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Fighting crime in schools : the case of the Community Shepherds Project in Ficksburg, Free State Province.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this research report is my own unaided work, and that I have given full acknowledgement to the sources that I used

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MMalebese Mary Ngalo Date

Abstract

The Department of Social Development introduced the Community Shepherds life skills Project at two schools in the Ficksburg community, in the Thabo Mofutsanyane district of the Free State in 2007 due to the high rate of crime that occurred in the schools. The project targeted children with a history of criminal behaviour and learners who exhibited other forms of anti-social behaviour, and provided them with life skills that could help them face life challenges. No systematic evaluation of the project has been made since its inception and, therefore, the aim of the study was to investigate the perceived impact of the Community Shepherds Project in reducing crime in schools in the Ficksburg community in the Free State province. To achieve the aim the following objectives were identified: To establish the perceived impact of the Community Shepherds Project's life skills programme on the behaviour and conduct of learners who are participating in the project; to identify factors impacting on the successful implementation of the Community Shepherds project; and to suggest ways of strengthening the Community Shepherds Project. The study population consisted of learners who were members of the Community Shepherds Project in Ficksburg, who had participated in the project since its inception, and their parents. Teachers from the schools participating in the project and the police in Ficksburg constituted the key informants. The sample included 15 learners who were participating in the project who had been arrested for committing different offences and who displayed anti-social behaviour at home and in school, their 12 parents and 4 key informants from the police and the schools.

A qualitative research design was used to collect data from the participants in order to obtain in-depth information concerning the perceived impact of the life skills programme on the behaviour and conduct of learners who participated in the programme. Different semi-structured interview schedules were administered to the learners, their parents and the key informants. The findings reveal that the perceptions of the respondents was that the life skills programme had an impact on the behaviour of learners because the life skills that they had gained from the programme helped them to stop committing the offences that they used to commit. The life skills also helped them to stop displaying the anti-social behaviour that they used to exhibit.

The findings revealed that the factors that contributed to the success of the project included the approaches that the facilitators used to run the project, like motivating the learners in everything that they did, and the cooperation between the facilitators, the school and the parents. The findings also reveal that the good team work that occurred between the learners, support from the parents, as well as support from the Department of Social Development, all contributed to the success of the project. The suggested ways of strengthening the Community Shepherds Project were that the project should be implemented in all schools in the community, including the primary and multiracial schools. It was also suggested that the project should include all youths in the community. The final suggestion was that the project should include all stakeholders in the community. The life skill projects should target unemployed youths in the communities so that they can gain skills that can help them become self-employed. The study also recommends that the life skills project should be implemented in all schools in South Africa to provide learners with life skills that can help them to face life challenges. Learners who have been involved in criminal activities should not be the only ones who are taught life skills – all learners should have the same opportunity.

Key words: Crime in schools, life skills programmes, crime prevention, behavioural problems, Ficksburg.

Table of Contents

Contents

Acknowledgements i

Declaration ii

Abstract iii

Table of Contents v

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Background 1

1.2 Rationale and Problem Statement 4

1.3 Aim and Objectives 6

1.3.1 Aim 6

1.3.2 Objectives 6

1.4 Research Questions 6

1.5 Organization of the Study 6

CHAPTER 2: CRIME IN SCHOOLS 7

2.1 Introduction 7

2.2 Theories of Crime 7

2.3 School Crime in Western Societies 9

2.4 The Causes of Juvenile Offending in Western Societies 10

2.5 Measures Taken to Prevent Crime in Schools in Western Societies 12

2.6 Crime in South African Schools 14

2.7 The Causes of Juvenile Offending in South Africa 16

2.8 Crime Prevention Measures in South African Schools 20

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 24

3.1 Research Design 24

3.2 Study Area 24

3.3 Study Population 24

3.4 Sampling 25

3.5 Research Instruments 25

3.6 Methods of Data Collection 26

3.7 Pre-Testing of Research Tool 26

3.8 Data Analysis 26

3.9 Method of Data Verification 27

3.10 Limitations 28

3.11 Ethical Considerations 28

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA 29

4.1 Introduction 29

4.2 Impact of the Project on the behaviour and conduct of learners 30

4.3 Factors that contributed to the success of the Community Shepherds Project 36

4.4 Suggestion for strengthening the Community Shepherds Project 42

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 46

5.1 Introduction 46

5.2 Summary of the Findings 46

5.3 Conclusions 49

5.4 Recommendations 50

REFERENCES 51

APPENDICES 55

APPENDIX A: Participant information sheet 55

Appendix B: Consent form for participating in the study 56

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview for schedule for the teachers 57

Appendix D: Semi structured interview schedule for the learners 58

Appendix E: Semi structured interview schedule for the police 59

Appendix F: Semi structured interview schedule for the learners' parents 60

APPENDIX G: Consent form for learners participation in the study 61

Appendix H: Letter of permission from Tlotlisong High school 62

Appendix I: Letter of permission from MJ Mohlahli High school 63

Appendix J: Letter of permission from the Department of Social Development Free State (Bethlehem) 64

Appendix K: Letter for confirmation of counseling offering 66

Appendix L: Ethics Clearance Certificate 67

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Crime is one of the most haunting problems in South Africa. The level of violent crime in South Africa is so high that one would be forgiven for calling the country a special kind of war zone (Pringle, 2010). Makhanya (2000) indicates that all South Africans recognize crime as an issue of national concern today. Makhanya (2000) further indicates that the general epidemic of crime sweeping South Africa goes so widespread that all South Africans fear that crime has to be defeated in order for us to achieve peace, stability and development. Due to the high level of crime occurring in South Africa, there is no peace in families, societies or the country as a whole. The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (2010) revealed that when comparing data on violence in South Africa with other counties; statistics demonstrates that South Africa is amongst the most violent countries in the world. Pringle (2010) further mentions that violent crime is perpetrated by young men who are members of formal and informal groups and that violent crime weakens South Africa's economic and social development.

According to Tours (2008), the high crime rates are predominantly concentrated in certain township areas where there has been a rise in drug-related crime and where crime bosses and gangs have taken over in the absence of adequate law enforcement. Tours (2008) further mentions that these areas are key contributors to the crime rate in the country. This is the case because there is a lot of competition among people. People compete for cars, clothes and other properties which in the end will cause people to engage in criminal activities. The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (2010) indicates that the most common offences that are committed in South Africa include, murder, rape, fraud, aggravated robberies, burglaries of businesses, car theft, aggravated assaults and burglaries of houses.

The following factors have been identified as precipitating factors that make South Africa a violent country. Firstly, "issues of inequality, poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalization contribute to crime in South Africa. Societies with high levels of inequality tend to have high levels of violence indicating that inequality is a key driver of violence. Inequality is also inter-related with other social problems such as those of poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalization in

South Africa" (The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2010, p.3). Secondly, "there is an issue of vulnerability of young people linked to inadequate child rearing and poor youth socialization. In South Africa, the childhood experiences of many children and young people in South Africa involve multiple levels of adversity including poverty, unstable living arrangements, absent, indifferent, or violent fathers. In South Africa, children are exposed to many risk factors which enhance the chances that they will become involved in criminality and violence" (The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2010, p.4).

Thirdly, South Africa is a unique society in that citizens tend to perceive violent crime as the norm. They therefore have a high tolerance for violent crime and ambivalent attitudes regarding crime and the law. Indeed, the culture of violence spurned by Apartheid, means that South Africans have been socialized into viewing the violence that characterizes everyday life as something to be expected, when this extent of violent crime is far from normal. Moreover, this history has created the widely held belief that violence is the only way to resolve conflicts or other difficulties. Violence is therefore perceived as both necessary and justified among South African society. Factors that perpetuate these beliefs and thus continue the cycles of violence include a high exposure to violence in the family and community, men's perception that they need to use violence to protect themselves and to obtain the respect of others, and beliefs among men that legitimizes coercive sexual behavior against women" (Pringle, 2010, p.2).

Fourthly, the criminal justice system has many weaknesses. "The key instrument for dealing with violent crime offenders in South Africa is to incarcerate them in South Africa's correctional facilities. However, the deplorable status of South Africa's correctional institutions means that they only serve to reinforce the criminal and violent tendencies displayed by offenders. Indeed, South Africa's correctional facilities serve as a place from which offenders can consolidate their place in criminal networks. Moreover, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes to re-socialize offenders back into communities are inadequate at best and non-existent at worst…criminal justice system remains a double-edged sword which continually reinforces the problem of violence and crime whilst it also mitigates it" (Pringle, 2010, p.3). Other key factors identified comprise the easy availability of firearms and other weapons in South Africa, and the easy access to, and widespread use and abuse of, alcohol and drugs.

In the Ficksburg community which is the study area, dagga is easily accessible. Most schools are surrounded by taverns where alcohol and cigarettes are sold to learners. Burton (2008) indicates that it is not surprising that in South Africa, there is easy access to alcohol and drugs in communities surrounding schools. Most offences are committed by juveniles and these juveniles are used by older people because they have a perception that young people are not arrested because of the diversion programmes. Thus the cases will be withdrawn afterwards. Although diversion is important for young offenders, it has been inappropriately used in the Ficksburg community. The probation services statistics from the Department of Social Development for the period 2004-2007 indicate that most juveniles in the area who have undergone diversion programmes have reoffended. Unfortunately, the diversion programmes do not offer follow-up activities.

Burton (2008, p.15) states that schools exist primarily to ensure that effective learning takes place so that children are socially and intellectually prepared to become responsible adults who actively participate in, and make a positive contribution to, society. A number of factors stand in the way of effective and efficient learning at schools. Not least of these is school-based crime and violence, which is a barrier to education and threatens to deprive and even, deny learners their constitutional right to education. Crime has become prevalent in both primary and secondary schools. Schools are no longer regarded as safe places where children go to learn and have fun: they have become danger zones. The types of crimes that are committed by learners are mostly serious crimes like murder, rape and sexual harassment. Prinsloo (2006) observes that reports in newspapers from 1999 to 2004 show that the sexual harassment of female learners is a serious problem in many of our schools. Prinsloo (2006) further mentions that learners are also involved in victim-less crime such as the use of alcohol and smoking marijuana, and conventional crimes such as vandalizing school property, theft and abuse. To show the incidences of crimes that are taking place in schools, “the then Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor indicated that there were 115 cases of assaults, 111 acts of sexual violence and four acts of violence involving a firearm that were reported to have occurred in South African schools during 2004” (Smit, 2007, p.53).

According to De Wet (2003, p.168) crime that occurs in schools does not only affect the offenders and the victims, but the educators, the parents, the community, the Department of Education and the country’s economy as well. The quality of education is also affected by the high rate of crime taking

place in schools. For instance, some learners drop out of school. The school drop-outs end up as drug addicts, violent criminals and anti-social individuals, rather than being assets to the nation. "Through the National Department of Education and a number of Provincial Departments of Education, the government is exploring various programmes to address the most visible and immediate evidence of lawlessness and anti-social behaviour within the school environment but the situation remains the same" (Burton, 2008, p.15).

The high rate of crime among juveniles in the Thabo-Mofutsanyane district, in the Free State gave rise to the Community Shepherds life skill Project. The Community Shepherds Project started in 2007. The aim was to reduce the high rate of crime that took place in the participating schools: MJ Mohlahli and Tlotlisong secondary schools. The project targeted learners from grade eight up to grade eleven. The social workers from the Department of Social Development are the facilitators of the life skill programme. Life orientation teachers from the two participating schools are directly involved in the project. The presentation takes place once a week in each school after school hours.

