately (from the three different sources; NGO’s, principals and students). The first discussion on the NGOs, will also be used to explain in length how the coding process was done using the Nvivo software and the subsequent ones that follow (the Principals transcripts and the learner’s ones) give more of a brief explanation. The Nvivo Software contains free nodes which were my first level codes and tree nodes (parent nodes) which made up my second level codes.

4.3.1 Schools Development Unit

First level codes are mostly descriptive codes used to reduce the data that you have. That being said, an example of a first level code (free node in Nvivo) from my data (interview with NGO official) that is descriptive is ‘No drop-out in primary school’. This node summarises the section where the interviewee was saying that there are no drop-outs in primary school. This first level code emerged straight from the data and describes what the interviewee was trying to say. Some of my other first level codes include: ‘the wrong interpretation of stats, gate keeping in grade 10, average and bad schools, retention in grade 9

& 10 and so on. When I was conducting first level coding I noticed that some of the codes I started with were too encompassing and described large sections of the interview; this meant going back to those particular sections again to breaking down the data as much as possible into discrete parts (Strauss and Corbin 1990:62). For example, the code 'gate keeping and retention in grade 9& 10' were at first 'gate-keeping in grade 9&10'. On reading the contents of the code I realised that I was clustering different concepts into one, rather than seeing that from the data they were in fact spoken about differently. I realised that the interviewee only spoke about grade nine once, as a grade that is often repeated, but he talked more about grade ten later specifically labelling it as a gate.

Second level codes are the tree nodes in the Nvivo software and second level codes are the more interpretive codes, which contain the root name that explains the different aspects that make up the tree. We therefore cluster the various first level codes (On the Nvivo software, the first level codes make up the child nodes and grandchild nodes) together and group them into different themes which are the second level codes. For example I formulated a parent code such as 'School Functionality' and under this code I put in all the first level codes that could be connected to school functionality. The nodes (codes) under 'School Functionality' are: 'Under Performance' 'Quantity versus Quality', 'Blaming Migration', 'average and bad schools' and 'high attendance in school'. I then compared each of these nodes and separated some into child nodes(some of the first level codes). The two child nodes I came up with were: 'Under Performance' and 'Quantity versus Quality' because I felt that according to the direction of the interview these both fit under the School Functionality node but were conceptually different from each other. Under the child node Underperformance I placed 'Blaming Migration' as a grandchild node (also made up of first level codes) because the interviewee was saying how teachers blame migrants who underperform especially those from the Eastern Cape. Under the child node Quantity versus Quality I placed two grandchild

nodes; ‘average and bad schools’ and ‘high attendance in schools’. I did this because ‘average and bad schools’ was speaking to the quality of schools in the townships and specifically in Philippi and ‘high attendance in schools’ was speaking to the fact that according to the interviewee more than eighty per cent of the school age children in Townships go to school and that there are enough schools for each child to go to school.

The main themes drawn out of analysing this interview were:

1. The negative Impact of History
2. Making better use of technology
3. School Functionality
4. Retention being worse than dropouts

4.3.2 Principals from Sophumelela and Zisukhanyo

I gathered a vast number of first level codes when looking at the transcripts from the principals, and every time I looked at them again numerous first level codes continued to emerge. I therefore have not exhausted all the possibilities of the things that were emerging from the data. I decided to stop looking for more codes once I realised that I had more than thirty five first level descriptive codes.

Many of my first level codes here were slightly similar, for example: ‘gangs are territorial’, ‘gangsterism’, ‘pressure to join gangs’; however what I appreciate about the first level coding phase is that one can distinguish between all these codes that had different ideas to them. For example the code ‘gangs are territorial’ specifically spoke about gangs being distinguished by the territory they come from and the issue that that brings forth with learners coming to a school that serves many of these territories. The code ‘pressure to join gangs’

code speaks about young boys mostly feeling the pressure to join a gang either for safety or ‘power’ which could eventually and presumably lead to dropping out. This just proves the importance of breaking down the data to come up with descriptive codes even though some are very similar. This sets the stage for the second phase of coding that allows us to draw pattern and links between the first level codes.

I used memos to break down the first level codes and group them up into the second level codes. Picking up from the example of the different gang first level codes; I was able to come up with a second level code which was ‘gangsterism’s different effects’ and this opened up the way for the different discussions that came up around gangs and how they relate to dropping out. I then clustered three child nodes (first level codes) under the parent code which were: ‘gangs are territorial’, ‘gangsterism in general’ and ‘gangsterism in grade nine’. In the child node: ‘gangsterism in general’ I was able to put in more ideas like the issue of safety, peer pressure to join gangs and crime and drugs. These just shows how there are different ways that gangsterism may affect dropouts.

The other second level codes or themes that came out of this analysis process for the principals were:

1. The Brunt of the education System
2. The gatekeeper grades: 9& 10
3. Lack of Parents’ involvement in child’s academics
4. NGO impacts on Dropouts
5. Gangsterisms different Effects.

4.3.3 Learners from Zisukhanyo and Sophumelela

In this section I was dealing with three of the transcribed interviews I had had with the learners from both Sophumelela and Zisukhanyo. Because I was dealing with three interviews I had a lot of first level codes and I stopped at thirty six first level codes before grouping them up to make up the second level codes. The interesting thing about this set of interviews is that some of the themes that emerged from the principals' interviews were similar to the ones with the learners, but also a little bit different. For example in the first level codes, drugs and substance abuse were reasons that were different from gangstersim, whereas in the interviews with the principals drugs, alcohol and crime were grouped together. In addition, things that pertained to peer pressure were different from gang involvement. These were other reasons altogether why school aged children are dropping out of school.

For this section the second level codes or themes that came out of the coding process were:

1. Gendered gang involvement
2. Repetition's affiliation to dropping out
3. Gangsterisms different effects
4. Crimes, Drugs and Alcohol abuse
5. Peer Pressure and eventual dropout

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

In the findings I list and describe the different themes that emerged out of the analysis that was conducted. I will group these into different subheadings and then subsequently merge some of the findings. This merging process is just to show how some views were shared across the board and thus become the stronger reasons why high school learners in the Philippi area drop out of school.

5.1 FINDINGS FROM THE SCHOOLS DEVELOPMENT UNIT.

From the list in the analysis section there are four main things that emerged out of the interview with the person from the Schools Development Unit; first being the negative repercussions of an apartheid history. From the interviewee, the reason that there is such a crisis in the schools within the township is because of the repercussions of an oppressive history. The second theme that emerged had to do with questioning the way we are reading the statistics. According to the Schools Development Unit official, looking at dropouts is not as simple as reading statistics; it is a complex process that requires right use of technology for the building of longitudinal data that tracks students within the system; from grade R to matriculation. Also there are many possible correlations when we look at statistics other than just dropouts: there could be transfers but more importantly retention (repeating).

Repeating or retention was a very core point within this data. For the interviewee, repeating is an even bigger problem than dropping out especially within so called 'black schools'; this means that the statistical numbers that we read could instead be a reflection of retention and not dropouts. Students in the Townships tend to take longer to finish school

than the normal four years. Another part that added to the theme of retention was grade nine and ten being the main grades that learners tend to repeat school. Grade ten becomes the marker or the gate and also the usual point that numbers seem to dwindle. In summation, the problem is not dropouts but retention, not that he said there is no dropouts just that it is not as big a problem as retention.

5.2 FINDINGS FROM THE PRINCIPALS

After the analysis it was clear that there were a number of themes that began to emerge, some being different and others being similar to what had emerged from the interview with the Schools Development Unit. The first theme or thematic inference is that one of the reasons that students would drop out of school is because they feel the 'brunt of the education system'. This has to do with what the principals felt caused students to fail academically. Also within this theme is the issue of retention and that being caused by the pass requirements that are introduced in grades nine and ten. They said that part of the reason that students repeat and fail academically especially in grade nine is that they have gone through the rest of their academic lives being allowed to move on to higher grades with low marks but now in grade nine there is a pass rate that is introduced that forces you to repeat the grade again. What is important to note here is that they differed on whether this leads to dropping out. The principle from Sophumelela definitely thought that this repeating leads to dropping out but the principle from Zisukhanyo said that it will not lead to dropouts because the student usually keeps going until they make it through the grade.

Second in the findings is the gate keeping grades which are grade nine and ten and other than what we have discussed around repetition and academic failure being highest in those grades; it is also the age that get influenced by their peers. Grade nine for one of the

principals is the main problem grade when it comes to dropouts, one of the reasons being that learners are at the age of experimentation and being influenced by peers is a real concern. Tied in with this is the issue of gangsterism and its different effects on dropouts. There are three effects that link to dropouts that we came up with from the interview. The first is that there is delinquent behaviour tied in to gangs; crime, drugs and substance abuse.

In the interview with the principal from Zisukhanyo it became clear that gangsterism is one of the main issues that they tie to dropping out. The principal gave three reasons why he thought learners dropped out of school but he stressed that “the issue of gangsterism which is the one that is the key. It is the major one” (Appendix 2: Transcript 1). One of the reasons that it is such a huge issue is because of safety and the learners’ fear of being targeted by gangs. Safety is thus a huge concern according to the principals and is one way that gangsterism leads to dropping out. School learners thus drop out school because of fear for their lives and not because they are pressured to join the gangs or failing in school. The principal from Zisukhanyo stated that the thing is that “learners are afraid to come to school, because you will find that this area is fighting with that area” (Appendix 2: Transcript 1). This is an issue that comes up again especially in the interviews with the boys from Sophumelela. The last two themes that came out of this interview were the lack of support structure that comes from the NGO’s and the parents of learners. What the principal were saying about NGO’s is that in as much as they do some work around schools they do not really focus on dropouts much and especially implementing schools of skills in the area which the dropouts can go to as an alternative.

