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2021
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An investigation into how role play impacts stakeholder relations in large corporate organisations

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A research report submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand as a requirement for Master of Arts in the field of Applied Drama: Theatre in Education, Communities and Social Contexts

15 May 2021

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ABSTRACT

This research was necessitated by a deep desire to equip myself and my peers with knowledge on how best to engage stakeholders when traditional communication methods prove to have limitations. At its core, this study sought to explore how role playing as a technique of applied drama could positively impact stakeholder relationships.

This research was a narrative enquiry, comparing accounts from EnviroServ Waste Management (Pty) Limited and Lonmin. The research explored what happens to stakeholder relations when role playing is used rather than when an organisation, in this case Lonmin, opts for alternative means of stakeholder engagement.

Three narrative reports from stakeholders of both organisations were analysed, where it was evident that role play allows for a collaborative approach between diverse stakeholders with varying interests. Analysis of the data revealed that community forums afford participants an opportunity to hear, listen and likely understand that there are multiple ways of perceiving and approaching the same situation. Data further showed that stakeholders are more willing to come up with solutions when they feel included. Additionally, further exploration of the data indicated that it is at times necessary to go against the status quo, and for organisations to try new approaches in order to achieve their objectives.

Based on these findings, it was concluded that large corporate organisations should have an open door policy and consider community forums which utilise role play. Its accommodation within community forums are tangible in the long run, and positively impact on both the bottom line and reputation of the company.

Key words:

Stakeholder, Role play, Community forum, Communication, Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

What a journey this has been! Through it all, God has been faithful. Not once did I ever feel as though I was alone. I always felt covered and guided! To my late grandmother, Mrs Makwena Johannah Marakalala, thank you for teaching me the value of hard work. This is for you!

Wayne van Niekerk, words are not enough to express how much I value you. I love you, my man. You have been an incredible husband, friend, sounding board, supporter and father to our girls throughout this adventure. Dankie! Thank you for cheering me on and listening to my stories! You are truly remarkable.

To my precious girls, Ceana and Amber, thank you for being unbelievably supportive of mommy. Thank you for being understanding! I have been pleasantly surprised at how well you have adjusted to this current reality. I hope to one day make you proud, my dearest children!

My mom (Morongwa Seema), dad (Julius Seema), brother (Surprise Seema) and his wife (Masekele Seema neé Ntene), thank you for the love and prayers. I am blessed to have you!

To my dearest friends, Mrs Esmé Gombault and Dr Ralph Mathekga, I appreciate the both of you. Thank you for everything. I love you deeply!

Alison Sparke, Nolitha Nkosi and Mapule Thaisi, thank you for EVERYTHING. You contributed to this success!

Last but not least, Hayley Roberts! I am grateful that you were my supervisor. I enjoyed walking this journey with you. You are such an authentic person, unassuming and passionate. *Modimo a go dire ga botse*! My experience with you has been enriching. I could not have hoped for a better supervisor.

Dr Petro Janse van Vuuren, you provide a wealth of knowledge. Your wisdom and ability to communicate have left a permanent impression on my heart. I have known of you and your work way before I returned to Wits to complete my Masters degree and was over the moon that you would be guiding me on my journey. How very lucky can a girl be?

CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the year 2012, there was a great deal of unrest in South Africa, contributing to political and economic uncertainty. There was a shift within the political landscape as the liberation movement turned ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), faced intense and public in-fighting. This constant in-fighting eventually led to the expulsion of some of its leaders from the youth league. The expelled leaders included Mr Julius Malema who would later start his own political organisation, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). Malema challenged the status quo, often calling for the expropriation of land without compensation, amongst other demands. The party's slogan, economic freedom in our lifetime, appealed to some voting youth. The EFF (2019) was able to achieve 8.31% of the overall vote in the national elections, becoming the third largest political organisation in the country (https://www.effonline.org). Mr Malema's brand of politics and rising popularity was worrisome for the ruling ANC and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the workers' union it was affiliated to.

The mining industry in South Africa was likewise thrust into the spotlight. The majority of union-affiliated mineworkers countrywide expressed their dissatisfaction about their wages and living conditions. According to the Mail & Guardian (2015), the mineworkers demanded a minimum monthly remuneration of R12 500, and increase in their wages of between R4 000 and R5 600.

Two competing trade unions, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) were in opposition, often accusing each other of not having the workers' best interests at heart. The National Union of Mineworkers being founded in 1982 was traditionally the union of choice for mineworkers whilst AMCU was an emerging union, having only been formally registered as a union in 2001 and officially registered in 2002. AMCU was perceived to be more militant than NUM; the latter, whose founders such as Mr

Cyril Ramaphosa had a stake in Lonmin Platinum Mine was "fast losing favour with disgruntled mine workers" (Mail & Guardian, 2015). As argued by Buitendag, an academic and researcher who has written extensively on law, politics and justice, and Coetzer, a senior associate at Cowan-Harper Attorneys in South Africa, "NUM as a member of COSATU has a familial relationship with the ANC government and as a result, collective bargaining in the mining industry … assumed a political, almost mechanical, quality" (Buitendag & Coetzer, 2015: 108). It is further said that against this backdrop, it was easy for NUM to have become complacent in regard to the grievances of its members. Buitendag and Coetzer (2015: 109) further state that some of the NUM leaders including, "Frans Baleni (the General Secretary) earned R105 000. per month" and that these are some of the factors "which contributed to the ever widening gulf between workers and NUM". Unfortunately, the contestation between the two trade unions would reach peak levels resulting in the deaths of mine workers belonging to both unions.

At the Lonmin Platinum Mine situated in the North West Province in South Africa, following weeks of protest action and an inability of stakeholders to meaningfully engage and reach consensus, a stalemate was reached. According to two South African academics, Boettger and Rathbone (2016; 2015), the "Lonmin management consciously or inadvertently operated from a point of view promoted by capitalism that reduces labour to factors of production". This dehumanisation was named as one of the factors to contribute to the challenging situation.

There has been extensive literature regarding the event, including essays such as *The Marikana massacre, labour and capitalism: Towards a ricoeurian alternative* (Boettger, 2016) and *History as a system of wrongs - Examining South Africa's Marikana tragedy in a temporal legal context* (Buitendag & Coetzer, 2015); both allude to the stakeholders' failure to communicate effectively, including making dialogue possible. The experience of the researcher as Group Public Affairs Manager has shown that a perceived lack of transparency can potentially lead to further breakdown in the relationships amongst stakeholders and fuel suspicion and mistrust. One of the factors that could have positively impacted this complex

situation was a communication methodology or technique that was inclusive, that is to say, allowed for a variety of voices. This report then is an evaluation of the affordances of role-play, and not a description of how to use it.

1.2 PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

The researcher is a trained facilitator and a University graduate with a qualification within the Arts. This same researcher has worked for various organisations in Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs teams since 2003. These organisations, including within the education sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and corporate South Africa, required assistance in addressing their relationships with their identified stakeholders. For the past thirteen years, the researcher has been employed by EnviroServ Waste Management (Pty) Limited (EnviroServ), the largest waste management company in sub-Saharan Africa, as their Group Public Affairs Manager. The two core functions of the role are to act as a link between the company and external stakeholders as well as to work towards relationships that are mutually beneficial and sustainable.

When stakeholders are unhappy, they have an ability to defame the company name on social media, within the communities and in newspapers. This has the ability to tarnish company reputation and eventually impact profitability. Customers in the waste management industry are fastidious when selecting waste management providers. Likewise, when they are pleased with a company's actions, they are able to inform others and thus influence relationships and perceptions.

There are numerous definitions of what a stakeholder is, including that it is "any group or individual who can affect, or are affected by the achievement of a corporation or organisation's purpose, firm's objectives or performance" (Freeman, 1984: 2). Schiller et al (2013) succinctly defines stakeholders as "groups or an individual who can affect or are affected by an issue". The view of the researcher is that stakeholders are employees, communities around the company's waste treatment and disposal facilities (the company owns four landfill sites and a medical

waste incineration facility in South Africa alone), political organisations, civil society organisations, various government departments, customers, shareholders, suppliers, and industry bodies. All these stakeholders have the capacity to negatively or positively impact the company's reputation and bottom line unless engaged and included regarding issues that they perceive to be of interest to them. Consequently, it is necessary to ensure that all stakeholders are invited to the community forum meetings where a range of issues are tabled and discussed. Like EnviroServ, the Lonmin Mine in Marikana had multiple stakeholders, but for the purpose of this research, the focus will be primarily on the miners, mine management and community members. The research will examine how an alternative engagement method as used at EnviroServ could potentially have benefited stakeholders in the case of the events at Marikana. It became apparent while facilitating community forums that those community forums which only focussed on dialogue and formal discussions, had the potential to aggravate participants. They did not afford participating stakeholders, an opportunity to take themselves out of a situation. Arts-based initiatives, such as role playing, have the capacity to "challenge a team's way of seeing and feeling and teaches them (team members) to question values, change their perspective, cause reflection, and generate passion" (South, 2016: 8).

Role play as used within the community forums entails the various stakeholders coming together to resolve a number of issues in an environment that poses little conflict. The various stakeholders raise a matter and then are given or elect to embody different roles of the people involved or impacted by the issue. The resolve is to attempt to reach a solution or a compromise on issues. The embodiment is followed by a discussion of the various roles and what is required to resolve the matter. At all times, the role is discussed and then the various stakeholders have an opportunity to see how they could reach solutions.

The Public Affairs Manager has to relay complex waste management terminology to stakeholders in an understandable manner. The manager has to therefore facilitate group meetings ensuring meaningful dialogue occurs, and has to

understand that an organisation's stakeholders will constantly change. The stakeholder needs and wants may shift from one moment to another, dependent on the broader macro and micro-economic conditions impacting the country, specific provinces and regions. This then calls for companies to ensure that their policies are not rigid, but that they are adaptable and can be reviewed to accommodate a wide range of stakeholders who are the "positively engaged (faith holders), the negatively engaged (hate holders) and fake holders – the unauthentic persona produced by astroturf and algorithms" (Luoma-aho, 2015: 2). Astroturf and algorithms are computer generated processes and personas and there is no actual physical contact with the personas. A system determines who may or may not like a brand. Hate holders hold entrenched views which cannot be changed and a facilitator, is not compelled to put much effort into change their viewpoints. The faith holders are to be engaged as they are potential brand ambassadors. Most effort, however, is to place in engaging fake holders as they can be swayed in either way.

When relationships with stakeholders proved difficult at EnviroServ, the researcher introduced new ways of engaging and doing business. Community forums were set up in each province. Community forums are permanent structures set up with the sole purpose of ensuring that there is a constant platform for various internal and external EnviroServ stakeholders to communicate and reach agreements. Role playing was later introduced in order to tackle issues in new ways. Role playing is defined by Moreno (Heathcote, 1972: 79) as "the personification of other forms of existence through the medium of play. Moreno saw it as a technique not just for practicing existing roles but for the exploration and expansion of the self into an unknown universe. Through this technique as employed in the community forums, participants are able to 'explore issues, and tell stories' (Prendergast & Saxton, 2013: 211). The experience of the researcher has been that participants are free and appreciative of being included. Additionally, they tend to view the organisation as transparent and then raise concerns and offer solutions.

In one of the community forum meetings in Gauteng, shop stewards and community leaders were at loggerheads over EnviroServ's employment policies. Community

members felt that by complying with department of labour's dictates stating that retrenched employees should be given preference when new opportunities presented themselves, EnviroServ was essentially discriminating against community members. Shop stewards were highly displeased at what they perceived to be community leaders' selfishness. The two were loggerheads. Additionally, EnviroServ directors and management who sit in on the community forum platform, were required to make their stance clear. Unions accused EnviroServ of bowing to pressure from community leaders and residents. It was at this point that discussions proved futile and each of the various representatives were requested to embody a different role. The two community leaders took on the roles of an EnviroServ HR director and union representative. The 5 union representatives took on the role of community leaders, community members and EnviroServ management. EnviroServ team took on 2 roles, community leaders and union representatives. Each stakeholder was requested to embody the role as authentically as possible. After some discomfort and laughter the characters came to life. At the end of a heated 30 minutes, a realisation was made- everyone had been after their own interest and not considering others. This led to compromises and the realisation that failure to comply with the country's laws by EnviroServ would eventually be a loss for all.

Van der Water, McAvoy and Hunt (2015: 53) observes that role playing allows for "empathy, inferencing, and problem solving", which were previously missing when engagement was only through traditional communication channels including websites and pamphlets. Community forums reliant on dialogue highlighted issues that needed to be attended to, but were not as effective in resolving those same issues timeously. Role playing's ability to induce empathy, inferencing and problem solving seemed to be a needed solution to resolving concerns from local community stakeholders. An environment was created where at least some participants / stakeholders could feel safe from judgement by other forum members. Indeed, the stakeholders / participants, "seeing that they are protected by the cover of a role, will risk expressing attitudes and points of view which they might not venture in less protected situations" (Landy, 1993: 160). Through years of

employing role play in community forum settings the researcher observed that there was a reduced sensitivity in the group and less threat as nobody can accuse others of blaming them for certain failures. A scenario was presented and everyone took on a role and offered a solution, thereby including most participants in the generation of an outcome.

