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THE EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS IN WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING SUPERVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE.

A report on a research study presented to

The Department of Social Work

School of Human and Community Development

Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand

In partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree

Master of Arts in the field of Social Development

by

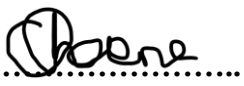
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JUNE 2025

DECLARATION

I, Choene Rose Mabitsela (1840046) declare that this research report is my own work, and all sources used to compile the report have been cited accordingly. It is submitted to the Humanities faculty, under the School of Human and Community Development, at the University of the Witwatersrand, for the degree of Master of Arts in Social Development.



03 June 2025

Signature Date

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To my family and friends, thank you for your never-ending support and love. Knowing that you have my back was very reassuring throughout this journey.

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Finally, I would like to express gratitude to myself for completing this study. It was not an easy journey, but I made it to the end gracefully through perseverance and hard work. I am proud of myself.

ABSTRACT

The supervision of community development students in work-integrated learning (WIL) is a process where students are advised, guided, and supported in their journey of becoming trained community development practitioners. This can be a challenging yet insightful task for community development workers (CDWs) who are responsible for supervising students. This study aimed to explore the experiences of CDWs in supervising community development students in WIL using a qualitative research approach, guided by a narrative research design. Data was collected through semi-structured individual interviews with 10 CDWs who are responsible for supervising community development students enrolled for WIL at the University of the Free State (UFS). Participants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The collected data was analysed thematically. The study found that CDWs assume various roles and responsibilities, such as coaching and mentorship, to ensure the students' professional development in WIL through supervision. Additionally, the CDWs reported to have faced various challenges including language barriers, the students' personality traits, limited resources for maximum impact, as well as protest actions that frequent the local community. The study recommends the development of a supervision framework for community development using a developmental approach.

Keywords: community development, community development workers, community development students, experiences, supervision, South African Council for Social Services Professions, work-integrated learning.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBO:	Community-Based Organisations
CDW:	Community Development Worker
CGAS:	Centre for Africa and Gender Studies
DSD:	Department of Social Development
GEAR:	Growth, Employment, and Redistribution
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO:	Non-Profit Organisation
NQF:	National Qualification Framework
POPIA:	Protection of Personal Information Act
RDP:	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goal
SLOT:	Strengths, Limitations, Opportunities, and Threats
UFS:	University of the Free State
WIL:	Work-integrated learning

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 *BACKGROUND*

Community development is an important approach to creating socio-economic, cultural, political, and psychological change in our communities, country, continent, and the globe as it aims to address the causes, rather than just the results of inequality, exclusion, and disadvantage (Department of Social Development (DSD), 2014). According to Behzad and Ahmad (2012), this is a process for the people, by the people, where they come together to devise strategies for their own development, guided by principles such as equity, social justice, and universalism (Fursova, 2016). When community development emerged in the 1900's, the focus was mostly on rural areas and their needs, intending to restore life completely by empowering rural community members to be self-reliant and be familiar with the use of modern resources for their physical, social, economic, and intellectual development (Brokensha & Hodge, 1969, as cited in Swanepoel & De Beer, 2016). According to Boyd et al. (2008), this perspective changed with time after much criticism, to an approach that recognised the community strengths and assets such as networks. In addition, the new approach encouraged accountability instead of dependency, and it emphasised the importance of a Strengths, Limitations, Opportunities and Threats (SLOT) analysis (Harrison et al., 2019). In support of the shift of perspectives, Gebre and Gebremedhin (2019) explain that the former perspective downplayed the interlink of rural and urban community development by giving too much focus on rural communities and slightly ignoring the developmental challenges in urban areas. Therefore, the change of perspectives presented comprehensive and holistic practice.

To implement community development, community development workers (CDWs) are important assets because they facilitate the activities that lead to communities being self-reliant and empowered to manage their own development through active participation and advocating for access to resources (Mokoena & Moeti, 2017). For them to be effective in this task, it is important for them to have professional reflexivity in their practice, which is defined as the ability of a professional to do a situation analysis and apply the relevant knowledge and

technical skills with critical awareness (Tremblay et al., 2013). From this understanding, Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) becomes a crucial element in the process of training of CDWs.

WIL is practical, experiential learning, where students apply classroom learning in real-world settings (Kolb, 1994 as cited in Aprile & Knight, 2020). According to Smith and Worsfold (2015), WIL allows students to actively learn how to apply disciplinary knowledge to real-life situations. In addition to WIL, supervision becomes a support structure to the students. This implies a relationship between a student and their supervisor, where both parties can gain intellectual, emotional, professional, and personal accomplishments when done properly (Ngwane, 2017). It plays a huge role in the career development and work readiness of the students after completion of WIL. Contrary to the 'usual' act of supervision, the process is not only about supervisors telling the students what to do, but rather about them strengthening the professional capacity of the students (Wenham et al., 2019). Amongst other tasks, supervisors are expected to ensure that students can adapt to learning on the job (Martin et al., 2011). This study, therefore, aims to explore the different experiences of CDWs who are given the responsibility of supervising community development students.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

For many decades, community development in South Africa was mainly the responsibility of social workers, which created an overreliance on the profession when it comes to community development practice (Sithole, 2017). This is not to say that social work and community development are totally separate, but even with their intersection, the scope of practice and training in the two lines of work are different, mostly because community development is more multidisciplinary than social work (Forde & Lynch, 2015). This is one of the reasons why community development became an occupation outside of social work, where there was a distinction between social workers and CDWs. One of the differences between the two professions is that the list of people who can practice community development is quite expansive, whereas social work is strictly practiced by trained social workers who are registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) for practice as required by the Social Service Professions Act 110, 1978 (SACSSP, 2017 pg. 2; DSD, 2011). This pushes the need for the training and development of CDWs to be regulated by the SACSSP, to ensure that it does not mimic the social work profession but rather compliments it.

Building from the wide spectrum of people who can practice community development proven by Hart and De Beer (2022), students placed at community development organisations for WIL

are more likely to be supervised by individuals with diverse academic and professional backgrounds. Although the workplace and fieldwork experiences of the CDWs are absolutely valued, this study acknowledges the importance of their academic backgrounds in shaping the students' professional identities as prospective community development practitioners. This acknowledgement is supported by the point made by Lester (2014), who stated that each profession has specialized skills, knowledge, mindset, and expertise, which are acquired through relevant qualifications. Additionally, Maistry (2012) asserted that each profession is practiced on the foundation of theoretical knowledge and ideologies, which are learned in academic settings. Nevertheless, all CDWs who are supervising community development students must be supported maximally to ensure successful training of the students.

One of the ways to offer this kind of support is to ensure the existence of guidelines and framework directed to the supervision of community development students in WIL, as well as the CDWs' access to them. Currently in South Africa, there are policies that address the supervision of practicing CDWs, but there is an existing gap of those that address the supervision of community development students to ensure consistent training and support. This forms the basis of this study because supervising students and supervising already practising professionals are different and require different roles, responsibilities, and boundaries. Sithole and Shokane (2023) affirmed that it is worth noting how these professionals learn and assume their supervisory roles to support them. As a starting point, it is important to know and understand the real-life experiences of the CDWs supervising community development students to maximise support and work towards the development of evidence-based guidelines and frameworks.

1.3 *SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY*

The professionalisation of community development started in October 2011 at a summit held by the national DSD, however, the process remains incomplete to date (Ditlhake, 2021). Despite the incompletion of the professionalisation process, several tertiary institutions offer community development as a professional degree in South Africa and there is a possibility that more institutions will adopt it following the complete professionalisation of community development by the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the establishment of a regulatory board for the profession by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) which is still in progress (SACSSP, 2022).

It is therefore important that there is a framework that guides how supervision is to take place in WIL as per the standards of the SACSSP. Due to this reason, exploring the experiences of CDWs who supervise students in WIL at an institution that has adopted WIL in their community development curriculum for some years provides a pathway for the development of guidelines for the community development framework that are evidence-based and relevant to community development student supervision in the twenty first (21st) century.

Additionally, although many authors such as Luka and Maistry (2012), de Beer and Swanepoel (2012), Westoby (2014), have written on community development (practice, professionalisation, and training) and CDWs, there is a gap in literature that addresses the experiences of CDWs as supervisors in WIL in South African institutions. Similarly, the DSD and SACSSP both do not have a community development supervision framework for WIL yet, therefore the results of this study motivate the need and guide the contents of such a framework. The framework will be beneficial in outlining the different roles and responsibilities, standardised training, qualification spectrum, accountability and disciplinary measures, and other aspects of a policy framework.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the experiences of community development workers with supervising community development students in work-integrated learning?
- What kind of support systems are available for community development workers in supervision?
- Which guidelines can be followed to develop a community development supervision framework?
- What are the strategies to improve the supervision of community development students in WIL?

1.5 *AIM*

To explore the experiences of community development workers in work-integrated learning supervision at the University of the Free State.

1.6 OBJECTIVES

- To explore the experiences of community development workers with supervising community development students in work-integrated learning.
- To describe the support systems available for the CDWs in the supervision of community development students in WIL.

- To recommend guidelines that can be followed to develop a community development supervision framework.
- To recommend strategies to improve the supervision of community development students in WIL.

1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Community development: A sustained and comprehensive approach to empowering citizens, shaped by a clear set of values and practices (DSD, 2014). It plays a crucial role in reducing inequality, promoting meaningful social change, and strengthening democratic participation. It is grounded in the ideals of inclusion, equality, and social justice, and seeks to improve the quality of life for all. This work is essential in the South African context, where significant gaps remain between developed areas and those still facing developmental challenges (DSD, 2014).

Community development worker (CDW): An individual who supports and guides activities that empower individuals, families, and communities to take charge of their own development, to achieve sustainable and self-reliant livelihoods (DSD, 2009). The concept is used to refer to CDWs who supervise students undergoing work-integrated learning at the UFS. Additionally, this concept includes all CDWs, regardless of their qualifications and national qualification framework (NQF) level.

Community development student: A person studying towards a community development qualification at a recognised education and training institution (Republic of South Africa, 2019). For this study, it refers to students who are in their 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year of study in community development at the UFS and are undergoing work-integrated learning at organisations based in Qwaqwa.

Supervision: A process whereby a supervisor performs educational, supportive, and administrative functions to promote efficient and professional rendering of services (Nortjie, 2022). In this research, it is used to refer to the process that enables a community development worker to promote efficient and professional rendering of services to the community development students.

South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP): A statutory body established in terms of section 2 of the Social Service Professions Act No. 110 of 1978 (SACSSP, 2017 pg. 2). According to the Act, the SACSSP is responsible for the recommendation of the standards of education, training and development of social service

professions, wherein community development belongs. These standards are set upon consultations with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Council on Higher Education (Republic of South Africa, 2019). Additionally, the SACSSP ensures that all institutions that provide education and training for community development, as well as the prescribed qualifications, are recognised and approved (Republic of South Africa, 2019)

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL): an umbrella term for a range of approaches and strategies that facilitate integration of theory with the practice of work, within a purposefully designed curriculum (Doolan et al., 2019). For this study, WIL is used to refer to an approach and strategy used by the UFS in collaboration with organisations that provide community development services to the communities in Qwaqwa, in the Free State province, to train community development students.

Experiences: The manifestations of the interaction between an entity and the environment they exist in (Acampado, 2018). The concept is used to refer to the manifestations and interactions of CDWs in the supervision of community development students from the UFS in WIL.

1.8 *BRIEF OUTLINE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY*

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the experiences of CDWs in community development student supervision at the UFS. Prior to data collection, the researcher received an ethical clearance certificate number SW24/08/01 from the Wits Non-medical Ethics Committee. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews, which followed a narrative research design and was analysed using a thematic analysis process. The population was sampled through purposive and snowball sampling techniques, guided by a criteria set by the researcher to ensure that the sample chosen serves the objectives of the study. The limitations of the study included the geographical location of the participants as well as the institution where the study was conducted.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE CHAPTERS

This research report is divided into six chapters, which are organized as follows:

- Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter of this research report, and therefore entails the basis of the research study.
- Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical underpinnings of this study, as well as how they guide supervision in WIL.

- Chapter 3 provides the literature review, wherein the researcher provides a discussion of the various findings from other authors and publications to provide a better understanding of the concept being studied.
- Chapter 4 is the methodology, which accounts for the choice of methods, processes and procedures followed by the researcher.
- Chapter 5 presents and discusses the results of the study.
- Chapter 6 is the last chapter, and it discusses the main conclusions and recommendations that are based on the researcher's findings as well as relevant literature.

1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced the study by providing an extensive introduction and background on community development, CDWs, and the training of CDWs, which led to the discussion of the supervision of community development students in WIL. Additionally, the statement of the problem and significance of the study were discussed to provide the relevance of this study within the community development field. Moreover, the aim, objectives, and research questions were outlined to provide clarity on what the study aims to do, and how that will be achieved. The main concepts encompassing the study were defined to give them context and meaning, and a brief description of the study's methodology section was provided to give the reader a summary of how the study was conducted. Lastly, the structure of this research report was outlined by chapter, for a better understanding of how the paper will unfold.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2. INTRODUCTION

A theoretical framework is defined as the foundation that supports the theory underpinning a research study. The assumptions, predictions and assertions of the theory become an intellectual base for the research data (Kivunja, 2018). There are two theories that will be used for this study namely Kolb's experiential learning theory and the social constructivism theory.

2.1 *KOLB'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY*

Kolb's experiential learning theory (ELT) is an adaptive process of learning that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behaviour (Stirling et al., 2016). It was founded by David A. Kolb in 1984, building from the works of Dewey (1938), Lewis (1951), and Piaget (1978) (Stirling et al., 2016). Experiential learning is defined as a teaching philosophy whereby students are engaged direct experience and continuous reflection to increase their knowledge and develop critical skills (Fees & Perchiniak, 2023). It can be achieved through a cycle with 4 parts in accordance with the theory. The four parts are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. The acquisition of knowledge requires an intentional transformation of one's experiences into knowledge. To do this, one must integrate what they know, their experiences, and reflection (Stirling et al., 2016). For CDWs who supervise community development students, this means that they need to integrate their knowledge of community development practice, their previous experiences in community development practice and student supervision in WIL, as well as the lessons they've learned through those experiences. This will enable them to maximise the process of supervision and ensure that the students also gain valuable experience and lessons through their supervision.

Stirling et al. (2016) identified a few critiques of the theory. Firstly, it provides overly simplistic learning modes and styles to be widely applicable. Secondly, it is based on a minimal consideration for cultures outside the western cultures and therefore might be difficult to apply in different cultures. Lastly, the theory does not address the potential unequal power relations that are involved in the process of learning (Vince, 1998 as cited in Stirling et al., 2016). There are various ways in which this study will address the critiques of this theory. Firstly, the data will reflect the different experiences that CDWs have in supervising community development

students in WIL, and their lessons learned through their interaction with the students. Secondly, to address the minimal consideration of cultures outside Western culture, this study is conducted within the South African context on community development, WIL, and student supervision, which portrays the South African higher education and workplace cultures. Lastly, the data will reflect on how the CDWs relate with their supervisees to tackle the existing power dynamics between them.

2.2 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

In collaboration with Kolb's ELT, this study is also underpinned by the social constructivism theory. The social constructivism theory was developed by Vygotsky in 1978, and it stands on the belief that language and culture are important aspects of a person's learning, placing great importance on one's social context (Mishra, 2023). In support of Mishra (2023), Akpan et al. (2020, pg.50) wrote that "language and culture are the frameworks in which humans experience, communicate, and understand reality". By this, they meant that concepts are conveyed by language and are interpreted by experience and interactions within a cultural setting. Therefore, to learn from concepts, one must try to make sense of what they have experienced.

Akpan et al. (2020) further stated that when a person encounters a new experience, they harmonise it with previous ideas and experience. This can mean adjusting the new experience to old knowledge or discarding it if it is irrelevant. Similarly, students harmonise what they encounter in the workplace with what they have learned and experienced in the classroom. For learning to take place effectively, the students are required to interact with their environment, which includes their peers and supervisor, and colleagues in the workplace. This is because learning is an active, rather than passive process (Mishra, 2023). This means that participation is very crucial in WIL.

This theory is relevant to this study as it promotes the students' autonomy in the supervision process, by acknowledging the contribution of both the students and the supervisor, and most importantly their collaboration towards WIL supervision. Additionally, it is built on the principles of reflective thinking, problem solving, collaborative learning, teacher scaffolding, personalisation, and discussion (Mishra, 2023). These principles encourage supervisors to work towards skills development that is suitable for each students' needs. This concept is also known as the zone for proximal development, which is the area between what the student can do independently and what they can do under the supervision of someone who knows more or has

more experience than them (Alghamdy, 2024). The supervisors are able to capitalise on that zone for effectiveness of supervision.

The social constructivism theory has been criticised for being too subjective and avoidant of reality (Boyland, 2019). However, learning is experienced differently by each student and all cases should be accounted for fairly. This study acknowledges that lived experiences will never be the same to different people. Additionally, this study will be exploring the real-life experiences of CDWs in WIL supervision, which will represent the reality of being a CDW who supervises community development students at the UFS.

The two abovementioned theories work well together as they showcase the importance of WIL for the professional development of the students by emphasising the need for workplace experience. Additionally, they emphasise that both the students and the supervisors have a role to play in WIL supervision. It is not a one-sided process, but it is reciprocal. Lastly, both theories acknowledge that the students do not come into WIL empty headed, but they do need assistance from a more experienced person to shape their development and growth.

2.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the two theories underpinning this research study, which are Kolb's Experiential learning theory and social constructivism. These two theories have been discussed in relation to how the CDWs experience the supervision of community development students in WIL, as well as how their experiences shape the work they do with time and lessons learned. The integration of both theories for this study accommodates the contribution of both the CDWs and community development students in WIL.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3. INTRODUCTION

This section entails the literature review, which is defined as a process of investigating published work with the intent of evaluating research work that is available about a specific research topic (Chigbu et al., 2023). A literature review summarises and synthesises the writings of other academic writers without making new contributions, so that there can be an assessment of the quantity and quality of knowledge that is available in the scholarly field (Ramdhani et al., 2014). This chapter firstly discusses community development on a global, regional, and local level, as well as its principles. Additionally, it entails community development practice in South Africa, guiding legislation, and the challenges facing community development practices. Lastly, it discusses WIL as well as supervision in WIL.

3.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GLOBALLY

The origin of community development is wide and differs from one area to another. For some countries worldwide, community development stemmed from the need to undo the effects of colonialism which have taken away power and resources from the people (Brown & Green, 2015). Chile (2012) refers to this as social transformation, whereby communities are empowered to stand for and by themselves for the reconstruction of their communities. Community development then allows members of different communities to use and preserve their power, cultures, traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems (Sodi & Mkhabela, 2009). Although this might sound like a simple or linear process, it is quite complex. It requires effort and willingness from different stakeholders, including the community themselves.