1.2 RATIONALE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Crime has become a major social problem in South Africa today. According to the South African Police Services' annual report (2008/2009:1), during 2008/2009 a total of 2 098 229 serious crime cases were registered in South Africa. The South African Police Services annual report (2008/2009: 27) further states that in the Free State province there were 157 reported serious crimes per every 100000. This was an increase of 5, 7% as compared to the 2007/2008 period. Crime has become prevalent in schools and this has become an issue of concern for the government. According to the *People's Daily Online* of May 18, 2007, the South Africa's Safe Schools call centre reported that in the Western Cape, there were 270 reports of vandalism and burglaries, 174 reports of crime, 167 reports of abuse as well as 53 reports of gang-related violence and activities in schools between January and April 2007. This goes to show the extent of the problem in schools. The Ficksburg community in the Free State has also not been spared from this menace.

According to statistics from Probation Services in the Department of Social Development in Ficksburg (Free State) between April and December 2007, 159 juveniles aged between 14-18 years were found to be in conflict with the law and 60% of them were not first-time offenders. Most of them were

learners coming from the two participating schools. The crimes were committed within the school premises during breaks and after school hours. Of those reoffending, 99 were boys and 60 were girls. The criminal activities included possession of drugs and weapons, vandalism, common assault grievous bodily harm, abuse and theft.

Mostly, offenders belong to gangs and their victims are newcomers, girls and members from different gangs (in the same schools or from different schools). Crime occurring on school premises does not only affect the learners but also the educators and the community at large. Crime has some consequences for the learners, such as dropping out of school, poor school performance, and teenage pregnancies. Crime may also result in poor relationships between the learners and the educators, and between the educators and the parents. The school thus ceases to provide a conducive learning environment. Learners fail to achieve their full potential and as a result they will be unable to secure employment.

In view of the rising crime in Ficksburg in the Free State, the Department of Social Development decided to take preventative measures by introducing the Community Shepherds project in 2007. The project was established in two Ficksburg schools and mainly targeted children with a history of criminal behaviour. However the project also includes learners who exhibit other forms of anti-social behaviour. The project seeks to reduce the high rate of crime occurring in Ficksburg schools by addressing the individual problems of learners and by providing the learners with life skills. These life skills include gardening, vocational and entrepreneurship skills. The expected outcomes of the life skills programme are as follows: reducing the crime levels in the community and in schools, reducing the number of school drop-outs and preventing teenage pregnancies. The other expectation was that learners would acquire life skills which would empower them to face life challenges. However, no systematic evaluation of this project has been made since its inception hence its impact is unknown. In the absence of systematic evaluation, the researcher would like to investigate the perceived impact of the life skills programme in reducing crime in the two schools in Ficksburg. The researcher is also of the opinion that this study is vital in order to give an indication of whether the project as it operates in Ficksburg has been successful in terms of its stated objectives or not. The results of the study will be useful to the Department of Social Development for its programmatic intervention and also to inform policy. The study will also add to our knowledge base on crime prevention.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Aim

The aim of the study was to investigate the perceived impact of the Community Shepherds Project in reducing crime in schools in the Ficksburg community of the Free State Province.

1.3.2 Objectives

To achieve this aim the following specific objectives were identified:

- To establish the perceived impact of the Community Shepherd Project's life skills programme on the behaviour and conduct of learners who are participating in the project;
- To identify factors impacting on the successful implementation of the Community Shepherd project; and
- To suggest ways of strengthening the Community Shepherds Project

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How has the Community Shepherd Project benefited learners at the participating schools and the community?

What are the behavioural changes witnessed by parents and teachers?

Which factors are contributing to the success or failure of the project and what can be done to strengthen the project?

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter one provided an introduction to the study. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature. The research design and methodology is explicated in detail in Chapter Three, while the results are presented and discussed in Chapter Four. Chapter Five gives a summary of the main findings, as well as conclusions and recommendations emanating from the study.

CHAPTER 2: CRIME IN SCHOOLS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Crime in schools, which is referred to as misbehaviour, disruption, bad conduct or conflict in schools has been described as a problem of the first magnitude and an epidemic (Hanke, 1996). School crimes are personal crimes, consequential and harmful because they affect learners, educators and the community at large. Schools are no longer known as safe and secure environments where children can go to learn, enjoy themselves and feel protected. Hanke (1996) indicates that from 1950 to 1975, misbehaviour in the school setting shifted from acts of violence against property to those against persons and fights had shifted towards the use of weapons. School crime consists of three categories of misbehavior namely: any act judged unacceptable by the administration (e.g. violating school rules), disruption which involves group events like boycotts and behaviour that is against the law, like delinquent acts.

Despite efforts to address the problem of crime in schools, the situation remains the same. According to O'Neill & McGloin (2007), school crime has not been eliminated and, moreover, schools with high crime rates still exist in Western societies. O'Neill & McGloin (2007) also mention that due to the problem of school crime, some schools across the world have introduced an array of crime prevention techniques.

2.2 THEORIES OF CRIME

A number of theoretical formulations have emerged to account for youth misconduct. Some of these theories are strain theory, learning theory, labeling theory and control theory.

Strain Theory

According to Marsh, Melville, Morgan, Norris & Walkington (2006), strain theory indicates what sort of social conditions and situations lead some people to break rules and act in criminal or deviant ways. An example is the strain that an individual experiences within the school and family which results in weakened bonds with conventional society and promotes stronger bonds with delinquent peers. According to Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006), association with the delinquent peers increases the

likelihood of youth misconduct. The theory further states that when someone is living in a disorganized community, believes that legitimate opportunities for success are unavailable, and involvement in petty crimes leads to feelings of hopelessness, strain will occur which will cause deviant groups and activities to appear to be acceptable substitutes.

Learning Theory

According to Marsh *et al.,* (2006), behaviourists are of the opinion that any behaviour can be learned. The theory states that as people develop and interact with others, they learn through trial and error and how to behave in different ways. Depending on how and what people learn, they may or may not learn to behave in either criminal or non-criminal ways. Bezuidenhout & Joubert, (2006) are of the opinion that youths growing up in socially disorganized environments are at the greatest risk of having weakened social bonds and are more likely to commit crime, particularly when law–breaking values and attitudes can be learned and reinforced by peers.

Labeling Theory

Marsh *et al*., (2006) describe labeling as a process by which individuals and/or groups classify and categorize certain types of behaviour and certain individuals. The process of defining a youth as delinquent begins with a conflict between the youth and the community over the definition of a situation. For example, a youth might define activities such as stealing CDs from a music store and loitering in public areas as play, fun or adventure. In other words, to the youth these are normal childhood activities. Agnew (2000) indicates that the community is, however, more likely to define same behaviours as delinquent or evil. The labeling does not only relate to the activity but to the youth as well. Once the community members start to define the youth as evil, changes begin in the way that they interact with the youth. Once the youth feels that he is isolated from others, he begins to define himself as evil as well.

Social Control Theory

Marsh *et al*., (2006) state that social control theory is related to the self control of an individual which starts during the process of socialization especially in the role of a family. Socialization is a process by which individuals learn about and consider the consequences of their behaviour. Two aspects of the

theory have been identified which are: a) Lack of control in an individual and b) Opportunity to commit crime. If an opportunity to commit crime arises, an individual with low self control will commit it while an individual with high self control will not. Marsh *et al*., (2006) indicate that people who break the laws either do not have close attachments to others or do not have aims, aspirations and beliefs that make them law-abiding. Marsh *et al*., (2006) further state that young people who engage in delinquency do so because they are not strongly tied to the conventional social order and they have less self control.

2.3 SCHOOL CRIME IN WESTERN SOCIETIES

Hemphill *et al., (*2006) mention that anti-social behaviour is prevalent in Western societies such as Australia and the United States, ranging from 5% to 17% depending on the criteria used, and it rises in prevalence through adolescence. Hemphill *et al*., (2006) further state that crime is committed by both girls and boys and by all racial groups. According to Meyer, Astor & Behre (2004), a study of 110 adolescents which was conducted in Australia revealed that male and female middle and high school students were equally likely to report that they had been involved in a violent incident during the past years.

According to Hanke (1996) crimes that occur in the schools of Western societies are classified as follows: theft, withdrawal from school, protests and demonstrations, drug and alcohol abuse, vandalism which is singled out as a special case of violence. Hanke (1996) indicates that bullying involves name-calling, malicious gossip, racial slurs and petty theft of lunch money. To show that violence and the threat of violence have increased substantially in 25 years, Hanke (1996) adds that Californian schools in the United States of America have reported that over 8500 weapons had been taken away from students including nearly 800 guns, over 400 knives and 2000 explosives.

Meyer *et al*., (2004) indicate that national statistics point to physical fights as the most common form of school violence between students. It is documented that many students and teachers in elementary and secondary settings in the United States are frequently exposed to violence in and around their schools. Meyer *et al.,* (2004), further mention that students are not the only victims of crime but teachers as well. It had been reported that three percent of teachers were the victims (annually) of serious violent crime like rape, sexual assault, and aggravated assault. During the 1993-1994 school

years, 12% of school teachers were injured by students, while 4% were physically attacked by students.

According to Pitts (2001), juvenile offenders have the following characteristics: They are rated by their primary school teachers as troublesome, dishonest, aggressive and frequent liars. In adolescence, they drink more beer, get drunk more often, smoke cigarettes, gamble more heavily, have tattoos, and are more likely to smoke marijuana and engage in unprotected sex.

2.4 THE CAUSES OF JUVENILE OFFENDING IN WESTERN SOCIETIES

Cupido, Kritzinger, & van Aswagen, (2006) indicate that international research suggests that crime amongst the youth, as with any criminal act, can be attributed to many factors such as the negative influences of the community, low socio-economic status of the families, dropping out of school and single-headed households.

Pitts (2001) adds that other factors include a) pre-natal factors, b) parental supervision, c) discipline and attitude, d) broken homes and separations, e) socio-economic deprivation, f) peer influences, g) school influences and h) community influences.

According to Pitts (2001), harsh parental discipline, cruel, passive or neglectful parental attitudes, poor supervision and parental conflict, measured at age eight all predicted later conviction. Hollin, Browne & Palmer (2002), indicate that in UK, fathers and mothers use physical punishment as a way of preventing delinquency but that harsh forms of discipline have been associated with the development of delinquent behaviour. It has also been pointed out that physically disciplining a child is likely to have a damaging effect and that corporal punishment is abusive. The result of physical punishment is that the child will behave aggressively.

Pitts (2001) is of the opinion that offending is high for boys from broken families and that the children of single teenage mothers were particularly likely to be convicted. Pitts (2001) adds that where there is a lack of maternal affection or where children are reared in either unified homes with a high degree of parental separation or single parent homes, the children are also likely to be convicted and that this is the result of a lack of strong attachment to parents. Hollin *et al.,* (2002) indicate that children who have an attachment to a single parent are more likely to commit delinquent acts than those with

multiple attachments. Hollin *et al*,.(2002) add that children who come from broken homes (as a result of divorce or separated parents) display the following behaviours: They enter into sexual relations early, make poor occupational choices, develop less stable long-term relationships, develop long term problem behaviours and suffer from depression and other anxieties.

According to Pitt (2001), low economic status at ages eight to ten predict future conviction. During adolescence, if not employed, they offend more often. Hahn, Fuqua-Whitley, Wethington, Lowly, Crosby, Fullilove, *et al.*, (2007), add that low economic status is one of the risk factors for youth violence. According to Hemphill *et al.*, (2006), a family history of anti-social behaviour, unclear family rules and low monitoring of an adolescent's behaviour contribute to delinquency. In some conditions, some parents stay away from their families due to poverty and migration labour. Adolescents are left behind without proper supervision and they sometimes end up engaging in delinquent acts. In some instances some parents misuse alcohol and they do not have time to set rules for their children. Children end up losing respect for them and do not abide by any rules that the alcoholic parents set. Joubert *et al.,* (2006), add that youths who commit crimes are those who live in economically stressed families and communities and, more often or not, have histories of being victims of physical and sexual abuse, have educational and vocational skill deficits and are prone to becoming involved in alcohol and other drug abuse.