5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE LEARNERS

As stated in the analysis there were about five major themes that came out of these interviews. First was the issue of gendered gang involvement. This was an interesting theme that emerged from the interviews. According to the girls in Zisukhanyo gang involvement and pressure is mostly seen with the boys; and while the boys at Sophumelela agreed with this they also said that the pressure is as much for boys as it is for some girls who join out of wanting to be associated with the boys within a particular gang. The next emerging theme among the learners was repetition's affiliation to dropping out. This is a recurring theme and is mostly connected to what the principals of the schools had to say and that is that repeating leads to dropping out. After a student has repeated more than once then they are definitely more likely to drop out of school according to the learners.

The third finding/ theme that emerged was the idea of gangstersim and its different effects. There were so many different things that came up on the issue of gangs; there was the safety concern, there was the issue of gang involvement in an out of school as well as the pressure to join gangs. One of the more major concerns around gangsterism was safety and feeling like joining a gang is one way to ensure your safety. An example can be taken from the interview with the boys from Sophumelela where a boy by the name (nickname) Artie when asked about the pressures to dropout, his response was:

The pressure we are facing is mostly gangsterism, you see, if we are here in school the gangsters are waiting for us out there and we have to fight them and so to be safe you have to drop out of school and be like them and then you are safe (Appendix 2: Transcript 3).

In all there seemed to be a number of gang related reasons that the learners gave as to why school learners drop out of school. The fourth theme that emerged had to do with the role of crime, drugs and alcohol abuse. While it is easy to see the link between these things

and gangsterism, from the interview it was clear that there was a definite separation of these three things from gangsterism. The final finding was the role of peer pressure that can lead to an eventual dropout. Again this seems easy to tie in with the idea of gang involvement but it is important to understand why the learners separated these things from each other. The idea behind peer pressure to drop out had to do with some of the friends that some of the learners had that are not in school and encourage the learner to skip school for a day or two to spend time with these friends instead of school.

5.4 MAIN THEMES ACROSS THE CATEGORIES

Grades 9 & 10.

From the five interviews conducted and the analysis, there are a number of themes that we have initially separated that recur within two or all three of the different interview groups. The first is that grade nine and grade ten have become the bottleneck grades and the point at which many children tend to drop out or repeat. This is significant because it points to various reasons that result in either dropout or repeating in these grades and it has to do with the fact that these are the grades where pass requirements become part of the academic system. So while you could have passed through the rest of the grades without having to repeat due to failure, now in grade nine and ten you have to attain a certain mark to pass into the next grade. The failure here is with the academic system that makes these two grades the gate keeping grades instead of having pass requirements all the way from high school.

Repeating

Another reason behind dropouts that emerged specifically in two of the interview categories is the issue of repeating. The first interview that I had with a member from the Schools Development Unit was the first eye opener into the crisis of repetition in most disadvantaged schools or in this case schools in the township. The main argument that comes out of this is whether reading various statistics of enrolment numbers is actually a case of repetition rather than dropouts, especially because of the grade nine and ten pass requirements that are introduced in these grades. So far with my other interviews (those in the Philippi area) this issue of repetition has not been contested but has been taken to be one of the reasons to drop out. There were however, opposing views on this as well. The principal of Zisukhanyo believes that many of the students who repeat, usually just keep pushing until they finally finish but that there are those few who would lose morale and drop out. The opposing view comes from the principal of Sophumelela who believes that yes there is repeating but that quickly leads to dropping out because of a lack of morale, the lack of a family support system and the feeling of failure. In this case the Principal of Sophumelela says that the feeling is that the academic system has failed them. What he refers to here is the issue of a pass requirement starting in grade nine.

Gangstersim

The major recurring theme that both the principals and school learners kept bringing up is 'gangsterism'. The Principal of Zisukhanyo made the point that in grades nine and ten, many young learners and especially the boys associated themselves with gangs, either for safety or to feel like they belong. What also emerged from the interviews is the argument that since they are not doing particularly well in their studies they would rather join the gangs and

leave school. However not all the learners who leave school do so to join gangs; some of them leave because of the lack of safety that develops because of gangsterism and violence within schools.

Safety in School

Another emerging theme that keeps recurring is the issue of safety in school especially because what it seems like is that students (especially the male ones) are not feeling safe in school. This issue of safety is as a result of gangsterism and was always talked about in relation to gangsterism. In one of the interviews I had with the boys of Sophumelela, one boy said that they should implement some sort of search system in school before and after school so that students do not come in with weapons. The boy continued by saying that:

“Every time when the kids are coming to school there needs to be that searching of the people. Because these gangsters are not always people that are outside of the school, it is also people that are also on the inside of the school and these weapons are there when we are learning and at the break but when we are leaving school in the evening you will see these weapons coming out of the bags...” (Appendix 2: Transcript 3).

This goes to show that even if you're within the school bounds your safety is still a big concern especially if one area is in 'battle' with another area and you just happen to be a part of the other area (whether or not you are part of a gang). Another one of the boys I interviewed kept emphasizing that sometimes you drop out not because you want to join a gang but because you are not safe, you are just constantly a target because not all the gangsters have quit school, some are still in school and they know who you are and where you come from and they might decide that they will use you to send a message to those gangs from your area.

From all the interviews that I conducted within the Philippi area, this seems to be a big issue primarily for boys. According to the principle of Zisukhanyo, there are different gangs in different areas; and the problem comes in when you have a school that is supposed to serve multiple areas. This means that if you are part of a different gang from another area but go to a school in an area that an opposing gang 'rules' then you are never safe after school (or sometimes even in school) because you will be a constant target (for the resident gang). The thing is you do not even have to be part of a gang but if you're not from the area you are still a target; this means that you are constantly feeling unsafe and it just becomes safer to drop out.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Here we will discuss the findings and how these relate to the literature we have already discussed. We will break down this section into the themes that kept recurring either between two or all three categories of respondents. This section therefore moves away from the categorical differences of the principals, learners and the NGO's and merges the themes that had similarities across the categories. We will therefore focus on and expound on three of the major themes that have emerged from the data and have discussion around those themes using literature. The three emerging findings/ themes we will be looking at are:

1. Pass Requirements Introduced in grade nine and ten & Repeating grades-
2. Gangsterism - the different drives to join gangs-peer pressure, crime, alcohol, association.
3. Safety or lack thereof in school- Tied in with gangsterism but is more proclaimed because it causes people to dropout.

DISCUSSION

6.1 PASS REQUIREMENTS (G9&G10) & REPETITION

The issue of pass requirements is closely tied to the issue of repetition in the grades. As we found out from the data collected, students tend to go through the school academic system whether they have passed the grades well or failed them, when they reach grade nine they are then required to get a certain mark in order to continue to the next grade. This pass rate that is only introduced so late within the school system results in students having to repeat the grade if they have failed and in order to move on. Repetition then becomes one of

the major issues of schools within the township which includes the Philippi area. As we discussed, Bloch stated that one of the major crisis's in the education system and especially in the impoverished areas is that many of the students in these schools feel like the education system fails them (2009:25). This becomes exceptionally true when you have a pass requirement introduced in a later grade that results in school learners either having to repeat the grade or dropout.

Anderson, (et al), state that the disadvantage of African schools in South Africa is repetition and that the Africans in the disadvantaged schools much longer to finish school (2001:7). Anderson however does say that the problem in the township schools is not one of dropping out but rather it is one of repeating school. In fact Anderson et.al finds that school enrolment in African disadvantaged schools is actually ninety seven per cent which means most children are in school (Anderson (et al) 2001:7). We can also add that Baine and Mwanwenda state that one of the issues for disadvantaged schools is the repeating which is as a result of academic failure (1994:120); this therefore means that Africans in the disadvantaged schools much longer to finish school (Anderson, (et al). 2001:7).

This just shows that academic failure being one of the factors that lead to dropping out is a contested topic. This was also a topic of contestation among the interviewees with the member from the Schools Development Unit saying that the problem is repeating rather than dropping out; however the principle from Sophumelela stated that repeating eventually leads to dropping out of school. While some of the learners as well as the principal of Zisukhanyo say that many of the learners that do repeat keep going until they do finish. This means that while academic failure can be a factor that influences dropping out it is also a contested one that needs more looking into for any future investigations.

Even though there is a contestation as to whether repeating does actually lead to dropping out of school, one thing seems certain and that is that the main issue comes in with grade nine and ten either being referred to as the gate keeping grades by the interviewee from the Schools Development Unit. In all of the interviews conducted the main grades that were associated either with dropping out or repeating were grades nine and ten; mainly because of the pass rate. In speaking to the principals, the main issue is always the forty per cent that you have to attain for math to move on to the next grade. This seems to be where many of the students struggle. According to both principals as well, this is also why there are little to no dropouts in the higher grades (grade eleven and grade twelve), because it is those students who are not barred down by academic failure and have passed the two grades that cause many of the students a lot of grief. Even with those like Bloch who believe that the problem in the disadvantaged schools is dropping out, he also states that “over half of the children who start school never get to the end, with grade nine being a major point of dropout” (Bloch 2009:59). Even Abott, Hill (et al) believes that low grades or failing can also point to dropping out (2008:570).