Community development as an approach is used widely since the term ‘community’ does not only refer to people bound by the same geographical location, but rather it can refer to people who have the same concerns (Swanepoel & de Beer, 2016). For instance, Tang (2018) wrote on the use of community development as an approach to tackle the labour discrimination of ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom. These include various ethnic groups from different parts of the world, even though this study was scaled down to the Chinese. Similarly, a study was conducted on women e-commerce entrepreneurs in rural Australia, focusing on how their digital livelihoods are affected by social media, and how their entrepreneurial activity impacts community development (Sutherland et al., 2024). The two mentioned studies reflect on how

community development can be used in vast contexts but ultimately to achieve an improvement in people's living conditions.

All countries across the globe have their own historical context of community development, how it came about, and for what reasons. However, for many countries, it came in a form of colonial policies and practices, even before the name "community development" was coiled (Nicholas et al., 2010). For this reason, all approaches of community development are administered differently. There are global approaches and plans to community development such as United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals are being implemented by about 170 countries worldwide, with the aim of creating a better and sustainable future for their communities (StatsSA, 2023). All countries that adopted the SDGs have localised them to fit their own contexts to better implement them in a smaller scale too. With globalisation and related issues increasing, community development is also becoming a challenge because the quality of life is slowly deteriorating due to the industrial revolution and mass production that are changing how communities function (Phillips & Pittman, 2009). Therefore, community development practitioners and leaders must be radical in the approaches and interventions they initiate and implement in communities to create a transformation.

3.2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REGIONALLY

Africa is widely known for its poverty and colonial past. For that reason, a lot of community development interventions are focused on mitigating the impacts of poverty, colonialism, and patriarchy (Tjale et al., 2024). "Some projects are initiated for women, some for youth, and others for people living with disabilities to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living" (Tjale et al., 2024, pg.2). This quote is from Tjale et.al. (2024), who conducted a study on the state of various community development initiatives across various Southern African countries including, but not limited to Namibia, Botswana, and Zambia. They found that the various initiatives that existed were mostly for poverty reduction, empowerment, as well as women and youth development.

In some contexts, community development initiatives include 'pro-poor' policies, social welfare programs, etc. This can be both a good and not so good factor. It is good in a sense that these interventions acknowledge that African communities are found in marginalised and disfranchised states because they were forcefully made to live under unjust policies and conditions (Goel, 2014). However, the downside of it is that these interventions are a different way of imposing the preferences and desires of donors, governments, and organisations instead

of the community interests. According to Brown and Green (2015), this compromises participation and empowerment but rather promotes a top-down approach. To this end, Burlington (2019) sees it important that CDWs stand firm in their roles of being change agents and facilitators among others, while allowing the communities to be the drivers of their own development. This is because when not done right, community development interventions can cause more harm than good.

Community development requires action; therefore, all interventions need a certain level of engagement. One of the hindrances to community development in Africa was that many initiatives were not engaging with the different dimensions of community development in African contexts and worse, they often carried a notion that people should give up their cultures and traditions to be more developed (Pawar, 2014). This contributed to native people undermining or overlooking different programs that come in the name of community development, as well as the cultural homogeneity that is slowly wiping out cultural diversity (Ife, 2016). Historically, the arrival of community development in the 1960's came with a lot of promises in the African region, but up to so far, the challenges that existed then are still prevalent even now. In many African communities, vulnerability and poverty have gone for a prolonged period even with various development policies developed (Korten, 1980 as cited in Pawar, 2014). This does not mean there is no progress being made however, the challenges such as genocides and continuous exploitation that Africa is still experiencing does not have a good reflection on the leaders of the continent and their policies.

3.3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, community development may be associated with apartheid; however, doing so undermines ubuntu as a practice that exists beyond the history of colonialisation in South African communities (Chile, 2012). Therefore, it is important to take note of the different aspects of the need for community development in the country. The mandate to professionalise community development was set out by the then president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, in 2003, where he stated that the basis of the CDWs programme is aimed at addressing the inequality and marginalisation of the majority in the country (Ministry for Public Service and Administration, 2007). In doing so, he not only acknowledged the effects of apartheid but also the gap between the government and the communities, which causes further marginalisation and inequality in the country.

The efforts of achieving community development in South Africa are significantly identified by social relief projects, which, according to Luka and Maistry (2012) fail to empower communities. However, community development is in the process of being professionalised and registered with the SACSSP. The minister of the Department of Social Development (DSD) stated that the department aims to create a professional board for the implementation of community development, just as there is for social work and child and youth care work (DSD, 2023). This indicates the continuous efforts of the government to ensure that community development is a well-grounded and legitimate profession in South Africa. It also gives hope to the future of community development in the country, because it has the potential to strengthen the basis of knowledge and expertise in practice (Benzinger & Muller-Camen, 2021).

Currently, training for community development is offered at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels 4-9 in various institutions of higher learning such as the University of Johannesburg (UJ), The University of the Western Cape (UWC), the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN), and the UFS (Gray & Lombard, 2024). These institutions offer community development education and training at different NQF levels, mainly between NQF 7 and NQF 8, therefore the intensity of their WIL component and supervision also differs. UJ and UKZN offer the community development undergraduate degree at NQF level 7, whereas UWC and UFS offer it at NQF level 8. The process of professionalising community development practice is still underway and progressing, which is facilitated by the national DSD. This includes finalising the database for practising CDWs and electing representative members for the community development board under the SACSSP (SACSSP, 2022). This will be done according to the Social Professions Act of 1978 (Department of Communication and Information, n.d.).

3.4 PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development has various principles to guide its practice, and these include participation, human orientation, holism, empowerment, adaptiveness, sustainability, release, and ownership (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2016). For this study, focus will be on participation, empowerment, sustainability, ownership, holism, adaptiveness and release. Principles are important in creating a foundation of rules in which practitioners should be mindful of (Jacab, 2009). The outlined principles were selected because they do not only provide a foundation for community development practice, but also for the supervision of students in WIL to ensure that the process is effective and has a long-lasting impact.

3.4.1 Participation

Participation emphasises the involvement of community members in all stages of community development from planning until evaluation (DSD, 2009). Participation emphasises shared power between the community and other stakeholders, where community members are not treated as the "other", thus Waweru (2015) stated that participation enables all community members to make a valuable contribution to their development. This means that the community has equal knowledge of the successes, failures, progress, delays, and other essential events in the process of their development. In community development, it matters who participates and the extent to which they participate. This is because there are different levels of participation according to Arnstein's ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969 as cited in Rashied & Begum, 2016).

The ladder of participation consists of eight rugs organised into three levels, which determine whether it is authentic participation or not. The first level at the bottom of the ladder is non-participation, which consists of manipulation, and therapy. These operate in deception and misleading the community. They are disguised as participation through meetings, interviews, or surveys but with no intention of giving the community any kind of power or autonomy. They follow a top-down approach (Rashied & Begum, 2016). Level two is tokenism, which encompasses informing, consultation, and placation. When participation takes place on the second level, communities are heard, and they are also able to hear others. The challenge is that their participation has no power to change the status quo. The final level is citizen power, which is represented by partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. In this level, citizens can negotiate and engage with traditional powerholders and obtain full decision-making power (Arnstein, 2019). Participation affects the other principles that are mentioned in this paper and those that are excluded. This is because through participation, community members become well informed, empowered, and obtain ownership of the development process (Laniello et al, 2019). As Nortjie (2022) has asserted, participation is an important element in the learning process. Therefore, it imperative that students and CDWs maximise their participation in WIL supervision to benefit from the process.

3.4.2 Empowerment

Empowerment is a process of allowing communities to gain power, control, and access to resources through giving them a voice, as well as the ability to make and account for their own decisions (Schenk et al., 2010). Matta (2023) asserted that empowerment is an intentional

process, meaning that structural walls must be intentionally broken to allow communities to move from a state of powerlessness to being well-resourced, informed, and influential. One of the factors that affects the empowerment of communities is power dynamics, which refer to the relationship between the traditional decision makers and the community (Nikkhan & Redzuan, 2009). Therefore, for empowerment to take place, there must be an expansion of power in a way that allows communities to take action that has influence over the communities in which they are part of. As Pierson and Thomas (2013) have said, being powerless creates a culture of silence, whereby community members accept and settle for their living conditions due to loss of hope.

There are a lot of factors that create the feeling of powerlessness in marginalised communities, with most of them being structural and more difficult to overcome. According to Ife (2016), these factors include the economic globalisation that has proven to widen the gap between the haves and the have nots, the loss of community in the twenty-first century causing relationships to slowly lose value, the dominance of the Western culture in societies around the world whereby indigenous communities feel that their identities and cultures are under threat, as well as the empty promises made by government officials and politicians who use the communities' challenges to lure them into voting but not deliver what they have promised. These examples strengthen the need for community development to inform, educate, and give power and resources to the people, so that they are not always dependent on external assistance to see the change they long for.

Similarly, WIL supervision empowers the CDWs by strengthening their professional identities through their professional relationship with the community development students. Through the interactive nature of this relationship, as highlighted by O'Donoghue (2015), they are able to pass on their professional knowledge and skills to the students and educate them on the reality of community development practice compared to the theoretical knowledge they have acquired in the classrooms.

3.4.3 Sustainability

Sustainability is the efficient use of resources to meet the needs of current generations without encroaching on future generations' ability to meet their own (Flint, 2023). In a world of overconsumption, sustainability requires communities to use less and produce maximum results, with a balance between social, economic, and environmental factors. To achieve this, ecocentrism is important in community development. Ife (2016) describes ecocentrism as a

worldview that removes humans as the most supreme beings in the world but emphasises their interconnection with animal species and the physical environment. Majority of the current environmental challenges the world is experiencing such as loss of biodiversity, pollution, soil degradation, and climate change are a result of unsustainable human economic practices. As the world progresses, growth is determined by how much technology is used and the production of goods and services, which unfortunately come at a cost. Gupta (2023) asserts that although natural resources are important for economic growth, their extraction and use often lead to hazardous human practices and exacerbates environmental issues. It is therefore important to have policies, rules, and laws that control these practices. Unfortunately, the current generation is barely able to meet their own needs with the resources that are available now, which puts future generations in jeopardy.

There are various policies and strategies worldwide, that are put in place to encourage sustainable development such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which have been adopted by various countries worldwide (United Nations, 2015). However, Africa has been showing slower progress in achieving these goals compared to other continents (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2022). According to Mahlatsi (2021), this is caused by corruption among African governments, which has proven to result in drastic economic losses. Moreover, African countries have increasing populations, inadequate infrastructure, and very little funding compared to others. The governments have limited willingness to provide budgets for resource allocations and investment in infrastructure (Mahlatsi, 2021). In the words of Winston (2021), safe, inclusive, well planned and governed communities can provide high quality of life for all, as well as equal access to good quality services even for the upcoming generations. CDWs therefore have the responsibility of guiding community development students towards sustainable community development practices through WIL supervision.

3.4.4 Ownership

Swanepoel and de Beer (2016) emphasise the significance of ensuring that all community development efforts belong to the community so that there is less dependence on external help and more responsibility and accountability from community members. This principle advocates for the community to be the owners of the development process and the results thereof (Waweru, 2015). These authors press on the idea that people often identify with, protect, and maintain what they have envisioned, conceptualised, and implemented rather than something that was imposed on them. Authentic community development ensures that even if external organisations and personnel are involved, they do so supportively and to build capacity among

community members. For communities own their development, they must also own their contribution to the situations they find themselves in, which will allow them to own up the responsibilities that they have to create change. Additionally, it is important that communities acknowledge their experiences that are a result of oppressive structures and discourses that affect their lives. Ownership allows communities to work towards their development in their own pace (Ife, 2016). This principle further provides a basis for the relationship between the CDWs and the community development students in WIL supervision, whereby it encourages both parties to be responsible and account for their actions towards the effectiveness of the supervision process, while acknowledging the contributions of the other party as well.

3.4.5 Holism

Holism is a principle in community development that recognises that change in one aspect of the community affects other aspects too (Waweru, 2015). Ife (2016, p.256) simply puts it as "everything is connected to everything else" and explains it using the concept of a ripple effect. The ripple effect implies that every act has multiple impacts like ripples in a pond, which reach the further end of the system. In essence, the ripple effect in community development shows how actions of community members can have an unintentional impact on their lives and the well-being of their communities. This is why community development processes must follow a holistic approach. For instance, if a community's greatest challenge is crime, there is a high chance that crime is a result of other factors such as unemployment, high levels of school dropouts, failures in service delivery, family dynamics, etc. Therefore, initiatives that are adopted to address crime in such communities must start by addressing the other parts of the system from which crime has emerged.

Concerning the supervision of community development students by the CDWs, holism speaks to the connection between theory, practice, and praxis. According to Ife (2016), a CDW must always reflect on their theory and practice, as well as the intersection and interaction between the two aspects. CDWs, therefore, must ensure to facilitate WIL supervision holistically, reflecting on their community development knowledge, practice, and how they inform their duties and responsibilities as supervisors.

3.4.6 Adaptiveness

Adaptiveness is the ability to blend into different conditions from the usual especially in a new environment (Littlejohn, 2018). According to Waweru (2015), community development is expected to be adaptive in two ways. Firstly, the processes must be context specific to

accommodate and fit in various community issues. This is because there is no blueprint for community development therefore all communities and their issues need to be understood in their broad context to have successful interventions (Ife, 2016). Secondly, community development should enable communities to be resilient. Resilience is defined as the ability to withstand any environmental, financial, social, cultural, or any type of shock without entirely collapsing, resulting in the inability to allocate and utilise resources efficiently (Hall, 2014). For communities to be resilient, participation, ownership, and empowerment are essential because they will enable the community members to make informed decisions, to learn more about their community and associated issues, explore past experiences, as well as possible future events (Engle, 2011). In this way, they can respond to damages that have already been done, anticipate upcoming shocks, and make decisions on how to then lessen the effects of these shocks or possibly prevent them. On the other hand, WIL supervision gradually builds the resilience of the community development students by developing their professional identities and assisting them in exploring how to manoeuvre various challenges they encounter in the profession and the field.

3.4.7 Release

Release is a principle that advocates for communities being released from the deprivation trap rather than short-term relief (Waweru, 2015). The deprivation trap is a mechanism that keeps people caught in the cycle of poverty with no way out, generation after generation (Maile, 2013). Temporary relief strategies will always bring the communities back to where they are or even in a worse situation after the projects are done. CDWs must therefore position themselves in a manner that enables them to be catalysts of change. They should also initiate community development students into this practice through WIL supervision. One of the factors that causes communities to always fall back into poverty is unsustainable interventions of community development and service delivery. Community development initiatives must therefore address structural causes of poverty such as inequality, lack of access to resources, unemployment, etc. (Ife, 2016). For example, many Black communities South Africa often find themselves living in poverty because of the policies that were implemented during the apartheid era to oppress non-White citizens. Although the apartheid regime has long collapsed, the effects of its existence are still effective even now. The generations born and living in the democratic era are still going through poverty just like the ones who lived in the apartheid times. The achievement of this principle depends heavily on sustainability, participation, capacity building

and a holistic approach to community development practice (Litrell & Litrell, 2006; Maile, 2013).

3.5 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

Community development practice is essentially the act of putting communities in a position where they can change their current reality through partnerships with external stakeholders (Maistry, 2012; Schutte, 2020). It is practiced in many different techniques and strategies, which can be altered to fit the specific needs of each community as per the principle of adaptiveness. For instance, in Nigeria, it was used as an approach to tackle issues of education among young girls through story telling under a campaign called Girl Rising (GR). Through the stories told by different young girls, the campaign can raise awareness on the importance of girls getting educated for the development of the community (Mukhtar, 2019). Other organisations such as Save the Children South Africa partner with the government to advocate for access to education by providing early childhood programmes to ensure that children get education from a young age, which prepares them for primary school education as well (Save the Children, n.d.). Both initiatives advocate for education, but through different approaches. This indicates the versatility and adaptability of community development practice.

Due to the ambiguous nature of community development, it has been confused with methods of relief such as welfare and service delivery for a very long period (Westoby, 2014). This is not to say that welfare and service delivery are not helpful however, they are not entirely what community development practice is about. Limiting community development practice to only a few strategies of relief can take away its holistic nature just like in Nigeria as according to Muia and Kiilu (2019). They stated that one of the factors that limit the development of Nigerian communities is the overuse or dependence of social welfare in the attempt to achieve community development. Therefore, it is imperative to have skilled, trained, and knowledgeable community development practitioners who will execute and implement community development in an ethical and transformative manner (Hains et al., 2020). This is why Mokoena and Moeti (2017) consider them to be the building blocks of achieving the developmental agenda in South Africa. Although it is usually practiced in the social sciences, it is multidisciplinary. For example, a study conducted by Le Clair (2016) on occupational therapists revealed that community development principles are on par with the client-based approach to occupational therapy, and they promote the mindsets of working with communities instead of merely working in their territory.

Additionally, community development practice is not limited to the public sector. Ife (2016) argued that the world is at a parlous state, and it has been evident throughout the years in different countries that the governments are largely unwilling to make significant changes to create change, therefore the private sector, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, important too in community development practice. This includes non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), as well as non-profit organisations (NPOs). This is not to say that these organisations are faultless, however, Abiddin et al. (2022) stated that these organisations thrive at raising consciousness and sparking interest of self-help efforts among community members. Additionally, they advocate for the poor to influence policymaking.

CDWs are also important actors in community development practices. They make sure that there is an improvement in the community's access to resources and services. There are multiple roles that they play, and it is possible to perform more than one at a time, therefore making them generalists more than specialists to avoid fragmented community development practice (Ife, 2016). There are many roles that CDWs play in practice, including being an advocate, educator, enabler, mediator, facilitator, and researcher.

3.6 LEGISLATION GUIDING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

Community development is practiced by various institutions, namely government institutions, non-governmental organisations, and community-based organisations (de Beer & Swanepoel, 2012). All organisations have internal policy legislation that guides their practice; however, the development of those policy legislations must be guided by standard national legislation. Some of the legislation related to the practice of community development include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), White paper on social welfare (1997), Community Development Practitioners Toolkit (2009), the Draft Community Development Practice Policy Framework (2014), and the South African Social Service professions Bill (2019). Rikhotso (2013) stated that it is important for CDWs to be well informed on legislation that guides their practice so that they can better be a mediator between communities and respective organisations, especially the government.