Hahn *et al.*, (2007) indicate that delinquent peers are one of the risk factors associated with youth crime. Pitt (2001) mentions that most of the activities, both legal and illegal, take place in the form of groups, while Flannery *et al*., (2008) are of the opinion that association with anti-social behaviour may further contribute to the escalation of anti-social behaviour, including substance abuse, delinquency and school problems.

Flannery *et al.*, (2006) are of the opinion that negative peer association through gang involvement increases the possibility of more serious anti-social behaviour and that attending a high delinquency school is a predictor of later convictions. However, Pitt (2001) indicates that the culture, atmosphere and organizational structure of a particular school may have a powerful influence upon the prevention of and desistance from youth crime among its students, irrespective of the problems which children bring to the school. Hemphill, *et al*., (2006) add that schools with a low interest in subjects and a high

academic failure rate are also a risk factor. Flannery *et al.*, (2008) are of the opinion that disorganized school structures with strict discipline and enforcement of rules, crowded physical space, and lack of conformity to behavioural routines can increase the propensity towards aggression and violence. Flannery *et al*.,(2008) also point out that unsupervised after school time is highly associated with increased delinquency, substance abuse and association with delinquent peers and that poor school achievement, school dropout and suspension are included.

Pitt, 2001 indicates that residence in the inner city puts children and young people in a position where they are easily influenced to become involved in crime and other forms of deviance because it is in the city that families experience difficult situations. Hemphill *et al.*, (2006) also argue that disorganized communities contribute to delinquency. Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006) indicate that non-white American youths who grow up in a neighbourhood with a high crime rate in the inner city and who have a low economic status are the most vulnerable to crime.

Flannery, Hussey, Biebelhausen, & Wester, (2006) are of the opinion that the availability of drugs, the presence of violence, a high crime rate, low neighbourhood attachment and social disorganization lead to anti-social behaviour and that large family size is a contributor to youth crime. Hollin, Browne & Palmer (2002) add that the reasons are that parents of large families may find it difficult to monitor and supervise their children and to respond to different behaviours. Another possible explanation is that large families may have less economic resources, so that the type of stress and conflict associated with poverty comes into play. Hollin, Brown & Palmer (2002) also add that having a delinquent sibling increases the risk of delinquency through a modeling effect. The more siblings that are present in the family, the greater the chance that the young person will have been exposed to delinquent behaviour.

2.5 MEASURES TAKEN TO PREVENT CRIME IN SCHOOLS IN WESTERN SOCIETIES

In the Western societies some measures are taken that could help to reduce the high rate of crime in schools. According to Hahn, *et al.*, (2007), several programmes focus on providing information about the problem of violence and how to prevent it on the assumption that providing the information to students will lead to reduced violence and change behaviour.

Pitts (2001) indicates that some schools in the UK developed school programmes to improve students' participation, enhance their study skills, increase teachers' competence and cultivate pride in schools. According to Pitts (2001), the programmes led to small decreases in delinquency. Pitts (2001) adds that cognitive-oriented programmes were developed that targeted parenting skills, classroom management skills and the social skills. However, there was no evidence that it was more successful. According to Smith & Sharp (1999) bullying is a major problem in schools. It takes place in the form of beating, tripping up, taking other pupils' belongings, name calling etc. Pitts (2004) mentions that in order to prevent bullying and anti-social behaviour both in school and outside the school in Norway, there were improvements in playground supervision, and courses on improving problem-solving skills and assertiveness were developed. The point of improving the school grounds to prevent bullying was also mentioned by Smith & Sharp (1999) when they argued that in order to prevent bullying some schools improved the quality of play through general improvements such as providing seating or climbing structures to reduce boredom, overcrowding and exclusion among students.

Smith & Sharp (1999) mention that other way of preventing bullying is through a curriculum that is rooted in cooperative values with the aim to raise awareness and empathy. Hahn *et al.,* (2007) add that in the school curriculum, more than 90% of schools teach about anger management, bullying, pro-social behaviour such as (cooperation, praise or support of others), communication skills, decision making skills, goal making skills and other techniques for avoiding conflict and violence.

The Department of Education and Science in the United States (1987) stipulates that in order to prevent school crime in Western societies, measures like improving security and strategic planning should be taken. Security includes intruder alarms, safes, door and window locks and patrols with the aim to prevent unauthorized access to the premises. The Department of Education and Science, (1987) further mentions that security goes hand in hand with coordination and planning because they are concerned with the implementation, timing and back up of security measures.

The Department of Education and Science (1987) states that when the effectiveness of security was measured, it was found that security is highly effective if the system is well designed and related to use of the building. According to Time & Payne (2008) such structural elements may be counterproductive in that students may feel like inmates, threatened and helpless, and this may stall

their thinking and learning process. Hahn *et al.*, (2007) mention that another programme that was implemented in schools was the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Programme which may also include a violence reduction component. The programme was, however, assessed to be ineffective in reducing violence or drug abuse. The other measure that was taken to prevent crime was to remove the students from school through suspension and expansion. O'Nell & McGloin (2007) mention that the method was ineffective because it negatively impacted social bonds and often led to an increase in drop-out rate. Hemphill *et al.*, (2006) add that school suspension increases the likelihood of subsequent anti-social behaviour.

Hemphill *et al*., (2006) further state that apart from expulsion, the following method was applied: the students were asked to sit outside the principal's office with work to complete. O'Nell & McGloin (2007) add that there would also be withdrawal of other privileges like school camps, and they would also attend counseling and anger management sessions, or would be moved to another school for a new start. Presently, there is the utilization of restorative justice approaches which focuses on restoring the losses experienced by victims and holding the offending student accountable for the harm he has caused.

2.6 CRIME IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

South African schools are rapidly and increasingly becoming arenas for violence not only between pupils but also between teachers and pupils. There are inter-school rivalries and gang conflict as well. According to Van Jaarsveld (2008), schools are being defined as dangerous places, war zones and unsafe institutions. Van Jaarsveld (2008) adds that school violence is a serious problem not only in South Africa, but globally and that school violence touches every country and each school in its own unique way. Burton (2008) adds that violence in South African schools impacts on children, their families and society generally. Vally, Dolombisa & Porteus (1999) are of the opinion that, although various policies and legislations have been enacted to hasten desegregation in many school communities attests to continuing violence in South African schools. It is suggested that in South Africa, juveniles and young adults commit far more crimes than the general population (Cupido, *et al*., 2006). Pitts (2001) also points out that conviction rates show that young males in South Africa are at greater risk of being convicted for a wide range of crimes than older males or females of any age

groups. According to Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006) the above statement holds with the view than crimes take place in schools where youths are gathered. Bezuidehout & Joubert (2006) mention that educators are faced with problems such as gang-related activities, the carrying of weapons and drug trafficking on the school grounds. In the research bulletin: *Snapshot results of the 2005 National Youth Victimization Study*, Burton (2006) indicates that several studies have reported on the endemic nature of violence in South African schools. The above study reported that one in five learners had been threatened or hurt by someone at school, and a third had been verbally abused by someone at school. It further mentions that the perpetrators of school violence are often learners at the school, classmates and other young people in the community.

De Wet (2003) points out that crimes that are committed in South African schools include drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution, crimes against the dignity and good name of a person, theft and murder, whereas Van Jaarsveld (2008) points out that school violence includes theft, vandalism, bullying, fighting, sexual harassment, rape, robbery, aggravated assault and threats with, or the use of, weapons.

Prinsloo (2006) indicates that, newspapers from 1999 to 2004 revealed that sexual harassment of female learners is a serious problem in many South African schools. More than 30% of girls are raped at school. It is also indicated that girls experience violence in schools and that they are raped, sexually abused, and are denied their self respect.

De Wet (2003) also points out that an empirical investigation was conducted to establish a group of Free State educators' perceptions of the scope of crime and crime–related behaviour of learners at their respective schools. The study revealed that learner on learner violence was the most common violent crime that learners tend to commit. Respondents indicated that learners at their schools either assault or threaten to assault fellow learners on a very regular basis. The respondents also claimed that learners carrying a firearm to school occurred on a regular basis at their respective schools. Learner involvement in violent gangs and their participation in gang fights were viewed by most participants as the most common deviant behaviour by learners from their schools.

De Wet (2003) adds that several school girls in Pretoria have turned to prostitution due to alcohol and drug related debts. De Wet (2003) further mentions that in the investigation made by Sithole (1996), school girls with the support of their parents, sometimes attempt to enter into sexual relationships with

their educators. He also said it happens that male learners act as intermediaries between girls and educators in exchange for alcohol and thus there are learners who are guilty of prostitution.

Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006) state that in South Africa, the quality of education and school facilities vary. Problems encountered in schools, such as in the Eastern Cape, result in some young people being inadequately prepared for improving their education at tertiary level. Bezuidehout & Joubert (2006) add that some public schools are situated in disorganized communities such as Elsies River in the Cape where violent actions are rife and school buildings are vandalized. De Wet (2003) mentions that vandalism is a serious and general problem in South African schools. De Wet (2003) points out that more than a quarter of schools in the Western Cape are regularly the target of vandals.

Vally *et al*., (1999) are of the opinion that the policy on retrenchment and redeployment of teachers in South Africa resulted in many teachers being laid–off because of severe budget cuts, often causing a teacher shortage in some schools and the severe overcrowding of classrooms. Valleys, *et al*., (2002) add that in 2002 the redeployment of teachers caused violence in South Africa. There were some protests by students. Many learners were shot, principals were injured by students, and cars were stoned in protest of the dismissal of temporary teachers and the redeployment process.

2.7 THE CAUSES OF JUVENILE OFFENDING IN SOUTH AFRICA

There are some factors that have been identified as contributing to juvenile offending in South African schools. According to Bezuidehout & Joubert (2006), there are factors or phenomena that have to be present to precipitate crime. De Wet (2003) adds that there are various factors that may also contribute to school violence like substance abuse, drug use, poor school performance, drug dealings, mental illness, joining a gang, being abused as a child, poverty, stress, incompetent parents and media influences such as television, movies, books, computer games, music and the internet. All the above factors may contribute to a pupil becoming a delinquent and using violence in schools. Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006) point out that lack of discipline is a problem that has not changed since the arrival of democracy in South Africa. After democracy in South Africa, one would have expected the crime level to drop but instead it is increasing, especially in schools. Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006) add that violence and vandalism appear to be escalating in schools and impact negatively on learners. Vandals damage windows, furniture and electrical appliances. Vandalism may sometimes be a symptom of

poverty, where children steal classroom doors to sell in order to buy food. Glanz (1994) mentions that lack of discipline is caused by rapid urbanization in South Africa particularly in black communities. Urbanization is accompanied by a breakdown of traditional norms, values and formal and informal means of social control according to the social control theory.

Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006) say that, under South Africa's apartheid system, young black high school children were marginalized and powerless. Violence was socially approved in the name of liberation. Bezuidehout & Joubert (2006) further mention that during the transition to democracy, violence remained a major problem in South African schools. Teachers are being shot and killed or robbed in school premises. The perpetrators are often part of the school governing bodies themselves and there is a lack of backup from school governing bodies or good parenting examples.

According to Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006) there is a difference between public and private schools in South Africa. Private schools have better facilities than public schools. Parents in private schools pay high amounts of class fees. Private schools have highly qualified teachers. At public schools, there is shortage of books and qualified teachers. Some public schools have no running water, toilets, tables or chairs for pupils to use. The above conditions can create relative deprivation amongst learners at public schools with the possibility of committing anti-social and criminal activities aimed at their own facilities. Malgas (2001) is of the opinion that school conditions can alienate children. As a result they may end up being drop-outs and become involved in criminal activities.

