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Community development workers programme: mentoring for social transformation in the public service in post-apartheid South Africa

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Abstract: The new public sector community development workers (CDWs) programme was established in 2004 following ineffective service delivery through chronic under-spending on annual budgets in post-apartheid South Africa. CDWs receive training in learnerships within the National Skills Development Strategy to ensure access to and spending of local government poverty alleviation funding allocated for housing, childcare grants, and pensions and other services. As learnership mentors are mandatory, this research investigates the formal mentoring of CDWs after learnership programmes. CDWs and their mentors from two large municipalities participated. The main findings show inadequate formal mentoring of CDWs despite legislative requirements. Crucial mentoring for career development and psychosocial support is patchy and uneven. Social transformation of communities and access to government services and grants is likely to take longer than anticipated if CDWs are not adequately mentored during their training and in workplace learning.

Keywords: CDWs; community development workers; human capital development; institutional learning; learnerships; mentoring; organisational change; public service; post-apartheid South Africa; social transformation.

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and internationally. She works with several South African Universities, public and private organisations implementing mentoring strategies and programmes. She has been involved in collaborative work with international mentoring experts such as Professor David Clutterbuck, Professor Colleen Chesterman and Professor Joseph Pascarelli. She is an Evaluator of mentoring programmes and external examiner of postgraduate students in many institutions.

Motlhake has a Bachelor of Arts, Higher Education Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma in Management (Business Administration) and Masters of Management (Public and Development Management). He was a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) at the time of the research. His responsibilities included monitoring the public service capacity building programmes implemented by SAMDI and Community Development Workers programme was one of them. His other responsibilities included giving strategic and technical support for other capacity building programmes. Currently, he is responsible for strategic support, coordination of strategic planning sessions and performance monitoring in the department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

"When we are out there in the community, we know that we need assistance because we are not superman or superwoman. So, your very first contact is your mentor because she will advise with steps to take. Without our mentor, I do not think we would have had a smooth journey in this programme. The mentors are very important in this programme." (CDW Learner, interview 2005)

1 Introduction

In social transformation throughout post-colonial Africa, many countries and governments have had to face the effects of covert racial discrimination and inequality. South Africa institutionalised apartheid in 1949 and its racial segregation policies resulted, for the majority of the population and communities displaced by forced removals, in unequal access to health care, education and participation in the political processes. Since the advent of democracy in 1994, post-apartheid South Africa has to deal with the legacy of a deeply divided, unequal society. The South African government has had to build capacity in all spheres of government because of lack of skills in public service employees, poor integration and coordination across departments; inadequate information dissemination about government services and the inability of poorly educated communities to access social benefits, education and health services provided for in government budgets.

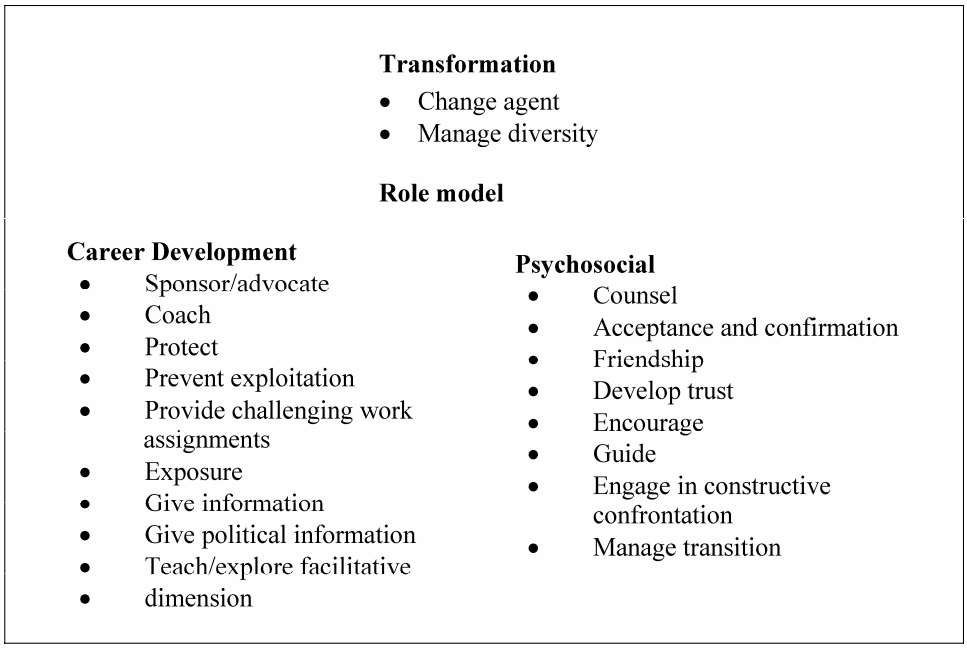
This research study focuses on a specific public service intervention in South Africa aimed at making government funding more accessible to the poor through the introduction of community development workers (CDWs) at municipal level in nine provinces in the country. As mentoring is a mandatory process in the training of CDWs, the purpose of the research is to investigate mentoring in the CDW programme with a focus on workplace mentoring. The CDW programme was instituted, because of ineffective government service delivery between 1994 and 2004 which was highlighted in government report entitled 'Towards a Ten Year Review: Synthesis report on Implementation of Government programmes' (Republic of South Africa, 2003) and again in October 2005 in Vuk'uzenzele (http://www.info.gov.za/vukuzenzele): 59% of all local

municipalities under-spent provincial budgets and were in need of assistance in delivering basic services to their communities. The CDW programme forms part of a much wider process of redressing Apartheid inequities in education through 'learnerships' and work-based training.