3.6.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) is the supreme law of the Republic of South Africa; therefore, all other laws should be built on it (Parliament of South Africa, 2018). The main aim of the constitution is to transform South Africa into a more equitable, just, and integrated society by promoting non-discriminatory practices such as no racism, sexism,

colourism, etc. According to Sevenhuijen et al (2003), the development of this legislation was influenced by the need to address segregation and the oppressive history of the country, following apartheid. This is why amongst others, it promotes social justice, equal rights, and social development. Chapter seven on local government and chapter 10 on public administration provide guidance towards the services that the public must receive, and the way they should be delivered by public servants, wherein CDWs also fall under. Thus, CDWs must ensure that their professional conduct aligns with the values and priorities of the law according to the constitution.

3.6.2 W*hite paper on social welfare (1997)*

White paper on social welfare (1997) is a developmental framework that was developed as a layout aimed at changing how social welfare services were approached and delivered in South Africa, and it entails the guidelines, principles, programmes, and policies that are fundamental in delivering these services (Paul, 2010; Department of Communication and information, n.d.). The goal was to ensure that the developmental social services delivered to South Africans are comprehensive, well-resourced, rights-based, and of good quality (DSD, 2013). Phunguzwayo (2014) and Sevenhuijsen et al (2003) asserted that this is not the first legislation that focused on transformation in the post-apartheid South Africa. It was preceded by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994, and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) of 1996; however, the adoption of the two frameworks was still accompanied by a significant decrease in economic growth and national income, as well as an increase in the people living in poverty. A new plan of action had to be developed with the consideration of an overburdened welfare system, and insufficient financial resources to meet all needs of the citizen, which is the gap that gave the White paper on social welfare prominence. This legislation functions to promote minimal reliance on grants and other forms of assistance from the government in communities by empowering them to become self-reliant.

Although this framework is somewhat relevant to community development practice, it is criticised for not providing objectives that are explicitly for community development, but rather it provides objectives for broad social service professions (Gray & Lombard, 2024). This creates the need to have an approved community development policy document. The policy document would function to ensure that CDWs are trained to be developmental, enabling them to relieve the welfare system while releasing the communities from the deprivation cycle.

3.6.3 Community development practitioners' toolkit (2009)

Community Development Practitioners Toolkit is a document that was developed in 2009 following a research study conducted by the national DSD to evaluate the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people in urban and rural areas, as well as the extent to which they are impacted by the services and projects rendered by the department (DSD, 2009). According to Patanakul et al. (2015), it is important for the government to monitor and evaluate its efforts in transforming communities so that necessary action can be taken to increase impact. For that reason, it was deemed important to develop a document that would guide community development practice. The DSD (2009) asserted that the main purpose of the toolkit is to enable and guide community development practitioners to be agents of change while allowing communities to oversee their own development (DSD, 2009). However, it is not a blueprint for community development practice, therefore, it must be used with caution and flexibility.

The DSD (2009) further asserted that the toolkit was intended to encourage communities to express their thoughts, voices, experiences, and expectations to improve livelihoods and promote responsive service delivery. This toolkit outlines community development in the South African context, including the definition, mandate, vision, principles, and the expected outcomes from community development practice. It therefore enables CDWs to understand their roles at the household, municipality, district, and provincial levels.

3.6.4 Social Service Practitioners Bill (2019)

The Social Service Practitioners Bill (2019) is a draft legislation that aims to guide the establishment of a South African council for social service professions to determine its composition, powers, and functions. Although it has not been approved yet, it has been drafted to promote and regulate the education, training, and professional development of social service practitioners; regulate their conduct and provide a basis for incidental matters (Republic of South Africa, 2019). According to Section 47, subsection 2 of the bill, community development is an occupation for which community development practitioners and assistant practitioners can be registered, provided they have the required education and training. Additionally, the bill provides a criterion for students studying towards a social service profession or occupation, as well as the requirements of institutions that offer education and training to the mentioned students. This information is essential for this study as it is based on the WIL supervision of students who are studying towards a community development qualification at the UFS.

3.6.5 The White paper on the transformation of the public service (1997)

The white paper on the transformation of the public service (1997) is a national policy that was developed to provide a framework and an implementation strategy for the transformation of public service delivery (Department of public service and administration (DPSA), 1997). It is based on eight (8) principles, termed Batho Pele which means people first translated from Sesotho. The Batho Pele principles, according to the DPSA (1997) were developed to ensure that the South African public service delivery meets the needs of all South Africans by focusing on how the services are delivered and not what is delivered. Through this approach, all government institutions can apply the principles according to their needs and various contexts. Regardless of the existence of this policy for decades, there is still an increasing number of protests that are related to public service delivery, especially in poor and marginalised communities (Joel, 2022). This gives prominence to the need for the training of good-quality CDWs.

3.6.6 Draft Community Development Practice Policy Framework

The Draft Community Development Practice Policy Framework is a document developed by the DSD to outline the expectations of community development practice in South Africa, as well as to convey its fundamental principles and values. This document acknowledges and highlights the work done by community development practitioners compared to other community development work done by other professions, such as health practitioners (DSD,2014). The contents of the framework encompass the conceptualisation of community development practice in South Africa, including but not limited to the role of community development practitioners, the norms and standards of community development practice, practice requirements for practitioners, as well as the scope of various community development qualifications according to their respective NQF levels. According to this draft, the Bachelor of Community Development that is offered at the UFS is expected to produce community development practitioners who can facilitate collective action to build and empower communities, thus, supervision in the training of students is imperative (DSD, 2014).

3.7 SUPERVISION IN WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING

The denotative meaning of supervision is an activity of managing people, a department, a project, etc. and ensuring that all things are done correctly (Cambridge dictionary, n.d.) however, it can also be defined according to a specific context. In this context, O'Donoghue

(2015) defines it as an interactive professional relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee, where the focus is on the supervisees' professional and practice development.

The main task of supervision in WIL is to foster professional development and a professional identity in the students through a process of scaffolding, where they critically link their classroom knowledge to the workplace (Engelbrecht, 2019), as it is a tool that students can use to integrate theory, practice, and methodology. Additionally, it can be used by organisations to groom competent and responsible professionals (Fransehn, 2007, pg. 72 as cited in Thaver, 2013). The two highlighted points above demonstrate that processes and approaches that are used in WIL may be uniform and possibly be unequally effective for all students. This is why Aprile and Knight (2020) emphasise that supervision must be a process that stands out in WIL by accommodating the diversity of knowledge and capabilities that the students demonstrate. In accordance with Aprile and Knight (2020), Khosa (2022) alluded that the supervision of students in WIL should enable them to develop a sense of belonging in their line of work so that they can internalise their roles and responsibilities, as well as uphold ethical practice. Supervision in WIL serves three functions which are directly tied to the roles of the supervisors, namely the normative, formative, and the restorative function.

The normative function is also known as the administrative function, and it serves to ensure that the students have a sense of how they fit in the professional space they are in (Owen & Shohet, 2012). According to Engelbrecht (2019), it ensures that the students align their work and practice to the statutory and organisational norms, thus serving as a quality control function. This function requires the supervisor to manage the daily activities of the students, ensure a smooth entrance of the students in the organisation, and establishing standard working arrangements between the students, the organisation, and the employees in the organisation (Rowe et al., 2012).

The second function, which is the formative function is described as one that fosters, monitors, and evaluates the students' learning and development of skills, understanding, and capacities (Basa, 2021). It encourages the empowerment of students through enriching them with knowledge, skills, and values to enable them to effectively execute their duties as professionals (Engelbrecht, 2019). To fulfil this function, the supervisors are expected to assume the role of being an educator, support, and a guide. This can be done through activities such as coaching and mentoring. This requires the supervisors to make time for the students and allow them a sense of autonomy during the period of WIL (Winchester et al., 2016).

The last function, the restorative function serves as a professional oasis as described by Owen and Shohet (2012). This is because this function of supervision ensures that students are offered grace for reflection and support. This is supported by Basa (2021) by stating that the restorative function enables the supervised students to reflect on how they respond to the challenges they find in practice as reflection plays a huge role in their professional development. Rowen et al. (2012) emphasised the role of guardianship by the supervisors. They elaborated that supervisors must assist students to differentiate between ethical and non-ethical behaviour in practice. In this way, they are ensuring that the quality standards of the profession are passed on from one generation of practitioners to the next.

3.8 CHALLENGES WITH WIL SUPERVISION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

There is limited literature available on the challenges that are faced in the supervision of community development students in WIL in South Africa. However, there are four challenges that showed prominence in different bodies of work, namely the absence of a standardised framework for the training of CDWs, the professional identity crisis in community development practice, communication with the students, and the varied educational backgrounds of CDWs.

3.8.1 The absence of a standardised framework for the training of CDWs

The growing recognition of community development as a stand-alone occupation is one of the ways in which the public sector has been trying to ensure transformative and sustainable development in South Africa (Gray & Lombard, 2024). Furthermore, the adoption of community development as an academic program with the integration of WIL is the contribution of the higher education and training sector in ensuring that there is a production of qualified and capable professionals to carry out such a mandate (Cader, 2021). However, the absence of an approved and standardised framework for both the practice of community development and the training of CDWs is a hindrance in producing a good quality of CDWs (Hart and De Beer, 2022). As a result of the lack of a standardised framework, the training of CDWs is not uniform in various institutions, as well as in the field. CDWs supervise community development students ‘the best way they know how’ with the knowledge they have, and their own understanding of what a supervisor must do. According to Hart and De Beer (2022), the existence of this framework will serve to form a foundation for community development training and practice that encompasses the values, norms, standards, and principles of the occupation. Furthermore, it will greatly improve curriculum development and how training programmes are structured and reviewed.

3.8.2 The professional identity crisis in community development practice

One of the biggest challenges in community development practice is the lack of harmonisation of community development practice across the country. There is a lot of ambiguity around community development practice, what it means, and how it should be done (Ditlhake, 2022). This is problematic because it breeds a professional identity crisis and affects the formative function of WIL supervision, whereby the students are expected to gradually develop their professional identity as CDWs. Additionally, Gray and Lombard (2024) highlighted that very little is known about CDWs that work outside the public sector. This means that placing students in organisations that are not in the public sector for WIL is a gamble, and it risks a skills and competency mismatch from what is expected by the institution, as well as what is done in the field and imparted on the students. This further emphasises the urgency of creating a standardised and harmonised framework for community development in the country.

3.8.3 Communication with the students

A study conducted by Cader (2021) on field instruction in the community development and leadership degree at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) presented that fieldwork supervisors reported that students barely make means to initiate communication with them throughout the field instruction period. Not only does this hinder the students' ownership towards their learning and development, but it also defeats the reciprocal nature of supervision in WIL as described by Carelse and Poggenpoel (2016). This increases the chances of WIL supervision being counterproductive, thus producing incompetent CDWs post-graduation.

3.8.4 Varied educational backgrounds of CDWs

Community development is an occupation whereby its practice is based on empowerment, inclusion, and 'improving the lives of people living in poverty'. Therefore, people are permitted to practice it without any relevant qualification, so long as they are creating change. This has resulted in many CDWs practicing without community development qualifications, although others do have related and unrelated post school qualifications. This is confirmed by a study conducted by Hart and De Beer (2022) with an intent to create a baseline database for CDWs in the country. The study revealed that out of 1532 CDWs that participated, 1179 (77%) of them had post school qualifications however, only 8% of the 1179 CDWs had community development qualifications.

Although the CDWs have sufficient workplace and fieldwork experience, the supervision of students in WIL relies on the integration of theory into practice. Fleming et al. (2021) reported

that limited understanding and knowledge of the theoretical base of the course affects the effectiveness of supervision in WIL. Therefore, the proportion of CDWs who have community development qualifications means that community development students are more likely to be supervised by CDWs who have limited theoretical knowledge of community development. This further limits the supervision outcomes in WIL because the philosophies and theories taught to students by lecturers become limited in application in the field (Carelse & Poggenpoel, 2016). Given the diverse qualification profiles of the CDWs, Hart and De Beer (2022) advised that the existence of prescribed norms and standards for community development practice in a community development framework would be beneficial for the curriculum development of community development programmes, as well as the development of a 'qualification articulation matrix' which will clarify the recognition and equivalence of various degrees, the accumulation and transfer of academic credit, recognition of prior learning, and similar issues for community development practice.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided the analogy of community development and its functioning globally, regionally, and in South Africa. It has also provided a context for community development practice in South Africa, its underlying principles, and guiding legislation. These sections provide the basis for the existence and importance of CDWs. Furthermore, this chapter has also provided an analysis of the supervision of students in WIL with a brief outline of its functions to give relevance to the objectives and rationale of this study. Finally, the chapter discussed the challenges found in the literature regarding the supervision of community development students in WIL and how they impact the occupation.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research process and procedures followed to carry out the research study. This is done to explain how the researcher has conducted the research study and why they chose the specific methodology. Furthermore, this section enabled the researcher to position herself in the study, as well as to align the research objectives and questions with the chosen methods and procedures (Austin & Sutton, 2014).

4.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study used a qualitative research approach to explore the experiences of community development workers (CDWs) in Work-integrated learning (WIL) supervision. A qualitative research approach is defined as a method used when the researcher seeks to understand non-quantifiable phenomena such as experiences, beliefs, behaviour, etc. through collecting, organising and analysing non-numerical data (Grossoehme, 2014; Bhangu et al., 2023). This approach enabled the researcher to explore the various experiences of CDWs in WIL supervision holistically, without limiting them to quantifiable measures. Additionally, the approach optimised this study by allowing the CDWs to reflect on their impact and resilience in the work they do, and lastly, the data obtained from the study formed evidence to support the recommendation of guidelines that can be used to develop a framework for community development WIL supervision.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

To satisfy the aim and objectives of this study, the data collection process followed a narrative research design. Narrative research is the study of human beings and their experiences of the world through storytelling (Ntinda, 2018). This design assists the researcher to understand how people act and experience things as a reflection of their social contexts (Moen, 2006). In addition, it helps understand how people attach meaning to their experiences, as well as their understanding of themselves as a factor in their own stories. According to Ntinda (2018), this design acknowledges that people give meaning to their experiences through the stories they tell. Therefore, it enabled the CDWs to elicit on what it means to not only be a CDW, but also to be a supervisor to students in WIL concurrently. Additionally, they were able to reflect on the challenges, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses of WIL supervision in community

development, as well as the various factors that contribute to the success or lack thereof of WIL supervision.

The narrative design allowed the researcher to make a comprehensive analysis of the different narratives that are told by the participants. This is credited to the non-linear and holistic nature of the stories told (Bruce et al., 2016; Wolgemuth & Agosto (2019). However, according to Scheffelaar et al., (2021), the power dynamic between the researcher and participant produces a risk in the authenticity of the stories narrated. To counter this effect, the researcher ensured to not second guess the responses of the participants when probing but rather follow up in a manner than allowed participants to go more into detail for enhanced comprehension.

4.3 RESEARCH CONTEXT, POPULATION, SAMPLE, AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

4.3.1. Research Context

This research study is based on CDWs who are working full-time as professionals in organisations that offer community development services to communities in Qwaqwa and are also supervising students who are enrolled for their second, third, and fourth year of study for the community development course at the UFS Qwaqwa campus. Community development is a 4-year qualification offered by the UFS Qwaqwa campus only, under the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies (CGAS) although the institution has three campuses namely the Bloemfontein, Qwaqwa, and South campus. It was first launched in 2016 and took in its first cohort of students in 2017 (UFS, 2016). It was strategically placed in the Qwaqwa campus to increase the engagement of the university with the Qwaqwa communities to not only build relations with them but to create impact in the communities that surround the campus.

In this course, WIL is a compulsory component under the Community development practice module across the second, third, and fourth years of study. Each year has different WIL attendance requirements in order to proceed to the following level. This is because the module credits increase with the year of study (UFS QwaQwa Campus, 2023). Second- and third-year students are placed in organisations in Qwaqwa, whereas students in their final year can be placed anywhere in the country according to their personal preference. This study is only focusing on CDWs that work in organisations that are based in Qwaqwa and are taking in students across the three levels of study. This is done for the convenience of researcher in terms of location, and to have better control of the results of the study.

4.3.2. Population

A population is a collective of individuals with shared characteristics within a particular domain (Willie, 2024). These are individuals who possess the qualities that will provide information that best suits the research interest of the researcher and increase the depth and richness of the outcomes of the study (Gill, 2020). The population for this study was CDWs who supervise second, third-, and fourth-year community development students in WIL from the Free State province. This population was chosen for three main reasons. Firstly, the UFS is one of the tertiary institutions that integrate WIL in their community development curriculum in South Africa (UFS QwaQwa campus, 2023 p.29-30). Therefore, the CDWs supervising the students enrolled for the programme would provide rich data about their personal experiences of WIL supervision to the researcher. Secondly, Community development as a degree in the UFS started in 2017, which is less than 10 years ago (UFS, 2016). The CDWs therefore have recent and relevant experience, which allowed the researcher to make conclusions and recommendations that are suitable for the supervision of current and upcoming community development students. Lastly, the chosen population narrated experiences of the supervision of a diverse pool of students across the three academic levels.

4.3.3 Sample

A sample is a smaller portion of the population that is chosen by the researcher to ensure that they obtain rich and manageable data (Gill, 2020). The portion is chosen through criteria that the researcher puts in place following the aim and objectives of the study (Gill, 2020). The sample size for this study were 10 CDWs, who were chosen based on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion criteria:

- Aged 18 years and above.
- Male, female, or LGBTQ+.
- Employed full time as a CDW that supervises community development students from the UFS for WIL.
- Employed as a supervisor to community development students at UFS in WIL for at least six months

Exclusion criteria:

- Not employed full time as a CDW supervising community development students.
- Employed full time as a CDW but not as a supervisor to community development students.
- Has less than six months of experience in supervising community development students.

4.3.4 Sampling technique

The study used non-probability sampling, which is a sampling method whereby the researcher does not select a random sample from their population of interest therefore, not all subjects in the population have an equal chance of being chosen (Ahmed, 2024). Instead, there are elements that the researcher considers and uses them to determine who to include in their study.

The participants were recruited through a purposive sampling technique and a snowball sampling technique. A purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is used to deliberately choose information-rich samples that will enable the researcher to obtain maximum information in the most resource-efficient way (Palinkas et al., 2015). There are various reasons for choosing the purposive sampling technique for conducting this study. Firstly, the technique accommodated the strict time and financial constraints binding this study, and secondly, this technique enabled the researcher to choose CDWs that have more chances of providing in-depth insights and data. However, Thomas (2022) and Andrade (2021) warned that purposive techniques risk the validity of the study. This is because participants might alter their behaviour and truth after being chosen by the researcher, leading to biased results and conclusions, whether intentional or not. To reduce the likelihood of this event, the researcher spoke about the importance of giving honest responses for the integrity of the research and an accurate representation of their own experiences.