Petro Janse van Vuuren (2016: 8), founder of the Strategic Narrative Embodiment model, an applied arts-based approach to facilitating within organisational spaces, maintains that, "by taking on a role, people gain knowledge and power over everyday life". This is reflected in the experience of the researcher in community forums, particularly in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng, where the various members of the forums became better equipped to respond to questions about EnviroServ from the community members whom they represented within these forums. As a technique, role playing affords everyone an opportunity to share ideas, thus offering richer, well-thought-out and creative solutions. According to Samba (2013: 47), "Applied theatre has for many years been acclaimed as one of the most successful approaches to reaching out to disadvantaged rural and urban communities. This success has been enhanced by the participatory nature of applied theatre". As a technique of applied theatre, role play offers many of the same benefits. In the disadvantaged and rural communities where some of the researcher's work is, participants better understand and thus receive messages easily. The researcher has further observed that although community forum members are people who have come to know each other well, as the work is over extended period, the new members coming in participate from the get go. They are thus able to see things through from this shared understanding to implementation of ideas and impact on the various' stakeholders' lives. In dialogue based sessions, new members sit as observers.

Participants in such role play-based community forums at EnviroServ were encouraged to express their opinions on matters affecting them. Role playing further encourages people's awareness of themselves, for example, when a community leader would witness or observe a different stakeholder take on their

role, they would acknowledge how they are perceived or come across to fellow stakeholders. This can potentially lead to engagement strategies that have everyone's commitment as the participants themselves contribute to these strategies through the role playing community forums.

EnviroServ has been able to derive rewards from the community forums that utilise role play at the centre. Participants are more aware, demonstrate greater empathy and offer considered responses to issues raised. This is in direct contrast with Lonmin's approach to stakeholder relations in 2012, where the norm was to engage with the workforce primarily through the recognised trade unions, toolbox talks and then through the website. The Lonmin management did not amend its communication and engagement policies to align with the emerging demands, but instead continued to state that they would not be engaging directly with workers as there were long established communication channels. As revealed in the final report on the Marikana protests, Lonmin management refused to meet with and interact directly with the workers, opting rather to "prepare a communiqué which would be delivered by helicopter"; this communiqué "would issue ultimatums to the workers to go back to work" (Farlam Commission Report, 2015: 162). Boettger and Rathbone (2016: 2) suggest that "the breakdown in communication may have been the result of reductionist anthropological trends that arise in capitalism, where workers are dehumanised and reduced to production factors with a particular monetary value that must be kept as low as possible to ensure maximum profit".

From the experience of the researcher, it is seen to be more beneficial for companies to avoid generic stakeholder engagement / relations approaches. Each stakeholder's unique circumstances should be taken into account. As an example, the process for engaging with local community stakeholders in Kwandengezi, KwaZulu-Natal is very different to engaging with local community stakeholders in Motherwell, Eastern Cape. Stakeholders can be easily offended if an organisation has not made a concerted effort to understand the region's unique cultural, political and economic conditions as "people differ in their personal histories, ways in which they experience things, and emotional responses, leading to differences in the ways in

which communications are encoded, transmitted, received and understood" (Pfeiffer ,1998: 2). As an example, absolutely no engagement may take place in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal without first engaging with the local Chief who has to be informed beforehand who the organisation intends to meet with within his area and the purpose of the meeting; only then can ward councillors and other community leaders be engaged.

Furthermore, there are specific roles expected of a woman facilitator and which the researcher has been compelled to adopt and embrace in order for the company being represented to be accepted. The researcher has had to amend her employer's stakeholder engagement strategy to ensure that it is effective. The stakeholder engagement strategy has to be adaptable, and consider what is deemed acceptable in line with cultural idiosyncrasies within a specific area. Provision has had to be made within the strategy to use various languages. Overall awareness of the area in which she works has had to be demonstrated. In KwaZulu-Natal, what a woman wears is significant with a dress being considered more acceptable than pants. In such a context, role playing makes it possible to genuinely put oneself in others' shoes, and it has the ability to serve as "a new mediation and collective thinking tool" (Souchere, 2009: 10). Role play is able to help people learn more about each other in an unobtrusive manner. At Marikana, as an example, an opportunity was missed to better understand each other, including factors influencing beliefs and thinking patterns. However, in the Eastern Cape township of Motherwell the Ward Councillor is the first point of contact when a company approaches or seeks to engage with the community. In this region, dress code does not necessarily determine how an outsider is perceived, and a female representative is at liberty to choose to wear pants in a meeting.

Participation in a role play activity usually means taking on the role of a character and this teaches people about the empathy and understanding of different perspectives. Landy (1990: 227) states that "the more roles one is able to play, the better one should be able to deal with a variety of social circumstances". Within community forums, those members who engage in role play tend to have a better

peer understanding and are more accommodating. A community leader in Motherwell, a Ward Councillor, was previously only ever concerned with his ward but since being introduced to role play, he has become more concerned about the welfare of other leaders, knowing the pressure that their communities put on them. This demonstrates the potential for role play to lead participants into a reflective mode. Stakeholders can look at a situation objectively and derive meaning without excessive attachment or emotion. Essentially, role play allows for issues and not personas to be discussed, it makes it possible for new ways of doing things to be agreed upon. A stakeholder through embodied role, suggests possible solutions.

1.3 ASSUMPTIONS AND BIASES

The experience of the researcher after thirteen years of working for the largest waste management company in sub-Saharan Africa and advising others on their stakeholder engagement / relations and communication strategies has resulted in a somewhat overly critical view of the shortcomings of other organisations where stakeholder engagement strategies are concerned. To address this bias in the research, the focus will be on data rather than on personal opinions.

As an EnviroServ employee, another potential bias could be towards upholding the company's reputation. The researcher has nothing to gain from portraying EnviroServ in a positive light. She is a senior employee whose abilities are known and was trusted with establishing a department and heading it. The researcher's employer was aware that the research might have reputational implications unknown at the start of the research, and still gave consent. As a researcher, she is self-aware and relies on literature and data. Her own voice and opinions are withheld to allow for the data gathered here to speak.

With regard to the events that took place at the Lonmin Mine in Marikana in 2012, there were numerous and complex factors that contributed to the situation. It is the view of the researcher that the actions of the various stakeholders involved was not adequate and that the negative outcomes could have been avoided. What transpired

demonstrated that indeed "many social and organisational problems derive from unsatisfactory relationships brought about by inadequate communication between people" (Pfeiffer, 1998: 1). Although communication was one of the core issues that contributed to the events at Marikana it was not the only factor. It is, however, a key factor that relates to the current research into how role play impacts on stakeholder relations in large corporate organisations.

In contrast, it is the contention of the researcher that EnviroServ has managed to avoid challenges similar to that of Marikana as its stakeholder relations strategy does not rely on inflexible methods of communication. Community forums work to ensure that most stakeholders' voices are heard and that various people can see how others arrive at the decisions they make or the positions that they hold. It is based on the premise that, "all that has ever been accomplished by humans and all that will ever be accomplished involves communication with others" (Pfeiffer, 1998: 1). What is complicated is finding communication and engagement strategies that work for all parties involved. At Marikana, it was evident as narrated by a striking mine worker at the time, Mr Noki, that "not all stakeholders felt that their voices mattered" (Mail & Guardian, 2015). It can be assumed that it was these types of perceptions that led to frustrations and a breakdown in relationships.

Based on this background and experience, the researcher therefore works with the assumption that undermining some stakeholders in favour of those more prominent is likely to have poor outcomes. All stakeholders want to be acknowledged and to be assured that they matter.

As an Applied Drama practitioner who has seen value in engaging stakeholders using creative and innovative means, the researcher further recognises that there is a bias towards human interaction and face-to-face interaction. Traditional mediums of communication such as websites and other communication methods such as editorials, advertisements and advertorials which have been employed by large organisations have considerable limitations.

1.4 STATEMENT OF INTENTION:

Drawing on the experience gained at EnviroServ as a foundation, the research will explore how community forums that utilise role playing as a technique can have a positive impact on stakeholder relations. The research will examine what effective stakeholder engagement strategy entails and perhaps more importantly, draw from community forums as employed by EnviroServ to establish whether there was a possibility that the Lonmin Mine at Marikana could have benefitted from implementing role play within community forums in 2012.

This research acknowledges that what transpired at Marikana in 2012 was unfortunate and could potentially have been avoided. More importantly, it draws on the work of the researcher as a facilitator in providing examples of successes and failures experienced when engaging with stakeholders through role play. This includes a review of how the introduction of community forums at EnviroServ and the use of role play in particular improved existing relationships with stakeholders including hate holders or detractors. The terms 'hate holders' and 'detractors' are used interchangeably to refer to those stakeholders who are dissatisfied with a company and/or hold a negative view of the same company. Role play as a technique of applied theatre ensures that people "read the situation, to harness relevant information from previous experience and to realign information so that new understanding becomes possible" (O'Neill, 1995: 80). This will be juxtaposed with some of the Lonmin Mine's communication tools and models of stakeholder engagement that were used at the time of the Marikana events of 2012.

Drawing from EnviroServ's community forums, the research will explore the affordances of role playing as an applied drama technique. One of the affordances of role playing as has been noted at EnviroServ is that it eventually allows for a "colleagueness" (Bowell, 2001: 48). A situation of 'colleagueness' implies the state of working together towards a common goal. This research will further investigate how and to what extent applied drama and role playing can be used in stakeholder relations.

The research will develop and present an adaptable stakeholder relations framework for future reference in order to provide an alternative voice on role play in organisations.

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Relations between corporate South Africa and local community stakeholders often experience tensions, as "citizens are increasingly sensitive to the economic, social, and environmental contribution that companies make to society" (Fifka & Adaui, 2015: 84). Local community stakeholders are adamant that "differentiation through price and product quality are no longer sufficient for business success" (Fifka & Adaui, 2015: 84). Previously, due to lack of information, education and other resources, stakeholders accepted what they were told and how information was relayed to them. Presently, however, stakeholders have become increasingly more aware of their rights and are demanding that organisations be transparent and disclose important information.

At the Lonmin Mine in Marikana there was a crisis around stakeholder relationships, as these were characterised by a failure to "listen to and respect the humanity of the workers" (Boettger & Rathbone, 2016: 4). Workers and communities felt disregarded, used and abused. The perception was that "the (mining) industry deliberately fragments its workforce; with workers consciously divided into ethnic, racial and regional lines. From the workers' perspective, the industry and employees continue to become rich, while they sweat underground, face death on a daily basis and sink deeper into poverty" (Twala, 2012: 62). Furthermore, there was limited trust emanating from a "colleagueness" alluded to earlier, and "AMCU leaders accused NUM of collaborating with the enemy, namely, the employer" (Twala, 2012: 63). The workers alleged that they had been attacked when they were on their way to a meeting, stating that, "Those NUM leaders killed us because they are protecting the employer" (Twala, 2012: 63). This is indicative of the fact that workers had little trust in the union representatives and

mine management. It further suggests a breakdown in both stakeholder engagement and relations and an inability to generate "win-win outcomes as called for by principled negotiation" (Pfeiffer, 1998: 14). The various stakeholders' uncompromising approaches made it difficult for them to collectively address their perceptions about each other, and to determine whether these perceptions were real or imagined.

There is extensive literature on what has become known as the "Marikana Massacre" including from authors such as Boettger and Rathbone (2016), Buitendag and Coetzer (2015) and Twala (2018). In summary, forty-four people, the majority of whom were miners, were killed at the Lonmin Marikana Mine in 2012 following disagreements between mine management and miners over wages. This resulted in stakeholders blaming each other. They continued to hold different views and perceptions of the event, as explained by Twala (2018: 64) in *The Marikana Massacre: A historical overview of the labour unrest in the mining sector in South Africa*.

This research seeks to understand the impact that community forums have had on the local community stakeholders in two locations where EnviroServ works. Relationships such as with some stakeholders in the Eastern Cape, which were difficult, improved when a decision to establish a community forum was reached. On the other hand, community forums were not utilised at Marikana in 2012. Jones (1996) observes that when in role, the participant "stands in with" the character and at the same time "maintains the distance". This is critical as distance allows an individual to calmly reflect and to have a measured response to a situation. This research hypothesises that the inflexible stance and ensuing violence at Marikana may have been as a result of stakeholders not having a different voice to listen to and to use as a sounding board. The research further suggests that community forums can ensure that all of the stakeholders have a voice. Additionally, there is greater potential for amicable and trustful relations to be developed. A similar community forum practice could therefore have helped to avoid the problems of mistrust amongst stakeholders in the case of Marikana, given that "applied theatre

offers rich possibilities for bridging the gap between what people want and what they have, what they say and what they do (Janse van Vuuren, 2016: 4).

With shifts in the needs of stakeholders and traditional ways of communicating proving to be inadequate, this body of work could potentially aid corporates in making informed decisions when looking at stakeholder engagement. It further calls for a conscious reform of policies around stakeholder engagement / relations and communication. These policies are often skewed to present companies as carriers of knowledge who go into communities to transfer knowledge to supposedly ignorant and uninformed community stakeholders. Role play on the other hand acknowledges human beings as thinking beings with an innate ability to "adapt their roles for new information" (Van der Water, McAvoy & Hunt, 2015: 53). The inflexible position adopted by Lonmin at Marikana in particular, and the refusal to meet with the workers outside of established structures as explained in the Farlam Commission Report (2015) deprived stakeholders of an opportunity to treat each other as equals, which might have presented unique opportunities to negotiate.