As CDWs drawn from communities are not highly skilled at present and their training is a completely new initiative, mentoring during their learnership and first employment in communities is regarded as a key factor in the success of the programme (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2004). The authors argue that effective mentoring ensures that the desired learning and workplace outcomes are achieved. The argument for using a transformational model in human capital development and mentoring programmes to achieve the outcomes is that transformation needs to be clearly articulated as part of the mentoring agenda so that it is foregrounded in the process (Geber, 2004; (see Figure 1).

This research is a qualitative interpretative study conducted because there is very little information about mentoring in the public service in South Africa, particularly in local government departments. Very few Black African public service employees had experience in public service jobs prior to 1994 and mentoring in the public service is a new initiative for transformation in the sector. The context of transformational mentoring involves the establishing of learning alliances for professional development and a commitment to social and organisational change (Geber, 2004). Investigating the implementation of mentoring within the CDW programme in South African metropolitan municipalities contributes to the body of knowledge in public service mentoring in an African post-colonial and post-apartheid social transformation context.

Figure 1 The transformation mentoring model



Source: Geber (2004)

The purpose of this study is to investigate the research question: how effective is mentoring when CDWs enter their workplaces? In two groups of participants, the research identifies the challenges existing within the first cohort of the CDW programme and makes suggestions for refining the mentoring offered in the programme.

A more detailed overview of the public service and specific government interventions in the South African context of social transformation is presented in Section 2.

2 South African background and research context

Community development, as a public sector strategy for social transformation, is new in South Africa and was not part of the public service institutional culture prior to 1994. The CDW programme forms part of a much larger governmental National Skills Development Strategy initiative, established in 1998 with the department of labour and the department of education to build human capacity in individuals previously disadvantaged by the apartheid political and educational system. The National Skills Development Strategy identifies priorities for skills development and makes provision for a new system of learning, known as learnerships, which combines structured learning and work experience (Republic of South Africa, Skills Development Amendment Act, No 31, 2003).

A learnership is a work-based education and training programme with both structured workplace experience and structured theoretical training. The purpose of the learnership is to fast track the development of current employees or unemployed persons, to offer employment opportunities while obtaining a nationally recognised qualification. Mentoring is a critical component of learnerships during the period of training or study and in the workplace. In the South African context, transformational mentoring (Geber, 2004) is essential. Mentoring of the learners (the mentees in this process), according to the Mentorship Strategy Paper (2003), occurs formally at three levels in the process: during academic training by a learnership mentor, by a workplace mentor and by a provincial mentor to give the necessary support to the development of the learner/mentees.

The CDW programme commenced in 2004 to address issues of inadequate information dissemination about government services in many poor communities. A new public sector echelon of multi-skilled CDWs now exists to act as government's direct link to communities in order to enable communities to make use of government and development services.

Frank and Smith (1999) state that community development is the planned evolution of all aspects of community well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural). It is a process in which community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. Community development in South Africa, according to Handbook on Community Development Workers in South Africa (2004), is about placing individuals at the centre of the development process, emphasising people's participation, fostering self-reliance and bottom-up problem solving. A CDW in South Africa is a community-based resource person who collaborates with other community activists to help fellow community members to obtain information and resources from the service providers to meet their needs, achieve goals, realise their aspirations and maintain their well-being.

In the new public service initiative, the CDWs work with government ward councillors in local municipalities, identifying the problems faced by socially and economically disadvantaged communities and compile reports about the local issues and progress of local communities. They also ensure that government hears the needs of the people and that the people are well informed about services and programmes of government.

The first CDW learnership introduced under the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority in 2004 enables learner CDWs to gain theoretical and practical skills while gaining work experience and a nationally recognised qualification (Republic of South Africa, Department of Provincial and Local Government, Handbook on Community Development Workers in South Africa, 2004).

The CDW's role is to be at the forefront of the efforts to develop and transform their communities (CDW Course manual: Book 1, 2004). The CDW programme comprises 40 days of formal academic training divided into five blocks over a period of a year; 18 days for mentors to engage with learners and fieldwork assignments given at the end of each training block with practical experience in the field which accounts for another 35 days. The CDW learnership leads to a national diploma in community development after successful completion of a course and assignments (CDW Course manual: Book 1 (2004).