Expulsion from school is a factor in predicting future criminal behaviour. As parents are working outside the home, children spend time without parental supervision and the opportunity exists for them to commit illegal acts (Bezuidenhout & Joubert, 2006). Malgas (2001) observes that school failure is a determinant of delinquent acts. When young people fail to complete their studies, they turn to delinquency as a means to meet their needs as it becomes difficult for them to be employed. According to Glanz (1994), strain theory also indicates that the anticipation of failure is conducive to involvement in delinquent behaviour.

Communities can be regarded as contributing factors to crime. Glanz (1994) suggests that social learning theorists emphasize the effect of the environment on the development of a criminal career. According to the social learning theory, young people are exposed to criminality in their communities.

The presence of delinquent individuals and delinquent activity in a community provides both the opportunity and the role models for delinquent behaviour. Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006) note that the community also contributes to delinquency if there is an availability of substances such as drugs and alcohol, as well as a climate of violence and criminal involvement. Midgley & Graser (1975) indicate that as a result of movement from rural areas to the cities, blacks experienced conditions such as poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, limited educational opportunities, and poor recreational and leisure facilities, all of which contributed to the collapse of social control.

The high rate of crime in South Africa takes place in informal dwellings where children grow up in a violent environment and in a culture of survival. Incidences of crime, such as stealing and violence, have been internalized by these children. According to Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006), community-based violent victimization was found to be associated with young adult criminal behaviour. Yablonsky & Haskell, (1988) observe that some families are closed systems that are characterized by rigidity, inflexibility and social isolation. When violence erupts, the children become the accessible target and members from outside who could help have no space for intervention. Flannery *et al.*, (2008) point out that exposure to violence has been linked to a number of mental health, including increased depression, stress and self-destructive behaviours. Flannery *et al.*, (2008) add that children victimized by family violence are at risk for perpetrating violence later in life.

According to Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006), lack of parental supervision corresponds with criminal activities and misbehaviour. Poor parental supervision and family availability will affect adolescents' behaviour as youths choose to associate with peers who may display diverse problematic behaviour. It was also found that lack of adult supervision is the cause of violence during the hours immediately before and after school. The majority of boys spend after school hours unsupervised by an adult and most of them never receive supervision.

Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006) also indicate that in South Africa, it is not only of lack of supervision that contributes to delinquency but also a lack of parenting skills, as many parents are young or they fear their own children. In the study by Malgas (2001), it was found that children who have been abused or neglected are 40% more likely to be arrested as juvenile delinquents and adult criminals. They are also likely to steal and be arrested for violent crimes. Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006) argue

that due to the high rate of sexual abuse of children in South Africa, young boys and girls may leave their homes and turn to prostitution to escape the abuse at home and to earn a living. The findings of prison inmates in South Africa found that 44% reflected the consequences of violence, family disruption, ill-treatment as children and physical and sexual abuse.

In reaction to the violence in schools in South Africa, many have called for the reintroduction of punitive discipline such as corporal punishment. Vally, *et al.*, (1999) point out that many schools in KwaZulu-Natal openly practice corporal punishment. Vally, *et al.*, (1999) indicate that many studies have shown that, far from curbing violence, corporal punishment encourages anti-social behaviour, aggression, vandalism and perpetuates the cycle of violence. Van Jaarsveld (2008) is of the opinion that an individual's class can also play a major role in shaping individual's character. Van Jaarsveld (2008) also points out that violence occurs amongst individuals who are disadvantaged in comparison with the rest of the society. Van Jaarsveld (2008) further indicates that although that is the case, violence occurs amongst the economically, socially and politically well-off individuals as well.

Violence in schools is caused by societal cultures which encourage, tolerate and demand violence. Solving conflict and problems through violence has been a core element in South African culture and as a result, violence is used as method of solving conflict and reaching goals in schools as well. School pupils are only modeling what they see at home and in their communities which lead them to use violence as a method of resolving issues (Van Jaarsveld, 2008).

Van Jaarsveld (2008) is also of the opinion that conditions within schools themselves and the norms and societal relationships that exist within a school could also be a cause of school violence. Schools failing to implement preventative measures may result in school violence. He added that the school is seen as a place where students act out socially, aggressively and criminally the most due to the fact that the school premises are the most common social settings for youth and also the place where interpersonal rivalries take place.

2.8 CRIME PREVENTION MEASURES IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

South Africa has put in place some measures to prevent crime in schools. Some were evaluated and found to be effective while some did not meet expectations. Bezuidenhout & Joubert (2006) identify the following programmes that are aimed at preventing crime in South African schools:

Peer counseling and tutoring are provided by the Big Brother, Big Sister South Africa (BBBSSA) organization. This programme is aimed at reducing negative peer group influences. The main targets are children from disadvantaged communities, and particularly those that are from dysfunctional families. The organizers of the programme work with the Department of Education to identify children in need of these programmes from schools, children's homes, and from organizations for children with HIV/AIDS. The children are often assigned mentors who have to undergo training in order to equip them with the necessary skills. The programme has been successful because most of the children remain in school. They become free of drugs and are not involved in violent crimes.

The Youth to Youth Programme is set by Alcohol and Drug Concerns, targets youth between the ages of 14 and 21 years and is delivered to children by trained youth and adult mentors. The motto of the programme is that one can have fun without drugs. For the younger children in primary schools there is a workbook called, 'It's my life', which teaches them about coping with their feelings, what illegal substances are and the dangers they hold for them.

The Adopt a Cop Project is aimed at improving the relationship between the police and the youth. The project informs children about personal safety and matters concerning the negative effects of juvenile misbehaviour. Specially selected SAPS members who serve as role models, visit schools and nursery schools on regular basis, and the officers are available to the school when they are needed or when problems arise. The post box is displayed and children may use the post box to report any criminal behaviour taking place. This project has been a success since it builds the relationship between the police and the youth. The programme is also said to be assisting the police with building a relationship with the students and also to gain the support of students and staff to prevent violence and solve crimes.

Another programme uses puppets, stories and games to educate the children with regard to alcohol and drugs. The programme is aimed at pre-primary and early primary children. Skills training is also provided to address issues such as self-esteem and peer pressure. The focus of the programme is on the primary causes of problems like poor self-image, the inability to resist peer pressure, poor family relationships, lack of decision-making skills, and poor communication skills. The aim of the programme is to give the children the opportunity to be who they are and what they want to be.

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in South Africa works in schools through the implementation of interventions programmes that aim to make schools places of safety, schools that will be free from violence and crime. It aims at responding to crises and threats of violence and crime. Its primary goal is to build a culture of human rights and democracy. Interventions are provided by social workers or psychologists to at-risk pupils. Glanz (1994) indicates that these types of programmes are said to have little evidence of success in preventing juvenile offending. Apart from that, the programmes are expensive and time consuming (Glanz, 1994).

There is also a programme that involves teachers, children and parents in decision making. One component of the programme is the home room class where one teacher remains with a class for at least three years. In the programme, teachers are taught how to create and reinforce a positive environment for learning in class and to teach interactive learning skills. Pupils work in teams and receive recognition for team efforts. Evaluation of this programme is that children showed some improvement in school achievement but showed little change in bonding. The programme had no real effect on juvenile offending.

Glanz (1994) also states that teachers with low qualifications produce students with poor performance which contributes to delinquency. These teachers mainly resort to corporal punishment, verbal abuse and other unacceptable responses.

Van Jaarsveld (2008) describes the safer schools programme as another programme that focuses on creating and ensuring a learning environment that is safe. It is a partnership between the Department of Education and the SAPS and it deals with issues such as bullying, drugs and firearms in schools, and sexual offences but its effectiveness has not been evaluated. Another programme that is implemented in South African schools is the Peer Support Programme. The aim of the programme is

to establish support for learners with psychosocial problems in order to prevent and reduce high risk behaviour related to HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and various forms of crime (Visser, 2005, p148). In this programme, peer supporters are identified, trained and supported to implement the programme in their schools with the assistance of a teacher and student facilitators. Peer supporters identify learners with problems, support them or refer them to helping agencies. They also started awareness and information activities to prevent and reduce high risk behaviour. Visser (2005) further observes that although the concept of peer support may be a viable strategy to provide information and support to secondary school learners, the implementation of the programme plays a very important role in the extent of its effectiveness in schools.

Vally *et al*., (1999) suggest that improving school security is another strategy used to prevent crime in South African schools. The cash-strapped provincial education department offers security services to schools with either inadequate or no security. Although security is important, security fencing, burglar bars and alarm systems are only provided to schools that have expensive equipment and these are only in schools in wealthier areas. It is also said that one school in the Cape Flats installed an electric fence around its perimeter to prevent gang related acts of violence and vandalism, however, learners have been thrown against the fence by fellow learners.

O'Neil & McGloin (2007) indicate that some schools across South Africa are using an array of crime prevention techniques due to highly violent incidents taking place within the school premises. Learners whose crimes warranted arrest for breaking the law had undergone diversion programmes such as: the Youth Empowerment Scheme, Family Group Conferencing and Community Service (Pretorius & Joubert, 1997). However, it has been shown that the diversion programmes have made a very minimal impact on the learners' attitudes towards crime in South African schools.

Cupido, *et al*., (2006) indicate that the disadvantage of diversion programmes is that they do not offer follow-up sessions or support. There is a need for more rehabilitative and intensive programmes. In other words, there is a need to change or to develop what the institution is currently doing in such a way that it can be done more effectively. The institution also used to do awareness campaigns where public gatherings were organized to make people aware of crime and its consequences. The impact

was found to be positive. However, they needed to be supplemented by short term and long term programmes.

Griggs (2005) is of the opinion that there is no sustainability of the programmes that were being implemented because the Department of Social Development created programmes and then withdrew. According to Bender & Lombard (2004), the Department of Education has also implemented life skill education in schools to change unacceptable behaviours in learners which may translate into inappropriate and risky behaviour at a later stage in life. The proactive approach to crime prevention was crucial as it was to ensure that young persons who were not yet involved in crime remained so.

Other shortcomings of the diversion programmes are as follows: Most of the time, only criminal offenders were attended to. Sathiparsad & Taylor (2005) are of the opinion that social workers deal with crisis only, while supportive and preventative services are overlooked. Cheon (2008) further states that the cause of crime is a lack of necessary life skills yet social work theory and practice have been more interested in troubled youth and the services they require. Youth development is not given sufficient attention.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative and exploratory research design. A qualitative study allows participants to speak about their experiences in their own words. The researcher was able to study human experiences in great depth. The study was exploratory in nature in that it sought to establish the impact of the Community Shepherds Project in reducing crime in schools. It thus provided insight into, and an understanding of, the impact of the Community Shepherds Project.

3.2 STUDY AREA

The study took place in the Ficksburg community where crime is viewed as being high among the black population. Ficksburg is a border-post to Lesotho and it is a rural area where there is a high rate of illegal immigration from Lesotho and other African countries. The place is characterized by unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, and poor housing conditions which are factors that precipitate crime in the area (Bezuidenhout & Joubert, 2006). The high rate of unemployment is caused by the high population rate and illegal immigrants from Lesotho, who are not in possession of South African identity documents. In order to meet their needs, they resort to crime as a solution to their problems. Because it is near Lesotho, properties are stolen and transferred to Lesotho and that makes it difficult to search for the stolen goods. The area is divided into eight zones. The two zones (zone six and eight) which are near the Caledon River that divides Lesotho from the Free State are known as danger zones because most offences take place there.

3.3 STUDY POPULATION

The study population consisted of learners who were members of the Community Shepherds Project in Ficksburg, and their parents. These learners had participated in the project since its inception. As mentioned earlier, the Community Shepherds Project was established in 2007 with a view to reduce crime in the two participating schools. A total of 60 learners aged between fourteen and twenty-one years were participating in the project. Teachers from the schools participating in the project and the police in Ficksburg constituted the key informants. Only teachers involved with Life Orientation work

closely with the project. There are four teachers from the participating schools who are involved in the project. The Community Shepherds Project group also visits other schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyane district to do crime awareness campaigns through poems, speeches, dramas and debates. Group members meet after school every Tuesday for two hours.