6.2 GANGSTERISM

One of the crises in terms of education in the Western Cape according to Graeme Bloch is the issue of ‘gangsterism’, drugs and peer pressure (Bloch 2009). Adding to what Bloch is saying, when you do join a gang, the pressure to dropout heightens because you see a number of your friends who are part of a gang doing well, ‘looking cool’, and making money. This can become a major drive to join because it becomes a way out of the current poverty situation as well as a way to support your family financially. This issue of gangs is not a new one especially in the Western Cape; however the often made assumption is that it is

mainly within the so called 'coloured communities' which is something that was emphasised in my very first interview with one of the members of the Schools Development Unit'. One thing that definitely emerged from the interviews within the schools is that the issue of 'gangsterism' is very much a concern even in the so called 'African' townships.

In one of the interviews with the principal from Zisukhanyo it became clear that gangsterism is one of the main issues that they tie to dropping out. Out of the three reasons that the principal gave around dropping out, he stressed that "the issue of gangsterism is the one that is the key. It is the major one" (Appendix 2: Transcript 1). According to de Wet the infiltration of gangsterism into schools is a big issue in South Africa (2008:87) and it is infiltrating into the education system which is definitely a cause for concern. Gang involvement through the interview process has been often also associated with drugs, crime and alcohol abuse and this can definitely become a pull factor leading towards the dropping out of school. The principal of Zisukhanyo kept saying that in grades nine and ten the boys (especially) are influenced by their peers and become associated with a lot of things that draw them out of school eventually. These things are associated with gang involvement because according to the principle to be part of a gang means that you belong somewhere. This can be verified by Bloch who states that there is definitely a social pressure and level of attraction that comes with joining a gang; Bloch goes on to say that especially for boys it becomes more attractive to join a gang than to go to school (Bloch 2009:79).

With the gate keeping grades which are grade nine and ten, they also seem to be the grades most influenced by their peers to get involved in some kind of delinquent behaviour. This is where the issue of gangsterism comes in and its different effects on the learners that would drop out because of it. One of the effects of gangsterism is through delinquent behaviour which is also tied to: crime, drugs and substance abuse. Abbot and Hill show that delinquent behaviour can eventually lead to dropping out. They make connections between

deviant behaviour and dropping out; especially when peer pressure is added to the equation (2000:570). What they find is that delinquency and deviant behaviour can eventually lead to dropping out (Ibid). What feeds this conclusion is a lot of the literature that they had gone through which points to a relationship between delinquency and dropping out of school (Abbott, Hill (et al) 2000:570). This supports the gang and dropout connection, especially because we are saying that gangsterism fit into the category of delinquent behaviour. However, with the whole gangsterism debate there is also something else that springs up and that sometimes it is not only those who join gangs that dropout but those whose safety is jeopardised by the presence of gangs.

6.3 LACK OF SAFETY IN SCHOOLS

The last theme that we will discuss has to do with drawing a relationship between violence in schools that result in the lack of safety in schools causing school children to have no choice but to drop out of school for fear of their safety. In the interviews with the principals and the students the issue of gangsterism and violence in school is a real concern because it makes the schools unsafe. As we saw from the findings one of the boys from Sophumelela Secondary School kept saying that one of the things that should be introduced in the schools is a search to check the students for weapons. De Wet finds that students carrying weapons to school is something common in some schools (2008:87). De Wet did his research in the Free State but from the findings it is clear that especially with the issue of gangsterism in this area learners are easily carrying weapons into the school, either to attack during or after the school day.

The grade nines and ten's that were interviewed also say that being part of a gang is much safer than not being part of one mainly because you will always have 'back-up' when

another gang tries to attack you. This results in a culture of violence not only outside of the schools but within the schools; and a culture that affects boys especially. What is interesting when it comes to safety and especially among the boys is the fact that they find that that they are the main targets of violence. This is not a new phenomenon and Mathews, Griggs (et al) did a study where they found that “school based violence, crime and behavioural problems tend to affect the males more frequently than the females...and the individual most likely to commit crimes of violence is a black male youth (Mathews, Griggs (et al) 1999:7). This is something that came up within the interviews, especially around factors such as gang involvement and fear of safety; it seems like it is an issue that seems to affect the boys in the area more than it does the girls in the area.

What it seems from the findings is that whether or not you are part of a gang you are not safe. This means that rather than lose your life you would rather dropout. This then begs the question of schools becoming some kind of ‘prison’ for some of the learners. The school that you are enrolled in happens to be the only school within close range of your home, but once your there, you are trapped in a place that you will constantly be worrying about your safety and whether you will be attacked today. The reason that I feel that this may be an important factor to consider is because it opens a different dynamic to school dropouts, which is that it not always a choice like succumbing to peer pressure or giving up academically; one can also be forced to leave school because they are not safe within the school due to the violence that learners infringe on themselves.

CHAPTER 7

SUMARRY & CONCLUSIONS

From the study that has been conducted, one thing that emerges is that there is not one particular reason why students drop out of school. There are various reasons that could lead a student to drop out of school in the Philippi area. Through this study we have been able to come up with three major reasons as to why students drop out of school. One is that they are being weighed down by the academic system; this means that they are actually failing academically which can pull them out of school. We have found that this reason is however a contested one because some people argue that the problem that academic failure due to pass rates results in is repetition. This would mean that many students instead of dropping out are just taking longer to finish because they have to repeat a particular grade.

The second reason that results in dropping out in within the Philippi area has to do with gangsterism and the pressure that there is to be part of a gang. If the academic system is not working for you then it becomes very easy to resort to being part of a gang instead of continuing in school. It also seems that the friends that surround you that are involved in gangs can also easily influence you to leave school eventually, especially if they are all not in school. There are a couple of things that are interesting about gangsterism that were brought up by the different perspectives. For the principals, young learners wanting to be a part of a gang was about being at an age where you want to belong somewhere and are easily influenced by your friends. These friends eventually lead you into dropping out, as well as lure you to become involved with drugs and alcohol which are all part of the lure of the gang. For the students, being part of a gang was influenced by peer pressure and seeing how well gang members are doing. One aspect that all the interviewees in Philippi did agree on

however is that gangsterism had infiltrated the schools and violence has become a part of their everyday and so most of the students that dropout do so because of fear for their safety.

Lastly, tied to gang involvement, another major issue that leads to dropping out in the Philippi area is the lack of safety in schools. Because of gang involvement there are many concerns about students that are part of gangs that have not dropped out of school and bring their battles into the school grounds. The issue is that gangs are territorial for one which means that different areas have different gangs, and yet you have one school that caters for all these areas. This means that once you are in school and from a different area you are a target all the time. The issue is around violent attacks against each other by the learners and so it becomes obvious that if you are not part of a gang and feel like your safety is being jeopardised it becomes easy for you to drop out of school. This shows that one of the reasons that school children dropout of school is because they are afraid for their safety and so are forced to drop out of school because of such fears.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbott R.D, Hill K. G, Catalano R.F, and Hawkins D.J. 2000. Predictors of Early High School Dropout: A Test of Five Theories. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. Vol 92 (3). Pp. 568-582.

Anderson, K, Case, A & Liam, D. 2001. Causes and Consequences of Schooling Outcomes in South Africa. *Social Dynamics*. Vol 27 (1) pp. 1-23.

Anderson. V, Azari. S, & Wyk. V.A. Philippi Community Profile. *South African Education and Environment Project*. South Africa.

Babbie, E & Mouton, J. 2001. Qualitative Studies. In *The Practice of Social Research*. Pp. 269-311. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

Bain, D & Mwamwenda, T. 1994. Education in southern Africa: Current Conditions and Future Directions. *International Review of Education*. Vol 40 (2) pp113-134.

Bloch, G. 2009. *The Toxic Mix: What's wrong with South Africa's Schools and how to fix it*. Tafelburg. Cape Town.

Bloch, G. (no date). Building Education Beyond Crisis. *Development Today*. Pp. 1-16.

Burns, R. 2000. Unstructured Interviewing. In *introduction to Research Methods*. Pp. 423-444. London Sage.

Coyne, I. T. 1997. Sampling in Qualitative Research. Purposeful and theoretical sampling: merging or clear boundaries? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. Vol 26; pp. 623-630.

De Wet, J & Erasmus, Z. 2005. Towards Rigour in Qualitative Analysis. *Qualitative Research Journal*. Vol 5(1) pp. 27-40.

- De Wet, C. 2008. Educators' Perceptions and Observations of Learner-on-Learner Violence and Violence-Related Behaviour. *African Educational Review*. Vol 4 (2) pp. 75-93.
- Hunt, F. 2008. Dropping Out from School: A Cross Country Review of Literature. *Create Pathways Tow Access. Research Monograph No 16*. University Of Sussex. United Kingdom.
- Johnson, J & Reynolds, H.T. 2008. *Political Science Research Methods*, 3rd Edition. Congressional Quarterly Press. Washington.
- Kelle, U. 1995. *Computer-Aided Qualitative Analysis: Theory Methods and Practice*. Sage Publications. London.
- Marshall, M. N. 1996. Sampling for Qualitative Research. *Family Practice*. Vol 13(6). Pp. 522-525.
- Marvasti, A.B. 2004. *Qualitative Research in Sociology: An Introduction*. Sage Publications. London.
- Mathew, I, Griggs, R & Caine, G. 1999. The Experience Review of Interventions and Programmes Dealing With Youth Violence in Urban Schools in South Africa. *Independent Projects Trust*. Pp. 1-52.
- Miles, M. B & Huberman, M.A. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Sage Publications. United Kingdom.
- Motala, S. 1995. Surviving The System- A critical Appraisal of Some Conventional Wisdoms in Primary Education in South Africa. *Comparative Education*. Vol 31(2) pp. 161-179.
- Punch, K. 2005. *Introduction to Social Research. Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, 2nd Edition. Sage. London.
- Strauss A, & Corbin J. 1990. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Sage Publications. London.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1- CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

Title of research project:

REASONS BEHIND DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL IN PHILIPPI.

Names of researcher:

KETHI WANGECI NGARI

Degree:

HONS. DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Department:

SOCIOLOGY

Telephone:

0792761183

Email:

[ngrket001@myuct.ac.za/](mailto:ngrket001@myuct.ac.za) geci.ngari@gmail.com

Nature of the research:

To research what the different reasons are why high school children in Philippi are dropping out of school. The task of this research is to hear the views from different people who are working within the education system (teachers, principals, NGO workers), or are part of the education system(the learners) regarding what leads to dropping out of school.

Name of participant:

Participant's involvement:

Institution:

1. I agree to participate in this research project.
2. I have read this consent form and the information it contains and had the opportunity to ask questions about them.
3. I agree to my responses being used for education and research on condition my privacy is respected, subject to the following:
 - I understand that my personal details (no names unless agreed to) may be included in the research / will be used in aggregate form only, so that I will not be personally identifiable
4. I understand that the interviewer will be using a recorded device to record this interview.
5. I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project.
6. I understand I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Signature of Participant _____

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Name of researcher: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 2: TRANSCRIPTS

The Transcripts included are the ones referred to within the thesis report.

Transcript 1

TRANSCRIPTION: PRINCIPLE OF ZISUKHANYO

Wangeci: Hello there, My name is Wangeci and I am doing a study on school dropout rates. Before we start the interview could you please introduce yourself and your position in this secondary school.

Respondent: My name is Mr (name Privacy as stated in the consent form) and I am the principle of Zisukhanyo secondary school....yes.

Wangeci: Okay. So basically what I want to find out is about school dropout rates in Phillipi. What causes them, what are the reasons behind school dropout rates and what are the kind of pressures that school children face that lead them to drop out of school in Philippi. Just in Philippi. Yes...so I have a couple of questions to start the discussion, but we can go ahead and kick off the interview now.

Respondent: Okay...

Wangeci: What is your take on dropout rates generally speaking?

Respondent: Yes we do have, ehm dropouts but it not that much in our school, I would say. And in certain categories I would mention one category is the issue of pregnancy; two it's an issue of gangsterism and number three it's an issue of the movement of communities from one area to another.

Wangeci: Movement? Hmm, maybe you can speak a little bit more about that?

Respondent: Yes, I will expand on all of these three categories. I mentioned the one on teenage pregnancies, gangsterism and the movement. Now the pregnancies, it's not that much although it is there, uhm maybe we will have three or two per year with the girls because they will become pregnant; and as much as the school does not bar them from coming to school they decide on their own that because now I am pregnant I will stay at home and then continue in the following year. So it is not that much.

Wangeci: And they still come back

Respondent: Yes they still come back. We had two this year that were pregnant but they are still continuing with their studies. Number two is the issue of gangsterism which is the one that is the key. It is the major one. You will find that it is rife in the grade nine's that is where you get the bulk. And here the number I would put it at five to ten per cent of the grade nine's. This year we have about 281 grades nine's so ten per cent is 28. Because what happens is that learners are afraid to come to school, because you will find that this area is fighting with that area. Like here we are serving Samora, Kossovo, the other side we call it Philippi and Brown's farm. And you find that the gangsters when they fight; Kossovo is fighting against Samora and then all these learners are coming to this school. Now if there are those fights, because they stab, they murder they kill each other, so the parent decides to take them to Eastern Cape. Because most of them come from the Eastern Cape and so the parents decide to take them back to the Eastern Cape rather than lose their kids. I would say that in that sense that is where we get the bulk, in the other grades it's not that much. But it is only the grade nine's. And you will find that when these learners are coming from Primary because if you are in grade nine this is your second year in the high school. So they started this thing in the primary school and brought it here

Wangeci: The gangsterism?

Respondent: Yes. Ehm which really impacts negatively on them because after sometime the parents will bring them back when they see that things have quieted down then they try and bring them back and that has a negative effect on their studies because now they moved and then now they are coming back and they have lost

some time and their studies. The third category, the movement you find that parents are in Kosovo for example, temporarily, now they find that they have to be relocated to another area, now you will find that those families when they move they move with their kids and maybe it is say twenty kilometres away from where they were studying and they end up staying at home and wasting a year until they find a nearby school but with that it happens from time to time and is not something that affects us that much because you find that they do not move all of them at the same time maybe three or four learners or five at the most. But it is not something that is a crisis, and is not something that is happening everywhere because the area that is most affected is Kosovo because it is an area not designated for human settlement. So they are being asked to move from time to time so there are these dropout rates in those areas.

Wangeci: So, when these kids are not in school, where are they? Do they join a gang

Respondent: Well that the unfortunate part, I cannot answer because I do not know, immediately they get out of the school do not know what they are doing. Because when the parents take them they say that they will find another school, say if they take them to Eastern Cape they say that they will find another school. When they leave we give them their reports, transcripts and certificates so that they can find a school wherever they will be settled.

Wangeci: Going back to the issue of gangsterism, have the children expressed grievances in terms of being pressured to join the gangs?

Respondent: Oh yeah, oh yeah, Oh yeah! We do have; when we talk to them about these issues, some of them will tell you or when the parents come to the school to collect transfer certificates they will tell you that 'no my child is not part of this' But there is pressure because he is in the area; so it is about the area that he lives in. Although he does not belong to the gang, because he lives in that area where there are these gangs then others will say that they are also a part of the gang. So we are not safe. So what they do now, especially those parents, is they organise transport for their learners that takes them from home to school and then after school they get collected back home. And also we have volunteer parents that are guarding the learners when they come to school from 7:30-8:15, so they are having some points where they stay and guard. They congregate and then they guard the learners as they come to school and then also after school, they knock off at one for the learners and then go to their points and they guard them as they go back home.

Wangeci: That's really nice...

Respondent: And that has worked because last year was a very terrible year but this year we have not had a single incident of gangsterism that was so rife just last year.

Wangeci: Oh, wow! Just that guarding?

Respondent: Coz know we have those volunteer parents that are guarding these learners and so now it has died down. And that has also assisted with the issue of dropout rates due to gangsterism.

Wangeci: Because children are now feeling a bit safer...

Respondent: yes...

Wangeci: I see. I had an interview I think about two weeks ago and something that came up that is interesting to me is the issue of repeating, and how that can perhaps also lead to dropouts, is there a problem here with children repeating?

Respondent: Yes, I think that is another category I should have added there; the repetition, especially in grade nine, because we have a bottleneck there, with the grade nine because most of them fail so they will repeat and repeat and then they decide to quit. But others will soldier on and keep on until they pass. But it's not that much of numbers because what they usually do is if they fail they change the school. If I fail I move from this school and go to another one.

Wangeci: SO they are still in school they are just moving

Respondent: Yes they are just hopping around changing schools; that is what they do.

Wangeci: So why is grade nine that 'bottleneck'?

Respondent: I think the issue is mathematics because the requirement is that they must attain code three which is 40% in maths so now it is very difficult for them to get that code three mathematics; so that is the main subject that is causing them to fail.

Wangeci: And that is not usually seen in moving from grade seven to eight or eight to nine?

Respondent: It is only when they get to grade nine and one of the requirements is that they get a code three and then they do not manage to get a code three and then they fail another subject and then cannot be condoned. And unfortunately we can't push them on (laughs) because we are only allowed to do one condonation. One in three subjects that is the condonation which is allowed.

Wangeci: So you do not think it is that much of an issue that it can be tied to dropping out?

Respondent: No, no, no, I do not think it is an issue.

Wangeci: Another thing, just to learn a bit more about the school, is it a no fees school?

Respondent: It is a no fees school

Wangeci: Are most of the schools in Philippi no fees schools?

Respondent: Yes I think the area, I think it is because we are part of the same quintile, which is quintile 3 in the sense that it is a semi-urban area and it has informal settlements so now we are categorised according to that and in that category the school becomes a no fees school.

Wangeci: So obviously that is not a reason for dropping out?

Respondent: ah, no! they get everything, everything. They must just bring themselves in with their uniform.

Wangeci: Even books?

Respondent: yes, in the beginning of the year we give them books, and textbooks and stationary...everything. We feed them twice in the morning. At half [past seven we give them porridge and then the main meal later. There is a morning meals, porridge and the half past nine they get the main meal.

Wangeci: What about support systems? Do you think that there is a strong support system in place within Philippi, in terms of say a school of skills for children who have dropped out of school?

Respondent: That is what we are struggling with and fighting with the department; our district which is the district south there is a life skills school which in Mitchell's plain but for this area we do not have one and this is what we are fighting for as we speak, because we need one for our area because that will assist us a lot for those that are not academically sound we can then refer them to such schools. SO it is something that is on the table and is being debated over.

Wangeci: okay, what about the kids who have dropped out, do you sometimes find that they want to come back to school? Say for example a student who dropped out to be a part of a gang and then now they want to come back?

