Gay and Lesbian Network

Project Report

Community Interventions (PSYC810)

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1. Executive summary

This paper is a report documenting the community intervention that was facilitated by a group of masters' students with and for the Gay and Lesbian Network (GLN). Briefly, it consists of subheadings namely, context, objectives, outcomes and analysis of themes, activities, critical reflection, and the summary and conclusion. In the 'context' subheading, a description of a community (globally and locally) is provided. Then, the understanding of GLN as a non-profit organisation is explained in relation to the work that they do for the unemployed and marginalised lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) members of the community. In the next subheading (objectives and outcomes), the goals that were agreed upon during the formation of the UKZN and GLN partnership are discussed and how they were executed. This execution included doing a qualitative study to explore people's experience of the Zenzele Youth Project; and of course this qualitative study required data collection and data analysis. The data of this qualitative study was collected using telephonic interviews, it was then transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis which involves coding the data set and extracting the themes. In the 'activities' subheading, the process of data collection and data analysis is described, followed by the critical reflection section which covers the masters' experience of working with GLN, and also describes the theoretical framework that the group adopted while working with GLN. This paper ends with a summary and conclusion of what the UKZN and GLN partnership was able to achieve.

2. Context

Community

Community is a concept in flux, the essentialist pursuit of providing a global definition for the term has been tackled by several authors, organisations, and professionals (Cruz, Giles, & Dwight, 2000; Everingham, 2003; Fryer & Laing, 2008; Kagan, Burton, Duckett, Lawthom, & Siddiquee, 2011). The notion of community is bound in dominant and commonly used United Statesian discourses that are in turn linked to cultural and political power (Fryer & Laing, 2008). This is problematic, as the exportation of these community notions, ideologies, and practices into collectivist cultures such as South Africa can create a form of "intellectual and cultural colonisation" (Fryer & Laing, 2008, p. 9).

These embedded power practices have the potential to reinforce imperialist tropes of white superiority and white 'saviourism' (Hammersley, 2012). This, in turn, can aggravate a form of 'cultural voyeurism' within collectivist cultures (Akhurst & Mitchell, 2012, p. 404).

Community in South Africa

The historical construction of "community" in South Africa traces back to the segregationist policies of the apartheid era (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011). This entailed the divide of racial communities in the pursuit of a power dynamic between white superiority and black inferiority. The legacy of this era has led to the understanding of "communities as survivors of apartheid oppression" (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011, p.250) in South Africa. This constructs a socio-politically fuelled narrative of 'communities' as marginalised and vulnerable spaces, predominantly occupied by black or coloured South Africans (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011). These are spaces that where the majority of the population are located and experience poverty, high rates of unemployment, poor health care, inadequate service delivery and extreme levels of violence and crime. This last reference to violence and crime is particularly relevant to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community that the UKZN team was working within 2016 and 2017, through the organisation of the Gay and Lesbian Network, GLN.

Gay and Lesbian Network

The Gay and Lesbian Network (GLN) has been a registered non-profit organisation since 2003, based in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The Network primarily works with unemployed and marginalised lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) members of the community. In order to promote equality, human rights, upliftment and recognition of the LGBTI community through a wide range of creative programmes. This assists LGBTI's access to services and reduces the fear of violence or discrimination. GLN, furthermore, works with all members of communities, which aligns with their core values of equality, respect and acceptance of all. In 2016, psychology students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) formed a relationship with the organisation. This collaboration produced a proposal for further research in connection with the Zenzele Youth Project hosted by GLN in 2015 and 2016. The Network expressed a need for constructive feedback from the project to assist in the sustainable implementation of the project on a long-term basis.

The UKZN students gained ethical clearance to conduct focus groups and interviews with past participants and facilitators of the Zenzele Youth Project, and write a report on these findings that will assist GLN with the continuation of this project. This is where the 2017 group of UKZN psychology students will continue with the collaboration.

GLN aims to work with all types of communities in order to create sustainable partnerships with a diverse group of people and those of the LGBTI community. This fosters the development in relation to human rights and improved health and wellbeing. GLN has several different programmes in action to achieve these aims: *Creating Enabling Environment*; *Health*; *Outreach programme - Advice Office and Drama group*; *Research Programme.* The program that we were conducting research on was the Zenzele Youth Project which is located in the Outreach Programme.