The CDW Toolkit. A Guide for Mentors, Coaches and Learners (2004) is based on British and European theories and practice of mentoring as the post-apartheid education system in South Africa uses British outcomes based education principles. The CDW Toolkit outlines the compulsory assignments that CDWs are required to do with the assistance of the mentors. Learners/mentees record their weekly activities in a logbook and write a detailed monthly report which is signed off by the mentors with their comments. Mentors are expected to guide and support learners through the activities to ensure that learners gain as much experience as possible and to ensure that learners gather sufficient evidence to show their competence (CDW Toolkit, 2004).

The CDW programme uses a network of three mentors at different levels in provincial and local government to assist learners/mentees with their academic and fieldwork. Firstly, the academic learnership mentors, appointed by the academic institutions involved in the training, assist CDWs with telephonic support during activities; undertake support visits to assist CDWs and reflect on learners' progress in completing assignments; undertake formative assessment and provide feedback to CDWs to facilitate learning.

Secondly, the workplace mentors appointed by the municipalities assist CDWs in developing a work plan; provide day-to-day monitoring and advice; conduct on-going assessment of the CDWs' progress and performance and develop recommendations on the CDWs' progress to guide the academic trainers in further skills development.

Thirdly, Provincial mentors, appointed by the head of the provincial public service department, assist CDWs by facilitating effective communication within the province; provide feedback to CDWs about their reports; give information to CDWs and advice about where additional information can be accessed. However, it is not clear from the documents whether provincial mentors will be monitoring or liaising with the workplace mentors.

The CDW Mentoring Strategy Paper describes mentoring as "a relationship and a set of processes where one person offers help, guidance, advice and support to facilitate the

learning or development of another person" (2003). An early definition of transformational mentoring by Hay (1995) states that it is a relationship between equals in which one or more of those involved is enabled to: increase awareness, identify alternatives and initiate action to develop themselves. Geber's (2004) definition is relevant here as well although it emphasises a commitment to social and organisational change in addition to individual development. The definitions adequately cover the processes and most of the roles and functions of the multiple mentors envisaged as part of the CDW programme, although that CDW mentors are engaged in assessment and supervision of the CDWs as well.

The policy documents and strategy papers have omitted the role of the mentoring coordinator. Several writers in the literature emphasise the role of the programme coordinator in successful implementation of mentoring programmes (Clutterbuck, 2001; Geber, 2003b, 2006). The nurturing and continuous presence of the coordinator operating in a 'hands-on' way is recommended by Boyle and Boice (1998) because, it has a significant effect on the retention of participants in the programme and also on the success which participants feel as a result of participating in formal programmes.

Within the South African context, a number of mentoring models underlying the CDW programme are discussed and critiqued. While there are very few published studies on mentoring in Africa, there is one South African model used in transformational contexts (Geber, 2004) which will also be discussed in Section 3.

3 Review of mentoring models in the literature

Traditional models of mentoring developed over the last 25 years by American leaders in the field such as Anderson and Shannon (1988), Kram (1988) and Cohen (1999) outline the career development functions of mentors, with nine generally accepted components, and the psychological functions with seven components. Career development roles include those of sponsor or advocate; coach; protector; provider of challenging work assignments; provider of exposure; giver of information; giver of political information; teacher; provider of feedback and/or constructive confrontation. Psychosocial roles include counselling; being a role model; giving acceptance and confirmation; developing trust; giving encouragement, guidance and friendship. The literature on mentoring functions and processes is not discussed in detail in this review as comprehensive overviews of work in both European and British and also in American contexts are easily accessible (see for example: Kram (1988), Dreher and Ash (1990), Chao, Walz and Gardner (1992), Douglas (1997), Clutterbuck and Megginson (1999), Cotton and Ragins (1999), Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) and Bozeman and Feeney (2007)).

Despite the wide range of functions in mentoring discussed in the literature, Jacobi (1991) suggests several common characteristics:

- Mentoring relationships are helping relationships usually focused on achievement where the mentor provides assistance to the protégé to succeed in the workplace or in academic contexts. A traditional line manager or teacher helps the subordinate or student perform specific tasks properly, whereas the mentor helps in the achievement of broader and longer-term goals. The mentor does not necessarily have the formal status or authority of the line manager or teacher.

- Mentoring includes any or all of three broad components: direct assistance with career and professional development; psychological and emotional support and role modelling.
- Mentoring relationships are reciprocal relationships. Benefits derived by both mentors and mentees can be tangible in nature or they can be emotional and do not include remuneration for service.
- Mentoring relationships are personal relationships requiring direct interaction between the parties. They involve an exchange of information about the unwritten aspects of the workplace which cannot be obtained from public documents.
- Mentors usually have greater experience, influence and achievement within a particular workplace or environment than their protégé.

Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) propose an integrated model which combines the North American sponsorship approach to mentoring, and the European developmental approach to mentoring to broaden the scope of mentoring beyond corporate institutions.

Carter and Lewis (1994) devised a 'four bases mentoring model' in which four bases or dimensions of competence involved in mentoring (Figure 2).

They identify the organisational base where the success of mentoring depends on the positional strength of the mentor and the readiness of the organisation. There needs to be visible top management support and a shared recognition of how learning happens within the organisation. The second, the development base relates to the readiness of the organisation in recognising that it needs constant adjustment through development. The third, interpersonal base is between the mentor and learner/mentee which includes counselling and coaching. The fourth, context base covers types of programme, objectives and selection of mentors and mentees. The model is a useful holistic one for analysing mentoring in organisations. It could be used in the public service for the mentoring of CDWs.

Yeomans and Sampson (1994) regard mentoring as a role with three dimensions, each of which relates to one of the three broad areas of concern in their model. They describe those dimensions as structural, supportive and professional as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 2 Four bases mentoring model

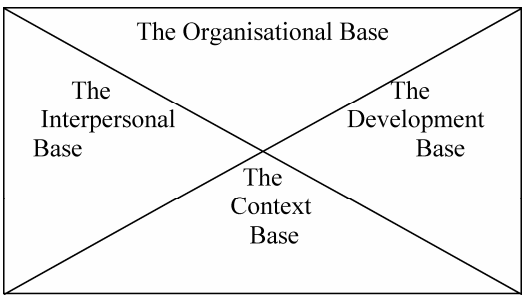


Figure 3 Dimensions and elements of the mentor's role

Role	Role Dimension	Role Element
MENTOR	Structural	Planner, organiser, negotiator, inductor
	Supportive	Host, friend and counsellor
	Professional	Trainer, educator and assessor

In the structural dimension, the mentor plays a key role of making sure that the conditions exist in the workplace which enable learners to perform effectively.

The second dimension of mentoring is the supportive dimension linked to the nature of the relationship between mentor and learner/mentee. Mentors can help mentees feel comfortable and help in minimising the stress of situations encountered in the workplace. The third dimension of mentoring is the professional dimension concerned with the career development.

Yeomans and Sampson's model differs from the models proposed by American writers like Anderson and Shannon (1988), Kram (1988) and Cohen (1999), and also from models proposed by British and European scholars Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002), and Carter and Lewis (1994) in that it includes the role of assessor as a mentoring role. Hay (1995), Clutterbuck and Megginson (1999) and others in the developmental ethos of mentoring maintain that mentors should not assess, evaluate or supervise the mentees – their role should be off-line. There is increasing research showing that line managers and supervisors are also involved in mentoring their direct reports (Payne and Huffman, 2005) and this appears to be case in the CDW programme.

Traditional mentoring is designed mainly with organisational self-interest uppermost and the mentor grooms the mentee primarily to suit organisational needs (Hay, 1995). Transformational mentoring in the South African context has a much wider scope in that the transformation of society is a part of the national agenda.

One model for considering human capital development is through the transformational mentoring model (Geber, 2004) see Figure1. Transformational mentoring involves the establishing of learning alliances for professional development and a commitment to social and organisational change (Geber, 2004). The argument for using this model in human capital development programmes is that transformation needs to be clearly articulated as part of the mentoring agenda. Unless it is, the chances are that the changes which happen during the mentoring process will be limited to personal and some professional development and will not effect the overall transformation of the organisation or society.

Geber (2003a) notes an additional role for mentors not previously made explicit in the literature. This is the transformation role and has three components: change agent, manager of diversity and role model. Mentors in the context of social transformation, make special efforts to integrate new employees into their departments to overcome institutional barriers and help them to manage the transition from learner to colleague or

co-worker, to shield them from being exploited and overworked, and to help mentees manage diversity and prejudice if they are working in contexts which are racially polarised.

The model of mentoring implicit in the CDW programme appears to be a composite of the traditional roles found in the mentoring literature. Mentoring in the CDW programme appears to be mainly developmentally focused, but it departs from the traditional one-to-one model commonly used and also requires CDW mentors to perform the role of assessor (Mentoring Strategy Document, 2003).

Section 4 reports on the qualitative research methodology used in the study, the research sites and participants. The data collection and analysis are briefly described.

4 Methodology

This study is a qualitative interpretative one in which data were collected in focus group interviews using a semi-structured interview schedule in Tshwane (Pretoria) metropolitan municipality in Gauteng province and eThekwini (Durban) metropolitan municipality in KwaZulu Natal. Focus groups are internationally recognised as a useful method for studying dominant cultural values and for examining workplace cultures (Kritzinger, 1995).

4.1 Sample selection

Participants were chosen from the first cohort of learners throughout the country who completed the learnership in 2005 (State of Public Service Report, June 2005). The sample is a criterion-based sample (Cresswell, 1998), as all the participants in the sample have experienced formal mentoring in higher education (Criterion 1) and each of them has been in a formal mentoring relationship in higher education for at least six months (Criterion 2). Permission to interview the 26 participants was granted by heads of department of local government of two of the largest metropolitan municipalities in South Africa: in Gauteng Tshwane Metro and Kwa Zulu Natal eThekwini Metro. Gauteng was one of the front-runners in implementing the CDW programme and Kwa Zulu Natal has the fastest growing urban municipality in South Africa. The sampling method is a purposive non-probability sampling (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

In the Gauteng Tshwane Metro, 16 participants – 9 men and 7 women took part in this study. They completed the learnership in March 2005 and began working in their wards and later in municipalities in urban areas, predominantly in townships with some informal settlements.