The second sampling technique applied in this study is the snowball technique, which is a method of recruiting participants through networking and referrals from the already available participants (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018). The method is mostly used when the research study is done on a population that is challenging to reach. Therefore, the participants referred their acquaintances who fit the sample description to the researcher. The more referrals the researcher got, the bigger the sample became. The researcher is allowed to take more referrals until a saturation point is reached (Parker et al., 2020). Due to this research study employing

face-to-face interviews, the researcher only reached out to referrals that were in the same geographical area, as well as those who were available for the interviews at a particular timeframe. The snowball sampling technique is greatly critiqued for risking the study having a non-diverse pool of participants, as explained by Kirchherr and Charles (2018). Additionally, for the snowball technique to take place, the researcher needs prior participants that suit the sample description of the study (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018). This is why this study utilised both the purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The purposive sampling technique allowed the researcher to choose diverse samples, so that the referrals can have diversity too. Four participants were recruited through the purposive sampling technique, and six were recruited using the snowball technique.

4.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND PRE-TESTING

Research instruments are tools used for data collection in research. They assist researchers in collecting, organising, and analysing the outcomes of the study, therefore, they must be valid and reliable (Daniel & Harland, 2017). This study was conducted through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the guidance of an interview guide to explore the unique experiences of the CDWs without a generalised understanding (Kabir, 2016). An interview guide is a document consisting of questions that will be asked to the participant, even though it will not be followed precisely. They enable the researcher to focus and ask the same questions to their participants (Bird, 2016).

A Pre-testing procedure was done prior to the main data collection process. It is a method used by researchers to ensure that the interview guides are feasible, valid, and reliable (Bhalla et al., 2023). The procedure was conducted with one CDW who has a year of experience in supervising second-year community development students from the UFS for WIL. The CDW was chosen through a purposive sampling technique, which was done to expose the challenges that may arise regarding the recruitment of participants for the main data collection. The decision to conduct a pre-testing procedure is best explained by Bhalla et al. (2023) who stated that the procedure ensures that the data collection tool meets the objectives and questions of the research study, and to ensure the appropriateness of the interview questions. Should the researcher have any information or sections in the data collection tool that they need to change, pre-testing allows them to do so promptly. The pre-test interview was recorded, transcribed, and analysed to make a thorough judgement of the interview guide.

4.5 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is the process of collecting data from participants to gain insights regarding the chosen research topic (Taderhoost, 2021). The data collected through this process should answer the specific research questions of the researcher. The data required for this study was collected through individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are defined as a way of gathering data through formal, verbal conversations that are guided by an interview guide. However, the interview guide was not strictly adhered to because these types of interviews allow the researcher to stray from the guide if the need arises (Kabir, 2016). According to Bird (2016), this is to allow participants to talk freely about points that are beneficial to the study but are not jotted down in the interview guide. In that way, the researcher gains the advantage of hearing the experiences more intensely.

This method was fit for this study because it yields high-quality data using a small proportion of participants, in a resource-effective time (Surawy-Stepney et al., 2023g). However, there are two identified challenges that affect this method of collecting data as stipulated by Swanepoel and de Beer (2016). The first one is that there could be a reluctance to answer certain questions because they might feel that they are putting their jobs at risk by providing some information. The researcher reduced the likelihood of such situations by guaranteeing confidentiality through a verbal and signed agreement. Secondly, since the researcher and participants had not been spending a lot of time together, there was a risk of mistrust from the participants, which could make the conversations less genuine as they would not be open to the researcher. To combat this, the researcher built a rapport with the participants before the interviews began by having a light conversation. The individual interviews lasted for 45-60 minutes, and were conducted at the participants' working premises, which is where they felt safe and at their convenience since the interviews took place during the working hours. The data collection process was concluded by the limited availability of participants, as well as the saturation point after the 7th interview. The saturation point is a benchmark for discontinuing the data collection process when new data is not giving new insights and patterns (Rahimi & Khatooni, 2024).

4.6 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The process of data analysis is one whereby raw data is changed into meaningful ideas and facts through breaking the complex factors found in the data into simple components that can be rearranged and interpreted (Dawadi, 2020). This process is important in helping the researcher to reach a conclusion for their study. For this study, data was analysed through the

thematic analysis method. It is defined as a method of analysing qualitative data by identifying patterns and themes within the collected data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). According to Dawadi (2020), the researcher looks for themes that will assist in capturing the different narratives that exist within the data in a precise way. For this study, this process was done through six stages.

The first step was familiarisation with the data, where the researcher transcribed the audio interviews in verbatim and went through the transcripts until satisfaction. During this process, the participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identities and maintain confidentiality (Dawadi, 2020). Some of the participants preferred to use Sesotho for the interviews therefore, during this stage, the audio recordings were translated from Sesotho to English and then transcribed on a word document. The next step was generating initial codes, which are statements from the data that are put in categories to represent a specific phenomenon (Nowell et al. 2017). This was done to simplify the data and focus on specific characteristics picked from it. This was followed by the search for themes. Maguire and Delahunt (2017, p.3356) define a theme as a distinct structure that highlights an important aspect of the data collected. Therefore, searching for themes involved searching through the data to find codes that relate to each other and placing them under one theme. Step four is the review of the themes, where the themes identified from the data were analysed and refined to ensure that the coded data matches the themes and that there are no overlaps or repetition of themes (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3358). After the themes were confirmed, they were given names that are unique, clear, concise, and tell a story to the reader (Nowell et al. (2017). In this step, it was important for the researcher to know and understand the core message sent by each theme. The sixth and final was compiling a report to present what was found within the data collected. The purpose of this report is to communicate the findings of the research in a simplified manner that can be understood by various readers (Mwita & Mwilongo, 2025). When writing the report, direct quotes were taken from the interview transcripts and backed by literature to reiterate the points made by the researcher (Nowell et al. (2017).

This method of analysis enabled the researcher to align the collected data with the research objectives and ensure that there is no dual representation of ideas and narratives in the conclusions, recommendations, and the overall report.

4.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is defined as the extent to which confidence can be put in the quality of the study and its findings based on the methods used to conduct it (Pilot & Beck, 2014, as cited in Connelly, 2016). Four elements were considered to ensure that this study is trustworthy: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

- **Credibility:** is the degree to which the findings of the research represent what the participants provided during data collection (Kortjens & Moser, 2018). For this study, the researcher used direct quotations to connect the findings with the original data. These were backed up by literature to provide a foundation for the interpretation of the data.

- **Transferability:** is the application of the findings of a study across different contexts (Nowell et al., 2017 as cited in Nortjie, 2022). To ensure this, the methodology and methods of the research were described in detail to allow the readers to assess if they are able to use the findings of this study to their context.

- **Dependability:** This suggests that if a similar study is conducted under the same conditions and context, the results should be similar (Souza, 2023). The process of this research is documented comprehensively to account for all decisions made.

- **Confirmability:** It is the degree to which other researchers can confirm the results of this study (Kortjens & Moser, 2018). According to Nortjie (2022), the research report must be a direct representation of the data without any interference from the researcher's bias. There are audio recordings and transcripts of the interviews to ensure that all findings represent the real data and can be traceable.

4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are the research norms and standards that guide the researcher's decision-making in the processes of collecting data, data analysis, as well as the dissemination of the findings (Mirza et al., 2023). Prior to partaking in the process of collecting data, the researcher received ethical clearance, with ethical clearance number SW24/08/01 from the Wits Non-medical Ethics Committee. Due to the nature of this study, the ethical issues that are considered are informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality, reporting back to participants, avoidance of harm, power dynamics, and deception.

- ***Informed consent*:** Informed consent is the act of the participants agreeing to continue with the interviews after being provided with comprehensive information about the study (Makhubalo, 2021). All participants were well informed of the aim, objectives, process, instruments, and potential risks associated with the study to allow them to make a rational and informed decision. They signed consent forms (attached as appendix B) in addition to verbal consent.
- ***Voluntary participation*:** The decision to participate was voluntary and not coerced. All participants were above the age of 18 and therefore did not need any parental/ guardian signature for consent. Appendix C, which is the participant information sheet, was read out and explained to the participants so that they understood what they were agreeing to should they decide to participate in the study.
- ***Power dynamics*:** The researcher allowed participants to ask questions and have freedom of expression in their responses. Some of the factors that contributed to the power dynamics include the researcher's academic status and the participants' pressure to use English to respond. Prior to the interviews commencing, the researcher asked each participant on the language they preferred to use throughout the interview to eliminate the pressure.
- ***Confidentiality*:** All responses from participants were kept confidential and will only be accessible by the researcher, supervisors, as well as the participants themselves. The recordings of the interviews have been put safe in a password-protected iCloud account to ensure that only the above-mentioned parties can have access to them.
- ***Anonymity*:** Anonymity was ensured according to the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) of the Republic of South Africa, 2013. No personal information of the participants will be disclosed. For data presentation and analysis, participants were given pseudonyms in place of their real identities and organisations.
- ***Reporting to participants:*** The researcher will give participants an update on the research once the final chapter is finalised to prevent falsification of data and to protect the integrity of research in the community (Mirza et al., 2023).
- ***Avoidance of harm*:** The researcher acknowledged that the aim of the study was to explore personal experiences and therefore the participants might feel some emotional discomfort with some questions. However, all participants were informed beforehand about the type of questions and their right to withdraw. No participant required counselling services after the interview was conducted.

- ***Deception:*** There was no deception to the participants by using a false identity or feeding them incorrect and inaccurate information. The participants were provided with the researcher's full names, institution, student number, the research supervisors' details, as well as the ethical clearance number prior to data collection for transparency and identity purposes.

4.9 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

4.9.1 Limitations

Limitations of a study are restrictions tied to it, which have impacts that are beyond the researcher's control. Ultimately, although unintended, they affect the results and conclusions of the study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The first limitation for this study is that the participants are CDWs who have experience with supervising Community development students at the UFS, Qwaqwa campus. There are chances that WIL supervision is done and experienced differently in other institutions, therefore, the results would be different. Secondly, the study was conducted with CDWs who are placed in Qwaqwa, which is a rural area. Community development organisations and workers in rural areas have different dynamics from those in urban areas or townships. Lastly, due to the nature of this research, the CDWs needed to speak on their work as supervisors for community development students at the UFS. Some CDWs may have felt as though they were being audited for their work by the UFS, which may have restricted the honesty in their responses.

4.9.2 Delimitations

Delimitations are the parameters that are put in place by the researcher to narrow down the study and to control the factors that might affect the results of the study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). For this study, the interviews were conducted at the organisational premises/ offices to avoid evading the participants' personal space and to reduce the barriers to communication that may be a result of being in their personal homes or at extremely public spaces. Secondly, the participants are full-time employed CDWs, even though some do not have community development qualifications. This is because even if an individual is a qualified CDW, if they are not employed on a full-time basis, they cannot supervise community development students. Lastly, the CDW must have supervised students for at least six months, which is the maximum duration of WIL per academic year for community development

students at the UFS, Qwaqwa campus. This period allows the CDWs to have different kinds of experiences with diverse students, which enriched the data that they provided to the researcher.

4.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an explanation for the choice of methodology and methods employed for this research study. This was accomplished by discussing the research approach and design, the research context, the techniques to be used for choosing a sample, as well as the methods of collecting and analysing data. Additionally, the researcher accounted for the pre-testing of the data collection tool, the ethical considerations, and the trustworthiness for this study. Lastly, this chapter elaborated on the limitations and delimitations attached to this research study and how they may have affected the results thereof.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will present the key findings of the research study that aims to explore the experiences of CDWs in WIL supervision at the UFS. Data was collected among 10 CDWs through individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews, upon which the researcher reached saturation as no new information was emerging after the 7th interview. The participants were CDWs who are based in Qwaqwa and supervise third- and fourth-year community development students at the UFS. The data was analysed thematically for the emergence of themes.

5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The table below represents the individual demographics of the CDWs who were interviewed on their experiences in WIL supervision at the UFS.

Table 1: Participants' demographic information

Participant number	Age group	Gender	Nationality	Race	Highest academic qualification	Community development qualification	Years in community development practice	Years in WIL supervision
1	50+	Male	South African	Black	Diploma	Yes	8+	6-8
2	26-33	Female	South African	Black	Matric	No	4-6	4-6
3	42-49	Male	South African	Black	Degree	No, Bachelor of Social Sciences	4-6	2-4
4	18-25	Male	South African	Black	Diploma	Yes	2-4	2-4
5	34-41	Male	South African	Black	Matric	No	4-6	2-4
6	42-49	Male	South African	Black	Higher certificate	No, child & youth care worker	8+	2-4

7	26-33	Female	South African	Black	Higher certificate	No, mechanical engineering	2-4	0-2
8	26-33	Female	South African	Black	Higher certificate	No, information technology & computer science	4-6 years	0-2 years
9	26-33	Male	South African	Black	Below Matric	No	0-2 years	0-2 years
10	34-41	Female	South African	Black	Degree	No, currently studying towards one	0-2 years	2-4 years

This study involved ten CDWs who have at least six months experience in supervising community development students in WIL at the UFS. The youngest participant was between the ages of 18-25, the oldest was 50+, and the most saturated age group was 26-33 with four participants. Six out of ten were males, and four were females. All participants were Black and South African nationals. The parameters of race, nationality, gender, and age were worth noting for the recognition of factors that may contribute to power dynamics in the supervision process.

Out of the ten participants, two did not have post-matric qualifications, and out of the eight with post-matric qualifications, only two of them were community development related. This finding is similar to what Hart and De Beer (2022) found when they conducted a study on the profiling of community development practitioners. They found that 77% of their respondents had post-matric qualifications, but only 8% of them were community development-related qualifications. This dynamic shows the multidisciplinary nature of the qualification spectrum in community development practice and places a great emphasis on the need for community development to be standardised to ensure quality practice and the training of community development students, as recommended by Hart and De Beer (2022), as well as Gray and Lombard (2024). Furthermore, this validates the significance of this study, which is to explore how the CDWs have experienced student supervision in WIL with various academic and professional backgrounds.

Five out of ten participants have indicated having more than two years of experience in supervising students for WIL purposes, which may enhance their supervisory capacity and their knowledge of how community development is structured in the academic space, compared to

their workplace. However, three participants have indicated to have zero to two years of experience in supervising community development students in WIL, and two participants have zero to two years of experience in community development practice. According to Kgari-Masondo et al. (2024), supervision improves with experience and interaction, therefore, limited experience and exposure to practice and supervision have a high chance of negatively affecting the quality of supervision. This is also supported by Odularu and Akande (2024), who stated that some of the biggest limitations to effective student supervision include the supervisor's limited academic knowledge and their experience in the workplace and as student supervisors.

5.2 *EMERGENCE OF THEMES*

The themes and subthemes that emerged from the thematic data analysis process are illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of themes and subthemes

Main themes	Subthemes
Theme 1: Supervision of community development students in WIL	– Provision of diverse supervision roles in the organisation – Active student engagement in the organisation. – Observational learning – Provision of coaching and mentorship – Integration of theory into practice – Mutual benefit in WIL
Theme 2: Available support for CDWs	– Supervisory support to the students – Peer-to-peer support – Support from the university – Support from other stakeholders – Other resources available
Theme 3: Capacity building attended.	– induction training for students – self-supervision – Peer to peer learning – Capacity building received from the university – Diverse topics covered in the university capacity building e.g.

Theme 4: Knowledge of policies and guidelines.	– Policy frameworks guiding supervision – Establishment of own rules and regulations
Theme 5: Challenges facing CDWs in WIL supervision.	– Students' personality traits – professionalism o Leave of absence o Incompetent reports o Dress code o Poor time management – Language barrier – Protest actions – Limited organisational resources
Theme 6: Strategies to improve the supervision of community development students in WIL.	– Meeting with students – Planning – Student placement criteria – Revised course curriculum – Clarity on rules and regulations – Collaborative learning

5.3 DISCUSSION OF THEMES AND SUBTHEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE STUDY

Throughout the discussion, direct quotes from participants' responses will be provided as evidence to support the themes and subthemes and will be indicated in italics. All findings will be supported by relevant literature.

5.3.1 Theme 1: Supervision of community development students in WIL

This theme will showcase the experiences of CDWs in supervising the community development students in WIL.

- **Provision of diverse supervision roles in WIL**

Supervision in WIL has various functions, which guide the roles that supervisors provide to the students. There are three main functions of supervision, which are the formative, normative and restorative functions. According to the Department of Social development (DSD) (2012) the formative function requires the supervisor to help the students to enhance their knowledge, competencies, and skills that enable them to perform their duties in the profession. This is done

in alignment of the students' curriculum in the institution of higher learning. The understanding of this function is reflected by participant 9's response:

"... obviously when they come to me, they were referred to gain a knowledge of how to develop in the community. So, I am implementing that mindset on them to say, "you do this, you do that"" Participant 9.

In the second function, the normative function, the role of the supervisor is to ensure that the students adhere to policy and procedures in the organisation, as well as those that guide their professional conduct. For this to happen, students must be well acquainted to the organisational policy, culture, and structures, which means the supervisors are responsible for introducing them to the policy and procedures in practice.

"My work as a supervisor is to go step by step with the students to show them what we work with, and how throughout the organisations. Since we work with the community; from children to adults, to make sure they know how to attack different groups of people, and the language we use when addressing them" Participant 8.

Finally, the restorative function serves to ensure that the students are supported, and their morale is improved. This is done by ensuring that the students are settled in the organisation, and that the working environment is conducive for learning (DSD, 2012).

"One of my roles in supervision is to make sure that people understand the culture in the institution, and that people understand our policy, and the constitutions, our structures, and even the types of our meetings like AGMs, staff meetings." Participant 1.

"The purpose is to help the students to understand the organizational culture, to understanding the way things are done here at social development. also to help and guide for their future as CDPs, to know the expectations on them when they are working" Participant 3

The quotes above demonstrate the supervisors' understanding of the three functions of supervision and the roles they are expected to provide to the students emanating from the functions.

- **Active student engagement in the organisation**

Participation is an important element in the learning process (Nortjie, 2022). Although the supervisors play the role of imparting knowledge and skills to the students WIL will never be effective if the students do not participate and continuously engage themselves in the

organization. Their willingness or lack thereof reflects their readiness to be in the work environment. According to participant 1, community development students do not hesitate to participate throughout the WIL period:

"The students are not stubborn, they participate, and they are always willing to spend the eight hours here with us. Although here and there they do have their own shortfalls" Participant 1.

It is also important to understand that not all students are the same, therefore, their engagement in the organisation will not be the same nor equal. It is important for supervisors to understand the types of students they are working with to increase effectiveness of the strategies used as per participant 2's response; *"One can be fast and the other can be a bit slow and the other one in the middle"* Participant 2.

Not all supervisors have had good experiences with the engagement of students. Participant 8 described the students as people who are reluctant to participate when they are in the field. *"The problem is that these students do not want to work, so they become a burden to me"* participant 8. Such students are referred to as 'difficult students according to Kgari-Masondo et al. (2024). They often are sluggish to do assigned tasks, come with excuses, and some have temperamental issues.