One of the contributing factors to the Marikana tragedy was the unhappiness of some internal stakeholders, in particular the workers, with the rock drill operators (RDOs) being the most outspoken. They "complained about the government's ineffectiveness in implementing the Mining Charter, which among others, required companies to provide housing for all. They claimed that there was no serious attempt to enforce the industry's obligations, let alone transform it" (Twala, 2018: 63). In looking at community forums and role playing in particular, which has been successfully used at EnviroServ, this research will investigate the extent to which internal stakeholders, in particular the ordinary workers and not just executives, were engaged at Lonmin. The workers are in the majority at Lonmin and when they feel neglected, problems are bound to arise.

At EnviroServ, community forums comprise a number of internal and external stakeholders including (at appropriate times) executives, senior managers and shop stewards. Because of this composition a sense of equality and accountability is

promoted. This was absent at Lonmin, resulting in a situation where stakeholders "othered" one another and as a consequence failed to offer or treat each other with the courtesy which they themselves would expect.

An understanding of the frustrations and underlying issues at Marikana may serve to provide an incentive to compel other corporates as they review their own strategies to consider whether they are being transparent, trustworthy, respectful and mindful of all of their stakeholders.

While organisational problems and issues with stakeholders are to be expected in the course of conducting business, such issues should not be permitted to escalate into a crisis. The experience of EnviroServ has been that in a thirteen-year period there has been a single crisis that the company has encountered. Although the crisis was not violent, the consequence was a significant reduction in profits in that period. The general approach of EnviroServ is to demonstrate to stakeholders that the organisation cares about them and as a consequence the company has developed a comprehensive live stakeholder relations strategy that is adaptable and viable, as well as being flexible between provinces and regions.

As the Head of the Department, the researcher participates in all community forum meetings in order to respond to any questions on behalf of the company. When questions are raised, an immediate response is thus possible. However, this was not the case at Marikana where stand-offs of many days had ensued between the miners and senior management who failed to address the miners in a timely manner.

An unintentional outcome of the community forums, in the case of EnviroServ, is that there is a human element associated with the EnviroServ brand. Previously, interaction with stakeholders was primarily through websites, pamphlets and a few corporate social investment (CSI) initiatives where the company's Marketing and Operations teams were provided with a budget to disburse to a few stakeholders who requested support, but with limited engagement with the communities themselves. This has evolved to include regular interactive sessions. Furthermore,

the company has ambassadors within the various stakeholders who understand the brand's unique challenges and can communicate and convey messages in a manner relatable to other interested and affected parties. In their essay, *The Marikana massacre, labour and capitalism: Towards a Ricoeurian alternative,* Boettger and Rathbone (2016: 5) argues that, "respect for people does not exclude responsible business practice. On the contrary, when people are engaged and treated with dignity, fear and aggression are overcome. There is a renewed awareness and understanding of the aim of business to be healthy and profitable". (Had Lonmin employed community forums, and role play in particular, it is possible that its stakeholders may have been better engaged and the Mine would have derived the benefits that are explained above.

Community forum meetings allow for stakeholders to become better acquainted and understand each other's concerns. Traditional communication methods as well as rigid mediums of communication employed by some large organisations do not allow for a platform for all stakeholders to express their views and contribute collectively to solutions.

1.6 POSSIBILITY STATEMENT

Community forums which have been established at EnviroServ have effectively used role playing to promote empathy, clearer communication and trust between the company and its identified stakeholders, especially the workers and local community stakeholders. Role play as a technique has led to "humanised" and engaged stakeholders. Humanisation is concerned with ensuring that people feel comfortable to express their views and be heard since "by re-establishing dialogue, stakeholders can become human again" (Feldhendler, 1994: 89).

Warren Nebe, founder and director of Drama for Life (DFL), a Fulbright alumnus, theatre director, senior lecturer and registered drama therapist, argues that "role play, observation and experimentation with alternative behaviours and strategies can help to reconstruct difficult group situations and explore alternative group

systems, contracts, goals and roles" (Nebe, 2006: 2). These affordances of role play demonstrate why role play is an effective technique in improving stakeholder relations. It enables communication and affords people an opportunity to agree on terms and conditions for engagement. Communities which were previously hostile may, as an example, feel more respected and valued when they are afforded a voice in a community forum space. By allowing stakeholders to propose potential solutions on issues impacting them, corporates have the opportunity to create faith holders. Through a deeper exploration of the uses of role play, the research demonstrates the possibilities which could emerge if forums and role play are incorporated into stakeholder relations strategies. The research will present a stakeholder relations framework which can be utilised by public affairs, stakeholder relations and corporate affairs teams; and communicators of companies as they engage with their stakeholders.

The lack of a flexible stakeholder engagement strategy may have contributed to the events at Marikana and it is possible, as community forums that use role play demonstrate, that these stakeholders could potentially have come together and engaged in a manner that would have been beneficial to all. As Nebe (2006: 8) argues, "role playing allows for people from different walks of life to not only come together, but to agree on how to work". It further makes it possible for people to determine which goals to work towards and the intended purpose. The stakeholders at Marikana may have been able to identify a common goal as a basis for negotiations that could have contributed to a positive compromise and averted the events that contributed to the tragedy.

An example is provided by the EnviroServ Holfontein waste treatment and disposal facility (landfill site) where community leaders have had to admit that they were hostile towards EnviroServ because of how some community members presented the company. However, sitting in a community forum with EnviroServ management, they could see that such representation was not always accurate or fair. Berger (1973), a writer and television producer, has written extensively on representation and argues that human beings are always actively encoding and

decoding meaning. He maintains that people, "never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves" (1973: 8). Due to the inclusive nature of the Holfontein community forum, community members could see for themselves that the business of the company was conducted in a transparent manner and could draw their own conclusions about the company.

This research aims to establish whether an inclusive community forum being utilised by Lonmin in Marikana in 2012 could have allowed for discussions and solutions-orientated engagements. Moreno (cited in Bolton, 1998: 195) defines, "role playing as the personification of other forms of existence through the medium of play. He saw it as a technique, not just for practicing existing roles, but for the exploration and expansion of the self into an unknown universe". The research interrogates how mine management, miners and local community stakeholders' engaged with the challenges at the time, and compares this with other possible engagement options at the time, with the aim of proposing options for stakeholders to draw on and thereby avoid a repetition of the negative outcomes that were experienced. Role playing makes it possible for participants to explore alternatives and to imagine themselves in other worlds, scenarios and circumstances as argued by Moreno. In other words, it opens up different worlds and encourages the consideration of alternative possibilities.

Through continuous efforts, harmonious relationships can be achieved and some South African corporates such as EnviroServ have been able to avoid challenges through drawing on a stakeholder relations strategy that includes role playing technique that promotes positive engagement and improved stakeholder relations.

1.7 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The researcher has worked for different organisations as a facilitator, communicator and stakeholder relations professional, and drawing on this experience holds the view that through communication many issues can be amicably resolved. In seeking to develop an effective communications or engagement strategy for a company, the

first step is to ensure that decision-makers understand that "an entity's stakeholders can be both internal and external to the organisation" (Chen, 2020: 1). This is premised on the value that all people matter and can make meaningful contributions if given an opportunity. Demonstrated "ubuntu" has the capacity to build sustainable relationships and to ensure that corporates develop ambassadors. According to Mugumbate and Nyanguru (2013: 2), "ubuntu is an African philosophy that places emphasis on 'being human through other people'. It has been succinctly reflected in the phrase I am because of who we all are".

At EnviroServ's Holfontein landfill site, one of the most engaged stakeholders is an individual who previously led six protest actions against the company. Months after attending community forum meetings and through the process of role play, where he was able to take on the role of an EnviroServ executive, he acquired a greater understanding of the challenges faced by the company and became more empathetic. As an esteemed community leader with great following, his feelings and thoughts about the company impacted how other stakeholders dealt with the company. Building a relationship with him equated to building relationship with other stakeholders that may have been influenced by his stance. The protests, which cost the company financially, ended. The workforce respected management more, and did not view the company as weak, unable to communicate and influence, and bowing to community leaders and members. Similarly, as an EnviroServ representative who had engaged with the community on the six occasions where they protested, the researcher could better understand his challenges as a community leader in a community ravaged by high levels of youth unemployment and poverty. Thus, both external stakeholders and the company have come to, "recognise the legitimacy of differences in perception" (Pfeiffer, 1998: 12) and are acutely aware of how the unique experiences of an individual will impact on how a situation is perceived. As a result of such awareness, there is a greater willingness to listen to each other. This was made possible, partly by taking on various roles and thus taking on the psyche of others. Role play allowed for stakeholders to understand each other's influences and thought patterns better. This was possible as following each role playing scene, stakeholders would be given an opportunity

to discuss the various scenarios that were staged. Furthermore, the roles, including the challenges and opportunities encountered by each role would be discussed.

A specific aim of the research is to provide engagement suggestions that can contribute to solutions-orientated interactions and can be adapted by various corporates so as to ensure that communication basics are explained, including that, "different people attach different meanings to the words, pictures, sounds and gestures used during communication" (Pfeiffer, 1998: 2). Furthermore, "understanding the other side's point of view is not a hazard to be avoided in the process of negotiation; it is the main benefit of accurate and clear communication and it makes creative agreements possible" (Pfeiffer, 1998: 12).

1.8 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of role play within EnviroServ and to apply these insights to the case of the Marikana shooting in 2012. The two organisations operate in different industries (waste management and mining respectively). The regulations that they comply with are similar, but they belong to different and industry bodies with different expectations. Stakeholder expectations vary.

Sub Aims:

- To investigate how role playing can be used in community forums to improve stakeholder relations, drawing on two examples, namely Holfontein in Gauteng and Aloes in the Eastern Cape.
- To explore how the applied drama technique of role playing, as illustrated in the case of EnviroServ, might have positively impacted stakeholder relations at Marikana's Lonmin mine.
- To provide recommendations on the stakeholder engagement framework which can be referred to and utilised by other corporates.

Looking at the affordances of role playing as a technique, the research investigates whether there were opportunities to employ this unique technique as part of Lonmin's engagement strategy. This is done in an attempt to understand the shortcomings in Lonmin's stakeholder engagement, and how possible future stakeholder engagement strategies used by various large corporate organisations can be better aligned to stakeholder needs through the use of role play. The research explores what an inclusive stakeholder engagement strategy should look like and how role play could be helpful when employed as part of the stakeholder relations strategy.

1.9 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are the following:

How might role play as an applied drama technique be used to positively impact stakeholder relations? In particular,

- In what ways can stakeholder relations be impacted or influenced by the use of role playing?
- What does role playing offer stakeholder engagements?
- What was the state of relations and engagement in Marikana prior to the tragedy and how might learning from the EnviroServ experience have possibly impacted these relations and changed the outcome?

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A number of readings have been drawn on to inform the concepts discussed in this paper including recent discourse on what a stakeholder is, what role playing is and the affordances of role playing, particularly when applied to improving stakeholder relations.

2.2 RATIONALE: IDENTIFIED GAPS AND EXISTING LITERATURE

As a practicing professional within the Communications, Stakeholder Relations and Public Affairs space, the researcher has observed an increase in the number of companies operating in South Africa proactively looking to fill the roles of either Corporate Affairs Executives, Stakeholder Relations or Engagement Executives, or Public Affairs Executives since 2016. Organisations such as De Beers, Safal Steel, Nestle, Novartis and Roche are some of the organisations seeking to appoint such professionals. Previously, most organisations including EnviroServ relied on communication managers to communicate, and this only when the organisations deemed it necessary to communicate. Unfortunately, in most of the cases, communication was going one way, from corporates to external stakeholders and often on platforms such as company websites that are not accessible to everyone or easy to read and understand. Communication did not allow for a two-way engagement where feedback could be given to corporates. As a result, issues and concerns from communities were not adequately addressed, resulting in "organisational problems from unsatisfactory relationships brought about by inadequate communication between people" (Pfeiffer, 1998: 1). The majority of companies still do not have a structured way of receiving feedback from local communities around their areas of operations, and this stakeholder, with the diversity of interests it represents has become increasingly influential and powerful. Theorists argue that upward feedback, upward communication and open-door

policies deliver significant organisational benefits (Tourish & Robson, 2004: 3). In this context, upward feedback and communication refer to a process where communication and feedback incorporates employees and residents from local communities as well as decision-makers and executives.

There is extensive literature focusing on the Marikana tragedy including the Farlam Commission report. Studies that look at role playing and stakeholder relations separately, as well as wide range of literature that touches on stakeholder relations and Marikana in particular was drawn on. The aim of the study, *inter alia*, is to contribute to literature that incorporates the three main themes, namely the Marikana tragedy, community forums that utilise role playing, and stakeholder relations.

Alexander (2016: 829) as one of the theorists that has examined the proceedings of the Farlam Commission posits that, "if Lonmin had been willing to negotiate with the workers, there would have been no massacre. They had no legal basis for refusing discussions". The various narrative accounts from the *Farlam Report* on Marikana will be used in relation to how community forums which utilise role play benefit from its affordances.

Narrative reports of various stakeholders have been captured as part of the narrative inquiry method which will be elaborated on in the methodology section. The narrative data gathered for this study at EnviroServ demonstrates that it is possible for a stakeholder relations strategy to draw on role play to allay stakeholders' fears and to positively impact relations. EnviroServ's community forums that use role play will be examined to understand how this technique might have impacted or influenced stakeholder relations at Marikana.

One of the benefits of role play is that it allows for "distance" which in drama therapy, a field linked to applied drama, is seen as a measure of a client's affective / cognitive involvement in a task. This point of optimal involvement is referred to as "aesthetic distance, a balance of affect and cognition" (Landy, 1990: 226). For

professionals tasked with stakeholder relations, this distance becomes critical in ensuring that emotional over identification is balanced with an ability to think critically when dealing with issues. It allows for all parties to be both reflective and reflexive and to manage emotions and apply their minds to problem solving. Bonwell (1991: 47), an educator and writer, asserts that role play can be used to help participants to experience stressful, unfamiliar, complex or controversial situations by creating temporary circumstances and allowing them to react and reflect in order to develop the skills necessary for coping with similar real-life situations. Circumstances leading to the Marikana tragedy reveal a stressful situation, as there was uncertainty in the air and stakeholders were not certain whether they could trust each other or not. Had role play been employed, and an opportunity to create scenarios that needed solutions, stakeholders might have been afforded an opportunity to view the situation more objectively. When the role of EnviroServ's Public Affairs Manager was embodied by others, the incumbent was able to acknowledge that others may experience her as being both brash and excitable.

There are a number of definitions of what a stakeholder is, including that "a stakeholder is any person, organisation, social group, or society at large that has a stake in the business. Thus, stakeholders can be internal or external to the business. A stake is a vital interest in the business or its activities. It can include ownership and property interests, legal interests and obligations, and moral rights. Stakeholders can affect a business, be affected by a business, and be both affected by a business and affect a business" (Grimsley & James, 2015: 1). Another definition asserts that a "stakeholder is a party that has an interest in a company and can either affect or be affected by the business. The primary stakeholders in a typical corporation are its investors, employees, customers, and suppliers. However, with the increasing attention on corporate social responsibility, the concept has been extended to include communities, governments, and trade associations" (Chen, 2020: 1). These two definitions are employed by the researcher in the professional space, especially when facilitating. They are not limiting and

ensure that everyone who considers themselves a stakeholder is acknowledged and engaged.

At EnviroServ, a stakeholder is defined in two ways; firstly, it is any person or organisation in close proximity to the EnviroServ operations (within a five kilometre radius of waste treatment and disposal facilities) while the second definition is concerned with the individual's or organisation's ability to impact the reputation and financial performance of EnviroServ. All the stakeholders are prioritised, respected and given the opportunity to be heard. For purposes of the research, the definition of a stakeholder as a facilitator at EnviroServ is to be juxtaposed with a hypothetical definition of stakeholder supposedly used by Lonmin, as narrated by some of Mine's stakeholders quoted in the Farlam Commission Report. This report alludes to the likelihood that Lonmin did not prioritise all of its stakeholders or provide the opportunity for them to be heard. The Farlam Commission was appointed by the then President Zuma to investigate matters "of public, national and international concern arising out of the tragic incidents at the Lonmin mine in Marikana" (Farlam Commission, 2012: 1). Lonmin "did not use its best endeavours to resolve the disputes that arose between itself and the members of its workforce who participated in the unprotected strike and between the strikers and those workers who did not participate in the strike" (Farlam Commission, 2012: 556). Rather, the Mine insisted "that its employees who were not striking come to work despite the fact that it was not in a position to protect them from attacks by strikers" (Farlam Commission, 2012: 557).

Based on the above evidence, it can be argued that for Lonmin, a stakeholder worthy of engagement is anyone who is able and willing to primarily protect their financial interests. A number of theorists argue that, "Lonmin refused to negotiate with the strikers and instead put concerted pressure on the ANC government to get the police to break the strike" (Higginbottom, 2017: 8). Workers, who are arguably an important stakeholder at Lonmin were unfortunately dehumanised. Lonmin contributed to this by refusing to acknowledge them as individuals with agency, and the Mine refused to negotiate with this stakeholder.

Community forums, on the other hand, ensure that all stakeholders are engaged and that issues and concerns are dealt with urgently. The stakeholder relations framework which will be presented as an outcome of the research will provide a blueprint for corporates to assess their own definitions of stakeholder and offer an opportunity to assess whether or not their current stakeholders are who they truly wish to be building sustainable relationships with.

On AMCU's website, the union states that its, "stance remains resolute in advocating socially progressive legislation in the interests of all workers." With regard to the events at Marikana, they state that the "massacre is a fatal incident that took place at the Lonmin Platinum mine on 16 August 2012. During this time, 37 workers were killed during a peaceful protest" (www.amcu.co.za). It can be argued that the language employed by AMCU is intentional and portrays them as a union that "cares" about the well-being of the ordinary workers. To describe the protest as a "peaceful protest" is deliberate and serves a certain purpose which is unclear at face value unless one is aware that to describe it any other way or in the opposite, would be to portray their members as violent. Stakeholders' use of language demonstrated bias; this bias can be highlighted in community forums using role play.

Davenport (1975) in *Digging Deep - A history of mining in South Africa* examines the mining sector and its history of profiteering by exploiting black communities is emphasised. The book explains the exploitation of and discrimination against black people in South Africa. In the context of continued inequality in South Africa, it was to be expected that workers and other stakeholders would question the profitability of the mine, even when mine management stated that there were no profits. Against this backdrop, the Marikana miners' demands for wage increases could be better understood. Additionally, their insistence that mine management should directly address them is understandable.

An examination of the literature about a number of stakeholders at Marikana reveals that their definitions of themselves were somewhat intractable and may have contributed to failed engagements at the time. For example, the unions are all about workers and their tone demonstrates organisations not open to negotiations. There already existed "noise" which is the "physical and psychological forces that can disrupt communication" (Pfeiffer, 1998: 2). On the other hand, community forums and role playing would encourage dialogue and negotiations and ensure that everyone is considered an equal. For example, EnviroServ executives sit in the same meeting as union representatives and ordinary community members.

The Report of the Farlam Commission of Inquiry is referred to throughout the research as it contains damning revelations against key stakeholders. The Report suggests that the various stakeholders had ulterior motives and essentially sought to silence each other. On the other hand, however, role playing calls on everyone to consistently express their thoughts and to be positively engaged.

A mineworker, previously quoted reveals mistrust between stakeholders, claiming that "NUM truly speaking, it always sides with the employer" (Alexander, 2013: 27). There were complexities including stakeholders second-guessing each other, the inability and unwillingness to compromise, political meddling, exclusion of each other in the decision-making processes, mistrust and fear of each other, the 'us 'versus 'them' mentality, and untested perceptions about each other which were taken as fact. AMCU leaders soon after the shootings alluded to political interference, stating that, "our (AMCU) decisions are not contaminated by any external influence of politics. They are determined by the members, and our job as leaders is just to guide and advise them" (Alexander, 2013: 58). It can be argued that this was an insult aimed at the NUM as it has open political links with the African National Congress. The statement below as found in the Farlam Commission of Inquiry's report hints at the complexity of the matter; the Commission found that "the decision to go over the so-called 'tactical option' was made not in the middle of the day on 16 August 2012 after the situation had escalated to such an extent that the tactical option was the only appropriate way

forward, but the day (or evening) before when it was not known what the situation on the ground would be when the tactical operation commenced (Farlam Commission, 2012: 185). This depicts a picture of stakeholders whose decisions were not based on goodwill. Contained in the same report is Captain Kidd's admission that, "he heard on the radio that the police were under attack" (Farlam Commission, 2012: 278). Without testing the validity of the claims, he participated in the shooting of the striking miners.

Higginbottom (2018: 2) in *The Marikana Massacre in South Africa: Results of Toxic Collusion* argues that the, "Marikana police operation had clearly been carried out in intimate coordination with Lonmin and as more details were discovered, a strong picture formed that to all intents and purposes, the police shooting was carried out on the company's behalf, with the knowledge of its executives and at their urging". This is noteworthy as it highlights that there was exclusion of the committee appointed by workers as they were unhappy with NUM. He further states that "company security guards and the police also shot at the strikers (Higginbottom, 2018: 3). It emerged at the Farlam Commission (2015: 513) that, "the tactical plan was made the evening before, on 15th August 2012; this is indicative of how strained relations were. Hopes of an inclusive and amicable solutions-orientated communication were distant. The "presence of four mortuary vans" (Marinovich, 2017: 76) at the strike point is a further indication of the expectation of violence resulting. This resolve by mine management together with the mine workers' much publicised stubbornness and refusal to leave the Koppie fuelled tensions. Mr Ntsenyeho, a protesting miner said in his address to his fellow protesters, "we would leave here (the Koppie) after getting the money we want. Otherwise, we will die on this mountain. None of us will be expelled, none of us will leave whilst we are here. We would rather die" (Farlam Commission, 2012: 234). The hard and resolute stance taken by miners and mine management was not conducive to solutions. Both parties displayed lack of cooperation. "The executives of Lonmin refused to negotiate with the strikers and instead put concerted pressure on the ANC government to get the police to break the strike" (Higginbottom, 2018: 8).

A Lonmin executive, Albert Jamieson, whose questionable classification of the strike and his call for "a massive police presence and possibly army presence" are indicative of the Mine management's attitude that was not aligned with the workers' needs (Lonmin, 2014: 1-2). Workers wanted direct access to management, but management refused to make themselves available and concede to the request.

From available literature, we note political meddling in the activities of the mine. That a non-executive director and shareholder was responsible for giving direction on what course of action should be followed during the strike was anomalous. Cyril Ramaphosa, a shareholder and a respected member of the African National Congress (ANC) National Executive Committee (NEC) was disputing how the Minister under whom Lonmin activities fell had characterised the labour dispute at the Mine and is on record as saying that, "the terrible events that have unfolded cannot be described as a labour dispute. They are dastardly criminal, and must be characterised as such. In line with this characterisation, there needs to be concomitant action to address the situation" (Ibid: 47). These public statements from Ramaphosa contributed to the progression of events.

One-way communication methods can lead to mistrust and frustrations, whereas "engagement through the arts may establish a process of reflection leading to action. In this model, participants move from habitual views of the world (downloading) to observational (seeing) and reflective modes (sensing and presencing) towards developing deeper understandings of who they are and how they relate to their surroundings (crystallising)" (Sutherland, 2012: 27).

Applied drama, and the role playing technique in particular, are thus viable options to consider when drawing up stakeholder engagement strategies. Role playing can be used to achieve specific outcomes for the benefit of not only the company but stakeholders as well. An example is provided of EnviroServ, where conflict has been avoided that could potentially have turned as violent as the Marikana situation At the Lonmin Mine in Marikana, there was no dialogue as the Mine management

had decided against engaging directly with the workers. Alexander (2013: 22) in *Marikana: A View from the Mountain* observes that, "an independent workers' committee was elected representing the three segments of Lonmin - Eastern, Western and Karee - and it became directly accountable to the workers". (Mineworker 8, thus named due to the threat to life for miners, widows and other witnesses to the strike, alleges that these same representatives and workers decided to march to the offices of Lonmin's local senior management but were "met by a white security officer who said that the managers would respond in 15 minutes, but there was no response and after waiting three hours their workers' leaders pressed the matter only to be told that their demands had to be channelled through NUM" (Alexander, 2013: 22). By avoiding this same dialogue which is "the medium of transformative education"; the Mine management made it hard for the stakeholders "to come together for the express purpose of naming the world with a view of changing it. Without dialogue, there was no communication" (Flanagan, 2006: 193). Any possibility of changing perceptions about each other was thus diminished.

The systematic dehumanising, disrespect and objectification of workers as alleged by the workers at the Mine suggests that mine management was only concerned with productivity and profits and had no real concern for the workers. A woman miner stated that, "when you start saying "safety, safety, safety" they (mine management) say "What should we do? Should we not take out stof (blasted ore-bearing rock), and just sit here, because you don't want to be hurt?" The sentiments were echoed by another mine worker who complained that "you don't even get time to eat lunch. They (mine management) just say your lunch box must remain on the surface" (Alexander, 2013: 26). The observations of one of the strike leaders was significant, in that he noted that the police did not employ normal tactics to disperse the crowds, but that "water, which is often used to warn people, was used later on, after a lot of people were shot at already" (Alexander, 2013: 43).

This research is a narrative inquiry and is concerned with human stories. Webster and Mertova (2007: 3) contend that narrative inquiry is in fact "set in human

stories". As posited by the theorist Clandinin (2003: 3), the narrative inquiry method is able to, "successfully capture personal and human dimensions that cannot be quantified into dry facts and numerical data".

There are various reputable and peer reviewed sources of arts-based interventions that include role playing, including from Nebe (2006), Landy (1990, 1993, 1996), Sutherland (2012), Steed (2005) and Janse van Vuuren (2016) who argue for the benefits of using arts-based interventions and role play in communications and building relationships. In her essay titled *Keeping promises: A Strategic Narrative Embodiment Model for designing social change interventions*, Janse van Vuuren (2016: 8) argues that role enables people to "understand everyday life" and that role play in particular enables people "to invent their own life narratives". What this emphasises is the value that role and role playing have in ensuring that human beings have clarity on issues and that they are given the power to impact on the narrative. Van Ments (1983: 186) asserts that, "role play has to do with asking someone to imagine that they are either themselves or another person in a particular situation. They are then asked to behave exactly as that person would". As a benefit then, had community forums been employed and role play used, there could have been a play between fiction and reality. From all these theorists and authors, it is clear that role play allows for the creation of new knowledge. Role play calls on people to participate in the invention of knowledge and solutions impacting their lives from a more neutral standpoint.

These various concepts are drawn on to inform the use of role play and possible uses and benefits in communications in the management of stakeholder relations.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.1 METHODOLOGY: WHAT METHOD IS USED?

As previously mentioned, the method employed in this research is narrative inquiry. It is a preferred method as it has demonstrated an ability "to deal with complex human-centred issues" (Webster & Mertova, 2007: 3). This narrative inquiry method is an ideal method in relation to the stories around Lonmin's Marikana stakeholders, narrative accounts from two ward councillors who sit on EnviroServ's community forums and the researcher's documented reflections that are central to the research. The two ward councillors express idiosyncrasies and oddities which would prove a challenge to capture using scientific, logical and numerical data. Clandinin (2003: 4) further adds that, "narrative inquiry follows a recursive, reflexive process of moving from field (with starting points in telling or living of stories) to field texts (data) to interim and final research texts". This method was appropriate for the investigation, which required the researcher to reflect on the turn of events. Mary Kay Kramp (2004: 121), a retired teacher with over 30 years' experience, reflects in *Exploring Life and Experience through Narrative Inquiry*, that, "as a qualitative research method, narrative inquiry serves the researcher who wishes to understand a phenomenon or experience rather than to formulate a logical or scientific explanation", and that the "object of narrative inquiry is understanding".

When it comes to understanding what transpired at Marikana, this narrative inquiry research is primarily a desktop study of available literature in the form of narrative reports from peer reviewed authors such as Twala (2018), Buitendag and Coetzer (2016) and Higginbottom (2017) on the "Marikana tragedy" to determine what transpired, what could have been done differently, and by whom.

A thematic content analysis of narrative reports was conducted. This thematic content analysis (TCA) is a "descriptive presentation of qualitative data"

(Anderson, 2007: 1). It is a method which allows the researcher, "to group and distill from the texts, a list of themes in order to give expression to the community of voices across participants" (Anderson, 2007: 1). Prevalent themes emerging from interviews with both EnviroServ and Lonmin stakeholders were then coded.

In relation to EnviroServ, two ward councillors were interviewed. The interviews revealed unique and specific journeys with the company. The journeys are as a result of the complexity of not only individual human beings, but human beings in a group dynamic and the socio-economic factors which cannot be divorced from human experiences of the world around them.

These two ward councillors represent their communities on EnviroServ's community forums and have been members of the community forums prior to the introduction of role play in the forum meetings as well as subsequent to the introduction of role play. Their narrative accounts are drawn on to show both the impact and affordances of community forums that use role play. They further provide insight into the working of community forums narrated their experiences dealing with EnviroServ. They are situated in Motherwell, Eastern Cape and Etwatwa (Holfontein) Gauteng. The reason for these specific narrative accounts is to understand what works at EnviroServ, and then to examine how Marikana could have benefited from the same. In both provinces, engagements prior to the establishment of forums were tense. After about three community forum meetings the tone of the engagements changed and there was a notable tolerance of each other. Complaints from the two communities about EnviroServ decreased as evidenced by a complaints log that is kept at each site and is sent to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) monthly.

To collect the narrative data from the above councillors, personal semi-structured interviews were conducted. As a method for data collection, the personal interviews option, "has the potential to overcome the response rates of a questionnaire survey" and "it is well suited to the exploration of attitudes, values, beliefs and motives" (Barriball & While, 1994: 329). The two interviewees were selected based on their

long history with EnviroServ, and on their knowledge of the nature of the relationship between their constituencies and EnviroServ pre- and post- the establishment of community forums. It has been over five years since the community forums were established and they have been privy to the evolution thereof in the nature of engagements. The two interviewees have borne witness to how the improved relationship came about.

It was intentional to conduct semi-structured interviews due to their two primary affordances which are, the "exploration of the perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues" (Barriball & While, 1994: 330). Semi-structured interviews further, "enable probing for more information and clarification of answers (Barriball & While, 1994: 330). The researcher avoiding assumptions during the interactions with EnviroServ stakeholders, instead probing for further information in the interviews. The interviews with ward councillors provided an additional opportunity to, "capture the voices and the ways people make meanings of their experiences" (Rabionet, 2011: 563).

Another form of data collection are the researcher's own observations based on her work done at EnviroServ. The researcher's reflections since the introduction of community forums are recorded. The proceedings and observations are recorded in a detailed journal. Journals and minutes of meetings with stakeholders, prior to the inception of formal community are referenced. Furthermore, observations made and recorded before the introduction of community forums form part of the research. Lastly, a journal with observations of stakeholders in community forums which use role play is used as data.

The data for Marikana derives from a range of sources including employees, mine management and a community member as quoted in various literature, in particular the Farlam Commission report, Higginbottom's 2018 conference article and others such as Alexander (2013, 2016). Alexander and colleagues visited Marikana

following the Marikana tragedy where they interviewed miners who had been part of the strike, as well as the widows, union members and other community members.

The Marikana inquiry is a desktop study looking at available literature in the form of narrative reports on the 2012 Lonmin Marikana events. The Farlam Commission's report, although not peer-reviewed, has accounts of the stakeholders that were directly and indirectly involved and has proven to be a useful source of information as it contained different perspectives and accounts of the events leading to and around the tragedy. Peer-reviewed authors such as Higginbottom, Twala and Alexander are additional sources of information referred to.

3.2 ALIGNING THE METHOD WITH RESEARCH AIMS

Narrative inquiry is concerned with analysing and criticising the stories that people tell, hear and read in the course of work. It is, "an event-driven tool of research" that is also concerned with the myths that surround us and are embedded in our social interactions" (Webster & Mertova, 2007: 7). Narrative inquiry has the capacity to assist in reaching the objectives of the research as the narrative accounts provide some evidence on whether community forums which utilise role playing technique can positively impact stakeholder relations.

Furthermore, the researcher drew on own journaled observations as a form of data from a thirteen-year period of employment. Occurrences within the meetings as well as the impact on day-to-day interactions were recorded and are analysed as part of the data.

The content thematic analysis demonstrates how the applied drama technique of role playing used in the case of EnviroServ might have positively impacted stakeholder relations at Marikana's Lonmin Mine. The shortcomings with Marikana mine management's communication tactics and rigid stakeholder engagement strategy have somewhat been established; the narrative inquiry has

looked holistically at the data in order "to lead to improvement" in future engagements (Webster & Mertova, 2007: 41).

One of the research aims as stated is to provide recommendations on the stakeholder engagement framework which can be referred to by peers and other corporates. The data has been coded and key themes have been as instrumental in the suggested stakeholder engagement framework which the research will provide.

3.3 HUMAN ETHICS CONSIDERATIONS

The events at the Lonmin Mine in Marikana in 2012 are highly politicised and are triggering subject matter, especially for some surviving strikers and the widows. The researcher therefore declared that the research was undertaken by a sole researcher with no mandate from anyone. The research was not externally funded. The research project was aligned to the professional practice of the researcher as a facilitator at EnviroServ, because the events at Marikana provide the opportunity to derive valuable lessons that may benefit the broader corporate community.

An ethical clearance was applied for and received as part of the research.

Since the researcher drew on her experiences as an EnviroServ employee it was necessary to obtain permission from the company. Being in the employ of EnviroServ does not hinder the researcher from conducting thorough investigations as she has a registered communications company to depend on. Nonetheless, a signed letter from EnviroServ stating that they are aware of my studies and that these may proceed as intended is on record. There are two human subjects, who have given their informed consent to be interviewed in order to provide a narrative account regarding the relationship between the company and their respective communities before and after the community forums were established. The two ward councillors' names are not mentioned in the research. They are quoted anonymously in accordance with the signed agreement.

3.4 UNPACKING DATA

Data can be analysed differently depending on the researcher or analyst's approach and intention. Data analysis offers a number of benefits including "opportunities to reduce the burden" (Academy for Educational Development, 2006: 2). Data analysis ensures that there are no assumptions made and that arguments can be supported. There are two common approaches to data analysis, linear and cyclical, with the latter offering greater "flexibility to the nature of the decision-making and also includes more and different kinds of decisions to be made" (Academy for Educational Development, 2006: 14).

Narrative inquiry as a method avoids being prescriptive due to the fact that human stories, which it is concerned with cannot be predetermined. This then makes analysing the data cyclically an appropriate choice, especially the EnviroServ data which was collected using interviews.

A thematic content analysis was conducted in order to understand the main, or recurring, themes. The steps followed in conducting a thematic content analysis are expanded upon below. Narrative inquiry as well as observations afforded the opportunity to identify common themes. The narrative accounts of the two EnviroServ stakeholders, observations as an employee of EnviroServ, as well as literature available on Marikana were all drawn on. Literature available on Marikana includes narrative reports as recorded in the Farlam Commission Report as well as by various authors including Alexander, Twala and Higginbottom.

The two data sets are different in that one is a semi-structured interview conducted by the researcher whilst the Marikana data relies on readily available material / literature. There are shortcomings with the latter including that there are no detailed accounts by a single or two sources, but rather numerous accounts by various stakeholders. It would have been preferable for the researcher to conduct face-to-face interviews for both data sets, but this was not possible due to ethical considerations as well as concerns related to Covid-19.

The outcomes of the research include a considered stakeholder relations engagement framework that can be utilised as a guide by peers within the practice. One of the lessons that emerges from the two data sets is to be inclusive when dealing with stakeholders. When considering their stakeholder relations / engagement strategies, corporates should take into account as many voices as possible. The strategies should be neither generic nor rigid. To this effect, the EnviroServ data and insights are drawn on in order to demonstrate how Lonmin might have possibly benefitted from a different approach.

3.4.1 Steps followed

The five steps followed in conducting a thematic content analysis are familiarisation, coding, generating and reviewing themes, naming themes and doing a write-up. These steps are expertly discussed by Caulfield (2019) in his article, *How to do thematic analysis.*

- **Familiarisation**

Familiarisation is the first step in undertaking thematic content analysis (Caulfield, 2019: 1). Simply put, this entailed going through all the available data on both EnviroServ and the Marikana events to obtain a comprehensive view of the information. The recordings of the interviews with Ward Councillors were studied. The journals which the researcher had compiled over time were reviewed Narrative accounts of Marikana events were noted down and reviewed to develop a familiarity with the data.

- **Coding**

Following on from the first step was coding. In this step, direct quotes from the two anonymous EnviroServ stakeholders and the Marikana tragedy's miners or eyewitnesses were captured. Observations by the researcher in her sessions were recorded. All the data was collated into groups identified by code. Every account

which stood out was highlighted so as to contribute to a succinct outline of the prominent points emerging from the data.

- **Generating and reviewing themes**

Having named the codes, the themes were identified as presented in the table below. These themes were closely examined to ensure that they are a true reflection of the data.

- **Naming themes**

The themes were then named and defined. The main attributes of each theme were explored and more importantly, how it may help readers to understand the data.

- **Write-up**

In conclusion, the analysis of the data was written up, relating it back to the research question.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The first impression regarding the data from EnviroServ was a realisation of how differently the two Ward Councillors initially experienced EnviroServ. It was as though they were experiencing different organisations. At the time of the interviews, the two held different views of EnviroServ from when they first started engaging with the organisation.

Speaking on his community's initial response to EnviroServ, the Motherwell and Eastern Cape Ward Councillor stated that, "we were fighting something that we didn't know, we now see the need for the company such as yours. Town planning challenges are not an EnviroServ problem" (2021). The Councillor was alluding to the proximity of EnviroServ's Aloes landfill site to the communities of Motherwell, Aloes and Wells Estate. Some of the community members, especially from this Ward Councillor's ward, had previously indicated that they were opposed to EnviroServ operating close to residential areas. They had further indicated that they would ideally prefer it if the company moved elsewhere.

On the other hand, the Ward Councillor in Etwatwa near the Holfontein landfill site in Gauteng expressed admiration for the company from the outset. He states that, "EnviroServ has always sought the development of the community and always employed from Etwatwa and surrounding communities thus curbing unemployment." Etwatwa is a semi-rural township in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng and

like most townships, faces high unemployment. It is for this reason that EnviroServ is applauded for its policy of prioritising communities adjacent to its operations when employing. The favourable response enjoyed by EnviroServ is as a result of listening to the needs of the communities in the community forums. It was in the community forums where it emerged that community members, residents and business forums ideally wanted the company to employ from the local community as part of community development. As EnviroServ stakeholders took on different roles, it emerged what the needs were. When given an opportunity to take on various roles of either an EnviroServ manager or executive, community members and leaders present in the meetings would through their roles highlight their needs and expectations from EnviroServ. Likewise, an EnviroServ manager would be able to bring up concerns and perceptions through an embodied role. The follow up discussion would often reveal what all stakeholders expect of each other, including ways to work towards realising wishes.

In addition, the researcher better understood how EnviroServ employees' actions and words are often analysed by some stakeholders. There are instances where what EnviroServ employees do, is noted as that which the brand stands for. The Gauteng Ward Councillor noted how EnviroServ endeavoured to be a good company and mentioned that, "the community forums are an indication that the company is committed to doing giving the people what they need" (2021). The company is able to do this as it is informed about the needs of the community in

the community forums. Role play as a technique was used to express inherent desires and highlight opportunities for all to do things differently.

The tone used by employees when communicating, either to each other or with external stakeholders, is important and influences how stakeholders receive and perceive the company. All stakeholders can easily impact the reputation of a company. External stakeholders appreciate being proactively engaged and associate actions and behaviours with respect. Role play allows for members of the community forum to better understand how they come across when they speak and they are then able to change their tone, allowing for better relationships and less strained encounters.

Community forums are proving to be very necessary for stakeholders. The Eastern Cape Ward Councillor states that, "the work of the forum reaches all community members. People understand EnviroServ and know why certain decisions are made" (2021). The community forum is constituted of democratically elected ward representatives who have the necessary mandates to call community meetings and provide feedback to ordinary community members. With 11 wards represented on the Aloes community forum in the Eastern Cape, these leaders are able to give feedback to their constituencies on the EnviroServ processes. Furthermore, these representatives are part of the decision-making body. They are consulted and issues are raised before a desired way forward is agreed upon. In this forum, ordinary community members sit with company executives as equals and voice their opinions. When an agenda item is raised, role

play centering on that item commences. Stakeholders present in the room are given a role; this often then affords an opportunity for various subject matters to be brought up in an environment that is not hostile, and concerned with class and status. Everyone can play through role play.

The Etwatwa Councillor mentions that, “people in the communities find EnviroServ transparent because of continuous engagement and willingness to respond to questions put to it” (2021). While the community forum meetings take place bi-monthly, the terms of reference drawn up by all stakeholders allow for any stakeholder to call a special meeting should an urgent issue arise. This provision which allows for any stakeholder to call a meeting is seen as empowering and indicative that the company truly wants to engage and listen and is not dictatorial. This is in direct contrast with Lonmin Marikana’s tactic to only engage with what they thought was a recognised structure (the NUM). Their executives would not even meet with other union representatives, including AMCU’s Mathunjwa. At some point he waited for over three hours before being told to come back at another time. On the other hand, for example, the EnviroServ Public Affairs Manager established a team in 2016 and attends most of the community forum meetings with the real ability to make decisions for and on behalf of the organisation. The Public Affairs Manager is one of the many internal and external stakeholders who is in a position to engage with the company executives, including the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Relationships with members of the community forums have somewhat eased, since the ability to

engage senior EnviroServ management directly and on a regular basis has led to more favourable working conditions.

When reviewing the data from the events of Marikana, the lack of trust for each other and each other's intentions appeared a number of times in the narrative reports. "The police officers in the line reasonably believed their lives and that of their members to be in imminent danger" (Higginbottom, 2018: 4). Elsewhere, the speech of Mr Noki (Mambush / the man in the green blanket) was reported on where he spoke about "two bulls in one kraal". The two bulls referred to the strikers and the police. He supposedly meant that "either the strikers or the police should leave the mountain. As the police found the strikers there, the police should leave" (Farlam Commission, 2015: 234). The first impression obtained from reading this report suggests the lack of respect for each other and each other's authority. The police cannot be dictated to by civilians or workers on an unprotected strike. Role play might have led to empathy for each other's situations and a desire to work together in seeking possible solutions. A community leader perceived as disruptive and presented thus during role play was able to change his behaviour. He stated that how he came across was not how he wished to be perceived. He mentioned that his intentions were in fact to find solutions. He could not identify with the role of a community leader as portrayed by others.

At the present time, the views of the two Ward Councillors regarding EnviroServ are aligned with what the company sought to achieve by introducing community

forums and using role play. The intention was to obtain greater participation and an awareness that EnviroServ is a brand that cares, is compliant with relevant legislation and is generally, that is to say, a company that endeavours to put human life and environmental well-being ahead of profit. This does not assume that relationships are always harmonious and on occasions, the meetings can be hostile. In such an instance, role play encourages participants, “to express their ideas and feelings in a relaxed environment” (Early Start, 2020, 1) as forum members go back to embodying the various roles. Stakeholders look at each other as roles and do not take things personally. They discuss what the role does and not the individual behind the role.

The Eastern Cape Ward Councillor states that from the first encounter with EnviroServ management, he was impressed by how responsive the company was and appreciated being consulted.

The Gauteng Ward Councillor states that “communities will always be demanding, but EnviroServ handles matters well” (2021). This statement by the Councillor aligns with the observation of the researcher that once role play was introduced and stakeholders allowed to take on different roles, they too could come up with potential solutions. The situations which would have been enacted would then be discussed in detail and a suitable solution sought. EnviroServ is thus perceived to be handling matters well as it is stated, only because inputs from various internal and external stakeholders are seriously considered.

Jones (2007: 3) observes that, “participation is seen to satisfy human needs”, and both Ward Councillors commended EnviroServ for including stakeholders in decision-making. Solutions and programmes that EnviroServ is involved with are often as a result of thorough discussions with stakeholders. Engagements with stakeholders have revealed the positive shift in the tone of meetings. Tone refers to the tempo of the meetings, how participants speak to each other as well as participants’ temperaments. It has become easier to get stakeholders to accept ideas and to have their buy-in. This could be attributable to the fact that, “the views of my community are encouraged” as the Eastern Cape Ward Councillor states. For the Gauteng Ward Councillor, his biggest interest is that, “the company assists the government to achieve its objectives with regard to skills development, creation of employment and taking care of the elderly”. As a government representative, the Councillor is pleased to have a stakeholder that appears to be aware of social challenges and is prepared to assist in addressing them. The Councillor’s statement is critical as it implies the importance placed by stakeholders on being heard and seen. It is critical for him that the company appears aware of the socio-economic factors impacting its neighbours. For a large corporate organisation, it is beneficial to have stakeholders view the company in a positive light. The nature of both EnviroServ and Lonmin’s businesses is such that there is a great reliance placed on the goodwill of their stakeholders. Both these organisations are required by law to conduct Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) in order to continue operating, and stakeholders can negatively impact the outcomes of these studies if they are not satisfied with how the business operates or conducts its activities.

From the collected / available data, some repetition was identified. In addition, there were some data which was unexpected. The researcher noted underlying patterns as well as comments deemed important for the practice. The data was coded to arrive at three key themes. A number of codes and themes emerged out of discussions with Ward Councillors, the researcher's journals and minutes from her work with stakeholders at EnviroServ, and lastly, the Lonmin narrative reports. Codes are shorthand labels or texts and other data which are linked to themes. The tables below present findings from the two different data sets, namely EnviroServ and then Marikana.

Table 1: EnviroServ codes - Emerging themes

Codes:	**Themes:**
• Consultative • Established, consistent and clear boundaries • Impression that it is biased towards assisting communities / it favours communities / it takes decisions with communities in mind. • Terms of reference, • Law and compliance & Care about reputation	Humanising and Dehumanising
• Engaging • Willing to teach • Humanising • Celebration of legacy / historical awareness	Reputation
• Clarity of communication • Language and tone are respectful • Language is indicative that you know people • Body language	Language and tone

EnviroServ, which has community forums that utilise role play, has seen stakeholders as represented by the one Ward Councillor stating that the company,

"consults stakeholders and has a clear bias towards the communities" (2021). He proceeds to state, "for me EnviroServ people care about the company's reputation, this is why they do everything in their powers to make sure that they hear, listen and action those things that the community wants" (2021). In the community forums, when participants are in role, a leader taking on a role of a mother can, for example, reveal more about what the real need is. EnviroServ's Dress -A-Learner programme was borne out of community forums. Stakeholders who are parents would often relay the positive impact that wearing full school uniforms has on learners. They would further allude to how much of a burden purchasing new school uniforms is on parents who are already facing financial difficulties. Role play then sparked real conversations and as an organisation, EnviroServ realised that schools and parents would appreciate assistance in the form of school uniforms.

In addition, the Eastern Cape Ward Councillor mentions that, "as a leader, community forums have protected me as I am not the only who sits in on them. Those with an interest as contained in the terms of reference can also come and say their piece. This way then, I cannot be accused of being captured or keeping information to myself. Everyone is allowed to say what they want, everyone can talk" (2021). This statement by the Councillor is critical in that it alludes to community forums which use role play to ensure that there is trust amongst various stakeholders. EnviroServ is also viewed as having nothing to hide, hence it freely allows people to ask questions and talk. The researcher's journal records the positive shift which occurred as a result of moving away from top-down engagement. Including that members of the forum had created a feeling of equality, being valued and feeing humanised.

The Gauteng Ward Councillor affirms that, "community forums have ensured that EnviroServ has a human face, even the language you use is indicative that you know people. We all know who to put questions to, and who to turn to when we seek assistance and so forth" (2021). He adds that, "not many organisations are this accessible, role play also allows us to relax and laugh for a while, even when we are looking at serious matters" (2021). A number of salient points can be deduced

from the Councillor's observations. Language and tone are important and play a role in how stakeholders perceive each other. Again, a break from the serious engagements and only engaging when there are disagreements does more harm than good.

Table 2: Marikana events codes - Emerging themes

• Only care about profits • Our safety doesn't matter • Not permitted to eat, and • Would not speak to us	Humanising and dehumanising
• Lack of cooperation • Arrogant and Self-serving • Disconnected and disengaged, and Violent.	Reputation
• Biased • Refusal to engage, and • Disrespectful	Language and tone

The table above is of trends and predominant themes emerging from the narrative reports of the Marikana events. Some of the affordances of community forums that have the role play element is that it allows for sharing of space with others. This "sharing of space with others translates into a culture of awareness of self and others" (Moncada-Linares, 2016: 1). This sharing of space as noted by Moncada-Linares is precisely what role play would have enabled at Lonmin's Marikana mine. Role play ensures that regardless of age, perceived class and status, everyone can meet as potential equals seeking solutions to issues and can speak with one voice. Community leaders, members, workers, management might have assessed effectiveness of the various policies together. Community forums that make use of role play provide a platform for an assortment of issues to be explored, thus possibly avoiding hostile environment. Socio-Economic Development policy, Employment Equity policy, compliance and any other issue which any stakeholder deemed critical or necessary to discuss, would have been discussed. The then Minister of

Minerals and Energy, Minister Shabangu, as an example, characterised the strike as a labour dispute. Speaking at the Farlam Commission, she was yet again emphatic that, 'I've never said it's not a labour dispute', adding that the then ANC NEC member Ramaphosa had provided a version that was 'incorrect' (Farlam Commission Report, 2015: 441–2). Had a forum been agreed to as had been suggested by Mathunjwa of AMCU, it is possible that the characterisation of the events could at least have been similar. Stakeholders might have been able to speak with one voice. In a radio interview conducted on the morning of 15 August 2012, Minister Shabangu stated that what was happening at Marikana was a 'labour dispute' and that 'the parties need to come together and address the wage dispute'. What the then Minister desired, which is a coming together of people, is possible with role play. This, however, is not what transpired at Marikana.

AMCU president, Mr Mathunjwa, is quoted as referring to NUM as "sinister forces"; this language and tone indicates lack of trust and faith in each other. It is indicative of warring factions. The language and associated tone set a negative premise from which to start negotiating (Farlam Commission Report, 2015: 497). The then Provincial Commissioner, General Mbombo, appeared to care more about the impact of the strike on the state and not on other stakeholders. She is quoted as saying "this thing must end today, it is costing the State a lot of money" (Farlam Commission Report, 2015: 499). As she was speaking in her capacity as a government representative, she created the impression that the state was only concerned with money and not the workers' well-being. Role play calls for all to be considerate of each other and creates the impression that everyone involved is an equal. As a minimum, it discourages disregard of others.

4.1.1 Three main themes emerging from data from EnviroServ and Lonmin Marikana

There are three main themes emerging out of the data from both EnviroServ and Lonmin Marikana, namely

1. Humanising and dehumanising

2. Reputation
3. Language and tone.

1. Humanising and Dehumanising

Humanising and dehumanising is one of the three key themes emerging from the data. This is what has come through repeatedly in the research and drawing on the literature and reports. One of the Marikana miners, who were fearful for their lives and thus spoke on condition of anonymity, says, 'we work under a lot of pressure from our bosses because they want production, and then there is also intimidation. They want you to do things that are sub-standard, and if you don't want to do that and follow the rules... they say they will fire you or beat you, things like that" (Alexander, 2013: 26). This alleged ill-treatment of workers is dehumanising. It further confirms earlier claims that the Mine only cared about profits / money and that the workers' well-being and safety did not receive the level of attention that it should have.

Data hints at the need and importance for inclusion of stakeholders and ensuring that they all are allowed to speak, and thus to be human. The Ward Councillors maintain that forums have allowed for their communities to be seen and heard by EnviroServ. The Gauteng Ward Councillor observes that, "*EnviroServ e re dirile batho, ba re bona*" (2021) or, "EnviroServ has made us human, the company sees us". The choice of words is important and speaks to the notion that when people are engaged, they feel humanised. Community forums using role play allow for this humanisation.