In the Kwa Zulu Natal eThekwini Metro, ten CDWs and two mentors were interviewed. The CDWs work in townships where some wards consist of hostels and informal settlements or in predominantly rural wards with tribal authorities or in semi-urban wards with informal settlements. Both female mentors work in the department of community participation. One mentor is the supervisor of community mobilisers with three years experience in the community participation cluster. The other mentor works in the office of the councillor in the rural based management as the organiser and administrator.

Table 1 Biographical information of mentee community development workers in this study from the first training cohort in 2005

Gauteng Tshwane metro			*Kwa Zulu Natal eThekwini metro*			
Age group	*Men*	*Women*	*Age group*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*
20–25	0	1	20–25	1	3	5
26–30	1	3	26–30	4	1	9
31–35	5	1	31–35	0	1	7
35–40	3	2	35–40	0	0	5
Total mentees	9	7	Total mentees	5	5	26

Source: Motlhake (2006)

4.2 Data collection and analysis

CDWs in the two participating municipalities were interviewed in August and September 2005 in focus groups as the municipalities were willing to provide somewhat limited time for the data collection and used a weekly meeting time in a central venue in the municipality for the focus groups. Motlhake (2006) conducted the interviews in English although he used some Pedi and Tswana language where participants had difficulty understanding English (Table 1). The focus groups produced intensive, rich and in-depth data about the relationships as described by Patton (1990), who suggests using few, information-rich cases in order to learn a great deal about concerns central to the purpose of the research. Focus group interviews with participants were tape recorded and transcribed.

The data were analysed in the process of 'making sense of the data' (Merriam, 1998, p.178) by coding according to the categories suggested by the literature review, such as the mentor roles proposed by Cohen (1995) and Geber (2003a). The thematic content analysis of all the interviews was conducted according to the constant comparative method described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994). The method allows the researcher to construct categories or themes by 'continuous comparison' of items or units of data with each other in order to find recurrent patterns in the data (Merriam, 1998). Two main categories of data were uncovered in this process and these are discussed in Section 5 detailing the findings of the study.

5 Research findings

Mentoring is one of the key components of the implementation of the CDW learnership capacity-building programme. The model used in the CDW programme makes use of multiple mentors in several hierarchical levels in government. This is an innovative approach which is designed to assist provincial and local government in better communication from grassroots up to the legislature.

Mentors are not given specific training in mentoring CDWs, but are briefly exposed to the contents of the CDW learnership course material. The mentor, according to the CDW Toolkit (2004), is expected to play the following roles: supporter, sounding board, catalyst, networker, advocate, advisor, source of information, listener, emotional support,

role model and coach who teaches managerial and technical skills, and professional and personal developer.

5.1 Workplace mentoring in eThekwini (Durban) metro

Mentors are given sparse input about their role in the programme. The concept of mentoring is defined in the CDW course manual, but it is conflated with the much narrower concept of coaching. It is reduced to a list of roles without any notion of the grouping of career development roles and the psychosocial supportive roles. Workplace mentors in this metro are not adequately trained to function as mentors, but are briefly exposed to the CDW curriculum and are given the 'CDW Toolkit'(manual) unstructured 'shopping list' of mentor roles. One mentor has this to say about her role in the programme:

> "As the municipal official, I'm getting paid for supervising the mobilisers, which is what I was hired for and not for mentoring the CDWs which is additional. As mentors, we were taken through training which involved going through the CDW curriculum so that when we mentor them, it should not be based on our experience only. Also to make it easy for us to assist them with their assignments because we know what is in the curriculum, e.g. assignment involving the Integrated Development Plans".

The mentors do not operate in isolation and play an important part in the integration of the CDW into the municipal system. Mentors network with other public service colleagues, as they are already known in the municipality and local government structures. As the environment in which CDWs operate is challenging, mentors give the CDWs emotional support, listen to their problems and give feedback. One mentor described her role like this when she said:

> "Within Rural Area Based Management unit, the area manager and I first invited councillors in the wards where the CDWs were operating to a workshop. In this workshop, we introduced the CDWs and explained why they were there so that the councillor will not feel threatened. Then, we had the workshop with Amakhosi (headmen), all 17 of them in our area. We introduced CDWs so that they can be comfortable working with Amakhosi".