The Zenzele Youth Project was created to curb the high unemployment rates in the LGBTI and their communities through these several workshops; Personal Development, Government Participation, Career Development, Financial Literacy, Legal & Human rights, Gender-based violence, Conflict Resolution, Positive living, Sexual awareness, and support systems. These components were facilitated by trained personnel and participants graduated with a certificate of completion. These practical skills based workshops were held in 2015 and 2016. It is here that the UKZN team will be intervening. GLN would like to develop a report detailing the experiences of this project by its participants. In order to do this, the UKZN team will be conducting several focus groups with participants and facilitators to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of the project. This will assist GLN in improving the project for future success.

UKZN & GLN partnership 2016

UKZN students first collaborated with GLN last year (2016). The UKZN group intended to evaluate the Zenzele Youth Project to determine the impact the project had on participants and to evaluate where the project may possibly require improvements. This feedback was essential to GLN's, as the continuation of the project was dependent on its investigated success through this research and the uncovering of areas of possible improvement. The UKZN group aimed to conduct focus groups and individual interviews with participants and facilitators of the 2015 Zenzele Youth Project. The group was able to gain ethical clearance but due to time constraints was unable to implement data collection. This is where the UKZN group of 2017 was able to take over the project and conduct the collecting of data through telephonic interviews.

3. Objectives and outcomes

Masters Students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal formed a group to work on a community project with their host organization - GLN, as part of the community psychology module. There were several objectives that the group hoped to achieve:

1. To get to know the GLN organization.
2. To identify challenges that GLN face.
3. To offer our services in assisting with the challenges the organization may be facing.

3.1 Getting to know the Gay and Lesbian Network

During the first two meetings with the director of GLN the purpose was to understand what the organization does and establish a relationship between the UKZN group and GLN. We learnt about the services they offer, and the community/communities they are primarily serving. This objective of getting to know GLN was met. The group introduced themselves to the Director of GLN and other employees within the organisation. Information about the organisation was communicated with the group, a tour of the offices was conductor with an explanation of each departments responsibilities.

3.2 Challenges GLN is currently facing

The second objective was to find out from GLN about the challenges they are currently facing. Through a discussion between the GLN director and the UKZN group it emerged that the organisation has several projects that they would appreciate participation in. However their first requirement was to finish what the 2016 UKZN students had started (feedback on the Zenzele Youth Project). As a group we committed to this project and were careful not to participate in more projects until we had finished the first one, considering our time constraints. This was done to make sure we met our objectives in providing a meaningful service. This service was primarily through research, such as:

Data collection and Data analysis
-Sampling
-Procedure of recruiting
-Data collection
-Data analysis
-Reporting

3.3 Offering a service

The service provided to GLN was based on the need expressed by GLN to complete this project. This project was initially undertaken by master students from 2016 who were unable to implement data collection. They were only able to gain ethical clearance due to time constraints. The task of our group was to implement data collection, conduct a data analysis and provide feedback to GLN in the form of a report. Through a collaboration with GLN researchers, data collection procedures were discussed and finalised. This included drafting an interview schedule for certain participants of the Zenzele Youth Project. The agreed-upon sample included individuals who took part in the Zanzele youth project of 2015 and 2016. The aim of this process was:

1. To determine how the participants experienced the Zenzele Youth Project.

2. To investigate what participants learnt from the Zenzele Youth Project.

3. To understand in what way, the Zenzele Youth Project has helped participants in their day to day lives.

4. To investigate how the Zenzele Youth Project could be improved.

To achieve these objectives, data collection initially involved conducting focus groups. The sample consisted of past participants of the Zenzele youth project that either: dropped out of the project while it was still running, are currently unemployed, are currently employed and those that are studying. Another focus group was going to be conducted with the facilitators of the project. Due to challenges such as:

- The willingness to participate from previous Zenzele Youth Project participants.
- Financial constraints of running focus groups.
- Time constraints.