Prior to deciding on a different approach and technique, which role play was at the time, EnviroServ faced challenges in communicating with stakeholders. Firstly, because there was no structured and inclusive forum, some stakeholders felt excluded and not important. Journal data suggests that once role play was introduced, participants behaved and raised concerns differently.

An aggrieved miner who participated in the Lonmin strike, and who is quoted anonymously for fear of repercussion, states that, “we blame the employer for not caring about us, because as a parent, as a head office, if there is a dispute in the family he will go and address it, find out what is the problem, so that his children will lay their hearts on the table (and) tell him “this is our problem” (Alexander, 2013: 30). Where stakeholders are concerned, there needs to be concerted efforts by large corporate organisations to ensure that an environment of equality and inclusivity is created. It is expected, and as is indicated by this miner, also one of the benchmarks by which stakeholders measure corporates’ respect for them. Stakeholders need to feel that they can contribute to solutions which impact them. There needs to be engagement in order for everyone to feel human and valued.

A key finding of this theme is that there is a real potential that the decisions made by large organisations can have unintended consequences. Community forums that use role play can potentially address some burning issues and perceptions such as feeling dehumanised before stakeholders resolve to respond accordingly. Role play enables an awareness of self and others by stakeholders, thus addressing any potential issues arising out of feeling dehumanised.

2. Reputation:

Reputation is another theme emerging out of the data. In this context and as per the data, it is concerned with the beliefs held about these two large corporate organisations. Stakeholders come to form decisions on what organisations stand for based on how they have experienced these organisations. The Eastern Cape Councillor, for example, states that at first, “we hated EnviroServ and wanted it to move from here. Now, most people understand the value that the company adds and we are happy that the company is here to help honour the legacies of our people such as Mr Alex Matikinca” (2021). Mr Matikinca is an anti-apartheid fighter after whom one of EnviroServ’s CSI projects in the Eastern Cape is named. What this statement further reflects is that reputations are fragile and therefore it is imperative that large corporate organisations should be visible to the stakeholders and constantly engage as part of reputation management. At the time that the

community wanted EnviroServ to move out, there was no regular engagement. As the Councillor noted, “a lot of what I knew about the organisation then, I had researched myself” (2021). Community forums using role play allow organisations to provide first-hand accounts of who they are. The organisations can directly influence perceptions. In all these community forum meetings, as an EnviroServ representative, the researcher was able to provide the needed clarity. In instances where there was uncertainty, colleagues were called upon to shed light on an issue. It is often procurement related queries where colleagues are required to provide clarity. These sessions where clarity is provided by experts in specific fields is necessary in the community forums as this creates an impression of a unified organisation where everyone internally wants what is positive for the stakeholders.

A few months prior to the events at Marikana in 2012, the vice-president had directly engaged the workers and this resulted in a possible strike being averted. The workers’ perception of the management changed when they refused to engage with them a few months later. Arts-based initiatives would have encouraged building agency within group participants.

There is a developing trend worldwide where communities including civil society groupings and business forums are demanding to be included in the procurement processes and empowerment initiatives of those companies and are demanding that companies are transparent and engage meaningfully and respectfully. Dorothy Heathcote, a drama academic, maintains that, “drama is a means of learning, a means of widening experiences” (Heathcote, 1972: 158). Role play in community forums as stated by the Eastern Cape Councillor, “was a new method of communicating and it indeed succeeded in accelerating learning about each other as stakeholders. We now know each other better and understand possible motivations for certain decisions including fears” (2021). The Gauteng Councillor observed that, “Everyone’s eyes have been opened as to why others make the decisions that they do and we all now see how others view us” (2021). This is what community forums have presented for the various stakeholders, namely an opportunity to learn and widen their experiences and worlds as they collide with

people from different backgrounds. Speaking of the need to end the ongoing strike, the then North West commissioner, Lieutenant-General Zukiswa Mbombo, noted that, "tomorrow when we go there for the second time now, that we were there today and they did not surrender, then it is blood" (Marinovich & Nicholson, 2013). It can be argued that a statement such as this is proof of lack of empathy for the workers and does not show a colleagueness which dialogue and role play allow for. In this context, people of different backgrounds had little opportunity to learn from each other as they were determined to achieve their own objectives. There was no common goal that all involved stakeholders could work towards.

In support of Heathcote, O'Neill refers specifically to role play as a "teaching tool" (O'Neill, 1995: 83). Both EnviroServ staff and other stakeholders have learnt as a result of their involvement in the community forums. The EnviroServ representative has become more patient and has gained a better understanding and appreciation of the challenges that the community forum members face. The Eastern Cape Councillor states that he has learnt to handle difficult stakeholders. Lonmin stakeholders thus missed out on an opportunity to learn from and teach each other in a similar way.

Lonmin might have benefitted from reimagining a new way of working, as it is clear from data that they did not have an open-door policy, as they would have engaged the workers and the newly elected committee directly. Emerging out of community forums is an appreciation as advanced by the Etwatwa Ward Councillor of the method used in, "challenging us all to think out of the box and to be solutions-orientated and to try and find each other as participants" (2021). Role play works towards ensuring that there is an alignment of sorts, this even when misunderstandings occur. Lonmin miners were not consulted or engaged; rather decisions were made on their behalf by Lonmin and NUM. The NUM leader at the time of the Marikana tragedy, Mr Erick Gcilitshana, confessed to this dehumanisation of the workers at the Marikana Commission of Inquiry when he testified that, "discussions were had with security about escorting employees to the various shafts" (Farlam Commission Report, 2015: 492). Even with danger lurking,

the profit-minded mine and NUM, "organised transport so that they (workers) could report to their workplaces in spite of the widespread intimidation" (Farlam Commission Report, 2015: 492). The workers were failed by a capitalist system that saw them only as a means of production. Although it is a good gesture to organise transport for workers to report to work during the strike, it is unfortunate that the workers' lives could still be risked in this manner. This is one of the reasons Lonmin's reputation as an organisation that is first and foremost profit-centred emerged. Role playing might have allowed for Lonmin to offer a different perspective. They might have reviewed how they engage with employees so that they were not perceived as being focused only on profits to the detriment of human lives.

A key finding within this theme is that community forums should be mandatory for all corporates and must include role playing as it, "will give teams a chance to get some experience in handling difficult situations and in developing creative problem-solving skills" (Early Start Group, 2020: 103). Role playing is centred on problem-solving and had Lonmin had this tool at its disposal, it could have come to certain realisations just like EnviroServ had.

What the Lonmin tragedy depicts is that traditional communication methodologies cannot always be trusted. Upon being informed of the workers' intent to issue a memorandum, Mr Mathunjwa advised Lonmin to, "call for an urgent meeting of all its stakeholders" (Farlam Commission Report, 2015: 494). Lonmin did not adhere to this, as they had already had "a meeting without him a day before on 12 August 2012" (Farlam Commission Report, 2015: 495). A forum meeting of sorts as suggested by Mr Mathenjwa would have an out-of-the-norm communication methodology and might have borne different outcomes; however, it was untested and therefore what it would have achieved remains unknown.

The data indicates that at Lonmin's Marikana mine, Lonmin acted "unilaterally" on matters which should have included other stakeholders including on matters related to "bonuses and allowances" (Farlam Commission Report, 2015: 489). This was

not well received by stakeholders who viewed Lonmin's actions as dismissive and disrespectful. By contrast, both Ward Councillors commend EnviroServ for being approachable. Perceptions regarding the brand have changed as the company is no longer viewed as being an unapproachable or unfeeling entity. Similarly, had there been some sort of forum where all Marikana stakeholders could meet and discuss matters and perceptions, it would have been clear that the killings of NUM members were not sanctioned by the strike leaders. One of the leaders, Mr Xolani Nzuza, is on record as saying that, "their killers ought to be found, charged and, if convicted, sentenced to long imprisonment" (Alexander, 2013: 819).

What is true is that as the world evolves and communities and socio-economic realities shift, communication cannot remain rigid. Tools, mediums and methodologies used in the past need to be re-evaluated in today's ever-changing world. As the world evolves and communities and socio-economic realities change, large corporate organisations should review how they engage in order to protect their reputations. The tools employed have to be agile and in line with changing times. Arts-based interventions and role playing are "seen to have social and psychological importance" (Jones, 2007: 3). Continuous engagement and being seen as being transparent positively impacts on how an organisation is perceived and potentially turns adversaries into ambassadors.

At the Holfontein landfill site, the protest actions decreased and matters were discussed openly and in an inclusive manner. The Gauteng Ward Councillor asserted that EnviroServ, "is a good company, because the managers never shut the door on anyone, they would rather say, no, not today. Come back tomorrow" (2021). This quote by the Councillor indicates that a lot of what company representatives do is taken as company values. In this instance, EnviroServ is perceived as a good company merely because its employees embrace an open-door policy. This open-door policy was agreed upon after engaging with stakeholders in community forums and understanding the importance that they place on not being turned away.

EnviroServ was seen as co-operative, empowering and in tune with communities' needs as alluded to by the Etwatwa Councillor when he says that, "seriously, we are truly happy that EnviroServ is available on call and that managers are accessible. This company is an important partner and should be protected" (2021). What we note from this and which is also a key takeaway from this theme is that perceptions are easy to impact, thus making reputation fragile. It is therefore critical for large organisations to constantly be reviewing their policies and ways in which they conduct themselves and work with stakeholders. Role play as seen in the case of EnviroServ gives the organisation an opportunity to receive constant feedback and pick up on potential risks.

3. Language and tone:

The last of the three prominent themes from the data is language and tone. Tone is how an individual, stakeholder or organisation comes across when articulating themselves. From the data, it may be seen that the language and tone used are important when engaging with stakeholders. Stakeholders often pay attention to these. For the Eastern Cape Councillor, "the brand is well represented; the employees are always calm and respectful" (2021).

The two Councillors interviewed acknowledge that the language and tone employed influence how a brand is viewed and received. This is what has come through in the data, namely that stakeholders notice the tone employed when engaging with them. It has been the experience of the researcher that when stakeholders raise their voices and the company representative displays restraint, they eventually change their approach and use the same tone that others are utilising, resulting in a reduction in tensions and hostility. Community forums using role play allow for empathy, humanisation and trust.

Both the human subjects maintain that the community forums have allowed for their communities to be seen and highlight, "language and choice of words" employed by EnviroServ representatives as being essential to this. To be seen implies being valued, included and respected.

Community forums using role play offer an opportunity for stakeholders to accommodate other people and their views as they eventually consider that there are other influences and thoughts that may be of influence. Marikana stakeholders missed such an opportunity. The tone employed by workers on strike was not necessarily conducive to cooperation. The mine management too displayed an arrogance unbecoming of an organisation that claims to care. "Sharing of space with others translates into a culture of awareness of self and others" (Luoma-aho, 2015: 48); this suggests that had Lonmin mine management met the ordinary workers, it might have been possible to realise sooner that workers had organised themselves outside of recognised unions such as NUM and AMCU. Role play insists on reflection and a coming together of people, including those with opposing views.

As articulated by the two ward councillors, when a company representative engages with stakeholders, the company name is either positively or negatively affected. Additionally, it has been observed by the researcher that had EnviroServ continued engaging as it had always done, there would have been the risk and threat of a community rebellion. Being in role and allowing for some distance in observing unfolding scenarios can soften hearts and present an opportunity for improved engagement.

Furthermore, this engagement needs to be authentic, as stakeholders are sensitive and attempt to decode everything said, including how it is said. The Councillors are emphatic that, "EnviroServ employees who are tasked with working with stakeholders speak well and calmly with everyone". The Eastern Cape Councillor added that, "even I have learnt how to deal with difficult people by watching how you as a company deal with me when I am not being easy" (2021). Enacted scenarios, where either the researcher or colleagues have taken on the role of this specific Councillor has ensured that the person self-reflects and becomes more self-aware. It is also important that there be clear boundaries which are applied consistently, but that when necessary organisations are prepared to display

flexibility and responsiveness. Evidence suggests that the Lonmin Mine was not always responsive or consistent. For example, there was a wage agreement at the time which stated that, “all proposals and demands on which agreement was not reached, or which were withdrawn by the unions or the company, are regarded as having been settled and may not be subject to strike action until this agreement lapses on the 30th of September 2013” (Farlam Commission Report, 2015: 485). Although this might be acceptable from a labour law perspective, it is not considered acceptable in Communications and Stakeholder Relations as it does not allow for continuous engagement and for people to change their minds or reconsider decisions. This sets a precedent for an unequal relationship and has a negative impact on trust.

Data indicates that the miners were not without reproach in the turn of events at the Marikana tragedy. Mineworker 8 admits to having chased NUM and AMCU leaders stating that the workers on strike said to Mathunjwa, “we do not want any union here” (Alexander, 2013: 39). This headstrong stance meant that the workers were left exposed as they had no recognised representation. Role play which as already ascertained allows for awareness of self and others, might have potentially led to stakeholders realising sooner rather than later that they were all going to be on the losing side by not talking to each other.

A key takeaway from this theme is that stakeholders should endeavour to attempt to address each other empathetically and note that their language and tone have a bearing on relationships in the long run. Role play allows a person to perceive themselves as others do, and can ultimately be reconciliatory as demonstrated by the change in attitude of the gentleman who led six strikes against EnviroServ at Holfontein but reconsidered his stance after a few sessions of role play. This led to stakeholders engaging meaningfully and deciding on action plans together.