3.4 SAMPLING

Systematic sampling was used to select members of the Community Shepherds Project who participated in the study. Each member was assigned a number ranging from one to four. All participants who were assigned number four were included in the study. Thus there were fifteen participants in the study given that the project had 60 members. Parents of the learners selected were automatically part of the sample.

All four teachers working closely with the project were purposefully selected. The researcher adopted purposive sampling to select four key informants from the South African Police Services in Ficksburg. Only police who attend school assemblies to make learners aware of criminal activities and their consequences were selected. They consisted of the two police officials from the Crime Prevention Section and two officials from the Detective's Section.

The participants are learners who were once arrested for committing different types of offences and those who displayed anti-social behaviour at school. The participants are also learners from grade eight to grade eleven and they are aged between fourteen and twenty-one. Within the project, there is a life skill programme where the participants are provided with interpersonal skills, problem solving skills, communication skills and entrepreneurship skills. Different activities like traditional dances, songs, jive and music are performed by the group. Within the group, the members share their problems and look for solutions.

3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the project members, their parents, the teachers and the police officials. Different semi-structured interview schedules were used for different participants. The use of open ended questions enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth information on issues because they allowed participants to provide detailed answers and to raise new issues. The other

reason for using semi-structured interviews was that the individual interview allowed for greater flexibility and probing on the part of the interviewer and qualifying responses on the part of the participants. The researcher used field notes and an audio recorder with permission from the research participants. The audio recorder enabled the researcher to obtain a full record of the interview which was useful for data analysis and also ensured the accuracy of the data obtained.

3.6 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher used face-to-face interviews to collect data. Face-to-face interviews enabled the researcher to have one-on-one conversations with research participants and to establish a rapport with the participants. The researcher listened and also observed research participants' gestures while conducting the interviews. The data obtained was subjected to detailed analysis from which considered conclusions were drawn. Participants were not intimidated by the interview and they provided information as expected.

3.7 PRE-TESTING OF RESEARCH TOOL

The researcher pre-tested the research tool to determine whether the questions that were going to be asked were appropriate. Three project participants that were not part of the study were interviewed as well as two police officers from Crime Prevention Section. The police were to be asked a question on the assessment of crime in Ficksburg schools. The response to the question required the police to go over all the dockets of juvenile offenders from 2007-2010. This helped the researcher to review the question and to ask them their perception about crime in the two schools that participate in the project. All questions that were for project participants were found to be appropriate. However, some of the questions required similar answers and the researcher was able to review the questions to avoid repetition.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (De Vos, Strydon, Fouche, & Delport, 2005). It is an ongoing process throughout the data collection process (Dawson, 2002). De Vos *et al*., (2005) further observe that the purpose of data analysis is to reduce data to an intelligible and interpretable form. Data from the field notes and interview

transcripts was prepared and organized before it could be analyzed. Qualitative data analysis was done during and after data collection. Data was analyzed according to the themes and concepts that were obtained during interviews. Codes were formulated and attached to the raw data and thereafter was grouped into categories. According to Dawson (2002) this is called content analysis where the researcher systematically works through each transcript assigning codes like words or numbers to specific characteristics within the text. The material from the set of interviews was classified and broken up into themes by the use of content analysis. Responses from the participants that were similar were put together through the use of comparative analysis. Finally, general conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that had been identified in data were drawn.

3.9 METHOD OF DATA VERIFICATION

According to De Vos, *et al.*, (2005), there are four methods that can be used to establish the truth value of a study which are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability .The purpose of credibility is to demonstrate that the inquiry is conducted in a manner that ensures that the subject is accurately identified and described (De Vos *et al.*, 2005). To achieve credibility, the researcher has presented the true findings of the study. The researcher used interview schedules with open ended questions to allow detailed responses from research participants. In addition, probes were used to validate the responses. The data was drawn from different participants and key informants to enable data verification as views from different participants were compared.

The researcher ensured dependability of research findings by clearly showing the methods used for data collection and analysis as well as sampling procedures employed. This will enable other readers who want to repeat the study to do so and come up with similar findings. In the view of Neuman (2007), dependability means reliability and according to him it suggests that the same thing is repeated or reoccurs under the identical or very similar conditions.

The last strategy to ensure trustworthiness of qualitative data is comformability. Comfirmability emphasizes the need to ask whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another (De Vos *et al*., 2005). The researcher used categories and themes in the analysis to allow rechecking of research findings. The researcher will also store raw data in the form of interview notes and the tape recordings in a secure place for future reference purposes.

3.10 LIMITATIONS

There was an interviewer bias because the participants provided responses that they believed would please the researcher or that would make them appear better. This was a limitation because the answers sometimes would not reflect a true picture of a phenomenon being studied. The study was limited to the Ficksburg Community only; therefore, the findings from the study cannot be generalized to other areas.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

De Vos *et al*., (2005) observe that it is advisable to mention steps to be taken to emphasize the voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw from the study at any given time. There should be measures taken to protect the welfare of the participants. Confidentiality was maintained at all times.

As some participants in the study were under eighteen years of age, permission to take part in the study was obtained from their parents. The participants were provided with consent forms which they signed as a way of showing their willingness to take part in the study. They were also informed about the identity of the researcher; that she was a student from the University of Witwatersrand and that the study was conducted as part of University requirements.

No value judgments were made about the participants' behaviour, actions and opinions. There was no imposition of personal value systems on the participants. The research proposal and the consent form were submitted to the University Ethics Committee to obtain ethics clearance.

The participants will be informed of the main findings that emerged from the study to show recognition and gratitude to them. All cited sources have been acknowledged and the research report was compiled as accurately and as objectively as possible. The raw data will be kept in secure, safe place for five years or for two years if publication of results is to be undertaken.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The aim of the study was to investigate the perceived impact of the Community Shepherds Project in reducing crime in schools in the Ficksburg community, Free State Province. The findings are presented and discussed as per the objectives of the study.

Table 4.1 Profiles of Learners

Respondent	Sex	Age	Grade	Date of joining the programme	Occupation	Marital status
1	Female	16	10	Feb 2007	Student	Single
2	Female	16	10	Jan 2007	Student	Single
3	Female	17	10	May 2007	Student	Single
4	Male	18	11	Jan 2007	Student	Single
5	Male	18	10	Jan 2007	Student	Single
6	Male	18	11	May 2007	Student	Single
7	Female	17	10	Jan 2007	Student	Single
8	Male	19	11	Jan 2007	Student	Single
9	Male	20	11	Jan 2007	Student	Single
10	Male	20	11	Jan 2007	Student	Single
11	Male	17	10	May 2007	Student	Single
12	Male	18	11	July 2007	Student	Single
13	Male	19	10	Jan 2007	Student	Single
14	Female	17	10	July 2007	Student	Single
15	Female	19	11	Jan 2007	Student	Single

Most learners are males. The participants' ages ranged from 16 to 20. All of them were in grade 10 or 11.

Table 4.2: Profiles of Learners' Parents

Respondent	Sex	Age	Occupation	Marital Status
1	Male	40	Clerk	Married
2	Female	62	Housewife	Widow
3	Female	42	Housewife	Married
4	Female	63	Domestic worker	Widow
5	Female	39	Housewife	Married
6	Female	39	Self-employed	Widow
7	Female	45	Self-employed	Widow
8	Female	79	Pensioner	Widow
9	Female	69	Pensioner	Widow
10	Female	35	Clerk	Married
11	Female	41	Domestic worker	Widow
12	Male	40	Clerk	Married

The majority of the parents were widows and only three parents were employed.

4.2 IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON THE BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT OF LEARNERS

Before the learners joined the Community Shepherds Project, they were engaged in different kinds of criminal or anti-social behaviours like theft, bullying, robbery, prostitution, abuse of other learners at school and abuse of their siblings at home. They also showed disrespect toward their parents, teachers and other people in the community. Some of the learners were stubborn, selfish and lacked self-control and self-respect. Some learners abused drugs and alcohol both at home and at school. The Community Shepherds Project provided learners with skills that were intended to help them deal with their behavioural problems. The learners acknowledged that they gained communication skills which are

the set of skills that enable a person to convey information so that it is received and understood and interpersonal skills or people skills which enable them to interact with other people.

They also gained skills in decision making which helped them to choose among solutions. The steps in problem solving include, identifying a problem, brainstorming, coming up with possible solutions, evaluating the selected option and lastly implementing it. Finally, learners gained entrepreneurship skills which prepare them to start their own small businesses or income generating projects.

The first objective of the study was to establish the perceived impact of the Community Shepherds Project's life skills programme on the behaviour and conduct of learners who are participating in the project. Learners and their parents were asked about their perceptions of the impact of the project. The key informants were also asked about their perceptions of the impact of the project.

The perceived impact of the programme was that there was a significant decline in thefts both at home and at school. This was attributed to the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills which enabled learners to start income-generating projects.

One learner pointed out that he stopped stealing from his neighbour's shop. He indicated that he sold sweets and biscuits and the money that he got from his small business helped him to meet some of his needs.

One parent said*, "After my son joined the life skill programme, he has stopped stealing and I have peace with my neighbours. He has opened a car wash and is now able to sustain himself. He used to steal food and money from my neighbours. I never had peace with my neighbours."* She pointed out that her son is no longer seen with friends during the weekends but spends most of his time at his car wash business. She also noted that her son buys food for the family with the money that he gets from the car wash business.

A key informant from one of the schools indicated that the thefts at the school had also gone down. She mentioned that learners were now free to go and play outside their classrooms leaving their books behind. She added that the brooms and other cleaning materials were not stolen anymore. A key informant from the police said,"*We do not have many cases of stolen properties among juveniles for a period of two years."*

It is thus clear that the entrepreneurial skills had enabled the learners to rechannel their energies productively. According to Lakin & Mahoney (2006) empowerment occurs when individuals, communities or organizations gain mastery over their lives and that youths who successfully cultivate both empowerment and a sense of community are more likely to develop the skills necessary to becoming healthy productive adults.

Another perceived impact of the programme was that learners were now able to communicate openly with parents, teachers and other people in the community. This is attributed to the communication skills that they had gained from the programme. One learner remarked that before she joined the programme, she never took part in class discussions. She further observed that some of the topics that were discussed in the project were sometimes presented in their class. She indicated that she now volunteers herself to lead the discussion and she said she felt proud of that.

One parent revealed that her son was now communicating well with other children in the family and sharing with them what he had learnt from the programme. The benefit of the communication skills were also echoed by the teachers when they noted that programme participants were able to communicate with other learners and their teachers at school.

The other perceived impact of the programme was that the learners stopped engaging in sexual activities with their teachers at school in exchange for food and clothes. One learner indicated that she had stopped engaging in sexual activities with her teacher who used to buy clothes and food for her. She indicated that she had learnt that in order for her to have expensive clothes, she has to work hard for them. Another learner added that she had learnt to accept the way she is and that engaging in sexual activities in exchange for alcohol or food won't help her but the solution to her hunger is to work hard in order to get food.

Another learner reported that he was no longer involved in fights as he had learnt that fighting could not solve any problem. He acknowledged that the problem solving skills that he acquired from the programme had helped him to deal with conflict situations. He said he was able to discuss and resolve issues without resorting to fighting.

One parent confirmed that the problem solving skills that her child had acquired for the programme had helped him to find solutions to his problems. She further mentioned that when her son was having conflicts with his siblings at home, he used to beat them. He used to go a number of days without talking to any one of them. She further indicated that after her son had gained the problem solving skills, he was able to resolve his conflicts with his siblings.

The perceived impact of the programme helped the learners to stop abusing other learners at school, their siblings at home and other people in the community.

One learner reported that he had stopped abusing his siblings at home. He said that when his mother was absent from home, he used to abuse his siblings because he felt that he had power over them. He indicated that he abused them emotionally, physically and financially. He further stated that after he gained some skills, he stopped abusing them.