To achieve our third objective of offering a service to GLN, and to assist GLN in fulfilling their research goals, telephonic interviews were then chosen as a method of data collection. This was due to the cost effective nature and convenience of telephonic interviews in comparison to the implementation of focus groups. These telephonic interviews would be audio recorded for transcription. The sample contained past participants of the Zenzele youth project that either: dropped out of the project while it was still running, are currently unemployed, are currently employed and those that are studying.

A mixed sample of 12 participants was obtained. Each member of our group conducted telephonic interviews with two participants. An interview schedule with semi-structured questions was created to facilitate the conversation with these participants and elicit specific information about the Zenzele Youth Project.

Once data collection was completed, our group transcribed the audio recordings of the telephonic interviews. The data was then analysed using Thematic Analysis. The results and report are being prepared by the group; the final report will then be submitted to GLN.

3.4. Analysis of themes

This section discusses the outcomes from our engagement with GLN. Thematic analyses has been used to analyse the data that has been collected and discuss possible results regarding the Zenzele youth project, Data was collected for the purpose of getting feedback from the Zenzele project group participants who were part of the project set by the Gay and Lesbian Network in 2015 and 2016. Data was collected through telephonic interviews. The following themes emerged from the data that has been collected using thematic analysis:

3.4.1. Personal Development

In the data collected, most participants found the personal development module offered by the Zenzele youth project to have been of great help, especially in the area of personal growth and how to handle certain challenges in life. The feeling was mutual between those who were employed after the project and those who are still unemployed. This course also helped some participants on how to resolve conflict and how to act when they are faced with life challenges. This is what some participants had to say.

> *"I've learnt a lot on how to resolve conflicts and about personal development. I didn't know what I want with my life. Where I am. But now I have got a lot of things to do after that project."*
>
> *"For personal development and sometimes I don't know what I want with my life and how to react if something is bothering me but now I can see that after that project I've gained something."*
>
> *"And it was teaching us about life being aware and being aware of things that happen out there and being able to face them… yeah, it was mostly about life and wellness."*
>
> *"It helped me by knowing who I am, and how to handle myself, and how to live a healthy and productive life as a homosexual person."*

3.4.2 <u>Skills obtained</u>

The participants learnt different skills by taking part in the Zenzele youth project and at the end, they were given certificates of completion. These learnt skills will help the participants in different aspects of their lives. Among different skills that were learnt in the project, there was financial skills, conflict management skills, CV writing skills, personal life skills, time management and sexuality. The participants learnt more about the LGBTI community. An employed participant learnt counselling and communication skills and is currently working as an HIV counsellor.

> *"Confidence is one of the skills that learnt there that I am now using in my work environment"*
>
> *"Helped to write the format of a CV" (CV writing skills)*
>
> *Time-management skills (Time management skills)*
>
> *"Punctuality is one of the skills that I learnt there that I am using"*
>
> *"Interview skills" and "Professional conduct"*

Personal / Life Skills

No skills

> Coping Skills
>
> A male participant learnt skills from his mentorship in the program;
>
> "use compassion"
>
> "how to use my hands further"
>
> "Listening skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills…"

From the data collected, contrary to what most participants said there was a deviant case came from a female participant who remarked that she did not learn any skills. These were her sentiments. *"No, I did not learn any skills"*

3.4.3. Career development

Most participants found career development to be very helpful in terms of advancing their careers. Career development can be seen as one of the esteem needs that Maslow discussed in his hierarchy of needs and these are the needs that a person needs for oneself to be independent and realise their personal potential (Meyer et al. 2008). The project enhanced the youth's skill for job seeking. Most of the youth learned CV writing skills, interview skills and professional conduct. The project also helped others find jobs and start their own businesses, even those who are still unemployed found career guidance to be of help to them. This is what some participants had to say.

> *"I know what to look for when I am going to the interview, eh… how to… prepare myself for the interview"* (Participant 1.)
>
> *"Yes, the project helped me to get employment because it taught us how to look for jobs"* Participant 2
>
> *"It was really giving us tools to upgrade your qualification because we were receiving some certificates to add on top of your CV"* (Participant 3)
>
> *"Learned how to respond during interviews – how to conduct yourself in an interview"* (Participant 4).
>
> *"Learned the skills to sell myself to a potential employer" and making a colourful CV"* (Participant 5).

3.4.4. Perceptions of gender and sexuality

Most participants indicated that the project increased their awareness on the knowledge about the LGBTI community; it also helped them be more aware of their own sexuality. To most participants, it helped them understand the challenges of gender-based violence. Such as hate crimes, stigmatisation and marginalisation of LGBTI community members. Information gained in this module is enlightening as it gives people information about issues around gender and sexuality. Participants remarked that they learned a lot about gender and sexuality with human rights.

> *" Um, shortly I've gained a lot of things cos I didn't know about gender-based violence and government participation…"*
>
> *"….hmmm it helped me by knowing who I am, and how to handle myself, and how to live a healthy and productive life as a homosexual person"*
>
> *"We should not violate the rights of homosexual skills and that we must treat them as the same as we treat everyone"*
>
> *"I know stuff that I didn't know before, like LGBTI, didn't know what that means, but now I do"*

Financial literacy

Other participants remarked on the information that they had gained from the financial management course, and implied that they are now financially literate. This theme was mentioned by several participants, that it helped them open their own businesses and saving more money which they see as an integral part of life. They expressed themselves in the following way.

> *Saving more (financial literacy)*
>
> *Starting my own business*
>
> *I have my own business now, bakery*
>
> *Financial literacy; very important topic in a life of a person.*

3.4.5. Project improvement

In the data that was collected, it is clear that most participants feel that the project should be improved in some way. Although most participants mentioned that they learned a lot from the project, that it was good and catered for their needs.

Some participants who took part in the study felt that there were a few improvements that could be made to make the project even better. Some participants expressed their feelings as follows:

1. Adding more youth projects

The participants felt that more youth projects should be added by the Zenzele youth project on top of the ones that they were currently offering. In order to help youths that are struggling to find a sense of purpose and direction in their lives.

2. Duration

Some participants complained about the duration of the project that was run by the Zenzele youth project as being too short and that it needed to be longer. More time seems to be what some participants need. This sentiment is supported by the following extracts from participants.

3. *Accessibility*

> *"The duration of the workshops, they were quite short, informative workshops like this need to take at least three months, so I'd add more time"*
>
> *"Yes, what I would change is the time or duration of the course. I would make it longer.*
>
> *"I would think maybe if they organise another project or a follow-up."*
>
> *One of the project facilitators (Linda) received less time; whilst she had a lot to offer*
>
> *Increase Linda's time"*

One participant mentioned that the project is not really accessible to the youth as they usually run it at centres that are far away from the community. And feels that they should take it to the actual communities to make it accessible to everyone willing to take part. One participant had the following to say.

> *Something that I would change within the project. Oh, ya to basically to because basically they normally do the project in centres where they are like the one that I have done was in the lay centre and the other one in an east bull. What I think is that if you people can maybe like take it to the actual community. Ya ya in order for it to be more accessible like in communities where ya in communities."*

4. <u>Social issues affecting youth in communities</u>

One participant mentions the fact that the project can be beneficial to the youth by addressing issues that affect the youth on a daily basis in their communities like teenage pregnancy, crime and abuse. This is supported by the following statement

> *"they did not have a teenage pregnancy, how to encourage a person that is abused, how to deal with crime among the youth."*

The themes outlined above are in accordance with the data that was collected by the researchers. The themes emerged from the replies to research questions that were posed. Extracts from the interview transcripts are quoted to support the claim that the researcher is making. These themes will help the researchers in interpreting the results and coming up with necessary recommendations that can be of help to GLN.

<u>Maslow's theory on needs</u>

The themes discussed above are in accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of need theory which remarks that in order for people to reach their full potential they need to make the most of their abilities and strive to be the best they can. This is in relation to the esteem needs. All humans have a need to be respected, to have self-esteem, self-respect, and to respect others. People need to engage themselves to gain recognition and have an activity or activities that give the person a sense of contribution, to feel accepted and self-valued, be it in a profession, hobby or employment whereby they feel useful and valued.

This is evidently remarked by the participants, that the youth project catered for their self -esteem needs and helped them learn to make the most of their abilities and strive to be the best they can through different workshops that were offered.

Maslow believed that humans have the need to increase their intelligence and thereby chase knowledge. This is related to education and having agency, an opportunity to learn and explore the world. Also, this is directly related to need to explore or the openness to experience, which is what the participants did when they took part in the workshop because they were open to learning new different skills (Meyer et al. 2008).

4. Activities

In service of the agreed-upon objectives, the activities that were done for GLN included data collection and data analysis. During the data collection stage, the masters' students sampled 12 people who participated in the Zenzele youth project in 2015. The sample was made up of unemployed and currently employed individuals, and also the people who assisted with facilitating the sub-components of the Zenzele youth project. The selected participants were then interviewed (telephonically), the interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. The group used telephonic interviews because they allow respondents to feel relaxed and to disclose sensitive information, thus there is also a growing interest in electronic qualitative interviews (Novick, 2008). To analyse data, the group decide to use thematic analysis because it offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

5. Critical reflection

Community psychology is said to focus on the interaction and relationship between an individual and their environment or social context, especially those that suffer due to extreme social challenges (Seedat, & Lazarus, 2011). Furthermore, it involves understanding the relationship and responding or intervening appropriately to enhance the well-being of a society (especially those that have been oppressed or marginalised) (Nel, Lazarus, & Daniels, 2010). Community psychology (both internationally and in South Africa) aim is to ensure accessibility of psychological services, especially to under-serviced communities and addresses social factors that affect a person's mental health (Nel, Lazarus, & Daniels, 2010). This can be done by following Lazarus's (2007) recommended perspectives of: empowerment (developing a person's sense of self and control over their lives); oppression (targeting concepts of sexism, racism, etc); prevention (identifying and addressing factors that place communities at risk); health promotion (physical, mental and social wellbeing); intersectional collaboration (commitment to working with others); and finally, a psychological sense of community (a sense of belonging).

However, the above-mentioned definitions, assumptions and perspectives of community psychology have been criticised. In fact, critical questions such as: Who has the authority to construct community psychology? How can such authority be resisted? And whose interests are served by the various constructions of community psychology? are being asked (Fryer & Laing, 2008). Fryer and Laing (2008) also state that there are various techniques and practices which have changed throughout the different discourses of 'community psychology' depending on the different interest groups, times and places. This strongly suggests that there is not one fixed way of doing community psychology, and will often depend on one's circumstances and situations they are in. There does not seem to be a universal textbook definition of community psychology as definitions have not only varied from country to country but also within the same country (Fryer & Laing, 2008). If the mere definition of community psychology is problematic then it is understandable that it evokes feelings of uncertainty of what and how to do it. A critical perspective of community psychology looks at it being predominately dominated by the USA's monocultural, individualistic vision and hardly distinguishes from the mainstream discipline (Fryer & Laing, 2008). Therefore, it is important that one does not simply accept any definition of community psychology but critically analyses exactly what is proposed as community psychology by understanding the contextual situation, the community in which one will be working in, and listening and understanding what the community themselves deem as the most necessary intervention.

Considering the above, and although our group had a preconceived idea of how we would be conducting community psychology within the GLN organisation, we were all left feeling somewhat disappointed after we found out that we were not going to be actively engaging with the LGBTI community, but rather adopting a research-based stance based on their Zenzele Youth Project. However, although we were only going to be conducting research, this did not mean that we were doing a less meaningful form of community psychology, we were simply taking on a different role as community psychologists. Stein and Mankowski (2004) state that for many community researchers doing qualitative research, they have the potential to empower groups of people who are often marginalised by society by giving them a voice which can allow social change. Therefore, our group's role in the GLN organization was as researchers, doing a qualitative investigation.

The literature describes this role as researchers in community psychology as a necessary second-order change that can alter the structure of a system and therefore sustainability will be enhanced if research is used to facilitate community change (Altman, 1995).

Conducting research on the Zenzele Youth Project will provide GLN with the necessary information to determine if a change needs to take place with regards to the implementation of the project which will enhance the sustainability of the project.