- **Observational learning**

Observational learning is a process whereby an individual positions themselves to learn from another person's behaviour (Hancock & Rymal, 2024). Ideally, one would assume that the learning process only applies to the students in WIL. However, participants have admitted to also have the willingness to learn from the students through observation and conduct. *"I am here to learn from the students, and they are here to learn from me"* participant 2.

It is imperative to note that a good professional relationship between the supervisor and student(s) cultivates this type of learning process. O'Donoghue (2015) reflects on this by describing supervision as an interactive professional relationship between supervisor and supervisee. This interaction enables a two-way flow of information between the involved parties, and that allows them to learn from each other.

Additionally, students are also given a chance to learn from the organisational staff by being present in meetings within the organisation, as well as community meetings. Participant 10 confirmed that they use this strategy to develop the students' skills for practice by saying

"*So one of the ways in which we give the students opportunities is if we have our weekly meetings, we will have them sit with us through the meetings"*.

"I mostly introduce them to the substance abuse program cause the victim empowerment one mostly works with private family cases, and they are always indoors. So, for them to know how the community works, I introduce them to that one" Participant 2.

In this way, they are able to learn from their social context, as according to the social constructivist theory (Akpan et al., 2020). This will further develop their skills and give them the opportunity to learn from the mistakes and successes of others.

However, supervisors may find themselves having uncommunicated expectations from students in the light of observational learning. Participant 9 said *"You are my student, sometimes I don't show you anything. I let you teach yourself what you do in a day because I show you a routine of everything. So tomorrow, I'm not supposed to remind you"*.

Although this can be seen as a strategy to cultivate independence, it is dangerous in two ways. Firstly, it may result in students feeling neglected and result in them feeling ashamed of asking for assistance where they stuck. Secondly, since these expectations are not communicated, the supervisor might perceive the students as unwilling to work or lazy.

- **Provision of coaching and mentorship**

Basa (2021) asserted that supervisors are expected to foster the students' process of learning and development. This can include giving students tasks to do and ensuring that they do it to the best of their capacity.

"I have to see that they do the work that they are here to do excellently, and even where they do not do it correctly, I have to help them one by one because they do not understand things in the same way" Participant 2.

"It is about giving someone a task, checking if they can do it, and if they have challenges, they get back to you to ask that I have this kind of challenge with the work you have given me. Then you go to check, or when they are done with the work you have given them, you go to check if they have completed it the way you had agreed, and you give recommendations on the work that they have done" Participant 6.

These quotes are evidence that supervisors seldomly expect perfection from the students. Rather, they use activities/ tasks as a way of enforcing learning and development. According

to the Council on Higher learning (2011), workplace supervisors must identify skill gaps and create opportunities that will develop and elevate those skills for the students.

"One of the challenges again is that I don't know as to whether they are being exposed to things like presentations and facilitations, because some of them they struggle when it comes to a facilitation or presentation, they do struggle a lot, but through our guidance, um they flourish" participant 3.

"We have some of them even take minutes of the meeting so that they improve their writing skills" Participant 10.

Additionally, the CDWs provide academic coaching through assisting the students with their academic assessments from the university.

"Yes, yes, yes, because sometimes they come here to ask us to help them with assignments. I remember one day they asked how we can help them, and we explained according to the questions they had" Participant 1.

- **Integration of theory into practice**

WIL is a method of bridging theory into practice and therefore producing employable students that have acquired advanced knowledge in the field (Sunnemark, 2024). Therefore, both theoretical knowledge and fieldwork experience are important elements for effective WIL supervision in WIL.

"Another thing what we gain through the trainings is that we get to understand what the students are there to do in our organisation because they must be able to implement what they were taught in school" Participant 1.

"My job is to show them what we do as an organisation because they do community development. So, they are here to practice what they learned at the university with us here" Participant 4.

"...they actually get to practice what it is that they are learning throughout the year or rather the semesters" participant 10.

Both participant 1 and participant 4 have indicated that they have obtained community development qualifications, and participant 10 is in the process of obtaining one. Their explicit knowledge of community development theory accounts for their understanding of how it guides practice in the field, and the importance of integrating both in WIL. According to Martin

et al (2019), WIL merges the knowledge that one gains from academic studies with their practical experience in the field. Therefore, supervisors who have a background of the academic knowledge are in a better position to understand the integration of theory and practice better than those who do not. The study conducted by Carelse and Poggenpoel (2016) on the supervision of social work students revealed that supervisors who were not familiar with the theories and schools of thought taught in the degree had to rely on the students for theoretical knowledge, which may affect their relationships with the students.

However, not having exposure to academic knowledge does not mean one is not capable of supervising students in WIL. Research is one of the strategies for continuous professional development, which contributes to the CDWs' ability to supervise community development students in WIL.

"I do my own research, so that is what keeps me going every day. So no one is telling me what to do today how do you do it, you know? I research. if ever I want to give them a job of typing, I research" participant 9.

This demonstrates the CDW's dedication and commitment to breaking limitations in supervision, as well as their adaptability.

- **Mutual benefit in WIL**

WIL does not solely benefit the students and the institutions of higher learning. CDWs, as well as the organizations they work in benefit from their participation in WIL supervision for students. Jackson et al. (2017) judged that students do not only benefit from their placement in the organisation, but they add value too.

"I'm benefiting, because now whatever work that I'm giving them, to them it's a study and to me it's the benefit of the company or the organisation" Participant 9

"We only have the experience, and we talk about these things in terms of experience and then the university students will come in, they will give technical terms to what we are talking about, and they will show us that it's not just theories, but this is actual work that's been done and there are terms of these things. So in that way we strengthen the students and they in turn strengthen us" participant 10.

Additionally, the CDWs have shown appreciation in the opportunity to contribute to the training of these students, and to pass on skills that they have learned in their practice.

"I can call it special because it's something that we normally did not think that one day we will get the opportunity to transfer the skills, you know, to give people what they need, especially the student to give them that motivation that they mustn't just study, but make sure that they know that being hands on is very important" Participant 5.

According to Ketner, Bolinskey and VanCleave (2017, as cited in Nyoni, 2020), such opportunities provide professional development and leadership skills development for the supervisors. The opportunity to supervise community development students for WIL therefore, is an invaluable experience for the CDWs.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Available support for CDWs in WIL supervision

This theme presents the available support systems in the supervision of students. This is the support offered to the students by the CDWs, as well as the different kinds of support that CDWs receive from various stakeholders.

- **Supervisory support to the students**

Alongside supporting the students through assuming coaching and mentorship roles, CDWs also provide psychosocial support to the students in WIL. Psychosocial support refers to emotional support and encouragement so that they can promote the process of learning (Fleming et al., 2021).

"*The support that we give the students is that they are not alone when they are doing their presentations, we are always together. They have our peers here and experts we have in our organisation"* Participant 1

"Even if they are not treated well, I want them to tell me so we can iron out the challenges they encounter so that everything can be alright" participant 6.

"Sometimes some of the students, their challenges that they present it's not the challenges that are related to this work involvement, they emanated from their families. So when you tend to understand the students, their needs and then support them" participant 3.

This kind of support also provides a safety net for the students, in the organization and when they are in unfamiliar communities. It also enables students to freely ask for help when they struggle (Flemming et al., 2021). At times, supervisors are faced with situations where they have to motivate the students and remind them of the goal when they are losing focus.

"I had to sit the students down as a supervisor and explained to them the importance of being active in the organisation because their urge to leave is often because they feel like they are wasting their time when there is not much work to do" Participant 4.

The students' lack of confidence in themselves as developing professionals, as well as in their supervisors may affect the effectiveness of their academic journey and the supervision process (Nyoni, 2020).

- **Peer-to-peer support**

Supervision can be a tedious and an overwhelming experience for the CDWs, especially given that they are still expected to bring forth results in their organizational duties too. The research findings indicate that the CDWs receive support from their coworkers, which reduces the workload and retains effectiveness (Fleming et al., 2021).

"When I have many places to be, I send them to some, and they go to show that I am not working alone. They relieve me off some work so that it is not too heavy" participant 4.

"My colleagues give comments on the work that I do. If there is something that I am not doing right, they tell me, and we work on correcting it for the future" participant 7.

"As a team, we have divided ourselves and given each other tasks because we understand that it is more about us as a unit than it is for an individual person who is supervising the students" participant 8.

The above quotes indicate that CDWs are supported by their peers in various ways. Firstly, when the main supervisor is not able to do their duties or has other commitments, the colleagues are able to temporarily supervise the students. This ensures that WIL continues and is not dependent on one individual. Secondly, CDWs get feedback and criticism on their supervision from their professional counterparts in the organisation, even if they are not supervising the students. This gives the supervisors a fresh and different perspective towards supervision, as well as corrective measures for future purposes. Lastly, to not overload the supervisor with work, teamwork comes through as an important tool. All employees have various tasks delegated to them, to avoid the supervisor doing all at once. According to Nyoni (2020), peer support creates a feeling of unity, creates an atmosphere of shared knowledge and the exchange of challenges and strategies.

- **Support from the university**

The UFS has a big responsibility of supporting the CDWs to ensure that the aim of WIL and supervision is met. Jackson et al (2017) asserted that universities that place students in organisations are required to support students in various areas to ensure that they yield successful outcomes. The research findings have shown that the university offers support to CDWs in different capacities. Participant 6 reported that *"Last year, the university gave us a workshop on how to draft proposals and approach funders. It helped us to know how to approach funders even before applications are out"*. This is capacity building for the organisation, not just for the supervisor. This This brings about growth in the organisation, and in turn enables them to better accommodate students for WIL.

Secondly, the university personnel do regular check-ups in organisations to make sure that everything is still running accordingly. According to a study conducted by Martin et al. (2019), this is a valuable act for the supervisors.

"Yes, they are very supportive because on a weekly basis, they do call us and ask us as to whether we have challenges, how did we overcome these challenges, those that we did not manage to overcome they guide us and in terms of how to overcome them and then, yeah, that's it, yeah. Yeah, we keep open communication" participant 3.

"There is someone who comes to check on how we are doing but this time he was not able to come physically but he called, and we spoke on the phone" Participant 7.

Additionally, the university updates the organisations on the students' academic progress even beyond their placement in the organisations.

"And what makes me happier is that the university updates us on the students' progress. Even the first ones, when they were graduating, they sent us pictures" participant 3.

However, there seems to be disparities with how supervisors felt supported by the university. Participant 8 and participant 9 reported on their dissatisfaction on the support provided by the university as follows:

"Unfortunately, the university does not support us in any way to be honest" participant 8

"Like I don't want to lie to you. Straightforward, I don't have any kind of alternative support" participant 9.

This disparity may reflect the inconsistency of the university in providing support, or the supervisors not responding to the provided methods of support from the university. According

to Khosa (2022), insufficient capacity building is a major threat to competence and supervisor morale.

- **Support from other stakeholders**

The organisations in which the students are placed have varying networks in and around the community. This works in favour of WIL, in a sense that the supervisors use those connections to maximise the WIL experience for students by providing them with exposure to a variety of fieldwork practices. Exposing the students to various fieldwork practices enables them to identify their strongpoints and their field of interest within the profession.

"Another support that we have is that the organisation is funded by the department of social development. We normally receive a subsidy from their side. The subsidy is meant for transport, projects, and to assist with some of the resources we need" participant 1.

"There are organisations that work with children who are abused, you find that sometimes we meet up if we have presentations. We communicate on how we can help the students" Participant 8.

"And also from the organisations that we find that we are doing the same type of work in the community, if there is something that I would like to have the students exposed to that I'm supervising, then I can always call up on other organisations to say look, I don't have this particular thing in my organisation. Is it possible they can come shadow you for a day or two?" participant 10.

Some of these stakeholders, such as the Department of Social development, make funding provisions to the organisations, which is used to obtain resources and travel to different communities.

"Another support that we have is that the organisation is funded by the department of social development. We normally receive a subsidy from their side. The subsidy is meant for transport, projects, and to assist with some of the resources we need" Participant 1

Although not all stakeholders are able to provide funding, they provide resources such as stationery to enable the CDWs to carry out the organisational duties, which in turn benefit the students in WIL.

"...and for things like charts and stuff, we usually get them from other organisations" participant 8.

The interorganisational partnerships are supported by Flemming et al. (2018), who asserted that having professional relationships with various organisations provides students with the opportunity to network and diversify their competencies.

- **The use of technology and organisational resources**

The data presented the use of the internet and social media platforms as resources that assist with effective communication and performance of daily duties.

"We communicate through the phone, using WhatsApp group or anything" participant 1

"In terms of resources, we mostly use the internet to do our daily duties" Participant 8

"I'm using social media to contact them" participant 9.

CDWs also use organisational resources to ensure that students have the capacity to do the tasks they are given in the organisation.

"Like we are sitting here, there's a laptop, there's a departmental network, there's a stationary there uh GG vehicles as you can see downstairs and if you look by the GG vehicles are there, yeah, basically… we have the photocopy machines, yes that is it." Participant 3:

5.3.3 *Theme 3: Capacity building in WIL supervision*

This theme presents findings from the data that relate to the different types of training that take place throughout the WIL supervision experience.

- **Introduction training for students**

First, when students enter the organisations, they are trained about the organisation itself. This includes training on the organisational culture, policy and procedures, and other factors.

"The first day when they arrive, and we start by helping them to understand our policy and follow with admitting them to our organisations. We welcome them and show them our culture so that they can feel at home and know who to approach for which concerns." Participant 1

This is also known as induction, which is defined as the process of welcoming new employees by providing them with the basic information about the organisation to enable them to settle in. this has proven to improve the employees' performance (Mchete & Shayo, 2020). This includes introducing them to the employees, establishing the ground rules, setting boundaries, etc. This is also outlined in participant 5's response; *"*

Yeah, very important so that when the students arrive, they know what's expected from them, and what are the duties to be performed, you know, so that the students can know that we are going to work with these individuals, yeah".

As part of the induction process, participant 7 explained that having ice breaking activities and moments often makes the students to adapt quicker in the organisation, therefore it is beneficial. *"We play games and get to know each other through the games and some TikTok challenges"* participant 7.

- **Self-supervision**

Although all supervisors are somewhat expected to bring about similar outcomes, they are not equally equipped and capacitated for supervision in WIL. Therefore, they use their own experiences and expectations to supervise the students. Although this might work in some aspects, it limits their effectiveness because their knowledge and insight of what they are supposed to do in their supervisory roles is limited (Khosa, 2022).

"In my first year of supervising, I supervised according to my understanding of how you must supervise a person" Participant 2

"We just do things by ourselves. We develop those things by ourselves because we are always around different people, in some cases, we learn from other people's strategies when we are attending meetings with other organisations" participant 8.

"Well, I don't have any kind of inspiration that tells me what is it that I'm supposed to do every day? Like someone who gives me advice to say this is what you must do today, and that is what you must do tomorrow. It just comes in my mind" participant 9.

Nyoni (2020) explained that the feeling of 'aloneness' by the supervisors may also stem from the fact that supervisors only receive training on supervision once a year, which may leave some supervisors yearning for more or with a feeling of an unquenched thirst.

- **Peer-to-peer learning**

In the second theme, supervisors admitted to having relationships with other organisations that are in and around Qwaqwa and how they are supportive to their roles in WIL supervision. To add on that, they have also indicated that they learn supervision skills, tricks, and techniques from other CDWs who also supervise community development students in WIL.

"So when we bump into each other when attending meeting somewhere, we ask each other how the students are". Participant 2

"You know with other supervisors from different organisations, I have learned through our conversations that some people do not yet understand what a community development practitioner is, and that as much as they have done it for a long time in practice, they have not done the theory, the ethics" participant 6.

This is important because they have different perceptions and capacity of supervising community development students. Therefore, learning from their professional counterparts increases the effectiveness of their supervision strategies as it enhances their willingness to transfer skills (Fleming et al., 2021).

Additionally, supervisors take up opportunities to attend workshops hosted by external institutions and organisations outside the UFS, where they interact with various stakeholders and professionals for professional development, capacity building, and supervisory support.

"We normally go to workshops around. The district hosts workshops there, and they invite us. We go there, participate, and give feedback" participant 5.

These external organisations are sometimes regarded as third parties, which Jackson et al (2017) argue that they play huge role in upskilling and capacitating the younger workplace supervisors.

- **Capacity building received from the university**

Student supervision is an important element in institutions of higher learning to ensure that their vision of WIL comes to life. It is therefore important that they train the CDWs for supervision based on their expectations. This means they provide guidance on how they are expected to impart knowledge and skills to the students, as well as the policies and procedures to follow when experiencing challenges (Jackson et al, 2015).

"So every year if there are students that are coming here, we attend training before at the university" participant 2.

"*Yes, um I started in 2022, 2023, 2024. So I did receive the training from the University of the Free state, here in Qwaqwa"* Participant 3

"In the supervision training, they trained us how to communicate simply with the students because they are from different places" Participant 6.

Participant 2 and participant 3's responses indicate that the UFS trains them every year before WIL begins, and it includes CDWs who have attended the training before. Although this might seem like a redundant exercise, it ensures that supervisors are still up to date with what is expected of them, and it allows the university to convey information on any changes that have been implemented from previous experiences.

In addition, these trainings prove to not only capacitate the CDWs for WIL supervision but also for professional development, which strengthens the organisation using a ripple effect.

"And with the training that we get from the university, we are able to strengthen the organization itself with the things that we do learn from the training" participant 10.

Participant 5 stated that *"normally the university provides us with the workshops that are relevant for the students. So that we don't go in a different way. We must go straight according to the module"*.

This means that the university provides these trainings through workshops, which enable participation and engagement between the CDWs and the facilitator in the training workshop. Workshops, as compared to regular training, are interactive and have more chances of improving the supervisors' skills and competencies (Muktar et al., 2022)

- **Topics covered in the university trainings**

As stated in the previous subtheme, it important for the university to provide training as a form of guidance to supervisors in preparation for WIL. However, it also matters what the supervisors are being trained on as this will determine how effective their strategies become when the students are now placed in the organisations. The topics covered in the trainings provided by the UFS are highlighted below:

"They cover issues of the ethics, uhm …Yeah, those are the ethics and then again the values and the principles of community development and during the training they also um cover issues related to the assessments of the of the students, such as their learning contract, they must do their agency analysis, then again they must conduct researches in community development that would lead to a project proposal, then they must identify the project and that they are going to embark on and then they must also implement project. as and then they need analysis is also there" Participant 3.

"We are taught how to supervise. In fact, in that training, the students were also there, and they were being told what is expected of them when they arrive here. For us, we learn things that we did not know" Participant 7.

"Well, one of the important things that that we learn during the training is how to deal with the different types of students that we have" Participant 10.

It is important for the university to ensure that the trainings provide the supervisors with content and information that improves their confidence in their ability to effectively supervise the community development students. Carelse and Poggenpoel (2016) revealed that fieldwork supervisors often do not believe that they have what it takes to make contributions to the students' professional development, which affects the students' performance in fieldwork. Furthermore, Nyoni (2020) asserted that there is always room for improvement in terms of the supervision training programs that are offered by universities for fieldworkers.

5.3.4 Theme 4: knowledge of policies and guidelines

This theme presents the knowledge and usage of policies and guidelines that are effective and relevant for WIL supervision.

- **Policy frameworks guiding supervision**

A policy framework is a document that highlights boundaries in practice by outlining the goals, objectives, values, and principles of a profession or an organisation (Lakhno, 2023). This emphasises what is acceptable and what is not, therefore all behaviour must be thought of first, as well as the consequences to follow (Stone, 2011 as cited in Du Plessis, 2016). According to the participants' responses, the organisations' already existing policies contributes a lot on how they interact with the students and the boundaries that students are not supposed to cross.

"So, there is a policy and a constitution in place, that guide our ethics and behaviour. Even for communications, there is a policy about reporting for the workers here" Participant 1

"Yeah, here in the department, we have a lot of policies, like, for example, we have a policy on dressing. Like, they know that the community development is a profession here. So when they are here they should dress professionally, formally, so that um they get respect to form the clients that we meet on a daily basis" participant 3.

"For example, for a student that would be working in finance, we have a policy that states the laws pertaining using the petty cash, or the finance policy". Participant 6

Additionally, supervision must encompass the community development values and principles in action, even between the students, supervisors, organisations, and the communities. This works to build the students' professional identity through supervision (Sunnermark et al., 2024). These values and principles are outlined in community development practice documents such as the Draft Community Development Practice Policy Framework (Department of Social Development, 2014).

"We work with confidentiality. We mostly work with clients, so they must know that they cannot take the client's information and talk about the at school. That will provide a bad image for us." Participant 8.

Per the university's policy, the CDWs are provided with guidelines on what is acceptable and what is not. Martin et al. (2019), the university must ensure to set clear expectations to both the students and the supervisors, to ensure that there is no procedure or task that is completed out of conduct. Clearly set expectations make the process of managing WIL supervision easier and more effective. Therefore, the provision of straight and clear guidelines is very important.

"I'd say everything because they bring some sort of a manual that explains everything that you are supposed to do as a supervisor or what they are expecting from you and the students" participant 2.

"But the university also provides guidelines to say supervisors, this is what is expected of you, this is what we are expecting you will do towards the students, how you will work with the students during this supervision period" Participant 10.

None of the participants made reference to any national policy on the supervision of community development students. This factor also places the urgency of having a standardised community development framework that will also address and guide the supervision of students.

- **Establishment of own rules and regulations**

Although the participants acknowledged the importance of formal and official organisational principles, they also spoke on the effectiveness of having tailor made rules and regulations for each cohort of students, which are a combination of the supervisor's boundaries and those of the students.

"So, because I am already used to having them here every year, I tell them how I would like to work with them but before we go anywhere, can we please make our own rules of operation". Participant 2

"They must receive everyone, follow the rules that are put in place for their position. If the person who must do a certain task is not available, there are rules to follow, you call that person so that they can tell you what to do with the clients. I think that is what helps us to not find ourselves in situations where a person jumps over their position and the laws that bind them and the position they occupy" Participant 6.

Additionally, some supervisors merge the organisational rules and regulations to set operational boundaries with the students.

"We have what we call an operational tool, which guides how employees are to be treated in our organisation" Participant 1.

5.3.5 Theme 5: Challenges encountered by CDWs in WIL supervision

This theme outlines the challenges that CDWs have come across in their experience of supervising community development students in WIL.

- **Students' personality traits**

Lack of confidence among students is a common challenge in WIL. In a study conducted by Martin et al (2019), workplace indicated that low confidence among the students was one of the biggest challenges they encounter, therefore they must find ways of assisting them with that, while being patient with the students. Similarly, the research data for this study presented shyness as a challenge among the students in the field.

"*The issue that I have with the is that they become ashamed and shy sometimes, so you as the supervisor must train them because as time goes on, they get used to the work"* Participant 1.

"Another one is shyness, because they come here to work with communities that they are not familiar with" Participant 2.

This restricts their engagement with the employees in the organisation. They want to be around their classmates only, and this limits their learning process in the organisation.

"When they arrive, they would want me to give them a table to sit at, maybe we are going to have a meeting with our colleagues. After the meeting, we will say to them that they must relax for some time. You will find that they all want to be on one side." Participant 6.

- **Professionalism**

Professionalism in WIL is a very important element because one of the functions of WIL is to develop their professional identities. The CDWs have narrated the following challenges with the students' professional conduct:

  - Leave of absence

The rules and regulations regarding leave of absence are often outlined in the organisational policy, constitution, or protocols. The students' adherence to these rules reflects their ability to take instructions and respects the laws of the organisation. The data presents this as one of the challenges that supervisors encounter, whereby the students may abscond and come up with excuses for it. It also proves the supervisors' understanding of these laws.

"The biggest one is that sometimes they want to take days off because they get sick or something, and that affects the work plan that we had" participant 1.

"The other issue is that we let a student know, for example, if one is not going to show up due to various reasons, this instance, let me say somebody all of a sudden, uh gets sick early in the morning, such person can report it before or by nine o'clock that he/she's ill due to this and this, but if it's something confidential for a day then they don't need to sign for a leave. But unfortunately, for students, students, they do not have leave days. So we allow them for a day to recover, to sit at home and then recover. If the next day he or she is also not fine, then they must go to the doctor, then whenever they come, they must provide a sick note that I was sick" participant 3

"Yes, they lied about the dates of their university holidays. They said they are closing on this and this date, when I asked their university supervisor, I was told that no, it is not those dates, it is the week after" participant 8

According to Kgari-Masondo et al. (2024), students may come up with many excuses to not deliver what is expected of them, which includes being present daily at work. This may be due to the shift from attending classes on some days while having some days off, to being expected to account for days off. Beytell (2014, as cited by Nyoni, 2020) asserted that this kind of behaviour breaks trust between the supervisor and student, thus resulting in unpleasant experiences of supervision.

- Dress code

How a person dresses in the workplace has a big impact on how they are addressed by their colleagues and clients. This is especially true for fieldwork, where the CDWs address various types of people. It is therefore important that the students also dress appropriately for the type of work they do. According to Santos and Marasigan (2021), the organisational policy often has guidance of how people are expected to dress in the organisation. Similar to leave of absence, the students' dress code says a lot about their professionalism and adherence to the organisational laws.

"I remember last time when I was talking about the uniform. Our office has uniform but if they don't have the uniform, I encourage them to just wear a white shirt when they want to assist somebody, especially in the counselling. You can't wear as if you it is Christmas or Sunday. You have to look like the employees. The employees must be ready actually to assist everybody. And now, if you are wearing expensive clothes and all, these people who abuse and use drugs will just start to judge you. You must be an acceptable person to the client" participant 1.

"Some of them you will tell them that remember guys tomorrow we are having a meeting, a so-called meeting which also includes the traditional leadership. And as a woman, you must know that you should not wear uhm…the dresses that you do not cover your knees. You must swear those that cover your knees, and you must not wear a trouser. Then the next day somebody comes and then you have to go there, there is a challenge. Now when we get there, they are chased out because the kings don't play" Participant 3.

"The first thing that we give to the students, like I said we have policies, we give them policies to look at, like it will include the dress code because we work with the community" participant 6

"Another one is the one of dress codes. You cannot dress in a way that is not professional. We work with different people in the community and the way the dress will obviously affect how the community members address them. Another one is the language you use and the way you approach clients. You must be approachable to people in the community" participant 8.

- Poor time management

Parker (2017 as cited in Khosa, 2022) stated that one of the factors that contribute to ineffective supervision is poor time management, which is an important skill to have in the workplace. The participants identified the lack of time management skills among the students, whereby they report late to work.

"On the first day because they are just starting, they arrive on time. They will even call you around seven for directions because they want to be there by 8am…

But as time goes, you find that a person starts having excuses about transport, apologising because of taxis, and all that" Participant 6

"So, issues of arriving to work on time, being professional, being presentable, those are the little things that we struggle with usually with the second years" participant 10.

Another factor that affects time management in supervision is the supervisor's scheduling conflict. Supervisors have narrated that they often experience a clash between their supervisory duties and their duties as a CDW in the organisation. According to Khosa (2022), this is one of the causes of poor time management in supervision because it causes a delay in the supervisor performing their roles in supervision.

"I have never experienced any challenges on my side except the time frames of my schedules clashing with when the students need help" Participant 1

"Most of the time when there is an information desk, sometimes the dates chosen clash with the dates where I have to do certain reports" Participant 2

- Incompetent report writing

Another issue raised is the students' incompetence in writing reports according to the organisations' standards.

"The department requests a report however, they do not know the struggles that we go through to have this report" participant 1.

"We have those that are unable to write reports in a way that we write reports here. They just want to write a report in their own way" Participant 3.

This response also reflects the students' lack of adherence to the organisational laws because the participant indicated that there is a template followed for report writing in the organisation, but students do not adhere to it.

- **Language barrier**

Rosales (2021) alluded that in fieldwork, having limited or no knowledge of the local area puts you at a great disadvantage because you will not be warmly received by the community, and will therefore struggle to penetrate the space. The participants' responses reflected a genuine concern with the limited ability of the students to speak Sesotho in Qwaqwa, where Sesotho is the main language spoken.

"Some of the challenges that we experience with the students is those that cannot express themselves in Sesotho. Someone is Sotho but the very same person is working with Sotho communities but cannot express themselves in Sesotho. Then we have a challenge there, because the communities must hear you" participant 3

"The first one is the language barrier. Because we live in a place where Sesotho is dominating so students from KZN specifically, they struggle a lot" Participant 5

"Language. Some speak Xhosa, Zulu, and others, so we end up having a barrier. Sometimes we are unable to understand each other" participants 7.

"The issues of like I said, with the language barrier, because with the language barrier, you find that most of the students are not even attempting to communicate in the local language" participant 10.

- **Protest actions**

Qwaqwa is a community that has been struggling with service delivery for a long time. The residents often protest to showcase their anger and dissatisfaction when services like water and electricity have been cut off for an extended period, whereas the students at the UFS Qwaqwa also protest to make their voices heard by the university management. although these protests are sometimes productive for the community as well as the student population, they often disrupt the workplans that were drafted by the supervisor and students.

"The challenge is that here in Qwaqwa there are always public service protests. You find out that you have plans with the students and then the students do not show up"

…You find out that the students are having strike at the university, and you have plans with them" Participant 3

"When there are community protests over water, electricity, and stuff like that we can't come. But if ever those protests happen on days where the students were supposed to come, we then try to make sure that we shift the activities to another day where the students will be available" participant 7.

- **Limited resources**

Community development students are placed in community-based organisations for their WIL program, especially in their second and third year. Organisations of this nature often find themselves encountering challenges with the availability of resources. Unfortunately, this does affect the effectiveness of WIL and supervision as it limits the extent in which work can be done (Ndebele et al., 2023).

"And the other thing is that if the university has resources on their sides, we would appreciate if they helped us with those. For example, pens, files, and others that can help us to work with the students and show them fully on what is done in the organisation" participant 1.

"Even if they are not in the office, I need to talk to them every time. So obviously I need internet access and I'm having challenges of that. Because sometimes we can talk about something and immediately when they leave, I remember that I should have said this and this to them" participant 9

Additionally, not all organisations are office-based. Some organisations are always outside because their organisational work is mostly environmental. Bad or extreme weather conditions do affect the ability of the students to do their daily tasks and might have to reschedule so that they can meet the minimum hours needed for the module.

"The other challenge is the issue of weather because we work outside. If it rains, we become unable to do our daily work" participant 5.

The availability of protective equipment would be beneficial for the purpose of continuing with work despite bad weather.

5.3.6 Theme 6: Strategies to improve the supervision of community development students in WIL

This theme will present the strategies that CDWs have advised for the improvement of the supervision of community development students in WIL.

- **Meeting with students**

Meeting with the students does not always have to be formal with a strict agenda. There are various types of meetings that supervisors may have with students, so long as it is within the bounds of professionalism.

"So one of the ways in which we give the students opportunities is if we have our weekly meetings, we will have them sit with us through the meetings. We have some of them even take minutes of the meeting so that they improve their writing skills" Participant 10.

Through these meetings, supervisors can monitor the students' progress and develop a way forward with them. In cases where one CDW supervises more than one, these meetings can be done individually or in a group just as participant 3 explained.

"we have group supervision. Then we also have one on one supervision and the one-on-one supervision, it's very crucial because you tend to understand the challenges that the student has".

Monitoring the students' attendance and progress has various benefits. It firstly ensures that students are on par with the required attendance at the organisation where they are placed so that they meet the minimum required hours to complete the course. Secondly, it allows supervisors to track the students' progress with the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills, which will enable them to adjust their supervision strategies (Martin et al., 2019). This is also known as the zone for proximal development according to the social constructivism theory.

"We have monthly meetings where they inform us with the challenges, they face so we can have a way forward. The meetings are our means of monitoring" participant 1.

"We have an attendance register to make sure that they attend. Secondly, we have a weekly report to make sure that they know what they have done and how to put them down" Participant 5.

Another way to track the students' progress is to hear how they explain the learning processes in their own terms. Reflective reports enable the students to report on their feelings, lessons, opinion on WIL, and their experience in-depth (Ramlal & Augustin, 2021).

"Yes, meetings, group meetings, yeah, because there's uh… what do we call… when we are done working for the day, a thing of giving reflection... every time, yeah, we have an hour after we have worked, at least an hour before we knock off, we sit down, then we give reflections, yeah" participant 5.

"When I have students every day in the afternoon I ask them, what have you learned? Personally, privately, I ask them, what did you learn? I need a report every day." Participant 9.

Additionally, strategic meetings with the students yields to efficiency in WIL supervision as it aids with time management. Everything that is done has timeframes and deadlines; therefore, it is essential to plan strategically around them. Strategic planning also includes knowing what is to be done on which day, at what time. Not only does this strategy increase effectiveness and productivity, but it increases the quality of the work done by the students and the supervisors (Dimitrova & Mancheva-Ali, 2018).

"We got an assembly each other every day. We do have an assembly to welcome everybody and indicate the work plan for the day the day, what are we going to do? and next week, what are we going to do? So, after conducting the assembly, we then have the knowledge of how everyone's calendar and work plan looks like" participant 1.

"They must also know how to plan the work before they leave to the field." Participant 2

"I always make sure to emphasise our starting and knock-off times even when I see that they are not keeping time" Participant 6

- **Support from the university with resources**

The CDWs have indicated the use of their personal belongings to enhance the effectiveness of supervision since they are scarce in the organisations.

"We do also use our own cars although organisation does not have a car, but we make sure that we use our personal cars and bring them along when we go to do home visits and presentations so that they can participate because they need to learn the concept of leadership slowly" participant 1.

"The student would go out with other colleagues and then do the planned activities of those officials. Yes, that is the support that they do offer. Even sometimes when we do not have transport, they volunteer to take us a from a point where we need to go" participant 3.

However, supporting the organisations with resources is important when the university prepares the organisations for WIL. The resources may come in a form funds, material, knowledge, etc. (Jackon et al., 2017). The participants have indicated the provision of resources by the university as one of the ways to improve WIL.

"And the other thing is that if the university has resources on their sides, we would appreciate if they helped us with those. For example, pens, files, and others that can help us to work with the students and show them fully on what is done in the organisation". Participant 1

- **Student placement criteria**

The organisations in which students are placed should be carefully considered and chosen because they determine how skilful the student will be following the WIL experience. They also have an impact on the direction a student wants to take with their professional career (Martin et al., 2019)

"I think that the university is the one that must choose organisations that are good for community development students.

"Yes, so some organisations, if you look closely, they don't' qualify to take in community development students for a start" Participant 2

It was also suggested that the university must look into placing students according to their vision in the community development field.

"*One thing I can think of is when placing students, I think that there needs to be a way of finding out what a student's interests are because we find that like I said that in second year and third year, they are placed, they don't get to choose for themselves and you find that it is not so much that the student is not interested in the course itself, but maybe the organization they are placed in it is not something that the they are looking into going into ever in their lives"* participant 10.

- **Revised teaching curriculum**

In WIL, the course curriculum is important because it affects the overall experience. the curriculum should communicate with the professional space and requirements, so that there is

a scaffolding of information from the classroom to the field (Winchester-Seeto et al., 2024). One suggestion from participant 3 reflected the need to match the course curriculum with the required skills in community development field.

"I believe that the university has people who have done research, people with intensive knowledge of community development. So, I think these things should be taught to the students at a first-year level" participant 3

Additionally, the CDWs have explained the challenge of students who do not know Sesotho, which is a local language in the field. Their recommended strategies include introducing the students to Sesotho as a module in the early stages of their degree so that they do not struggle when they start partaking in WIL.

"They must make sure that even those who don't know Sesotho, in the four years that they are here, if they want to do their practicals here in Qwaqwa, they must know Sesotho" Participant 3

"If they can, they must always include Sesotho in their conversations. I believe that if they can get a class on Sesotho, they would be better" Participant 5

"I don't know what programs they can put in place if I mean, they know they are going to place in students in this local community, maybe have basics of this local language, maybe in first year so that the student will not struggle so much in their second year and third year when they're in place in the local community" participant 10.

- **Clarity on rules and regulations**

The rules, regulations, and the expectations of WIL should be understood by both the student and the supervisor for effective implementation, which is why it is imperative that both parties receive training from the university prior to placement (Martin et al., 2019).

"They must clearly explain to them their responsibilities and the organisations' responsibilities" Participant 8.

Participant 8's response seems to be in contradiction with what some CDWs have reported regarding the clarifications of roles and responsibilities.

"UFS was very helpful or is very helpful in the sense that they will call us for training beforehand to know that we will sending these students to you, this is what is expected from you, and this is what is expected from the students" participant 10.

- **Collaborative learning**

Learning is a two-way process. In this context, both the students and supervisor should learn from each other. Knowledge is not only shared from supervisor to the students, and skill transfer is also not one sided. Both parties should maintain an open mind to facilitate the collaborative learning process. It is important for a supervisory relationship to be collaborative and participatory for effectiveness (Khosa, 2022).

"Another thing is that the students must be taught to share their knowledge from the university with us because when they come here, they only want to consume the organisation's information and for me that is stealing because we do not learn anything from them" Participant 8.

"If other people see what I have as a good thing, why don't I just give it to somebody else?" participant 9.

"We only have the experience, and we talk about these things in terms of experience and then the university students will come in, they will give technical terms to what we are talking about and they will show us that it's not just theories, but this is actual work that's been done and there are terms of these things. So in that way we strengthen the students and they in turn strengthen us" participant 10.