One parent confirmed that her son had stopped abusing other children in the community. She reported that some parents in the community used to report that her son was abusing their children sexually. Since he had joined the programme, he had stopped this behaviour.

A key informant from one of the schools also confirmed that the learners had stopped abusing other learners at school. According to the teacher, those learners used to abuse other learners at school by engaging in sexual activities with them without their permission. She further reported that the learners used to abuse both boys and girls sexually and that they used to target the grade eight learners.

The other perceived impact of the programme was that learners had stopped misusing drugs and alcohol both at home and at school. Some learners stated that they had stopped abusing alcohol and drugs both at home and at school. One learner said*, "I never thought I would stop to smoke dagga. I used to smoke at least five times a day. I did not care whether there were some people around me or not. I even smoked in the presence of my mother. She used to shout at me but I did not care. Now that I know the consequences of doing so, I have stopped doing it."*

A key informant from one of the schools confirmed that the learners had stopped abusing alcohol on the school premises. She indicated that in most cases, the learners used to come to school drunk especially on Mondays. She reported that they were becoming used to that situation. According to her,

many steps had been taken but the situation remained the same. She further added that since the programme had been running, the learners had stopped abusing alcohol on school premises.

One of the perceived impact of the programme was that it helped the learners have managed to build good relationships with their parents, teachers and other learners at school. This was attributed to the interpersonal skills that they gained from the programme. One learner indicated that he had built strong relationships with his family members. He pointed out that he had stopped spending time outside the family and felt that it was important to develop a sense of belonging because he now respected his mother. Another learner added that he had built good relationships with the teachers and other learners at school. He pointed out that he had started greeting his class mates every morning and he is able to share his personal issues with his class teacher.

Some parents confirmed that they now have good relationships with their children because of the interpersonal skills that their children gained from the programme.

Bernstein & Grey (1997) observe that successful relationship building helps to establish mutual trust and confidence and an environment that is conducive to change.

The acquisition of interpersonal skills also helped the learners to have self-respect and to respect their parents and their teachers at school. One learner indicated that he started to respect himself after the acquisition of interpersonal skills. He pointed out that he used to smoke dagga every morning before the classes began. He further indicated that he did not care when the teachers complained about the smell in the class. He said he has now stopped using dagga at school.

Another learner pointed out that he had learned to respect his teachers at school. He said, *"I used to make noise purposely in class knowing that the teachers were going to expel me from the class. The expulsion gave me chance to go and smoke in the school toilets. Lately I started respecting my teachers and behaved well in class."*

A key informant from one of the schools confirmed that the learners were now showing respect to their teachers. She indicated that some learners have started to submit their assignments which were something that they did not do before. She added that if they were asked to do their assignments they would make a joke out of it or simply refuse to respond.

The other perceived impact of the programme was that learners stopped being stubborn and self-centred. This was also attributed to the acquisition of interpersonal skills which they had gained from the programme.

Some learners indicated that they had stopped being stubborn both at home and in school. One of them said: "*I have stopped being stubborn because I now engage in class discussions.*" One parent confirmed that her son was no longer stubborn and self-centered. According to the parent, her son used to spend many days without communicating with anybody in the family because he was stubborn. He would finish all the food without due regard to other children in the family. She further added that her son never had respect for authority either at home or at school. She said her son now has good character and this has helped him.

A key informant from one of the schools was of the opinion that some learners had stopped being stubborn. She observed that the learners never liked taking orders but that lately they had started to take orders and even volunteered themselves to take part in the school choir. The interpersonal skills that the learners gained from the programme helped them to develop self control. Some learners indicated that they had developed self control after gaining interpersonal skills. One learner indicated that he sometimes used to confirm that he would never smoke but once he came across the cigarette, he was tempted. He said that after gaining interpersonal skills, he had developed self control and had stopped smoking.

One parent confirmed that her daughter had developed self control. She pointed out that her daughter used to succumb to peer pressure. She added that when her daughter's friends had sugar daddies, her daughter had one as well and she could not leave him. After she gained the life skills from the programme, she stopped her relationship with her sugar daddy and understood that such a relationship was wrong.

The other perceived impact of the programme was reduced absenteeism at school and that has helped the learners to improve in their studies. Some learners confirmed that after they had improved their school attendance, there was progress in their studies. One of them stated that he had started to do well in Mathematics. He indicated that since he started putting more effort into Mathematics, he had realized that he was not that poor at the subject. One parent confirmed that regular attendance assisted

her son to improve in his studies. She stipulated that her son was 20 years old and he was in grade 11. She further said her son repeated many grades because he did not put effort into his studies. She indicated that after her son joined the programme, he gave himself time to study and he went to school every day. She was thus confident that her son was going to pass at the end of the year.

Key informants from the two schools confirmed that the performance of the learners had improved. One of the key informants noted that some learners had improved in all learning areas that year. She said, "*I never thought they could have this passion in their studies. They are seen among some learners who attend afternoon classes. I wonder how long this will take."* One of the perceived impacts of the programme on the behaviour and conduct of learners was that most learners are no longer members of criminal gangs. Some of the learners mentioned that they had abandoned their friends who were members of different gang groups. They reported that they now show empathy to other people. One of the learners indicated that he had never been empathetic. He said he only wanted what he targeted without thinking about the victim. He said that since he had joined the programme, he had changed for the better.

4.3 FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE COMMUNITY SHEPHERDS PROJECT

The second objective of the study was to identify factors that contributed to the success of the Community Shepherds Project. Findings from the study point to perceptions that the Community Shepherds Project has had an impact on improving the behavioural conduct of learners in the two participating schools. The learners, their parents and key informants were asked to identify some of the factors that had contributed to the success of the Community Shepherds Project. The following factors were identified.

Cooperation between the facilitators and the learners, the parents and schools

Cooperation between the learners and the facilitators contributed to the success of the project. The learners indicated that there was cooperation between themselves and the facilitators. They reported that they were working in harmony with the facilitators. One learner stated, "*what I liked best with our facilitators was that they appreciated everything good that we did. They even appreciated our presence in the programme."*

Some parents felt that there was good cooperation between themselves and the facilitators. Some parents indicated that the facilitators informed them of anything that took place in the project by communicating with them through letters. They added that they were first informed about the project when they were asked to give their consent for their children to participate. They indicated that they were never excluded in matters concerning the programme and they felt that they were part of the programme. One parent reported that she felt that her presence was highly appreciated because at every programme meeting, they were asked to give their views and most of time, their views were heard. The key informants from both participating schools indicated that there was good cooperation between the project facilitators and the school principals. There was also cooperation between the facilitators and the rest of the staff in the two participating schools. One key informant from one of the schools indicated that cooperation was observed where the schools provided the venues for free during ceremonies. She further mentioned that the schools also provided teachers to help with some activities when it was needed. The school was also able to allow the programme participants to visit other schools during school hours as it was felt that the programme was part of Life Orientation.

Ownership of the project

Most learners indicated that they were involved in some decision making processes in the programme. They also spelt out that at the beginning of the programme, they were asked to indicate the developmental challenges that they would like to be helped with to enable them to cope with those challenges. One learner indicated that they were also asked to spell out specifically what coping life skills they would like to have.

A key informant from one of the schools confirmed that the learners had ownership and control over the programme because she stipulated that the participants were able to attend the programme in the absence of the facilitators. She added that, one day she thought the facilitators were there when she saw the programme participants gathering. When she arrived, she found that the facilitators were not around and one of the learners was leading the discussion while others were paying attention.

Support from families

All learners mentioned that the support that they got from their families made the project a success. They mentioned that their parents motivated them to be part of the programme so that they could change their negative attitudes towards life.

One learner said, *"my mother provided support to me because she accompanied me to the crime prevention debate where I was going to represent the group. She also encouraged me to continue to participate in debate so that I can gain more communication skills. The support that I get from her contributed to the positive attitudes towards the programme and made me stay within the programme."*

A key informant from one of the schools indicated that the parents of the learners were supportive of the programme because they supported the idea that their children should join the life skill project because they needed help. She further added that the parents attended meetings that were arranged to discuss programme issues.

A key informant from the police added that the parents of the learners were supportive of the programme because they attended the closing ceremonies every year. He said, *"I remember that there were many parents who were present on the closing ceremony in 2009. They were given chance to say their views*."

Support from the Department of Social Development

The learners also attributed the success of the Community Shepherds Project to the support provided by the Department of Social Development, particularly the provision of transport. They mentioned that transport was available for any trip that they took. They also pointed out that the Department provided them with food wherever it was needed. Some learners also pointed out that the trophies that the Department provided after they had won a debating competition enhanced their motivation to stay in the programme.

Some parents observed that the Department of Social Development had contributed to the success of the project because it provided financial support to the programme. One of the parents observed that all learners who were taking part in the programme were wearing new t-shirts on AIDS day and they were provided with food. She further said that that made the learners stay in the programme because they were motivated and well cared for.

A key informant from one participating schools also confirmed that the Department of Social Development provided support that made the project a success. He indicated that on celebration days, the top management of the Department made themselves available. He mentioned that the support from top management encourages the facilitators to work harder which in turn contributes positively to the success of the project.

Approaches by the facilitators

Learners indicated that the positive approaches that the facilitators used to run the programme contributed to its success. Some of the learners indicated that the facilitators consulted them on every matter that arose from the programme. One learner confirmed that and said, *"I remember that at the beginning of each year, we attended assemblies at different schools in the community. In order to list the schools that were to be visited, we were consulted to provide names of those schools."*

The learners also indicated that what they liked most was that in the programme they were not told what to and what not to do. According to them, the group discussions allowed everybody to make his/her own decision. They further indicated that the facilitators ensured that everybody became involved in the discussions. One learner stated that they used to sit in a circle and there was no possibility that someone would not have a chance to talk. Another learner stated that the facilitators used to create an environment that was conducive for everybody to be empowered. She reported that before the discussion could take place, they had to begin with something stimulating like a song or a game. According to the learners the facilitators put more focus on group dynamics like trust, cooperation and motivation, than on the outcome.

The learners pointed out that some programmes that were implemented in schools used to close during school holidays. They indicated that the Community Shepherds Project used to run even during the

school holidays. Some of the learners were of the opinion that the rules that were set within the programme from the beginning made every learner feel part of the programme.

Some learners also stipulated that every learner was awarded for any positive behaviour that s/he displayed. One learner said, "*after presenting a poem at the assembly, the facilitators gave me a set of Mathematical instruments and I felt proud and wished that I could present again."* All learners were of the opinion that the facilitators treated each individual as a unique person.

A key informant from one of the schools confirmed that the approaches that the facilitators used to run the programme, made it a success. She reported that the facilitators used language that every learner understood during discussions. She added that the facilitators had the directions and knew where to go and they did things according to the plans. She pointed out that the facilitators were honest to everyone both in the programme and outside the programme. According to the teacher, the facilitators were flexible and were open to the new ideas and opinions of other people. She said, *"When we advised them to bring some experts for some themes, they agreed that it was important and they invited those experts."*

Teamwork

The learners indicated that one factor that contributed to the success of the project was teamwork between the learners themselves. They mentioned that they worked together as a team during the programme.

One learner said, "*During discussions, we worked together as a team. There was no competition and we did not argue among ourselves. The fact that we worked together as a team helped us to win many competitions against other programme participants in the district."* A key informant from one of the schools confirmed that the learners worked together as a team. She mentioned that that did not take place during programme only. She said they developed a team spirit because they even worked together in class during studies.

Acceptance and recognition of own behavioural problems

Another factor that contributed to the success of the Community Shepherds Project was that all learners accepted that they had behavioural problems and that they needed help. They had positive attitudes towards what they learned. Some of the learners indicated that they had been trying to be good children but it was not easy for them to change their behaviours. One of the learners pointed out that after he realized that he had some behavioural problems, he visited his teacher and asked for advice. He mentioned that his teacher tried to help him but he only changed for a short time and then afterwards he continued with his behaviour.