4. 1. 2 Six key findings

The six key findings that are presented below are closely linked to the codes and themes emerging from the data.

1. **Clarity of communication is necessary**

Large corporate organisations must communicate clearly. They must mean what they say and say what they mean. The Eastern Cape Ward Councillor refers to "the terms of reference which govern how meetings will be conducted" and has a clearly defined "code of conduct which addresses such things as respect, dress code and how forum members who do not provide feedback to their constituencies will be dealt with" (2021). He proceeds to state that the community forum works as these terms of reference "were drawn up by a multitude of stakeholders". His Gauteng counterpart states that "information is communicated in a simplified but non-condescending manner" (2021). This is because there is an element of playfulness in role play, and information is easy to comprehend.

2. **Perceptions, whether real or imagined, can impact large corporate organisations' reputations**

What transpired at Lonmin Marikana was partly as a result of perceptions held. The various stakeholders did not trust each other and were unaware of each other's motives. As a result, they imagined the worst of each other. Data from Marikana, referred to earlier in this research, demonstrates that the police did not trust the miners and feared for their lives. Striking miners did not trust union representatives and accused them of always being on the side of the mine management. The workers perceived mine management to be concerned only with profits. Unfortunately, all these perceptions impacted on how the stakeholders engaged and eventually resulted in the deaths of over 44 people. As an arts-based initiative, role play might have allowed stakeholders, "to see more and see differently" (Sutherland, 2012: 27). Simply put, it could as a minimum have contributed to stakeholders being able to imagine a different possibility and reality at Marikana.

3. Reputation

Large corporate organisations are urged to be responsive. Community forums that use role play as shown by the data discussed indicates that reputation is easy to impact and furthermore, it is fickle. With Lonmin management opting on this occasion to not engage workers as they had previously done, accusations against them increased. An affordance of role play is that it, "engages people on a human level that unlocks potential, skills and interests which may have been dormant or under-used" (South, 2016: 10). It can be argued that had the Mine management interacted more with the workers, it would have seen this leadership potential in Mr Noki (the man known as 'Ambush' and seen on television screens in a green blanket) which his peers had managed to see. As South (2016) posits, the Mine management might even have been able to note his potential and use his skills for the benefit of all. A widow speaking on condition of anonymity from her Eastern Cape home states, "actually, who ordered the police to kill our husbands, was it Lonmin? Or was it the government that signed that the police must kill our husbands? Today I am called a widow and my children are called fatherless because of the police. I blame the mine, the police and the government because they are the ones who control this country" (Alexander, 2013: 20). This widow's sentiments are indicative of how many reputations were impacted resulting from a lack of proper information sharing and engagement. Her views on Lonmin, the police and the government of the day are shared by many. The opportunity to, "learn from others and about others" as granted by role-play was lost on these stakeholders (Sutherland, 2012: 27).

4. Stakeholders want to be included and engaged

Boal (Cohen-Cruz, 1994: 117), a theatre practitioner and political activist, described "theatre (read performance) as a vehicle for providing voice to the traditionally voiceless". To be successful, large corporate organisations should consider trying out new ways of doing things, including community forums which use role play as stakeholders would potentially have a platform to talk. The researcher observed how even in these community forums, the participants

who would normally be very quiet became a bit more outspoken when they took on a role and played out a scenario. An elderly gentleman in the Eastern Cape, for example, was previously considered quiet until he was given an opportunity to embody an EnviroServ official's role when faced with a tough decision to make. He was able to own the role and offer real solutions that were implementable.

5. Tone

The tone with which messages are relayed or information is shared is important. How things are said can potentially damage relationships. Stakeholders are thus urged to be cautious in how they come across. Self-awareness is essential. The Eastern Cape Councillor emphasises how impressed he has been by how EnviroServ representatives have dealt with him when he was aware that he was difficult to deal with. He speaks of the impression that this has left on him and how he, in his own engagements, endeavours to attain the same calmness. The Gauteng Councillor spoke of how "respectful" EnviroServ appears due to how its employees engage with stakeholders. This respect which the Councillors speak of had to be learnt by EnviroServ employees who have been part of the community forums where role play was used.

6. Affordances of role play

It is indeed argued that arts-based initiatives (ABIs) foster team spirit in an inclusive way as everyone is empowered through being given responsibility and being involved (South, 2016: 10). The research demonstrates that there is a possibility that if this technique had been employed at Lonmin, the underlying frustration of being left out of meetings and not being engaged might have been to some extent addressed. The various stakeholders would have had an input and a voice. The stakeholders could potentially have been open to different perspectives. The Eastern Cape Councillor maintains that, "EnviroServ is not like other companies in Motherwell. It engages; the company needs to educate other companies about working together with stakeholders" (2021). His Gauteng counterpart argues that, "were it not for the community forum, the

strikes would have continued because people were thinking that you did not want to care about them and did not want to give them opportunities" (2021). The applied theatre technique used at EnviroServ has made people feel humanised. It allows them to speak and do something which is most natural for the social beings that humans are.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Emanating from this research as well as from the lessons the researcher has learnt from facilitating community forums are the three key themes noted above. Additionally, the gaps identified within the industry further contribute towards a stakeholder relations framework as presented below and which forms part of the results and learnings from EnviroServ. It names both internal and external stakeholders that require engagement and seeks to stipulate the minimum frequency of the engagements.

Engaging meaningfully is part of being a responsible corporate citizen, thus large corporate organisations are urged to find out from their stakeholders how they want to be engaged and not to make assumptions. This is part of the humanisation of all stakeholders that is highlighted above.

Generic approaches to communication can potentially be damaging to an organisation's brand image. "Life experiences are given added validity by depicting them dramatically with and in front of others" (Jones, 2007: 13). Role playing as an example of an arts-based initiative and an applied drama technique afforded EnviroServ stakeholders in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng an opportunity to acknowledge their experiences with and in front of others. Lonmin Marikana did not have this platform for its stakeholders and the opportunity to witness, be heard and validated was missed.

Community forums at EnviroServ have somewhat allowed even EnviroServ employees to understand themselves and their stakeholders better. There are a number of complex reasons for the Marikana tragedy, but the research has demonstrated with some degree of certainty how the shortcomings in the stakeholder relations strategy contributed to how those events unfolded.

5.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Large corporate organisations do not and cannot operate in isolation. To this effect, large corporate organisations should consider a live stakeholder engagement plan or strategy led by a "principled" and "emotionally intelligent" individual or team.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan or Strategy should:

1. Ensure that an internal team is aware of socio-political matters in the country and are current and fully *au fait* with developments which could potentially impact the business landscape;
2. Name potential risks for the business- categorise into overall business and then, industry specific;
3. Identify stakeholders: categorise them into national, provincial and local and the categorisation should further include language, beliefs, etc.;
4. Define clear objectives for engaging;
5. Develop a detailed stakeholder matrix with up-to-date contact details;
6. Have a dedicated resource for any unplanned engagement requests;
7. Determine methods and tools to be used when engaging the various stakeholders; and
8. Provide resources and tools to ensure that recommended action plans are implemented.

A detailed Stakeholder Matrix will highlight the following:

1. Stakeholder Group;
2. Contact person and contact details;
3. Level of Engagement required; and
4. A suitable stakeholder owner will:
    - Identify agile stakeholder owners within the organisation; it is advisable for a company to own its relationships rather than relying on consultants.
    - Dedicate resources (people, financial, and otherwise to the team focussing on stakeholder engagement).
    - Engage with stakeholders in a structured manner.

- Not be opposed to employing new tactics to get through to stakeholders; these include arts-based initiatives as part of the engagement strategy, and role play in particular.

Stakeholders are all important and are categorised into Internal and External stakeholders:

Internal stakeholders	External stakeholders
➢ Owners ➢ Executive ➢ Senior Managers ➢ Employees ➢ Unions	➢ Government (national, provincial and local) ➢ Shareholders ➢ Communities (including business forums, political parties, civil society organisations etc.) ➢ Creditors ➢ Suppliers ➢ Customers ➢ Industry Associations ➢ Media ➢ Associations ➢ Investors ➢ Regulators ➢ Competitors ➢ Academic and Research Institutions

A stakeholder engagement strategy should serve a multiple purposes and clearly stipulate the purpose, scope of application, intent, messaging and have desired outcomes amongst others.

1. Purpose

Clearly stipulate who is being engaged and by whom within the organisation. Expand on how the engagement will take place and why the engagement will occur.

Engaging with stakeholders in a structured approach and with a strategic intent has become a business imperative.

2. Scope of application

Draw up a Stakeholder Engagement Plan which is applicable to an entire organisation. This Stakeholder Engagement Plan would need to be consistently applied.

3. Appoint a committee

The committee should have clearly defined objectives. In addition, it should also aim to proactively change perceptions and to build relationships across all stakeholder groups. This will be achieved through understanding each stakeholder group and then communicating correct messages across the various stakeholder groups. An overarching objective is to engage with all stakeholders and not just the highly vocal or more engaging individuals. The appointed committee should endeavour to meet at least once a month or as circumstances dictate in order to share tactics, opportunities, challenges and gains.

4. Intent

The overall intent with the Stakeholder Engagement Plan is to identify, monitor, and respond to the needs, values and expectations of the various stakeholders. This includes:

a) Focus on proactive reputation management
b) Change and influence perceptions by being neighbourly
c) Reclaim and entrench an organisation's reputation
d) Build and sustain relationships
e) Support and promote an organisation's brand promise and values
f) Increase Shareholder Value.

5. Key principles of stakeholder engagement

a. Communicate

b. Be proactive

c. Compromise

d. Be accountable

e. Remain calm; you are dealing with humans.

f. Build authentic and sustainable relationships, don't overcommit, and don't overpromise

g. Don't say anything that you wouldn't say if recorded or are on radio and / or on social media.

6. Messaging

Messaging should be developed in consultation with stakeholders and should be communicated and affirmed with the various stakeholder groups and needs to be clear and mutually beneficial, including,

a) Job creation

b) Transformation

c) Empowerment of local communities through preferential procurement, training, learnerships, CSI etc.

d) Good payer

e) Compliant with legislation.

7. Desired Outcomes

The desired outcomes of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan need to be stated, and may include the intention to operate in a sustainable manner without hindrances whilst enjoying harmonious relationships with stakeholders.

8. Levels of Engagement

It is important to note that there are different levels of engagement required by each stakeholder group to ensure that required intent is achieved, as explained below:

a) Engage (Platinum): Stakeholders with whom face-to-face engagement is necessary via community forums which utilise role play, meetings, workshops, social events, memberships, industry forums, conferences etc.

b) Communicate (Gold): Stakeholders with a high level of expertise but who have not participated in dialogue directly with the company via mass email, newsletters, and social media.
c) Inform (Silver): Stakeholders who are only seeking information, e.g. news coverage, publications, and civil society groups.

5.3 CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this research will assist large corporate organisations to avoid tragedies similar to the events that occurred at Lonmin Mine in Marikana in 2012. This could be done when stakeholders attempt to understand each other's motives and that they endeavour to learn from each other. Large corporate organisations must adapt with the changing times and demands of the day and consider incorporating role play in their communications strategies.

5.4 LIMITATIONS

The limitations inherent in relying on desktop engagement as was done in relation to the events at Marikana is that there was no opportunity to ask clarity seeking questions from the various stakeholders. Amongst these, for example, would have been a request to Mr Ramaphosa to expand on his email, the categorisation of the strike and incessant intervention. This research acknowledges that although the benefits of role play have been relayed, large corporate organisations might still struggle with how to go about introducing role play in their communications and stakeholder engagement strategies. Some stakeholders might also not be receptive to incorporating role play in their engagements and may require additional encouragement and support to do so. Other stakeholders are likely to experience some discomfort with playing.

The challenge is for large corporates to think more laterally and creatively in seeking to introduce arts based initiatives, and role play in particular, in their communications and engagement strategies. By so doing, they could address crucial

matters such as stakeholders feeling ignored, unheard, and dehumanised as was explained in the narrative accounts of the events at Marikana in 2012.

5.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

A possible suggestion for future study is to investigate how to ensure that stakeholders who perceive art-based interventions as superficial and not serious can remain engaged.

In addition, researchers could look into ways in which solutions and action plans emerging from community forums that utilise role play are implemented.

Based on the research, in a world where information is easily accessible and stakeholders demand meaningful engagement, companies need to do away with relying only on traditional communication methods. These methods are often one-directional and thus lack an ability to create meaningful dialogue and participation by all stakeholders. Furthermore, these methods are not as effective in building and mending relationships as arts-based initiatives. At both the Motherwell, Eastern Cape and Holfontein, Gauteng community forums, the stakeholders involved have worked together to identify solutions to issues. Role play, which is an example of an arts-based initiative, has been able to bring communities together. A sense of community beyond the organisation, EnviroServ, has been created. The research reveals that one way in which role play impacts stakeholder relations in large corporate organisations is by offering a more collaborative approach, allowing for empathy and building trust. In large corporate organisations, role play allows for inclusivity and creating a sense of being appreciated. It furthermore creates a platform for stakeholders to meaningfully engage as they distance themselves from situations and deal with issues as characters. Based on my findings, I recommend role play as it allows for a two-way communication and constant feedback.

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