The use of verbatim from the individual face-to-face interviews have strengthened this study and have been backed up by literature to validate the expressions made by the participants. The participants gave these responses based on their previous experiences in the supervision of community development students in WIL, therefore, this section represented their lived experiences, which were not manipulated by the researcher.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the findings that emanated from the data collection process that involved ten CDWs who supervise community development students in WIL. These findings were presented according to the participants' narrations of their experiences of supervising community development students in WIL at the UFS. Six main themes were presented in this chapter, namely the experiences of working with community development students in WIL, available support for CDWs supervising students in WIL, training in WIL supervision, knowledge of policies and guidelines, challenges facing CDWs in WIL supervision, and the strategies to improve the supervision of community development students in WIL according to the CDWs.

CHAPTER 6

MAIN FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the main findings, concluding remarks, and recommendations of this research study, which aimed to explore the experiences of community development workers (CDWs) in work-integrated learning (WIL) supervision at the UFS. All remarks, statements, and recommendations provided in this chapter correspond with the introduction, theoretical framework, literature review, methodology, and the findings of this study as presented in chapters one through five.

6.1 MAIN FINDINGS

This study has achieved its aim of exploring the experiences of CDWs in WIL supervision at the UFS, which will be illustrated through the objectives below.

6.1.1 Objective 1: To explore the experiences of community development workers with supervising community development students in work-integrated learning.

This study found that CDWs enjoy and appreciate having students for WIL. For them, there is a lot of professional development that they benefit from supervising the students as they play various roles for the students in the supervision process. These roles include, but not limited to, showing the students how to write reports, guiding them through presentations and facilitations, as well as giving the students opportunities to engage with the community. These roles boil down to the achievement of the normative, formative, and restorative functions of supervision (Engelbrecht, 2019). One of the most important elements that makes WIL effective is the students' engagement and participation in the organisation during their WIL period. The participants have reported that in this way, the students can learn from the entire experience.

WIL supervision is a guided by various policies, procedures, and guidelines. These include internal policies of the organisation, guidelines that the supervisors establish with the students, as well as those from the university. Apart from the abovementioned, there seems to be limited knowledge of the national policies and guidelines of community development practice such as the White paper on social welfare (1997), the Community Development Practitioners Toolkit (2009), the Draft Community Development Practice Policy Framework (2014). There may be a need for the provision of capacity building in line with such policies. This is because they are responsible for instilling the professional culture and identity in the students.

There are various challenges that were highlighted by the CDWs in their experiences of supervising community development from the UFS. These include student-related challenges as well as their own professional and organisational challenges.

The CDWs often find themselves working with students who are shy and constantly isolate themselves from other employees in the organisation, which may come across as the students' unwillingness to blend in within the organisation. The students' professional conduct is another challenge that the CDWs encounter. Some students want to abscond from work without following the organisation's policy on absenteeism, some have chronic lateness, others struggle with writing competent reports according to the organisation's standards, and there are instances of inappropriate dress codes for the workplace or specific occasions. The challenges related to the students' professionalism are important to note as they have a direct implication on how the student should be supervised for the development of their professional identity. Students who are not native Sesotho speakers often struggle with blending into the organisation and in some cases, the community, due to the language barrier since Qwaqwa is dominated by Sesotho-speaking citizens. Lastly, protest actions are quite frequent in Qwaqwa, be it from the UFS students or the community members, due to service delivery challenges. When these occur, they disrupt the work scheduled for that day or week because people are not allowed to go to work or school during that time.

Whilst students have their shortfalls, the CDWs also have their own. Some organisations have limited resources; therefore, they are limited in terms of the work they can do with the students. Additionally, CDWs experience scheduling conflicts, whereby their CDW duties clash with supervisory duties. More often than not, WIL supervision duties suffer the consequences of this clash however, the availability of other colleagues in the organisation minimises the impact.

6.1.2 Objective 2: To describe the support systems available for the CDWs in the supervision of community development students in WIL.

Various support systems are available for the CDWs in WIL supervision. These range from peer-to-peer support, to support from the university. The university's support to the CDWs is essential so that they are also able to support the students in the organisations. CDWs also work in conjunction with their colleagues, which helps relieve them from pressure when it gets difficult. The networks that the CDWs build with other CDWs who also supervise community development students enable them to share their challenges, gain different perspectives, and collaborate. This contributes as part of psychosocial support for the CDWs. In addition to the

CDWs receiving support, they are also responsible for being a support structure for the students.

In addition, this study found that there are various capacity building trainings that the CDWs attend to support them in fulfilling their supervisory responsibilities and duties. These include supervision trainings from the UFS, where they are capacitated on communication with the students, community development ethics and values, supervisory strategies, and how to work with different types of students. Some workshops are hosted by stakeholders such as the municipality, where the CDWs enhance their leadership skills. This assists to reduce the dependence of support from the university and provides networking opportunities for the CDWs.

6.1.3 Objective 3: To recommend guidelines that can be followed to develop a community development supervision framework.

The development of a community development supervision framework should be evidence-based to ensure that it improves the effectiveness and efficiency of supervision in community development training. The CDWs have recommended some strategies, which may be used as guidelines for the development of such a framework.

Firstly, the university should support the organisations where students are placed with resources. This does not mean that the university should completely take the burden of providing resources to organisations, but part of capacity building for these organisations should be assisting with essential resources to ensure that the supervisors can support the students during the WIL period without using their resources. Additionally, there should be a criteria set for the selection of organisations for student placement for quality assurance purposes. This is because some CDWs reflected that some organisations do more harm than good to the students.

The framework should be designed in a manner that promotes collaborative learning in a sense that all parties involved must benefit and learn from the experience. Moreover, various supervision and learning styles should be accommodated to allow the supervisor and supervisee to personalise the supervision process. Lastly, the framework should address WIL curriculum and account for the different languages that supervisors and supervisees use in community development practice. For instance, some students struggle with Sesotho, which makes them struggle with blending in with the community and some organisations. The participants

recommended that the university must at least have an introduction to Sesotho as part of the curriculum.

6.1.4 Objective 4: To recommend strategies to improve the supervision of community development students in WIL

To enhance the academic experience and better align institutional practices with student needs and educational outcomes, we propose a set of integrated recommendations across several key domains: student engagement, academic structuring, and pedagogical innovation. Firstly, it is recommended to have regular and structured meetings with students individually and in groups to provide guidance, provide feedback, and address concerns. It is important to document these meetings for the purposes of continuous improvement in supervision and for administrative processes. Students and supervisors should have open communication channels to ensure transparency and empower the students to take on an active role in their educational journey.

Secondly, it is vital to have a transparent and merit-based placement policy to ensure fair opportunities for all students. the placement criteria should be revisited to include a balanced consideration of academic performance, attendance, soft skills, and extracurricular engagement. Involving industry partners in defining desirable competencies will help align the placement process with current market demands. A rubric-based evaluation system should be introduced to minimize subjectivity and ensure equitable placement practices. Additionally, the curriculum must evolve to reflect technological advancements and industry trends. A comprehensive review of the current curriculum should be undertaken in consultation with academic experts, industry professionals, and alumni. Emphasis should be placed on interdisciplinary learning, project-based modules, and the inclusion of contemporary topics such as AI, sustainability, and digital literacy. The revised curriculum should also incorporate practical training and internships to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application.

Moreover, students must have easy access to and a clear understanding of institutional rules and regulations. It is recommended that a concise, student-friendly handbook be developed and disseminated at the start of each academic year. This handbook should cover academic policies, disciplinary procedures, grading systems, attendance requirements, and grievance redressal mechanisms. Orientation sessions and regular Q&A forums should be held to reinforce this information and clarify any ambiguities. Lastly, it is recommended that teaching strategies

should incorporate group projects, peer teaching, and interdisciplinary assignments to promote collaborative learning, which will enhance student engagement and the retention of knowledge.

These recommendations aim to cultivate a student-centred academic ecosystem that promotes transparency, relevance, and innovation. Implementing them thoughtfully will contribute to improved student satisfaction, academic success, and institutional reputation.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Supervision in WIL is an important element in ensuring that ethical and good-quality professionals are produced. It was therefore important to explore the experiences of CDWs who are responsible for supervising community development students in WIL at the UFS, as it is one of the several institutions of higher learning that incorporates WIL and supervision in their community development course curriculum. To achieve this, this study employed the qualitative research approach to gather in-depth data from the participants. The narrative research design was then adopted to allow the researcher to not only gather in-depth data but to ensure that different narratives and experiences are represented in the data collected. This also motivated the participants to tell their experiences in their own words, relating their work as CDWs to that of being a supervisor to community development students.

This study was theoretically grounded by Kolb's experiential learning theory, as well as social constructivism. Kolb's ELT enabled the researcher to make a connection between the CDWs' experiences in WIL supervision and their effectiveness in ensuring that experiential learning takes place through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. Additionally, the social constructivism theory provided an understanding of how the CDWs conceptualise WIL supervision for community development students in relation to their geographical location, previous experiences in WIL supervision, support received, as well as their knowledge and usage of policies.

These participants were chosen through purposive and snowball sampling techniques, which allowed the researcher to engage with participants who would provide rich and in-depth data for the study. Data was collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, which were guided by an interview schedule that entailed guiding questions to give the interviews direction without limiting the engagement of the researcher and the participants. Following the interviews, the data collected was analysed through a thematic analysis process, where the researcher followed six steps namely transcription, generation of initial codes, search for

themes, reviewing the themes, naming the themes, and compilation of a report that represented the data through themes.

The study was conducted within the adherence of informed consent, voluntary participation, acknowledgement of power dynamics, confidentiality, anonymity, reporting to participants, avoidance of harm, as well as deception. The limitations to the study were inclusive of the geographical location of the participants, the institution in which the study was conducted, as well as the extent to which the participants may have restricted their responses as a result of the nature of the study.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINDINGS

This study explored the experiences of CDWs in WIL supervision at the UFS. The following recommendations stem from the findings thereof:

6.3.1 A developmental approach to the development of a supervision framework for community development in South Africa

This study recommends the development of a community development supervision framework through a developmental approach. The framework will function to provide the What, Why, Where, When, and Who of supervision in community development. The developmental approach acknowledges that supervision gets better with experience. This means that the framework will account for the different qualifications, key performance areas, and the roles and responsibilities for the supervisors according to their years of experience in supervision, as well as in community development practice. Additionally, the developmental approach will also clarify the key outcomes for the students in supervision according to their levels of study and the community development curriculum. In this way, all parties involved have manageable expectations from the supervision process, and there will be better collaboration between them.

6.3.2 Accessibility of community development policy documentation

The findings of this study showed that CDWs mainly use internal policies, university guidelines, as well as rules and regulations that they have established with the students to guide their practice and supervisory work. Although this shows initiative and progress, it becomes a challenge for smaller organisations that do not have well-developed policies that fit into the standard required to produce quality community development graduates. The DSD and other stakeholders responsible for the professionalisation of community development should explore ways to increase the accessibility of community development guiding documents to the public

and, most importantly CDWs. There are departmental documents that are “internal” and inaccessible to the people on the ground, which are very important for community development practice. These cannot be accessed through a simple Google search, especially for the CDWs who are not technologically savvy. Moreover, the DSD and SACSSP websites do not have some of the fundamental documents for community development training and practice, which would guide the CDWs in the absence of a supervision framework, hence the need to increase the accessibility of community development guiding documents to the public and, most importantly CDWs.

6.3.3 Holistic capacity building for community development workers

Practicing CDWs are essential role players in the training of community development students. Their knowledge of the communities they work with and their relationships with the community members contribute to sustainable, inclusive, and top-down community development practice. With the professionalisation of community development progressing, a threat is posed to the CDWs who are not well capacitated for practice. This is because standardisation of a profession does gatekeep its practice and creates exclusionary measures for who can or cannot practice. Given the qualification database of CDWs, the government should find a way of capacitating CDWs who are not ‘qualified’ to ensure that they are still able to practice, as well as supervise community development students for WIL. In relation to the social constructivism theory, the CDWs will harmonise their previous experiences and knowledge with what they will receive.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As a result of community development still being in the process of professionalisation and the creation of a professional board with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP), there is much that can still be researched regarding community development practice, training, and supervision. The following suggestions may be considered for future research related to this study:

- There should be a triangulation done between the experiences of both academic and field supervisors in institutions of higher learning that incorporate WIL in their community development curriculum. The findings and recommendations from this study would account for inclusivity, fairness, and unbiasedness in the development of a framework for WIL supervision in community development training.

- The experiences of community development students in WIL should be examined to gather diverse perspectives from all parties involved. Additionally, the experiences of CDWs in WIL supervision should be investigated through quantitative research across all higher education institutions that incorporate WIL in their community development curriculum, ensuring a standardised approach to developing the framework.
- This study was conducted in Qwaqwa, a rural area. Therefore, this study should be extended to other institutions located in different rural and semi-rural areas.
- The work done by CDWs in non-governmental organisations should be researched on to increase the understanding of the work done by community development professionals across various sectors.

6.5 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This study explored the experiences of CDWs in WIL supervision at the UFS, by providing the good, bad, and the in between experiences as narrated by the participants. It has also shed some light on the support systems that are available in the process of WIL supervision, which have the potential of expanding to increase effectiveness. Although not all CDWs who participated have community development qualifications, their experience in the field and their passion for community development practice have made a huge contribution to the completion of this study, as well as in the effective training of community development students. This study acknowledges community development as a growing profession that has so much potential to grow and further contribute to ethical community development in South Africa and has recognised CDWs as essential stakeholders in community development training.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARENCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: SW24/08/01**
PROJECT TITLE	The experiences of community development workers in work integrated learning supervision at the University of the Free State (UFS)
INVESTIGATOR	**MABITSELA CR**
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	SOCIAL WORK
DATE CONSIDERED	16 OCTOBER 2024
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	APPROVED UNCONDITIONALLY
RISK LEVEL	MINIMAL RISK
EXPIRY DATE	22 OCTOBER 2027

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 22 OCTOBER 2024 **CHAIRPERSON**
(DR L PETERSEN)

cc: Supervisor: DR T LELAKA

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I 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.

_____ 29 / 10 / 2024
Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

Title of project: The experiences of community development workers in work-integrated learning supervision at the University of the Free State (UFS).

Name of researcher: Choene Rose Mabitsela

I, ……...……., agree to participate in this research project. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.

YES NO

I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study.

YES NO

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded.

YES NO

I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report.

YES NO

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name or other identifying data will not be used by the researcher in their research report)

YES NO

I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on

YES NO

…… (signature)

…… (name of participant)

…… (date)

…… (signature)

…… (name of researcher)

…… (date)

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

The experiences of Community Development Workers in work-integrated learning supervision at the University of the Free State (UFS)

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Choene Rose Mabitsela. I am a Master of Arts in the Field of Social Development student at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisors are Dr Tshidi Lelaka and Dr Emmison Muleya. I am conducting a research study about the supervision of community development students in work integrated learning. The study title is: The experiences of community development workers in work-integrated learning supervision at the University of the Free State (UFS).

I am inviting you to take part in my research. If you decide to take part, your participation in this research study I will interview you, with the interview that will last about 45-60 minutes. The interview will take place at your work premises at your preferred time during the week. With your permission, I would like to audio record the interview using a cell phone. This data will be kept in a password encrypted iCloud storage to protect the data from landing in unwanted hands. Only the researcher and two supervisors will have access to the data.

During the interview, I will need to ask for some personal information about you, including your academic background. The interview will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you. With your permission, other researchers may use the data collected from this research study, but your name and any personal information will not be used or passed on.

If you decide to take part in the research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You do not have to take part. You can stop being in the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to. You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decided not to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. You will not be paid for being in this research study.

The risks for this research study are no more than what happens in everyday life however, some of the questions asked may make you feel sad or upset. If this happens, I will stop the interview and continue another time. If you need some support or counselling services following the interview, these are available free of charge at the Department of Social Development,

Phuthaditjhaba offices. Please visit their offices at FDC Building Motloung street, Setsing complex, Phuthaditjhaba or alternatively contact them on 0587132877 to set an appointment with the social worker.

This research study will be written up as a research report. The report will be available on the university library website. If you would like to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you. If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,

Choene Mabitsela

Researcher:

Choene Rose Mabitsela, 1840046@students.wits.ac.za , (+27) 0 68 411 5054

Supervisors:

Dr Tshidi Lelaka, Tshidi.Lelaka@wits.ac.za , 011 717 8351

Dr Emmison Muleya, Emmi.Muleya@wits.ac.za , 011 717 4480

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Section A: Demographic data

Age: 18-25/ 26-33/ 34-41/ 42-49/ 50+/ prefer not to say.

Gender: Female/ male/ LGBTQ+/ other/ prefer not to say

If other, please specify: _____

Race: Black/White/Indian/Coloured/other/ prefer not to say

If other, please specify: _____

Nationality: _____

Highest academic qualification: Below matric/ Matric/ Higher certificate/ diploma/degree/ postgraduate

Community development qualification: Yes/ No

If no, please elaborate: _____

Years of community development practice: 0-2 years/ 2-4 years/ 4-6 years/ 6-8 years/ 8 years and above

Years of experience in supervising community development students: 0-2 years/ 2-4 years/ 4-6 years/ 6-8 years/ 8 years and above

Section B: Interview questions

1. Please share your perceptions and experiences in WIL supervision for community development students.
2. Please share the support systems that are available for you to assist with performing your supervisory duties. These can be from your colleagues in the profession, your organisation, or the university.
3. Tell us about any supervision training or capacity building you have received in the past two years of you supervising community development students.
4. Please elaborate on the guidelines you use to perform your role and duties as a supervisor.
5. Please share challenges have you encountered in supervising community development students?

6. How can these challenges be addressed at an organisational level?
7. How can these challenges be addressed at a university level?
8. What recommendations would you make to increase the effectiveness of CDW's role in supervising community development students?

APPENDIX E: PERMISSION LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS

14 October 2024

Dear Choene,

It gives me great excitement to witness your progress in your academic studies. Therefore, I confirm that you have been granted approval to undertake your study at the University of the Free State with the title "The Experiences of community development workers in work-integrated learning supervision at the University of the Free State". Please do not hesitate to reach out for further support related to your study.

We look forward to you sharing the results with us as well.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Grey Magaiza

Acting Director and Deputy Director

Center for Gender and Africa Studies

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APPENDIX F: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT

PARTICIPANT 6 TRANSCRIPT.

RESEARCHER: Thank you for being able to make time for this interview. As I have explained that the interview is about the supervision of the community development students from the UFS, I am going to ask about your personal experiences in your supervision journey since you started. Uhm, If you continue with the interview, you would be agreeing that the information you are going to give me can be used in my research report as quotes, and that the interview can be recorded. Is that okay with you?

PARTICIPANT 6: There is no problem, I agree that we can continue with the interview and that it can be recorded.

RESEARCHER: Okay thank you. Um, my first question right, please explain to me when we speak about student supervision, what is your understanding according to your work as a supervisor. What is it that you're supposed to do as a supervisor for the students?

PARTICIPANT 6: Okay, thank you, sister Rose. Uh according to my understanding when we talk about supervising anyone at work, it is about giving someone a task, checking if they can do it, and if they have challenges, they get back to you to ask that I have this kind of challenge with the work you have given me. Then you go to check, or when they are done with the work you have given them, you go to check if they have completed it the way you had agreed, and you give recommendations on the work that they have done. I think that's my understanding of supervision in short.

RESEARCHER: According to you, why is it important for the students to be under supervision when they are here?

PARTICIPANT 6: It is important for anyone at work to know what they should do and what they should not do because if they are not supervised by anyone, they will end up not complete the tasks they are supposed to that day or that week. They will find themselves struggling because there is no one checking if they are doing things accordingly, or if they are complying with the rules and regulations of the organisation or the position they are placed under.

RESEARCHER: **And then speaking of rules and regulations, which guidelines do you use as a supervisor to make sure that everyone occupies their place to say these are the boundaries for students and the supervisor?**

PARTICIPANT 6: Uh, it goes according to the positions that we have. Let me make an example with a person working in finance.

RESEARCHER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 6: We have a policy that states that you are not supposed to go to the petty cash box without permission or without following the policy addressing petty cash, or what the finance policy says regarding that. So, you cannot go and do things without knowing what the policy you are working with says, especially if there is something you want. Maybe for example, in our work we sometimes find ourselves doing overtime so we have to request an amount that will cover catering because they will be going over the time they are supposed to work so we will have some refreshments for them, so we will have to follow the laws regarding petty cash and finance so that everything can go well. And again, coming to me being a supervisor, for them to not jump over the laws regarding their position, maybe they are working with admin, and they know that admin does photocopies, how the machines work, and which laws to follow, there are policies. They will then not find themselves jumping over and moving from their positions to occupying a manager's position when there are clients or funders around. They must receive everyone, follow the rules that are put in place for their position. If the person who must do a certain task is not available, there are rules to follow, you call that person so that they can tell you what to do with the clients. I think that is what helps us not to find ourselves in situations where a person jumps over their position and the laws that bind them and the position they occupy.

RESEARCHER: **Mmh, okay, and then I heard you speak about funding. What kind of other support do you get as a supervisor so that your work is doable? I'd like to know this support on three different levels, right? Support from the people you work with, support from the university, and then support from other external people or organisations if there are any. So let us start with the one from the organisation, what kind of support do you get from the organisation?**

PARTICIPANT 6: uh, in terms of funding, from my colleagues in the organisation, every opportunity they get for funding, they make sure to communicate with me so I can check it out, and we sit down together and see how we fill it in so we can have more funding coming to the organisation. That's how we work together.

RESEARCHER: **Outside of funding, for your work as a supervisor, how do they assist you, so you are not overburdened by supervisory work?**

PARTICIPANT 6: Uh, from outside the organisation…

RESEARCHER: No, from here in the organisation.

PARTICIPANT 6: In the organisation, all right. In the organisation for me to not be overloaded by work, when there is somewhere I am going, there are people who I give the task of supervision to and I request a feedback when I return. That is what makes my work of supervising students easy when I am unable to supervise my colleagues or students when they are here because I know that even in my absentia my colleagues are there to take over with supervision. Even if it is just two or three people that we went to the supervision training on campus with but when we come back, we give the others information on the kind of supervision that is expected from us towards the campus students. So everyone understands and knows what they are supposed to do when you give them the task of accounting and being responsible for supervising the students until I return from where I am going.

RESEARCHER: Okay, and then from the university, what kind of support do you get?

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah, you know from the university, last year they called us and gave us a small workshop that taught us how to draft proposals and how we approach funders. I found it to have given us a simple job, because now we know how to approach funders even if they have not released applications, but we know that we have a proposal that we have written down that we can send to funders. As an organisation, we must bother the funders because the money is there even though they will tell you that they will only publish it at a certain time, but you find that there is another one that is just sitting because people are not applying for it therefor it will stay like that. But when you keep applying, you can get the funding that was just there. That is the workshop they gave us, and I found that to be very helpful because they even gave us some of the documents on how to complete a proposal, even though it was for a few days, it was only three days. So we believe with other organisations that the time was short because we start at 9 am until 3/3:30 pm. You find that some of the things they were not able to cover, and the next day, they get into something else, so we found that the time was short. Even though they sent us to go and draft the proposals ad return to the university and communicate with them to check the drafted proposal to give feedback before we send to the funders.

RESEARCHER: Hhm, and is there any other support that you have received from the university besides the one where they were helping with proposals? What support did they give that helped you to have easier work during the time the students are here?

PARTICIPANT 6: Financial support?

RESEARCHER: Any kind of support.

PARTICIPANT 6: Okay. Support from the university that we receive when the students are here is that we are always in communication with them.

RESEARCHER: **Okay…**

PARTICIPANT 6: We communicate with them whether we have challenges or not. We give them feedback on how we are doing things. Even if they are requesting that they have the students on a certain day or if they have a submission, they communicate with us directly and not the students, even though the students know. They ask to be with the students on a specific day so that we can reschedule for the day they will miss because if a day passes, it doesn't mean that it has been skipped so we communicate with the students to inform them that they are not coming to the practicum because they are meeting with the lecturer on campus.

RESEARCHER: Okay, is that all for support?

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes.

RESEARCHER: **Okay, since you spoke of the training, what is it in the training that you feel was very helpful in doing your job as a supervisor when the students are here?**

PARTICIPANT 6: Uh, supervision training, okay. They have covered a lot to assist us as organisations. Remember that we have different students from different places, who speak different languages, which has helped me and my colleagues a lot, so we can communicate simply with the students. I remember when we were taking the first time, when we were taking in students who were doing 3rd year, we found that they were from Eastern Cape, KZN, and Free State, but we found ourselves being one family with no challenge…

RESEARCHER: **Of whom comes from where?**

PARTICIPANT 6: Who is from where and all those, we were a family and that helped us very much even when we were attending the supervision training because we thought it was going to be a challenge you see… we were wondering why these people could call us this simple because I remember it was a one day workshop, but now I see that they do two-day workshops, but the very first one was for one day. Yoh, we felt like they were giving us pressure, but it helped us because it made things easy when they explained that when the students come, we

should treat them as our colleagues and not as students. We do the same work and take them as employees in the organisation. That helped us a lot.

RESEARCHER: Okay, and is there anything that is not covered in the training they provide that you think they should include in the next training?

PARTICIPANT 6: From my side, I don't think there is anything they left behind. I am saying so because they give us everything that covers me, and I follow everything they give and combine it with the way we do things in the organisation. I combine them so that we can work smoothly and simply until the end of our practicum.

RESEARCHER: **When you are supervising the students, which strategy do you use so that by the end of the period where the students are here, they are supervised on your side and on their side, you have met the requirements that were outlined by the university?**

PARTICIPANT 6: Yoh, the strategy that I use, I am one person who is soft, but there is never an instance where I treat someone special. I treat everyone equally, and I love people who do the tasks that I give them and ask me for assistance. Even if I take two and combine them, I will do the work with them. So I will work with them, or I will give them to one of my colleagues to work with them, and give me feedback so that I can know what is happening. Even if they are not treated well, I want them to tell me so we can iron out the challenges they encounter so that everything can be alright. When they leave, I take responsibility when they get into taxis from here to make sure that they arrive safely. Even when they come here to make sure that they arrive safely. Everything we do, I ensure that we do it as a team. No one will find themselves doing things alone or feeling neglected. If we have people who are learning too slowly, I try to take them to help. I avoid them to be assisted by the person they come from school with. I tell them that they must leave him/her alone to complete the task because at the end of the day, we must all have achieved the same things. We don't want this person to fail their practicum when they leave here. I also want to write about something true, I don't do favours. I tell them from the beginning when they come that there are no favours, we are a family and will treat each other equally, and we are all going to work. That is what I tell them from the moment they arrive.

RESEARCHER: Oh, okay. When the students first come here, what are your expectations, and what methods do you use to ensure that they are aware that you are expecting them to do 123, or to be in a certain way?

PARTICIPANT 6: The first thing that we give to the students, like I said we have policies, we give them policies to look at, like it will include the dress code because we work with the community, they must know what happens when they go to the community for door-to-door, or if there is a case that we are going to attend or if our clients come to us to attend a case, they must learn that in a case we don't take sides and this is how we work to make sure that both parties are satisfied when they leave. So dress code is very important, as well as how the communicate with clients and their behaviour. We know that everyone has their own behaviour and preferences, but when you are at work, you must comply with the laws at work so you can know how to react to situations, because it is hard to work with communities. You find that you encounter a violent person, and when you get there, you must be calm. Or you are doing house-to-house to meet someone for a house visit, then you find that the person wants nothing. So you must know how to approach that person so that when you leave, you know you've done your work. So policies are the ones that bind us and guide what we must do, how we must behave, code of conduct, dress code, and phone call etiquette because remember when you are here, you are the face of the organisation so even if it is a personal phone call with a problematic person and you don't answer it well, the clients that are in the room with you will just conclude that the people here don't answer calls…

RESEARCHER: **They don't answer calls properly?**

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes. So we make sure they know that they must answer all calls I an appropriate manner. Even if you just tell the person that "I am busy at work I will get back you" so that it is clear that you know your job well. So the policies are the ones that guide us to the correct way to communicate with people.

RESEARCHER: Since you started supervising the students, what kind of challenges did you encounter? I would like to know them in three levels. Firstly, with the students, what challenges did you encounter. And yourself as a supervisor, what are some of the challenges that you have encountered? And from the university's side, what are the challenges that you have encountered. We can start with the students.

PARTICIPANT 6: Students, okay. I will just talk about only two challenges.

RESEARCHER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT 6: Firstly, it is the issue of time management. On the first day because they are just starting, they arrive on time. They will even call you around 7am for directions because they want to be there by 8am.

RESEARCHER: They are still nervous.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes, they are still nervous. I will go fetch them at the stop and we come here. But as time goes on, you find that a person starts having excuses about transport, apologising because of taxis, and all that. You see? I already know. So, because I know that already, I'll just say "as long as you arrive," but I continue to emphasise the time of coming to work and our knock-off time. And on the knock-off time, we leave at 4 O' clock. We work for 8 hours a day. So, when you tell them that we leave at 4 o'clock, you will hear them start to tell you that "Eish can I please leave at 2 or at 3…", you see? And I ask them what are you going to do, because you were there at the supervision training? You heard from your lecturers, and we have also said that it is 8 hours a day. And we are not supposed to do favours and give them certain hours, whereas they did not work for them. We only give the hours that you have attended straight. You see?

RESEARCHER: Yah.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yah. Others will understand, and the others will say things like "I am sorry, but please give me the hours and I will add on next time". You know that students will come up with strategies to outsmart you. I think those are the two things, but we are able to cover them. And another thing is that on the first day when they arrive, they take a few days to get comfortable. When they arrive, they would want me to give them a table to sit at, maybe we are going to have a meeting with our colleagues. After the meeting, we will say to them that they must relax for some time. You will find that they all want to be on one side.

RESEARCHER: Ohhh!

PARTICIPANT 6: Or, they have that fear of not knowing what is going to happen. You see, things like that.

RESEARCHER: **Mhh, they sideline themselves**.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes, but as time goes, they start to get comfortable. Sometimes I create a WhatsApp group so we can communicate, and we add them. Some will text me privately about something that was said in the group, and they suggest on how we can improve it. And at that

time, it is after hours. So I tell them that no, can we please talk about it tomorrow at work, not here. Please approach me in the office because now it is my spare time.

RESEARCHER: **Yes, it is after work.**

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes, we speak about it then I say thank you for raising it. I don't want them to pick up that I do not want to talk about work things when I am home so I just say can we please speak about it at work, but I am happy that you have made me aware of that. And the following day, when I see that they are delaying, I approach them and ask that we should talk and fix things there and then. So the following one was from the university?

RESEARCHER: Yah.

PARTICIPANT 6: Since the beginning of the year that we started receiving students, there are no challenges that I have encountered with the university.

RESEARCHER: Hhhm.

PARTICIPANT 6: I don't have much of a challenge. The only challenge that was almost there previously was when we were supposed to go to campus. it was a general challenge among organisations because we could not take money out from the funders' budget. So, what is the campus saying? when we got there, we raised that issue, but they tried to fix that quickly by providing transport to pick us up and take us back. So that was the only thing that was almost a challenge, but they quickly corrected that.

RESEARCHER: **And for you as a supervisor, are there challenges that you have encountered?**

PARTICIPANT 6: Uhm, no. From my side, there isn't much. Even the first students, I still communicate with them. They can still communicate with me from as far as Eastern Cape. They can still communicate with me via WhatsApp and update me on what is happening. Last year around December, one of them came to me and asked how we are still doing. I told them that we are still pushing, we are still working nicely. They asked if we are still complete as before and that I must greet them and tell them that they got a job around Bethlehem. There is an organisation from the Pretoria side, it is called CCI.

RESEARCHER: Yeah, they got a job there?

PARTICIPANT 6: Yeah, they got a job there. They are implementing a programme of HIV and STIs around the area of Dihlabeng. So, I said I am happy about that.

RESEARCHER: **Yes, you've done your part.**

PARTICIPANT 6: So, at least there's something you see. And what makes me happier is that the university updates us on the students' progress. Even the first ones, when they were graduating, they sent us pictures. They were apologising for being unable to invite at least two there, but the pictures are there to show that they were graduating. So I was so happy I was even posting them on social media to show off work.

RESEARCHER: **To show them your work.**

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes, so that is one thing that made me so proud because it was showing that our organisation does the work.

RESEARCHER: **What would you recommend to the students regarding practicals so that your work as a supervisor is not as heavy, and the supervision process is effective?**

PARTICIPANT 6: Okay, uh, the recommendation that I would make to the students, the biggest thing is the issue of time management. If we find ourselves having completed the majority of the work that we do and not bulk them for the next day. I think that will help us to find our supervision to be very simple. Because once we start on a slow foot, we find that we don't have time to do the tasks, and we do things under pressure. especially on the issue of our meetings. I recommend that if they want an urgent meeting, they must communicate. They must not wait for us to tell them that we are going to have a meeting on Friday or on Monday morning to check what we are doing Monday until Thursday. Friday we will have a meeting on the things we end the week with. If they have a challenge on Tuesday or Wednesday, they must ask for a meeting so that they can have a way forward. I think that will make our supervision to be simple. And they will encourage us a lot because I remember last year there was a short notice communication from the university that we should apply to study as a community development practitioner. Even though our time was limited. And now, other people are not that familiar with the issue of applying online. And if they could assist our people with the issue of social media a lot, to say that this is how social media operates, so that our social media is more active. And, how to respond to negative responses and complaints on social media, you are not supposed to respond in a fighting spirit but rather be calm. So I think since they are more familiar with social media and they are active there, it would help to make our supervision easier.

RESEARCHER: And to other supervisors, what would be your recommendation so that the supervision is better?

PARTICIPANT 6: You know, with other supervisors from different organisations, I have learned through our conversations that some people do not yet understand what a community development practitioner is, and that, as much as they have done it for a long time in practice, they have not done the theory, the ethics. Remember when we are on campus for workshops, people get there and look at that paper to say "ohh these are the ethics" and when you get home...

RESEARCHER: **When you get home, you put it away.**

PARTICIPANT 6: You put it away. So if they can learn to understand what a community development practitioner is and how important it is, I think that can help other supervisors to understand. For me personally, when I could not apply to study on campus, I got people who are part of the community development practice project. So I had to register last year and be a student, but I did not have a chance. I needed to push, and I was happy to see that, oh, these are the things that these people are taught, and some of these things we have done them practically.

RESEARCHER: You do them.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes, so I have been pushing with it so that at the end of the day when they come here, I can know that they are my colleagues, and I am walking where they are walking. So I can know what to do going forward, and how we work together. I also know that when I have assignments, I can say, "Guys, here is an assignment, how do we do it here?" and they will tell me how to do it, so I strategise around it so I can say my things are sorted. That is what we would all like to see ourselves achieving.

RESEARCHER: Okay, and do you have any recommendations that you can make to the university regarding the supervision of students, regarding the whole experience of WIL, so that whatever they do, your work can be better?

PARTICIPANT 6: You know, for me, from ...

RESEARCHER: The university's side.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes, to the university, I'd say they are currently doing well, and they are doing all they can to make sure that our supervision can be simple. That is why when they call

us, they don't call us way before the students come. They call us when the students are almost about to come, so that people don't find themselves forgetting a lot of things.

RESEARCHER: Without forgetting…

PARTICIPANT 6: That is why I say they are doing it right because they also ask us the challenges we have, and we raise the challenges during the workshop with the presence of the students so that they can also raise their challenges.

RESEARCHER: **On their side.**

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes. If they have challenges, they are given a chance to speak. So, for those who will be there for the first time, it is an opportunity… another thing that I am requesting is one, a recommendation maybe… is that can we please be given the 4th years because they take six months for practicals.

RESEARCHER: **They take a long time.**

PARTICIPANT 6: I think that will help us since the 2nd and third years come here for a shorter period. Those ones, I checked them when we had a tournament and a programme of substance abuse and HIV & AIDS, then we made a soccer tournament in it. They were here for their third year and when they passed to the fourth year, they went to another organisation. They found themselves challenged when they got there. They said they found a well-developed organisation more than we are, but they found a big challenge. They said, "With you, we had the freedom to do work".

RESEARCHER: Mmh, you must work.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes, so they approached us and asked to do the project with me so we did a collaboration with them, and our even was very successful. We found many boys who went to get circumcised, some went to check their status, and the issue of substance abuse was also addressed. It was so beautiful. That is why I am saying, at least if they give us the uh...

RESEARCHER: Fourth years.

PARTICIPANT 6: With the fourth years, we will know that our things for the period of six months will have a big difference in our organisation because they did similar things. And they make sure that the proposal that we have drafted, we have implemented it, and we do follow-ups with them. Maybe when they leave, there is something that happens.

RESEARCHER: **Something they leave with.**

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes, to say this is the impact we've made, and this is benefiting the community. So, I think it is something that will help us a lot.

RESEARCHER: And do you have any comments or question that you would like to ask before I close?

PARTICIPANT 6: Uhm, no. I think I am covered with everything. I think I am happy that you came to check because I think you are the second person to come and do an interview, because I was happy about a student who was in the third year here with us, they came back to do an interview.

RESEARCHER: Ohhh.

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes, so I realised that we are going somewhere.

RESEARCHER: **Ohh, okay. Can I stop the interview because we are done?**

PARTICIPANT 6: Yes.

RESEARCHER: Okay.