Thus, we adopted Stein and Mankowski (2004) suggested the four-act process which was designed to help community psychologists accurately describe and understand the qualitative research process. This will be explained below as well as our critical reflection on how we implemented each act and if we maintained a collaborative relationship with GLN throughout.

1) *The act of asking.* This involves identifying and enlisting people who will be the focus of inquiry keeping in mind the research's goals that should motivate selection (Stein and Mankowski, 2004). Luckily, GLN had an extensive list of potential participants and they were able to identify and select the most suitable participants for our data collection by phoning those potential participants who would be readily available for telephonic interviews. Our group then took the research role of phoning the participants and asking them the necessary questions from the questionnaire we created with GLN. Upon reflection of this step, both GLN and our group could collaborate using our different resources and skills. Thus, there was no superiority displayed as GLN needed us and we needed GLN to conduct this qualitative research.

2) *The act of witnessing.* This involves listening to and affirming the experiences of research participants, thus being a witness that is open, present, and a passionate listener who is affected, responsible and accountable for what is heard (Stein and Mankowski, 2004). This step involved our group's research skills only as we were the ones who were conducting the telephonic interviews. However, reflecting back we often found that at times it was hard to actively and openly listen as we struggled with audibility of the telephone conversations resulting in irritation and perhaps lost audibility that could have been valuable to the research.

3) *The act of interpreting.* This involves making sense of the collective experiences of participants by using the researcher's experiences and knowledge and tuning the participants' stories into research stories (Stein and Mankowski, 2004).
Once again, our groups' research skills were used in analysing and interpreting the data and creating themes of the participants' experiences of the project. This part of the process at first seemed lengthy and challenging, but as a group, we were able to share the workload evenly.

However, there did seem to be a slight challenge with regards to the different amounts of effort different group members were displaying as well as a commitment to getting the analyse done within the timeframe given. But, this was resolved through a group meeting where it was ensured that each group member understands the importance of equal input and shared responsibility. Thereafter, each group member was happy with the outcome.

4) *The act of knowing.* This involves creating accessible representations of the knowledge gained and displays the understanding of the researchers about the social context and lives of the research participants (Stein and Mankowski, 2004). This part of the process did not appear too challenging to the group members as our research skills and knowledge assisted us in producing a satisfactory report that will be handed over to GLN with the confidence of our findings and report write-up.

In order to go about conducting research in a community and ensuring change, their needs to be a collaboration and sharing of resources between the researchers and the community group, which most often requires a paradigm shift for the researchers (Altman, 1995; Khun, 1970). This was not found to be a challenge working with GLN, as they were more than willing to offer their own resources such as contacting and narrowing down potential participants, providing contact details for confirmed participants, and allowing us to use their telephones to conduct the telephonic interviews. Us as the researchers provided our necessary research skills and were able to provide audio recorders. Altman (1995) also outlines one of the main barriers that community psychologists adopting a research role are likely to confront: that of time orientation. Researchers mostly emphasise the long-term, careful and thoroughness that is needed when conducting research, whereas community organizations are used to basing quick decisions on limited information (Altman, 1995). This was evident, especially regarding the change in data collection from focus groups to telephonic interviews. GLN required focus groups without fully investigating if this was feasible and affordable. Therefore, we were delayed in conducting telephonic interviews as our research proposal had to be amended. Upon reflection, GLN displayed moderate patience with regards to the progress of our research.

At times they did expect unrealistic deadlines and did not foresee the lengthy process it takes to collect data, analyse the data and then write up the findings into a report. However, our group could have been more proactive with regards to conducting the telephonic interviews and should have provided regular feedback on our progress to ensure GLN was kept in the

light at all times. Thus, reflecting back, our communication skills had room for improvement regarding reassurance to GLN on our progress.

Furthermore, GLN taught us how to critically engage with sexualities and the issues that the LGBTI community faces in South Africa. Butler (1992) envisions 'queer' as a politics that invites people to think differently. To trouble binary categories that ignore multiple queer elements. To conceptualise that sexual orientation, gender, biological sex, and desire are all different elements that intersect when creating a sexual identity. A constructionist picture of personhood acknowledges homosexuality on a macro level (Foucault, 1978). And a more intersectional approach will shed light on the smorgasbord of elements that manage stake in individual personhoods, such as, race, class, and gender (Crenshaw, 1991). These discourse of critical sexualities offered our group a new way of thinking about our own 'categories' of identification and being sensitive to the intersecting identities of those around us. Hegemonic discourses in South African, construct homosexuality and 'queerness' as un-African, and this in part is due to the compulsory heterosexuality subscribed to within many African traditions (Msibi, 2011).

Yet homophobia plagues the societies of contemporary Africa, with leaders purporting the 'un-African' nature of homosexuality through a troublesome paradigm of fixed patriarchy and heteronormativity (Msibi, 2011). A neo-conservatism that gains momentum through legal, religious, cultural and nationalist discourses that manage and police sexualities (Msibi, 2011). Where being queer has the potential to destroy African traditions and the family values within the paradigm of heteronormativity (Msibi, 2011). Foucault (1978) links sexualities to power, and in the South African context, there seems to be a fear of what power 'queerness' holds in disrupting norms and shifting power relations (Foucault, 1978). Therefore violence in South Africa is an existing epidemic that encompasses homophobic displays of corrective rape and gender-based violence (Nkosi, 2008). Our experience with GLN, attending their AGM, through discussions, and meetings offered us deeper insight into the plight of the LGBTI community and the extensive work GLN is doing to minimize it.

Overall, reflecting back on our experience throughout the year, as a group we felt uncertainty not only regarding the community we would be working with but also regarding our own abilities, capabilities and knowledge of this concept of community psychology. We had certain expectations of what would be required from us.

Firstly, our group thought community psychology involved actively engaging with a community that is disadvantaged and lacks resources, to provide them with assistance in increasing their resources and teaching them skills that could benefit them within their community. However, these preconceived concepts changed as our knowledge increased and we gained experience working with the GLN community.

The 2016 UKZN group experienced challenges in their communication with GLN. This was reflected in their initial meeting with GLN, where they agreed to multiple projects with GLN in the fear of compromising the relationship by saying no their needs. Due to time constraints, it was quickly realised that such a large scale of commitment would not be possible and the UKZN students were tasked with removing themselves from intended projects with GLN, without compromising trust within the partnership. With this in mind, our group approached the project with caution and made GLN aware of our time constraints this year and offered to complete the project dileanted last year. This is what GLN wanted, they furthermore said they needed assistance with other projects. To which we responded that our priority was to compile the report of the Zenzele Youth Project, and should we have time left after this we may enter into talks again about possible negotiating further engagement. This hindsight from last year's reflections allowed us to engage with GLN with transparency and trust.

Reflecting on our own community that developed this year with regards to the partnership we developed between each member of our group, we were faced with different challenges as we went through the different stages of forming, storming, norming, and performing (Llewelyn & Fielding, 1982). During our forming stage, all members were polite, enthusiastic and positive about the partnerships we had created. However, some of us did feel some anxiety regarding not knowing what to expect or what was expected from us. During the storming stage, group members attempted to push the boundaries in terms of lack of communication and being unable to meet deadlines that were established by the group. However, there was never any major conflict that had arisen between group members, and each member remained professional and respectful towards each other and could admit if they were not performing at the standard that the group had set.

In the norming stage, each group member could identify each other's strengths. Thus, dividing up group work was an easy task, we all showed commitment towards finishing the final project and could provide constructive feedback to each other without anyone taking

offence. In the final stage of performing, each member showed dedication and willingness to work hard to achieve the final goal, without any friction. Overall, our community was able to foster a strong sense of Ubuntu.

6. Summary and conclusion

In this paper, we have described GLN as an organisation, discussed the UKZN partnership with GLN and how this partnership has been since the initial formation in 2015 to how it is currently in 2017. The process of implementing and accomplishing the 2017 objectives was discussed as well. Furthermore, the theoretical framework that informed the master's group as we were working towards achieving these objectives was discussed in relation to the group understanding of community psychology.

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