Some parents confirmed that their children had realized that they had problems and that they needed help. One parent said her son used to tell her about the good behaviour that his neighbour displayed. The parent also mentioned that her son was aware that his behaviour was different from that of his neighbour. He told his mother that he wanted to change his behaviour and that he wanted to become a better child.

One key informant from one of the schools confirmed that the other learner once asked for help as he realized that his behaviour would put him in danger. She stipulated that the learner confessed that he and his peers were dealing in drugs and that the police were aware of their activities. She said the learner indicated that he was no longer willing to continue with his behaviour but that his peers would kill him if he left them. The learner was going to seek help as his teacher suggested because he realized that he had a problem.

Commitment and motivation

The learners reported that the commitment that the facilitators had to the programme had motivated them to be committed also. Some mentioned that they had been so committed that they wanted the sessions to be increased from once a week to three times a week. Other learners indicated that the motivation that they got from other learners and from the facilitators made them more committed to the programme. One learner said, *"I used to visit my uncle during school holidays. I had stopped visiting him lately because we attend the programme even during school holidays."* Another learner added that he did not care about the time. He said the sessions were presented after school hours and it was a time that everybody wanted to go home, but he said that was not an issue to him and what he wanted was to gain some new information from the programme.

All key informants from the two schools indicated that the facilitators and the learners showed commitment to the programme. They stated that the learners did not want to miss sessions and that they attended the programme during rainy days and cold days. They confirmed that the learners even attended the sessions during school holidays.

Some parents confirmed that their children were committed to the programme. They added that they were also motivated to attend the programme. One parent indicated that her son did not want to miss any sessions. She said she was so committed and motivated that she never forgot the day on which to attend or the time when the programme started.

4.4 SUGGESTION FOR STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY SHEPHERDS PROJECT

The learners, parents and key informants from the schools and SAPS were asked to suggest some ways of strengthening the Community Shepherds Project. The suggestions that they provided were the following:

The project should be implemented in all other schools in the community

Some learners and parents mentioned that the programme should be implemented in all the other schools in the community. One learner said, *"I wish the programme should be implemented in all other schools because many learners always come to me and ask what they can do in order to be part of the programme. They do not understand why their schools are excluded. They feel that they want to change their anti-social behaviour like we did."*

Some learners indicated that since the programme had helped them to change their anti-social behaviours, they wished that all other learners in other schools who were involved in criminal activities could also gain the life skills that would change their negative attitudes towards life.

One parent said, *"I have two boys who are attending two different schools. This one who is involved in the life skill programme has improved in behaviour while the other one is still stubborn. I wish the programme can be in all other schools to help us to deal with the negative behaviours of our children."*

All key informants from the two schools suggested that the project should be implemented in all schools in the community. One said: *"I once taught in one of the schools here in Ficksburg where the project is not implemented. We experienced a lot of criminal activities there. We could not cope with some of those problems. That school also needs this project."*

Similarly one key informant from the SAPS said*, "I am enough with the school cases. We spend more time focusing at school violence and some serious cases are ignored. If this programme can be in all schools in this community, things will be alright."* The other key informant from the Crime Prevention Section added that there is no use in focusing on only two schools when crime is committed by learners in all the other schools in the community.

The project should be implemented in primary schools

Some learners suggested that the project should be implemented in primary schools because learners in grade six and seven are capable of committing some offences.

One learner said, *"The project should be implemented in primary schools. I remember my cousin became pregnant while she was fourteen. These children should also receive life skills.* Another learner added that he started to smoke dagga while he was in grade six. He also indicated that he used to steal items like sweets, biscuits and bread from his aunt's shop while he was in grade six and he continued with his anti-social behaviour until he was in grade eleven.

Some parents suggested that the programme should be implemented in the primary schools and not in the secondary schools. They pointed out that the reason they said this was because young children will gain social skills early. Thus they will grow up being able to differentiate between what is wrong and what is right.

One key informant from the SAPS indicated that crime does not take place in high schools only but that it takes place in the primary schools as well. He further added that in most cases, primary schools are neglected because there is a feeling that learners in primary schools are young and are not involved in criminal activities like the older children. Bender & Lombard (2004) also encourage life skill education in primary schools because it is developmental, preventive and that children who have access to life skills education will learn the skills they need to cope with the problems of growing up.

The project should involve all stakeholders in the community

A key informant from one of the schools suggested that the project should include other stakeholders in the community. She further indicated that there are other themes that are discussed in the programme like teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS that need to be presented by professionals who are specialists in the field. She also added that since the learners are provided with gardening skills, the Department of Agriculture should also be involved. All key informants from the SAPS suggested that the project should not only include the Department of Social Development and the Department of Education but should include all other stakeholders in the community.

A key informant from the SAPS said, *"the programme seems to be important. I am working as a police in this community but I am not aware of the programme. If we knew about this before, so many changes could have taken place"*

The involvement of other stakeholders is important so that different ideas can be shared. Problems are easily solved and risks are easily identified when different professionals work together on a certain issue. Burton (2008) is also of the opinion that the most effective way to deal with situations like crime prevention is to initiate cross cutting engagement between a range of stakeholders.

The project should also be implemented in multi-racial schools

Some key informants from the two schools suggested that the programme should be implemented in multi-racial schools in the community. They mentioned that it is not only black learners who commit crime or display anti-social behaviour. According to them, whites and middle class learners are also engaged in criminal activities and also display anti-social behaviour. They further mentioned that it was believed that learners from low socio-economic status families commit offences but these days it is different. Apart from that, they argued that racism is still found in multi-racial schools. The key informant from the Crime Prevention Section indicated that as crime prevention police, they are given different areas to work on. He indicated that in one of his areas, there is a multi-racial school. According to him, there were many offences that were committed, especially by the whites. Vally *et al.*, (1999) are of the view that there are no structural programmes to help teachers cope with multi-

racial classrooms and there are no nationally or provincially coordinated programmes for students to develop anti-racist and anti-discrimination awareness.

The project should include all grades at schools

Some learners suggested that all learners in schools should be part of the project. One learner indicated that there were other learners who had not been involved in any kind of anti-social behaviours but who needed some skills to cope with life challenges. He added that some skills, like entrepreneurship, are especially important for those learners who are needy.

Some parents indicated that some learners at schools lack information. They were of the opinion that if all learners could be provided with the life skills, many changes could take place in their lives.

All key informants from the two schools observed that learners from other grades do not have the opportunity to gain some skills and therefore lack information. They also added that students who have not been arrested or who do not demonstrate anti-social behaviour should also be given the opportunity to learn life skills in order to gain self confidence and self -esteem.

The project should target all youths in the community

Some learners suggested that the project should target all youths in the community.

One learner said, *"there are some youths in the community who are not attending school and who reoffend. Those youths also need guidance."*

Some parents were of the opinion that youths who are in the community and who are unemployed have enough time to plan their criminal activities accordingly. They suggested that they be equipped with life skills in order for them to be self-employed.

All key informants from the SAPS emphasized that the project should target all youths in the community. Some of them stated that crime in the community is committed by both youth in the community and at schools. They said that there was no use of focusing on one side and ignoring the other.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to investigate the perceived impact of the Community Shepherds Project in reducing crime in schools in the Ficksburg Community of the Free State province. This chapter presents a summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The summary of the findings is presented as per the objectives of the study.

Objective 1: To establish the perceived impact of the Community Shepherds Project's life skills programme on the behaviour and conduct of learners who are participating in the project

The findings revealed that the perceived impact of the programme was that there was a significant decline in thefts both at home and at school. This was attributed to the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills which enabled learners to start income-generating projects. The findings revealed that learners were now able to communicate openly with parents, teachers and other people in the community. That was attributed to the communication skills that they had gained from the programme. The findings revealed that another perceived impact of the programme was that the learners stopped engaging in sexual activities with their teachers at school in exchange for food and clothes.

The findings also revealed that the perceived impact of the programme helped the learners to stop abusing other learners at school, their siblings at home and other people in the community. They also stopped misusing drugs and alcohol both at home and at school. Another perceived impact of the programme was that learners had managed to build good relationships with their parents, teachers and other learners at school. That was attributed to the interpersonal skills that they gained from the programme. The acquisition of interpersonal skills also helped the learners to have self-respect and to respect their parents and their teachers at school. Another perceived impact of the programme was that

learners stopped being stubborn and self-centered and this was attributed to the acquisition of interpersonal skills that they gained from the programme.

The study also revealed that the other perceived impact of the programme was reduced absenteeism from school which helped learners to improve in their studies. In addition, some learners abandoned their friends who were members of different gang groups.

Objective 2: To identify factors that contributed to the success of the Community Shepherds Life skills project

The findings revealed that there was good cooperation between the facilitators and the parents. Some parents indicated that the facilitators informed them of anything that took place in the project by communicating with them through letters. They added that they were first informed about the project when they were asked to give their consent for their children to participate. They indicated that they were never excluded in matters concerning the programme and they felt that they were part of the programme. The findings also established that the parents were invited to attend meetings relating to the project and they were asked to provide their views and their views were also considered important. The findings also reveal that there was good cooperation between the facilitators and the school principals and they worked hand in hand to make the project a success.

The findings revealed that the learners' having a sense of ownership of the project was a factor that contributed to its success. This was because learners were involved in some of the decision making processes in the programme and that, at the beginning of the programme, they were asked to provide the developmental challenges that they would like to be helped with to enable them to cope with those challenges.

The findings revealed that support from families was another factor that contributed to the success of the project. The study established that the parents motivated their children to attend the programme and supported them so that they could change their negative behaviours. The parents attended the meetings that were related to the programme. They attended every ceremony and also provided some contributions like taking part in the day's programme. Finally the parents also supported their children in every aspect relating to the programme.

- The findings revealed that the support from the Department of Social Development was one of the factors contributing to the success of the project. The provision of transport to the learners by the department on the trips that they took was regarded as important by the learners. Top management from the Department of Social Development supported the facilitators and this made them more motivated and encouraged them to work hard.
- The findings revealed that the facilitators used good approaches that contributed to the success of the study, for instance the language that was used was a local one that everybody understood. The facilitators consulted the learners on matters concerning the project. The facilitators ensured that every learner got involved in the discussion. They also rewarded the learners for anything good that they had done. Finally, the facilitators' focus was not on the outcome, but on group dynamics. Teamwork contributed to the success of the project. The study revealed that good teamwork among the learners made the project a success. The learners worked together as a team and there was no competition.
- The learners' acceptance and recognition of their own behavioural problems was a factor contributing to the success of the project. The study revealed that all learners admitted that they had some problems and that they needed help. Prior to them being involved in the project, they would ask for advice from their teachers, peers or parents and only abandoned their behaviours for a short period of time and began with the same kind of behaviour afterwards.

Objective 3: To suggest ways of strengthening the Community Shepherds Project

The learners, parents and key informants suggested that the project should be implemented in all schools in the community because crime is committed by learners in all the schools.

The learners reported that learners in primary schools are capable of committing offences and therefore suggested that the project be implemented in the primary schools. The parents said that learners in primary school should learn life skills while they are still young and as a result be able to differentiate between what is good and what is bad.

The findings revealed that multiracial schools experience problems in dealing with racism and that there are no structural programmes either from provincial or national levels that can help to deal with

the issue of racism. The learners, their parents and key informants reported that not only blacks, but also the whites and middle class children, commit crime and therefore it was suggested that the project be implemented in multiracial schools. The key informants from both schools were of the opinion that all other learners in all grades need life skills that can help them deal with life challenges, so they suggested that the project should include all learners at schools.