Respondent: Oh, yes they do and those who have change their ways or mend their ways. We do take them because we do not have a choice, they belong in here, we want them in here but we want them to be responsible, just to say to them that when you get inside that gate know what you are here for and not any other thing. Know what you are here for; that is the thing.

Wangeci: Let me just look through my questions; Um just to confirm, what grades do you think high school kids dropout of the most?

Respondent: I think that it is mostly the grade nine's.

Wangeci: Okay they grade nine's, so who do you think it is mostly the grade nine's? is it because of the repeating, or the moving,

Respondent: One I would also say it is because of the age. Once they get to grade nine they are about fifteen or sixteen. They are coming of age, experimenting with all these things, and I think that that is one of the key

things. I mentioned the three four areas but you know being part of a gang, is a case of being associated, of wanting to belong, so I think that that's it, as much as I have not done any empirical study to confirm that but looking from a far, I would say that they are coming of age and then they want to experiment with whatever is there and that hits them. And also we talked of support systems in the sense that some of these kids, are coming from child headed families, their parents are not here, they are maybe in the Eastern Cape or their parents have passed away and so you will find that they become the mothers and the fathers in where they are staying. Or maybe one is staying with the grandparent, or one is staying in the back yard; and those are some of the social issues that that they are facing. So there is no one who is supporting them in the end, all through the school has a support structure in terms of the LST which is the learner support team which is here at school. Uh where we find learners such as this, we do refer them to our social workers, the district social workers so that they can assist them here and there.

Wangezi: So there are social workers around

Respondent: Yes for our district, for our circuit we have thirteen and they are psychologists and social workers , so we refer our students to them so that we can get assistance.

Wangezi: So what kind of support do you think they get?

Respondent: What happens, is first finding out what is the problem at home and then we refer them to Social Development so that we can find out whether it is about money or grants that can assist. If issues are psychological, like issue like are drug related or otherwise we do refer them.

Wangezi: So do you find that many of these boys who are coming of age are facing a lot of other pressure like maybe starting to work early and leave school?

Respondent: No! I do not think that that is an issue, because all of those that are here they just keep going.

Wangezi: Okay so maybe you can tell me a bit more about Zisukhanyo if you do not mind me asking, what was the pass rate last year for matric?

Respondent: The pass rate last year was sixty two, and then the previous year it was sixty seven and then the year before...well, I would say that we have been lingering in the sixties (laughs). So we have been swimming there in the sixties range, 2012 62, 2011 it was 66 and 2010 it was 57. So at least we...but last year we had those (He pointed to a plaque like trophy written 3rd position)

Wangezi: Ah, so you were, third position in Phil...(interrupted)

Respondent: In the circuit. And then we were the top school in terms of bachelor passes, we had the highest number and improved by 15%. In the circuit.

Wangezi: So what exactly is the circuit?

Respondent: Circuit you will have about eighteen schools, that is this side, Samora, Philippi, and lower Kossovo, and so all these schools they form circuit five.

Wangezi: Well, that is impressive...So how many grade twelve's did you have last year?

Respondent: Last year we had about 167 and this year we have 136. So I would say that with the calibre of learners that we have, it is promising.

Wangezi: So out of the 166 how many of them passed? Or is it just 62% of the 167 students.

Respondent: Yes and 24% of them got the bachelor passes.

Wangezi: How does the pass system work? I did not go through it so I would love to understand how it does work? Bachelor passes? Diploma passes, higher certificate passes? How does it all work?

Respondent: In the olden days, we had the matric exemption and an ordinary pass. We had two, It was either matric exemption or an ordinary pass. Matric exemption is when you get a certain aggregate mark with different symbols, higher symbols, and that is university entrance which is the matric exemption. Then just a pass was just an ordinary pass. Now they have translated that exemption pass to the bachelor pass. Now the bachelor pass

is what we used to call matric exemption, so you get certain marks with a number of higher codes which allow you to go to university with that. So you have university entrance.

Wangeci: Okay so with the bachelor you can move into university?

Respondent: Yes. With a diploma you can go to a university of Technology and with a certificate you can go to a college.

Wangeci: And what if you just have a pass?

Respondent: If you have a certificate that is an ordinary pass. So you can go to college and do whatever. But with a diploma you can go to CPUT or whatever, umm, University of Technology and with a bachelor a University...okay?

Wangeci: Let me just run through my questions and see whether I have covered what I needed to seeing as you have to leave soon? (Short pause, the respondent gets a phone call which lasts about one minute). So can you maybe just generally comment on school attendance? Do you think that there are enough schools for the children to attend? Is everyone attending school?

Respondent:No! unfortunately, not everyone and it is their choice. Just like the dropouts there are those who would rather not attend school ad go look for work instead. But in this school the attendance is not that bad, I think we are ranging at maybe 6%; that is absenteeism. That is for the quarter.

Wangeci: Okay that is a small amount of people. Maybe my last question would be on NGO's. What role do you think the NGO's play in terms of school dropouts? Or school dropout rates?

Respondent: For now! There hasn't been anything with the NGO's that we have. I know that Amandla is still organising and trying to combine the resources that we have in our area. But for now there hasn't been movement from their sides so the schools are on their own.

Wangeci: How do you think they would help?

Respondent: With the Ngo's, as much as they should work with the school, I think that they should work more with the communities because it is very difficult for us from school to the community, especially in terms of parental involvement. We call parents for school meetings but they do not come. Maybe 20 parents come, or 50 parents come. We arrange meetings to talk about the performance of their kids but they do not come. SO maybe with creativity coming from the NGO's as they are working with the communities, these issues may be discussed at a certain level, so maybe they can assist in that area.

Wangeci: My last question as I close would be to see if it possible to get the student enrolments of this year and maybe last year?

Respondent: Yes last year we had about 1,120 students by the end of year term, and then this year we started at 1,150 but now we are standing at I think 1,110.

Wangeci: If it is not too much to ask, is it okay if I get those enrolment figures, in print?

Respondent: That would be a problem today only because our internet is down at the moment and I would need to access CEMIS website. But maybe next week when you come to interview the learners.

Wangeci: That is fine! I can come for that next week. So you said that next week I should come in early, say 10:00 o'clock

Respondent: Yes come from about 9:30/ 10:00a.m so that you can just grab them as they come in to collect their forms, you can just be like 'Hi, can I have a chat with you?'

Wangeci: Thank you so much for allowing me to interview you, I am very grateful for your time!

End.

Time: 30 minutes.

Transcript 2

Learners from Zisukhanyo Secondary School

21/06/2013

Wangeci: Maybe we can just start by going round and saying where you are from or which part of Philippi you live in?

Zozo: I do not stay around here I live in Peryl which is near Tygerburg but I was born in the Eastern Cape

Respondent two: I was born here

Wangeci: So you're from Philippi

Babez: (nods head)

Mancane (Boy): I was born in the Eastern Cape but my family moved here, I stay in Gugulethu

Wangeci: Okay so you are dropped to school every day

Mancane: yes

Sino: (Pointing to Zozo) we are actually from the same place

Assistant: I was born here but it was long time ago. Even Philippi was not existing at that time; so I am a native 'Philipian'

Wangeci: Sorry, you all seem a little bit too far do you mind if we move a little closer so that we can hear each other a little better? Thank you. SO I will also say where I am from; Originally I'm not from South Africa I'm here studying; doing my honours at the University of Cape Town. So just to confirm only one of you is from grade eleven and the rest of you are from grade twelve meaning that you are matriculating this year? How do you feel about that?

Sino: ah, it's hectic

Respondent: I feel happy, nervous and all that stuff, I feel happy that I made it but at the same time I feel scared that I will fail or something

Wangeci: What about you Zozo? How do you feel about grade 12?

Zozo: Well stressed out for the final exams.

Wangeci: And the finals are in November? October?

Babez: they start in October...

Wangeci: (Talking to the assistant) and you finished a while ago?

Assistant: The only thing I can say is study, you can go to a Sangoma or use whatever you want for a lucky, but this is not a lucky. Read and make sure you know what you are going to write on the paper that's it! Ain't no other medicine, study, that is the medicine.

Wangeci: So how were the exams this time round?

Sino: Some of them were good but others were not, but we will fetch the results today.

Wangeci (Talking to respondent 3): What about you? Are you excited to go to grade 11?

Mancane: I do not know?

Wangeci: and the results?

Mancane: Ah, no! I will not collect them today, I want to enjoy my holiday.

Wangeci: Okay, let me start the questions. So we can either go around in a circle as we answer or you can just talk if you want to talk, and we will see which works. Okay, so do any of you have friends who have dropped out of school?

Babez: I do have friends who have dropped out of school because of gangsters; some of them are boys and few girls but boys. So they dropped out of school because of gangsters. Gangsters, are hunting them you see so that's why they dropped out. And they do not want to get in the group but the gangsters want them in the group so they just dropped out. So they are not safe at all and that is why they dropped out of school.

Wangeci: So they do not feel safe? And they have not yet joined the gangs?

Babez: They even moved out of Philippi. Some of them went to the Eastern Cape and some of them went to Pretoria because of gangsters.

Wangeci: Anyone else?

Sino: Well, I know someone who dropped out of school not because of gangster but because I think his father had a small shop so I do not know what happened to his father or whether he found another job but they needed someone to take care of the shop and so he had to drop out to take care of the shop.

Wangeci: SO when did this person drop out?

Sino: Last year

Wangeci: So in grade 11?

Sino: No well he was in grade 10.

Zozo: I know someone who was a class mate. She dropped out when she was in grade 10. I think she was in grade 10 or something.

Wangeci: Anyone that you may know? (asking respondent 3)

Mancane: I know someone but I think he dropped out because of the pressure from his friends and that made him drop out of school.

Wangeci: Peer pressure. Okay so let's talk a little bit about that. Is it a big problem with friends?

Sino: Well yeah, for some people some of them do not feel like they fit in so whatever she says I must do then I will just do it because of that pressure.

Babez: It's also just wanting to be cool. Maybe you have someone who just wants to have swag and you don't have what they have which makes you feel alone and then you join that group and then you start doing wrong things because you want to please friends because you want to be cool.

Wangeci: What about you Themba (the assistant) what do you think?

Assistant: First of all let me just say that I knew a friend of mine who dropped out of school and I was in grade 11 at that time. The thing was at his home there was no one working and he was forced to leave school and find a job and all he found was something at *Inyanda* (CBO). And he became a volunteer for five years. So when his father passed away his mother could not afford to raise all the children in the room. But even later he wanted to come back to school but I do not know what happened, and he was very smart he even had a bursary to UCT which he forfeited as well. And even now he is still in the same position as he was and only just a volunteer and without matric. But coming back to the peer pressure thing, peer pressure is one of the things that has power in the township. Maybe we do not even tell you to join us, but because you envy us you will come anyway and will say guys I want to join. Many young people here want to be cool especially on a Saturday, so peer pressure is a huge thing in the Township. Thank you guys.

Wangeci: Okay so that pressure is it mostly for boys or for girls?

Assistant: Every one

Sino: Yes everyone but mostly for boys

Assistant: No it's for every one

Wangeci: Okay we will come back to that question later...So but what made you not drop out of school?

Zozo: I want to succeed in life, have a nice job a house a car. So I want to apply to UCT and do chartered accountancy.

Babez: I want to make my parents proud because I did not make it to past grade 12. It is only my father who reached grade 12 but did not go past that. I want to do social work.

Mancane: I want to support my family and help my father.

Sino: Well I had it rough growing up. I lost my parents but I do not want them to die for nothing so wherever they are they can be proud of me. And my aunt raised me and her son totally doesn't like school and I want her to have someone to be proud of. I want to apply to CPUT for clothing management.

Wangeci: So am I right in assuming that none of you ever felt the pressure to dropout of school? (everyone shakes their head); what about friends who have felt that they feel like they should quit even if they do not?

Sino: Yes, In my class there is this girl, she...first of all her mother is very sick so sometimes she doesn't come to school for a week to take care of her mother so sometimes she just feels like she wants to quit because she is very behind on her school work. And when she comes back there is a lot of pressure for her to catch up so yah she wants to quit but she did not.

Wangeci: Okay, anyone else? (pause for a while and no one seems to have anything to say). Okay so maybe I can ask this; when I was talking to a couple of people before they were talking about repeating as one of the reasons to drop out; what do you think about that?

Zozo: I know someone who dropped out of school because he kept repeating a lot and now he works at a small spaza shop.

Babez: And he was the oldest one in class and the rest of us were young and so he did not feel comfortable with us, and he did not want to do things with us, because he was older. Even when we want to play life orientation games he did not feel comfortable because he was older.

Wangeci: okay so found him in that class when you moved to that class

Zozo: Yes, and we left him there.

Assistant: Another thing is when you feel like your uniform is torn or doesn't look nice you feel bad and you want to drop out. They tell their parents in the morning that they are going to school and then they go to the friend's house and do whatever they do and then they wait for the school day to end and then they go home. It's because of what they are wearing and the fear that children will laugh at me and call me names.

Babez: To add on, even the disabled in school do not feel comfortable because people make fun of them and even some teachers. Another thing is the classmates will make fun of them. Let me make an example of Zozo; if Zozo is disabled then I will draw a picture on the board to make fun of her and that makes them not feel very welcomed in school.

Wangeci: Okay so just going back to repeating do you know anyone else with the same situation like the one zozo told? (Long pause; and short discussion in Xhosa between respondent 3 and 4)

Sino: well I do know one, this guy. I wouldn't really say that he is an adult because he is like 23 and we are all like 17 and 16 but he did not drop out he just kept going. He failed in grade 10 and then when he finally got to grade 11 he failed again and then yah, but he didn't quit he just kept going.

Babez: there is another guy who; we are in the same class. His name is Lusanda he is from Philippi area, he repeated classes, yoh! So many times, the other learners say that umm he was in the same class with another teacher in another school, and that teacher said it is true that they were in the same class (the giggle) but the main thing I like about him is that he did not give up he just kept going. He is now in grade 12. Still some of his classmates do funny things to him, they beat him and all that stuff but when he gets into class, he even starts shaking in class because he is nervous that people will beat him or make fun of him and stuff like that. But some

of the teachers do understand him and some of us do understand him because since he repeated the classes many of us understand his situation, and we do not want us to be like him.

Assistant: I know someone who dropped out of school, and I was like that is the stupidest thing I ever heard and to him the guy was not being given money to take to school. Even though there is a feeding scheme at school but he does not want to eat the food at home. And then his parents were not working so he decided to quit school. He ruined his own future, and he quit.

Wangeci: So there are cafeterias that sell things in school?

Assistant: yes there are, so he was like he doesn't want to eat with the feeding scheme he wanted to buy.

Babes: I also have a half-sister. I am the third in my house and my sister is second. She was clever at school she dropped out in grade 8 because my mother used to give her 2 rand for lunch so the other day umm; the other lady for next door told my mother that she must walk with her to school because she thinks that she is dodging. My mother said okay, she will watch her and the next day she saw my sister prepare for school and watched her as she did not go in the right direction of the school. My mother followed her and asked her, why aren't you going to school? And then she said that no, 'it is because you are giving me 2 rand and the other girls have 5 Rands or 10 Rands and stuff' and then my mother said, 'no we are not in the same situation and you must try and understand your situation because I do not have money but at least you are not sleeping hungry and are eating every day you see. But she don't work she don't do nothing now because she doesn't want to go back to school.

Wangeci: Oh, okay, so is that a big thing, having money to come and buy things?

Assistant: yes that and substance abuse as well.

Wangeci: Okay, we could also talk about that...(pause), so what about substance abuse?

Assistant: a lot of people you will find that they are drinking every day, I do not know how did they get money. Also the drugs make the guys think that they are superior and they did not need school. So some of the things like drugs and substance abuse are more like peer pressure because all of the three things are like a family, if you are affected by peer pressure and are into drugs and alcohol they work with each other... you will find that they will never come to school when they are drunk but they will come to school when they are high on dope and those tend to repeat school. And then they try and convince their parents to let them eventually leave school...all of you may add...I'm just blubbering.

Sino: Well it's in school, they get kicked out because the boys they smoke in school and say whatever they want to the teachers, so they get kicked out.

Wangeci: okay but do they come back to school?

Sino: some of them come back and then they get punished and then they continue

Babes: Some of them do drink in school as well, and then they will have attitudes towards the teachers (loud noise people walking in and out of the room: for about 4 minutes).

Wangeci: Sorry about that babes, you were saying

Babes: Boys and girls who are drinking in school. Maybe they drink at the toilets and then in the classroom they bring their bad behaviours and also to other learners and some of them even start to do something that they never did because he or she is drunk.

Wangeci: Anyone else? (Pointing to respondent 3 who has been quiet) as a boy I would really like to hear about your take on peer pressure...(disruption again for 3 minutes)

Mancane: Yes there is pressure to smoke dagga and drink and then the way it works is that I must do what the guy says I must do. And like if I do not do it, heh, then I get beaten or something like that, or they tell me I'm weak.

Sino: Just to add to that, to boys, if you tell them they are weak that totally works on their nerves, just telling them they are weak; and they do not want to be weak

Assistant: there is also that thing that I must look for the people and the common things that we share, not just jump into 'man I wanna be your friend!' you look at this person and they like going to Mzoli's like's drinking; and then, this guys he is seen like he has 'swag' you know? And you don't want to be left behind you know. And then you will find that these people that talk about all these things do not even do these things, you know go to Mzoli's and all that, even if they talk about the 'nxobo's' of Mzoli's. But because they talk about it a lot, this guy's starts to working on your nerves; 'eih this guy is popular', or 'eih! He is taking over'. You don't want to be left behind you know?! Another example is if I say I am not going to take the 'tik' but you tlk about tik al lot and I hear you and hear you and hear you, and then I use it; to be at the same level. And then I will smoke it more than even the person who said they smoke it and say that I am more superior because I smoke it every hour or every minute! That is how the peer pressure works sometimes.

Wangeci: Anyone want to add to that? (Long pause) nothing? Okay maybe let me ask another question. So what do you think of the ex-model C schools? Do you think that they suffer from repeating and dropping out? Who wants to start? Maybe Babez?

Babez: I do not think that they have the problems that we are dealing with because model C schools, or umm here at the township that we face. First like I have said there is the gangsters and in model C schools there are no gangsters, but here at our schools there is gangsters, there are learners who will shout at teachers and all that stuff but in the model C schools, ah! There is nothing like that; if they do that (shout at the teachers) they will be punished but here if they will be punished they will still do it next time and they will do it with two other people like some of us even shout at our mothers our parents. Even if I was raised by a single mother, I would start asking questions if I am drunk and stuff, I will start asking my parents why did he go and why did he do that stuff, umm, I will be aggressive to her. But in the model C schools, I do not think they have what we have.

Sino: Well I disagree, Well I think they do have it

Wangeci: drop outs?

Silo: Yes, but because there are children from the Townships who go to model C schools, they come with that behaviour of the Townships and do stuff there so they do have it.

Wangeci: ah, what behaviour?

Sino: Like maybe smoking in school or drinking in school or bad behaviour like talking whatever you want talk to the teacher

Babez: Aloku, that's why I said that they will do it but they get punished when they are caught, but when they do get punished they will not do it again because they have learned their lesson. You see that's why I was saying that.

Zozo: Uh, in model C schools there are children who are pregnant, so they do drop out of school. So it is similar to ours because they have students who are pregnant and have to drop out of school . SO yeah

Sino: It's just that here in the Townships it is more likely to happen

Babez: Also in model C schools they take you out when you are pregnant but here in these schools they do not take you out

Wangeci: so do you think they should be taken out?

Babez: Yes, because here at school we are here to learn not make babies and all that stuff, serious?! We are not here to make relationships we are here to learn and get information about our economy, numbers all that stuff so that we can have

Zozo: Brighter futures

Babez: Brighter futures, be successful in whatever you do, but when you come here you see a lot of girls here who are doing grade nine and grade eight and we are doing grade 12 this year, it's been five years and still we are not pregnant, so we should be the examples. But they don't see us as examples because they don't think that we don't have um

Zozo: Boyfriends

Babez: Yes boyfriends all that stuff and we are 'barru's' all that stuff

Wangeci: Barru's? What is that?

(They laugh at first)

Assistant: someone who doesn't know anything (they all agree)

Wangeci: ah, okay!

Babez: Yah! SO like I told the other girl when we were coming at school and then I told her, 'what happened?' because she is grade 11 now

Some girls walk into the interview and call on Silo and respondent 3

Sino: Oh, We have to go...

Wangeci: okay, going home?

Sino: no there is this programme in Athlone

Wangeci: Okay, thank you for being here! Sorry Babez, you were saying?

Loud noise interruptions from outside takes a few minutes to quiet down again

Babez: SO there was this girl I was walking with last year and I asked her what happened? You are doing grade 11 this year and you will go to grade 12 next year, what made you become pregnant! What happened? (interrupted by noise again for 30 seconds) then she said, no babez, leave me alone. And then I said, no! Don't tell me to leave you alone you are in grade 11 and you are supposed to be the example of the grade 8's and grade 9's so that they can see that as a girl you have to, how to take care of yourself or something. Coz really we are not here to make fun and stuff we are here to learn, yes!

Wangeci: Zozo, anything?

Zozo: Not yet!

Wangeci: So no one said anything about repeating in model C schools, what do you think?

Noise again, I had to repeat the question when it quieted down.

Assistant: Um, we in the township we have a lot of repeating, I'm not saying that they do not have repeating in their schools but the thing is here we go to school and our schools are bigger than theirs and then you find that the reputation of kids repeating school is more here and then there you find out that there is only 500 kids, and out of that 500 kids it's only gonna be maybe 20 kids who are gonna fail and then here beside drugs and other things, I do not know what is wrong with the Township or people who stay in the Township, they do not too much at school. They don't want to be nerds. They have that pride that I am not gonna study this over again I am just gonna study one time and then write the test and pass. I don't know why they are doing that. And then you will find that okay this person knows that their father has spent a lot for them to study here and then now I have to be focussed, and there is money for them to study again next year and oh, my father promised me that he was going to buy me a car when I finish grade 12. So things like that make you to be motivated. But here is out township we find that there is nothing that you are being promised and then also your parents do not know what is your future, like when they say go to school they feel like they want to get rid of you and then you gonna come back later on. They do not care about what your homework is or what you do in school, no! They don't care. The only thing they care about is when you are gone...oh yes! He is not here, he is school. When you go back home there is no one asking you, 'how was school?' no! Those are the things that make people repeat school more or drop out than in the model C. That situation.

Wangeci: (To the group) Anything else? Sorry about the noise, I know it's distracting and disruptive. (pause). Okay, let me see if I have any other questions (pause). Let's actually continue with repeating for a bit, and more on academic reasons, is it exams that are hard? Teachers? Etc.

Zozo: Well I think that some of the learners are taking slow or um they slow learners and maybe the teacher is moving fast. So the learner can't keep up with the pressure.

Wangeci: Babez?

Babez: Can you repeat the question again?

Wangeci: what are some of the academic reasons people repeat? For example like Zozo said, is it because some learners are slower than others; just in general.

Babez: Some of them, they complain about teachers because some of them do make fun of the learners. When you ask a question, and especially ladies; When you ask something like maybe you did not understand and you go to her then she will tell you; 'no you must go to other people and other learners because I taught you at the class, Um yeah

Zozo: Some learners they are not serious; they do not work hard. They do not want to form study groups so that we can pass and help each other; but they will be like no, it is a waste of time, I have to go to the party and go to a friends for holiday. So if we form a group they think, okay you are too serious and then we just leave them alone because they do not want to succeed and pass their exams.

Assistant: I am seconding that because some learners are not hard on themselves they want to be easy and lazy. Wake up eat, drink and sleep. This person has a responsibility to study but he is not going to do anything. Also the other thing that makes people repeat is that you find someone who is clever but the thing is he is not attending school and ends up not knowing anything in the exam or the paper that it going to be written. So they will be like, 'I am familiar with these questions but I do not know they answers' so you see. And also I am still seconding her (Zozo) because they do not do that thing called study group. You know when you are in a study group when you go into the exam you will all know an answer and then you will come out of the exam saying yes...'we know the answer', you know that feeling? But other students they do not try hard they say they are doing it for their families and not themselves and that is why we have a high rate of repeating in class.

Babez: And also umm, the other thing is people do not do homework they only do it the class. SO say for example Zozo does her homework in the morning I will come and copy Zozo's homework. That is not right, it is wrong. Some of those homeworks and classworks will help you in the exams. Copying will not help you because you will not understand and when it comes to the test or the exams you will be stuck because you copied and did not understand the question so, ugh it not right a t all!

Assistant: Yah! Plagiarism. (they all laugh).

Wangeci: Yes, umm Zozo, anything to add?

Zozo: Um teachers they form the Saturday classes so that we can be more ahead of the subject but there are learners who do not go to the Saturday classes even if they know that they are struggling with a certain subject. And they expect us, the ones who go to the Saturday classes to explain to them and show them the work we did but they do not make the effort to come. Some even stay next to the school while others of us live far but we make the effort to come to school and work hard.

Wangeci: Well I think we are done, but before we go I would like to hear some closing remarks on the top three reasons why people drop out of school? You can think about it for a while.

Zozo: pregnancy; there are many girls who are pregnant so they feel ashamed and drop out of school; gangsterism, they get expelled from school because they stab other learners in school; other one ummm

Assistant: drugs

Zozo: yes alcohol and drugs.

Wangeci: Thank you Zozo, and Babez?

Babez: there is also family issues for some. For example maybe I have family issues because my parents do not work all that stuff and it is only me going to school and coming home and there is not food and all that stuff. I won't concentrate on what the teacher is saying I will be thinking about what am I going to eat and how am I going to survive and all that stuff.

Wangeci: anything else you can think of?

Babez: Um, yah, bad friends because as we have already said they will be telling you to be cool and they will also tell you that um; you must go to a party on Saturday; and maybe on Saturday you have to come for extra classes or go to your study group. But your friends will tell you, 'no! it's okay, I will do it for you, let's go to the party man'. And you will feel like he is right then you got party and all that stuff and then, he won't be there when you are writing, he won't be there when you are at home studying and all that stuff; with all your problems and challenges. But he will be there at his home and his situation will be good and all that stuff.

Assistant: Well I am thinking maybe the other thing that makes people um drop out is being silly in the class and then end up failing. When you're that silly guy people will be saying 'uh! That guy makes a hell of a joke' but then that person fails. And then that person has a heart too and feels like 'eish I am a failure and people are going to laugh at me' and so what does he do; dropout. You know those people have pride and they never want to be attacked but would rather attack people. And then also having a conflict with teacher and always having conflict with the teacher can cause you quit. Those are my two reasons; thank you.

Wangezi: Thank you so much for your time ladies; I know it wasn't in the best conditions with all the noise and people walking in and out of the room, but I still want to thank you for your time and willingness to participate in my research. Have a great day; thanks again.

57 minutes.

Transcript 3

Transcript- Sophumelela Boys- 21-06-2013

Wangeci: Hi everyone, my name is Wangeci and I am doing a project on school dropouts and I would really love to hear your opinions on the subject. Okay, we can maybe go round and you can give me a nick name that I could use for purposes of recording. My name is Wangeci and as I said I am doing a project on school dropout rates in the Philippi area, which is why I am here to hear from all of you what you think. I hope that we are able to conduct this interview in English if that is okay with all of you? SO we can go ahead and start with the interview. Maybe the first thing I can ask is if you have friends that have dropped out of school? Or do you know a couple of people who have dropped out of school?

Viwe: I have friends that have dropped out of school because of gangsterism.

Wangeci: (after short pause of silence) anyone else?

Artie: I have friends that have dropped out of the school because of drugs.

Assistant: (Asks question in Xhosa). What I am telling them is do they know anyone, and it doesn't have to be personal, just someone that they know who may have a reason to drop out of the school.

Msi: (Switched to Xhosa).

Wangeci: Could you please repeat in English?

Msi: Can he...translate? (Continues in Xhosa)

Assistant (translation): What he is saying. He saying that the gangsterism is taking over and even parents have to change something because of that and kids are afraid to go to school because of that, but they can't be accompanied by their parents, so that is what he is saying leads to dropouts. The boys are too old to be accompanied to go to school every day, so that is what he is saying. Have I said the right thing (Talking to Chichi?)

Msi: yes.

Wangeci: Okay, what about for you people....

Assistant: Sorry there are two more boys that have just come in and I think that they should write their names and introduce themselves. (Talks to them in Xhosa about the project and introducing themselves, and the recording and that he will be the interpreter (takes about 3 minutes to settle in again).)

Wangeci: I was just saying that we should try and conduct the interview in English and then if there some things that you say better in Xhosa, or maybe if you feel that you don't understand something I am saying then Themba (the assistant) can translate for you. Okay so people were just letting me know about people that they know that have dropped out of school, so do you feel that you want to add to that? Okay can we also make the circle a little bit smaller? (commotion for a minute)

Artie: I wanted to say that I do have a friend that dropped out of school. I think he was doing grade nine; what happened was that he became a gangster and then he started to smoke dagga and tik and all that and then he became a skoller or robber

Wangeci: A skoller?

Artie: A criminal, all that stuff. Yah.

Wangeci: Okay thank you for that. Maybe what could help me keep track of who is saying what you can just give your name before you give your answer that will also help with when I am writing down what was said in the recording. Okay, so let's move on to the pressures to drop out, we have talked a little bit about gangs, what do you have to say about those pressures? Are you affected? If so in what way?

Artie: The pressure we are facing is mostly gangsterism, you see, if we are here in school the gangsters are waiting for us out there and we have to fight them and so to be safe you have to drop out of school and be like them and then you are safe

Wangeci: when you join?

Artie: yes when you join. But still you are not safe, like safe but you are safe at that particular time, yah!

Wangeci: (after another long sentence) okay, maybe if you feel more comfortable you can talk in Xhosa and then Themba (assistant) will try and translate.

Ali: (Speaks in Xhosa about gangsters again)

Assistant (translates Ali): what he is saying is that the gangsters are waiting outside for them outside, carrying weapons which terrifies every kid and you will find that everyone is terrified. And if you survive that day you know that you will not come back to school because you are terrified. That is what he is saying. Coz of that fear of seeing people wanting to kill you, or stab or beat you with a panga (machete). This makes them quit. Can you repeat the question again?

Wangeci: Okay, what are some of the pressures to drop out of school?

Artie: (Speaks in Xhosa, something about teenage pregnancy)

Assistant: (translates Artie) what he is actually saying is that guys drop out of school because you might engage in a relationship and then that has big consequences like pregnancy, and so you have to step up as a man and be a father and to become a father you have to quit school and go to work.

Ali: (Speaks in Xhosa about drugs)

Assistant: (translates for Ali) What he is saying is that having friends that smoke whatever drug and then they don't attend school and then you are the only one that attends school. He made an example about waking up early before school and going to smoke early with your friends (they both laugh). And you smoke there a lot and then you look at the time and realise that you are already late and so you decide that 'never mind' I will not go to school. That is how you end up dropping out of school.

Msi: (in Xhosa and about gangs)

Assistant: (translates Msi) Um, yah, what he is saying is that the security has to be upgraded in school. For an example um, every time when the kids are coming to school there needs to be that searching of the people. Because these gangsters are not always people that are outside of the school, it is also people that are also on the inside of the school and these weapons are there when we are learning and at the break but when we are leaving school in the evening you will see these weapons coming out of the bags and he is saying that the school then is not safe So the safety of the school will lead to a dropout because if you are not safe and we know that any time you can be stabbed or killed; you will not be comfortable in school and so you are going to quit. And that is what he is saying.

Viwe: (Speaks in Xhosa also about gangsterism)

Assistant: (Translates Viwe) Mmhh, that is one of the valid things. He is saying that the gangsterism thing is more on that peer pressure thing. It happens in a sense that you will see people that are being, uh..uh..uh cool or doing things like nice work or whatever, Could you repeat what you said again Viwe...

Viwe: eeh (repeats in Xhosa)

Assistant: (translates what Viwe said): What he is saying is that you are being motivated by the people that you see. So you feel the pressure to join that robbery thing and you go to rob some people just because you were entering that zone of pressure. Your goals are to have money and to support your family and some of them are then doing crime just because they are hungry in their stomach and they are joining gangsters because they want back up from the gangster to rob. Mmh...I think that is very valid.

Wangeci: Well thank you. Maybe I can ask another question: So clearly you have not dropped out yet even with the pressures you have talked off; why is that?

Ali: (In Xhosa)

Assistant: (Translates what Ali says) Ali is saying that the reason that he didn't quit is because crime does not pay. You might do crime and then at the end you're gonna pay for what you did. Either you will get arrested or being beaten by the residents or you die. And then why he doesn't want to quit school is that he wants a better standard of living and a better future and he is also into making sure that his family stays in a good condition when he is educated. Am I right (asking Ali, who nods). Okay yes.

Viwe: (In Xhosa)

Assistant: (translates what Viwe says). What Viwe is saying is that he did not quit school because of his family and he believes in his family and he wants to be the one feeding his family when he grows up and he wants to be the bread winner of his family and also his family is strict and he doesn't want to disobey but do everything he is being told by his family.

Msi: (Speaks in Xhosa about security)

Assistant: (translating what Msi said). Msi is saying that there needs to be a security in the school because basically there is equipment that is needed by the learners and the time they are being stolen, causes the education standard to drop and also umm (asks him a question in Xhosa and they talk for a bit before Msi says something else)

Msi: (In Xhosa)

Assistant (translate what Msi added): He is saying that why he is not leaving school is because he wants to support his family and whatever happens he believes in the wellbeing of his family.

Tobz: (Speaks in Xhosa)

Assistant: Tobz is saying that why he did not drop out is because he refused to keep the company of those that are not in school and then he refused the friendship and decided to start friendships with people in school and started focussing in school. He knows that education will never be taken from him. He also mentioned that when he is working with the people who are not in school while he is in school, he is going to be a 'rude boy' if I am saying right.

Wangeci: What do you mean?

Assistant: a rude boy, r-u-d-e. And he doesn't want to be that boy or that kind of person and he knows there is life at school.

Wangeci: (after a short silence) can I ask another question?

At this point another boy walks in to the room and my assistant tells him in Xhosa what we are doing and explains the whole interview process again, where he is from and where I am from etc. And then explains about what he does and where he works (this takes 3 mins and 30 seconds and was very hard to control because not speaking the language I couldn't gauge what they were saying and just assumed they were speaking about the interview.).

Assistant: Back to the interview

Wangeci: Okay going back to the question about pressure, I would like to know whether you; that are individually feel the pressure to drop out. We have spoken in general about the pressures but do any of you feel pressure to quit school?

Assistant: Translates the question in Xhosa.

Viwe:** (Gives an answer in Xhosa)

Assistant: (Translates what Viwe says) I hear you bruh! He is saying that there us a lot of pressure that is pulling him out of school. Basically it is about that envy. The guys out there are wearing nice clothes, they are drinking a lot of beer, and people act invincible. We can see like this guy is supposed to be in school but these guys now has money and looks rich and he is a really young guy. But we don't know where the money is coming from. But someone will drop out if school thinking that I will work for myself and get money to buy clothes and buy

booze also. So that is the pressure that we are facing because the people that are outside there, they portray life to him that you don't need education. Yah; that is what he is saying.

Ali: (Says something about friends in Xhosa)

Assistant: (translates what Ali says). What Ali is saying is that the pressure that is coming is from his friends that are not in school. They come to the fence and they tell him 'just jump' and let's go and smoke dagga and stuff like that. He refuses a lot but that thing is continuing. He is admitting though that he does smoke green weed (they laugh a bit). He does smoke so um, in all, the problem that he is facing is that there are friends in the school who come and tell him to jump to go and smoke; but he refuses a lot and he thinks that if this can happen to maybe someone else, that someone else may jump; jump forever! So yah.

Wangeci: Unfortunately I only have time for two more responses at the moment and I also know that you want to go and collect your report cards,

Tobela: (answer in Xhosa)

Assistant: (Translates what Tobela says). He is saying that one of the reasons that he does not want to quit school is because he knows that his family is broke and if he leaves school at this age he knows that the whole family is going to be broke forever. He is the last one and he knows that education is the key and he wants to stay in school for his family because he knows of the situation at home and he wants to be a bread winner as well and motivate the other kids within the family to be an example of the family.

Wangeci: One last person, on pressures to dropout?

Artie: Speaks in Xhosa

Assistant: (Translates what Artie says) He is saying that, and I have felt this feeling also. He is saying that he is an artist and he doesn't have the resources; equipment and etcetera to use for his career to boost his own career. So he thinks that, eish? School is going to be a long term thing and if he quits then maybe he can get a job and then buy the home system that he needs. That I would say happens a lot because lots of people quit school just because they think that this might happen the way I want or imagines. But in all what he is saying is that the pressure is the talent that he has. He thinks that the time is now with this talent, and the pressure is to get the things that may boost the talent.

Wangeci: Thank you so much for coming out in large numbers and participating in this research. I really wish I had more time with you so that we can continue with the interview but I have another appointment at one and I know you want to go and get you reports. But thank you, this information is very valuable to me. Good luck with your reports and results.

Duration: 43 minutes.