Learners viewed mentors as source of information. Some projects were much more challenging and learners needed more advice and guidance, on how to solve some problems they encountered in the workplace. Carter and Lewis (1994) regard these as activities for the interpersonal base. The mentors meet the learners every Friday to discuss their work. One of the mentors put her responsibilities like this:

> "I'm always available if one of my CDWs wants to see me outside my Friday sessions. My responsibilities include looking at their progress in acquiring the workplace experience and issue tracking which is basically information gathering in solving a problem and referring the problem to the relevant department and continuing to assist with the necessary help that person needs until the problem is solved. I also facilitate meeting between CDWs and departments".

This confirms reports in the literature about the career development and psychosocial roles performed by mentors (Kram, 1988; Buckley and Caple, 1991; Carter and Lewis, 1994; Cohen, 1999; Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2002; Geber, 2004). Mentors, although

briefly appraised of their roles, are committed to the process and do perform the most necessary roles.

CDWs in eThekwini have workplace mentors who were introduced to them during the early stages of the learnership. This made a huge difference, because the mentors created supportive environment for CDW to balance the fieldwork and academic work. Mentors play the role of networking as they are already known in the municipality and local government structures. One mentor put it this way:

> "I definitely think they needed me because without a mentor they would not have gone so far because each and everything is challenging. In order for them to get help from one department, they needed a recommendation letter to introduce them and clearly state their case or problem. Sometimes, I had to phone first to inform them because some department officials needed prove that these guys are CDWs before they could help them. Sometimes, I even phoned councillors to inform them about CDWs who were coming to seek help from them in connection with their assignments. If it was not for us their work would not have been easy".

As the environment in which CDWs are operating in is challenging, mentors are also giving the CDWs emotional support and listening to their problems. Mentors were also source of information and play an important role of managing the transition by CDW from trainee public service workers to become full public service workers. This transition is captured above the mentor puts one of her responsibilities as monitoring the progress of acquiring the workplace experience by transforming society, especially the poor in accessing adequate information about government services. She went on to say:

> "I make sure that they participate in all municipal programmes, e.g. community-based planning and community-based structures to acquire knowledge of how they work".

The KwaZulu Natal provincial government has allocated the sum of ZAR12 000 annually per CDW for stationery, telephone and fax services. The stationary is used for writing report when compiling the community profile and recently when they were conducting the African peer review mechanism workshops for the community. The presence of the provincial mentor and district coordinator at local level makes it easy for the performance of the CDWs to be monitored and helped where necessary.

5.2 Mentoring in Tshwane (Pretoria) metro

When the interviews took place, CDWs in Tshwane had been working for ten months after the learnership training had ended, but reported that workplace mentors had not been appointed for them. CDWs themselves are uncertain about what help to expect from mentors and from their managers.

> "During the learnership I got the impression that the mentor will be someone who will always be available to help us, somebody who will accompany me to the field. However, I discovered that they already had jobs to do and we were just extra responsibility to them which I sometimes, find as a burden to them".

In the Tshwane metro, the CDWs were not introduced to the community or municipal departments. They were only introduced to the offices of the Mayor and Speaker. As a result, they struggle with a problem of recognition. One of them put it like this:

> "When we refer community problems to government departments, we do not get any response. Tshwane municipality is not accommodating all organs of civil society, like the CDW officials, which might be as a result of incompetence or lack of interest. We, CDWs and ward committees are not used at all. I think there is a need for a team that can coordinate the problems of the CDW and contact the relevant department rather than dealing with individual CDWs".

The support that they get from the local municipal government is merely the provision of office space without computer facilities or fax and e-mail. However, the office of the Speaker based in the municipality helps with things like urgent calls and photocopying. To emphasise the lack of institutional support structure, one CDW said:

> "There is no support of any kind from anyone. In terms of solving some of the problems, I usually consult the paralegal books. We need technical support in the form of infrastructure of contacting and interacting with government departments".

In the Tshwane Metro, support from the provincial government is minimal. The CDWs do not receive any money for stationary and are currently writing and faxing or e-mailing reports using their own money or sometimes using facilities in the Speakers office in the municipality. The communication between the CDW and the provincial office happens mostly when the provincial officials need the reports. One participant summarised this by saying:

> "We should be getting support from the local government department at the provincial level, but we are getting no support at all".

It is clear that CDWs performance cannot be properly monitored because there is no one at local level supervising or mentoring them. This also negatively affects provincial government's promotion of inter-sectoral collaboration at district level, as highlighted by the CDW literature, because of inadequate involvement.

Personal and career development of CDWs as well as transformation of the local communities is jeopardised by lack of adequate mentoring in the workplace and at the Provincial level. Transformation of South African society is hampered by lack of integration of mentoring in programmes like the CDW programme.

6 Discussion

The findings in this study show that there are two major areas of concern for the successful implementation of mentoring in the first cohort of CDWs. The first centres on the conceptual framework on which the mentoring in the programme is based and the second looks at the effective integration of mentors into the process and the availability or lack of mentoring in the workplace.

6.1 Conceptual framework of mentoring in the community development worker programme

Mentoring is defined in the Mentoring Strategy Document (2003), but not in the CDW training manual. Consequently, the CDWs, their training facilitators and mentors have to decide by implication what mentoring is. The emphasis in the training manual is on

coaching managerial and technical skills which narrows the role of the mentor considerably.

The transformational mentoring model (Geber, 2004) for building human capital can be implemented by establishing learning alliances for professional development and a commitment to social and organisational change. The rationale for using this model in human capital development programmes is that transformation which is clearly articulated as part of the mentoring agenda is likely to affect the overall transformation of organisations and society.

The mentoring model used in the CDW programme is poorly conceptualised and not made clear to the mentors involved in the mentoring process. The model used in the CDW programme makes use of multiple mentors in several hierarchical levels in local government. This is an innovative approach, but erratically carried out in practice because there is no robust network of mentoring practice at provincial, local and workplace levels. Mentoring is conflated with coaching, supervision and assessment and is used as a catch-all concept without a clear understanding of what the responsibilities the various mentors should be.

The CDW mentoring model names many key players as 'mentors'. The model is hierarchical in the sense that these mentors operate from different levels in various positions of power. The mentor with most position power is the provincial mentor, because this person forms part of the decision-making body in the provincial legislature. However, provincial mentors are the most remote from the workplace. Therefore, despite this powerful position, provincial mentors depend on the other mentors at lower levels for the success of their role. If workplace mentors are missing, then CDWs are deprived of a vital resource for effectively doing their work.

Although there are multiple 'mentors' in the CDW model, the workplace mentor is the pivotal to the model. Workplace mentors play an important developmental role because they have experience of the work environment, and perform career development and psychosocial functions for mentees. Perhaps it is a misnomer that this model calls all three role players 'mentors'.

CDW mentors perform more roles than are traditionally associated with mentoring; mentors act as supervisors and assessors. Clutterbuck and Megginson (1999) emphasise an off-line mentoring relationship between the learner and the mentor where the mentor has less to do with performance management of the learner and much to do with developing the learner psychosocially and intellectually. Yeomans and Sampson (1994) include the role of assessor in their model. When the mentor is involved in assessment, learners may find it difficult to build trust and find common ground with a 'mentor' who has assessor or supervisory functions. Some organisations do make use of managers and supervisors as mentors and it seems that the public service does just that, consciously adding the assessor role for mentors in the CDW programme. This is designed so that learners/mentees feel accountable to several mentors and can expect support both in the academic aspect of the training and in the workplace.

When workplace mentors are absent from the process, the lack of mentoring of CDWs could lead to the ineffective implementation of the programme and inadequate development of CDWs and a continued poor uptake of government services in the communities, they are supposed to serve.

6.2 Lack of mentoring

Possibly because the CDW programme was one of the first implemented in Gauteng, and perhaps somewhat hastily so, most of the mentoring components of the model were simply not established for the first two cohorts of CDW learners in the province. In the absence of workplace mentors in Tshwane, CDWs hold weekly peer mentoring meetings. They share experiences about particular problems that they have encountered in the past and how they solved them. Most of the time, those with more experience in community development work helped the less experienced ones. A comment about their weekly meeting goes like this:

> "Our regular weekly meetings are also helpful in that we draw from each other's experiences and strengths. With regard to the weekly meetings, I feel that we should be holding them every time we come from fieldwork because we are getting a lot of help and direction from them".

Peer mentoring is regarded as a non-traditional approach to mentoring (Harvard Business Essentials, 2004). It points out the drawback of this kind of mentoring as 'lacking the power of high level mentors' like 'sponsorship, protection, challenge (through new assignments) and role modelling that many people need'.

CDWs without workplace mentors are denied the opportunity of more experienced mentors who could contribute to their professional and personal development. Lack of integration into the municipal system affects communication between CDWs and government departments. This affects the confidence and morale of the new CDWs and hampers their career development. It places the transformation of communities in jeopardy and perpetuates poor service delivery in communities which need it most.

In a study of public participation in South Africa carried out in 2007, Buccus et al. (2008) found that all municipalities in the country reported having CDWs working in them, but that confusion existed as to their precise role and relationship to local role-players. Further, it is not clear to whom they account in local and provincial government, and how they should relate to the local council, officials or ward committees. The confusion which surfaced in 2005 has apparently not been addressed and appears to be rooted in the conceptualisation of the CDW role, the learnership that they undertake and unclear expectations of the mentors and direct supervisors and their lack of training as mentors.

Mentors and mentees in this study have confirmed that mentors fulfil many of the roles and functions traditionally associated with mentoring. Mentors provide both career development functions and psychosocial functions, such as those described by Kram (1988), Anderson and Shannon (1988) and Cohen (1995). Academic mentors also provide functions specifically associated with the academic enterprise and supervision of tertiary education (Geber, 2006).

Although there is a considerable overlap in career development and psychosocial roles and functions, mentors in this study perform new functions in relation to those that are commonly performed by mentors. South African mentors in the context of public service mentoring relationships perform additional functions that specifically relate transforming the profile of the post-apartheid public service. Mentors are neither trained specifically to be aware that they will be required to perform these functions, nor are they trained in how to deal with situations affecting their mentees in the social transformation process. Mentors often operate intuitively and in an individual way, relying on a

culturally determined set of acceptable mentoring roles that are seldom articulated (Jones, 2001).

The smooth integration of mentees into their municipal wards is often more problematic than mentors anticipate. Feelings of antipathy to CDWs are fairly common, both from colleagues and from the public in the poor communities, and mentors may have to use their positions of power and authority to overcome overt displays of prejudice and discrimination. Mentors have to act swiftly and potently at the beginning of the relationship to facilitate the transition phase of the mentees' passage from the status of learner to colleague, particularly in the case of fairly young CDWs who have not worked in the public service before.

The implications of the findings in this study concern three broad areas in mentoring practice in social transformation contexts. First, there is the issue of mentor selection and training. Mentors can be exposed to the different models of mentoring and come to an awareness of their own natural style of mentoring and its implications for their mentoring actions and roles and for the ways in which they will impact on their mentees. As can be seen from the findings in this study, mentors tend toward adopting a hierarchical, apprenticeship model like that proposed by Maynard and Furlong (1993). However, as we have already shown, this is not sufficient for mentors in social transformation contexts. It would also be useful to mentors to receive training about their roles and functions, as described in the model shown in Figure 1. It is also desirable to train mentors about the specific functions incorporated in the transformational mentoring model. There is a need for mentors to be proactive in helping mentees to make the transition in status from learner to colleague.

Second, there is an issue of the organisational culture in the workplace, both at the macro and micro levels. There are policies that endorse diversity and employment equity, but there are also departmental subcultures that may hinder the mentoring of newcomers. The disjuncture between policy and practice may need to be exposed by mentors if they are sufficiently aware of it. It may also be a design flaw that the public service has not appointed a coordinator for the entire project. Lack of a specific appointment in this role places the mentoring project at risk. Weak coordination and monitoring of the mentoring process can mean that mentoring pairs which encounter difficulties in their relationship may struggle on ineffectually without seeking help until it is too late (Geber, 2003a). Boice (1992) insists that planned quarterly meetings with the mentoring coordinator is optimal to a structured programme.

Third, the institution needs to mark the newcomer's status by a formal ceremony clearly indicating the transition from learner to colleague and support it by marking the initiation with a symbolic boundary-crossing gesture (Van Maanen, 1982.) Formal acceptance is highly regarded in African culture and marks a right of passage. Ideally, this should happen as soon as CDW mentees are appointed and should be followed up by structured program workshops introducing the aims of the programme, stating the goals and desired outcomes, and allowing different understandings of mentoring to surface. Expectations can be clarified and mentors and mentees should articulate these so that mismatched expectations can be addressed (Clutterbuck, 2001) and roles defined (Jones, 2001), allowing mentors to match their behaviours appropriately to mentees' expectations early in the relationship and place more emphasis on other roles later in the mentoring or when they become necessary. Optimal integration of newcomers may result when care is taken to address issues in the social transformation context for both mentors and the working environment.

7 Conclusion

The CDW mentoring model uses multiple mentors at different levels with different positions of power in metropolitan municipalities, but the workplace mentor is the only active mentor in the process. The other 'mentors' are involved in supporting or management roles. The academic mentors fulfil their roles during the learnership, but the provincial 'mentors' are not active in the programme at this stage and perhaps calling them 'mentors' is inappropriate as they did not actually interact with CDWs at all in the first year after their learnership. Is a nice-to-have part of the programme design, but it has not been implemented. As a result, the success of the mentoring component in the early stages of the CDW programme depends on the workplace mentor. If the workplace mentor fails to do the job adequately, the morale, performance and development of the learners is affected.

Workplace mentors in the CDW programme need comprehensive training to prepare them for their role. CDW's workplace mentor training is that it should focus both on the career development process and on the psychosocial process. The training material should equip the workplace mentor with detailed techniques and strategies for initiating, maintaining and terminating the mentoring relationship with the learner which are key to the success of the relationships. Academic learnership and provincial mentors need training as well.

The CDW programme needs to be communicated to all key role players, especially in municipalities to get their commitment to the process. Municipalities and their communities are critical areas for human capital development, and South Africa cannot afford to jeopardize the opportunity of doing such essential social transformation work because of a lack of comprehensive planning, communication of the programme and adequate coordination within the programme.

A transformational model of mentoring (Geber, 2004) is suited to programmes designed for human capital development. The CDW learnership with mentoring during and after its implementation can be a very practical way of building human capital and enhancing individual and societal transformation and learning provided that mentoring is well understood and carefully integrated into programmes.

This study shows preliminary findings in an innovative public service initiative and highlights many of the challenges faced by the first cohorts of CDWs and the teething problems associated with implementing learnerships.

A longitudinal study of the implementation of the CDW programme in all provinces and municipalities could provide the South African public service with valuable information about improving and refining the programme to enhance human capital and skills development in a society recently emerged into democracy.

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