The key informants from the SAPS reported that the project should include all youths in the community.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions that can be drawn from the study are that it was important that the Department of Social Development implemented the Community Shepherds life skill Project in the two schools because the learners who participated in the programme had gained the life skills that helped them to stop committing crime and to change their anti-social behaviour. It can be concluded that many learners in the Ficksburg community lack life skills. It can also be concluded that every individual has an opportunity to change regardless of the kind of behaviour s/he used to display. Life skills programmes are important because they help people to cope with life challenges. Some factors like good cooperation between the facilitators and the school principals, and the involvement of parents in the programme, contribute to the success of the project.

Accepting learners the way they were and treating them equally helped to maintain good relationships within the programme. Encouraging teamwork in the programme reduced unnecessary competition among the participants. Facilitators who are active and motivated enhance the success of the project. Facilitators also need to have skills for working with adolescents and must be patient and understanding. Apart from that, facilitators should always keep promises as this helps to maintain trust between the facilitators and the learners in a programme. Support from the top management of the Department of Social Development encouraged the facilitators to work harder. If rules are set together with the participants, it is unlikely that they will be broken by the participants.

Incorporating extra-mural activities into a programme motivates learners to attend the programme. Giving participants opportunities to present what they can do helps to improve their self-confidence

and to build their self-esteem. Reminding participants of the circumstances that brought them into the programme has a negative impact on the learners and results in withdrawal from the programme.

Visiting different places gives the learners exposure to different places and people and increases their willingness to learn and to participate in the programme. Learners who belong to the programme develop trusting relationships with each other. Without financial support, the programme could not have been a success. Inviting other stakeholders during celebration days is important in order to get different views from other people.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were observed in order to increase the perceived impact of the Community Shepherds Programme on its participants:

- Interdisciplinary collaboration should be encouraged: social workers should collaborate with teachers, police, health professionals and members of other services to build positive working relationships and to make services more comprehensive and effective.
- The life skill projects should target unemployed youths in the communities so that they can gain skills that can help them to become self-employed.
- Life skills projects should be implemented in all schools in South Africa to provide learners with life skills that help them to face life challenges.
- Learners who have been involved in criminal activities should not be the only ones to be taught life skills – all learners should be given the same opportunity.
- Life skills programmes should be regarded as a learning area in schools.
- The research should have used a larger sample of the population so that generalizations to the greater population could have been made.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Good morning,

My name is Mary and I am a final year student registered for MA Social Development at the University of Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting the research on the topic: Fighting crime in schools: the case of the Community Shepherds project in Ficksburg Community, Free State province. I wish to invite you to participate in my study. Note that your participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you in any way. If you agree, to take part, I shall arrange to interview you at the time and place suitable for you. The interview will not take more than an hour. You have right to withdraw from the study at any given time. You are free to refuse to answer the questions that you feel uncomfortable with answering.

With your permission, the interview will be tape recorded. Only the supervisor and the researcher will have access to the tapes and the tapes will be destroyed after completion of the study. Please be assured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report.

Should you feel the need for supportive counseling following the interview due to some sensitive issues, I have arranged with the department of Social development in Ficksburg to provide some service for you. I t will be free of charge. You can contact them at 051933140. The street address is N03 Fontein Street Ficksburg.

Please feel free to ask questions regarding the study. I shall answer them to the best of my ability. Contact me at 0834437952. Should you wish to receive a summary of the results of the study, an abstract will be made available on request.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in the study.

Yours sincerely

Mary

Supervisor's name:

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

Fighting crime in schools: the case of the Community Shepherds Project in Ficksburg community, Free State.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby consent to participate in the research project. The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any question that I am uncomfortable with. I also understand that I may withdraw from the study at any given time without any negative consequences. I understand that my responses will be kept confidential.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT----------

DATE----------

SIGNATURE----------

APPENDIX C: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR SCHEDULE FOR THE TEACHERS

THE COMMUNITY SHEPHERDS LIFE SKILL PROGRAMME

The interview schedule is used as a tool to evaluate the perceived impact of the Community Shepherds life skill programme in reducing crime in Ficksburg community, Free State province. Your sincere input into answering the following questions to your best knowledge will assist in the evaluation of the life skill programme.

TO THE TEACHERS

1. How long have you been involved with the life skill project?

2. What are your understandings of the objectives of the life skill Project?

3. What are your perceptions about the usefulness or the impact of life skill project?

4. What is the evidence that the life skill project is achieving its stated objectives?

5. Is there any difference in the behavior and conduct between the project participants and other learners at school?

6. Do you think the project has been successful?

7. What contributed to the failure or success of the life skill project?

8. How can the effectiveness of the project be evaluated?

9. What can be done to strengthen the Community Shepherds life skill Project?

APPENDIX D: SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE LEARNERS

THE COMMUNITY SHEPHERDS LIFE SKILL PROGRAMME

This interview schedule is used as a tool to evaluate the perceived impact of life skill programme in reducing crime in Ficksburg community, Free State province. Your sincere input into answering the following questions to your best knowledge will assist in the evaluation of this life skill project.

TO THE LEARNERS

1. When did you join the Community Shepherds life skill programme?

2. Why did you join the life skill programme?

3. What was your behaviour before joining the life skill programme?

4. What skills have you acquired from the life skill programme?

5. In what ways have the skills helped you?

6. Did the skills help you to change your behaviour and conduct both at home and at school?

7. Would you encourage other learners to join the life skill programme and why?

8. What do you like best about the life skill programme and what don't you like best?

9. Would you like to remain in life skill programme and why?

10. What can be done to strengthen this programme?

APPENDIX E: SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE POLICE

THE COMMUNITY SHEPHERDS LIFE SKILL PROGRAMME

This interview schedule is used as a tool to evaluate the perceived impact of the Community Shepherds life skill programme in reducing crime in Ficksburg community, Free State province. Your sincere input into answering the following questions to your best knowledge will assist in the evaluation of this life skill programme.

TO THE POLICE

1. What is your perception about crime in Ficksburg schools?

2. Are you aware of the existence of the life skill programme (Community Shepherds) that is implemented at the two secondary schools in the community?

3. Are you working closely with it?

4. Has the programme helped in reducing crime and bad behavioural conduct at the two participating schools?

5. What is the evidence for that?

6. What factors contributed to the failure or success of this programme?

7. What can be done to strengthen this life skill programme?

8. Should the life skill programme be implemented to other schools in the community and why?

APPENDIX F: SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE LEARNERS' PARENTS

THE COMMUNITY SHEPHERDS LIFE SKILL PROGRAMME

This interview schedule is used as a tool to evaluate the perceived impact of life skill programme in reducing crime in Ficksburg community, Free State province. Your sincere input into answering the following questions to your best knowledge will assist in the evaluation of this life skill project.

TO THE PARENTS

1. When did your child join the Community Shepherds life skill programme?

2. What was the reason for joining the programme?

3. Explain your child's behaviour before joining the life skill programme?

4. What are the life skills that your child has acquired?

5. If he/she has not benefitted, what are the reasons for that?

6. In your own opinion have the life skills helped in improving the behaviour and conduct of your child? Explain how and why?

7. How would you describe the behaviour and conduct of your child now?

8. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this life skill programme?

9. Would you encourage your child to stay in this life skill programme and why?

10. What can be done to strengthen this life skill programme?

APPENDIX G: CONSENT FORM FOR LEARNERS PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

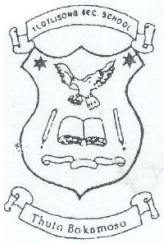
I hereby consent that my child takes place in the study. The purpose and procedure of the study have been explained to me. I also understand that that her responses will be kept confidential.

Name of Parent:

Date:

Signature:

APPENDIX H: LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM TLOTLISONG HIGH SCHOOL



TLOTLISONG SECONDARY SCHOOL

P O Box 489
FICKSBURG
9730

Tel.: (051) 9381276
Fax: (051) 9380313

OUR REFERENCE: .....

YOUR REFERENCE: .....

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The above-mentioned school is hereby given Mary Ngalo permission to conduct the research on evaluation on the project: Community Shepperd within the school premises.

I think you will find this in order.

Yours in service

P.M. Mokhoabane

TLOTLISONG SECONDARY SCHOOL
P/BAG X012, FICKSBURG 9730
2010 -08- 10
TEL. 051 - 938 1276
PRINCIPAL

"The only school that exists"

APPENDIX I: LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM MJ MOHLAHLI HIGH SCHOOL

M.J MOHLAHLI
COMM-TECH SCHOOL
First Things First
"PRIMUM PRUMA"

P.O BOX 1150
FICKSBURG
9730

TEL/FAX: 051 933 5379

ENQ: MOFOKENGP.P

:076 717 6970

10 AUGUST 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

In acknowledging your letter dated 06/08/2010, the school is hereby given **Mary Nqalo** the permission to conduct research study at our school. As the masters Degree student of the University of Wits, in Social Development, we appreciate and encourage her to success in the study. Therefore the school will also renders its assistance where po to her in good faith, as we hope this will also benefit to our society.

Yours faithfully

Mr MOFOKENG P.P.

.....

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
M.J. MOHLAHLI TECHNICAL SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 1150
FICKSBURG 9730
DATE: 10/08/2010
PRINCIPAL .....

APPENDIX J: LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FREE STATE (BETHLEHEM)

Department of
Social Development
FREE STATE PROVINCE

Enquiries: Takalo M.J
Tel : (058) 307 7541
Fax : (058) 307 7509
Cell : (083) 443 7645

E-mail : takalob@socdev.fs.gov.za

Date : 02/08/2010

RE: Permission and approval for project facilitation and studies

This serves to confirm permission and approval for Mrs. M.M Ngalo to fully facilitate the departmental community development project called: **Community Sheppards Project** which is a Youth Development and Social Crime Prevention Initiative.

The above named official is also permitted to use the project for her own individual study purposes. She is allowed to research using the project and participants for a purpose relating to her studies; and development of the project.

The project remains the departmental property not an individual; the concerned does not own the concept; neither does she have exclusive rights over the project itself.

The department hopes that you will find this letter in order and give it the necessary consideration.

Thank you in advance

Yours truly in service delivery

Mr. Takalo M.J
Acting Assistant Social Work Manager & Supervisor

Mrs. Motsoeneng C.M
Social Work Manager

Me. Ntsala M.M
Senior Manager (Thabo Mofutsanyana District)

Private Bag X 41, Bethlehem, 9700
Johan Blignaut Drive, Sederhof Building
Tel: (058) 307 7500 **Fax:** (058) 307 7509

APPENDIX K: LETTER FOR CONFIRMATION OF COUNSELING OFFERING

social developmen

Department of
Social Development
FREE STATE PROVINCE

Date: 17/08/2010

Re: Confirmation of counseling offering

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that Mr. Molefi Jeremiah Takalo is a registered Social Worker; with the following registration number: 10-22772; would be availing himself for counseling for the participants in the project facilitated by Ms. M.M Ngalo. Mr. Takalo would be available for the provision of the said service to the needy.

The direct contact details of the concerned Social Worker are as follows: Cell 083 443 7645, Tel 058 307 7500 & e-mail takalob@socdev.fs.gov.za.

I hope that you will find this letter in order and give it the necessary consideration.

Thank you in advance.

Yours truly
Takalo M.J: `----------
Social Worker

APPENDIX L: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Division of the Deputy Registrar (Research)

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON MEDICAL)
R14/49 Ngalo

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER H100 909**
PROJECT	Fighting crime in school: the case if the community shepherds project in Ficksburg community, Free State province
INVESTIGATORS	Ms M Ngalo
DEPARTMENT	Social Work
DATE CONSIDERED	17.09.2010
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE*	Approved Unconditionally
NOTE:	

Unless otherwise specified this ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE 26.10.2010 **CHAIRPERSON** .....
(Professor R Thornton)

cc: Supervisor : Prof E Kaseke

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to a completion of a yearly progress report.**

_____
Signature

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES