

**NEEDS AND ASSETS OF A PUBLIC ADULT LEARNING CENTRE  
FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED: AN EDUCATIONAL  
STUDY OF BOSELE**

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research is about establishing the needs and assets of a public adult learning centre for the visually impaired. The research is important because South Africa, as a signatory to the Salamanca Statement on Principles and Practice in Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 (Väyrynen, 2008), has an obligation to ensure the provision of quality education and training through inclusion. This also includes adult learners. The research emanated from the assumption that Public Adult Learning Centres for the Visually Impaired are not well equipped to provide quality education as envisaged by the Salamanca Statement and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In order to resolve this assumption, a qualitative case study with Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre (BPALC) for the Visually Impaired was designed. The research participants from this centre were purposely sampled due to the importance of their shared experiences and opinions in answering the research question. Multiple perspectives were applied in data collection by means of semi-structured and focus group interviews and documents were examined and analysed to obtain in-depth information about the research.

The analysis of the participants' shared experiences and opinions, combined with observation and data analysis, assisted in deriving at the conclusion that, although Bosele is a Public Adult Learning Centre for the visually impaired, it is still deficient in terms of the capacity to provide quality education as envisaged in the Salamanca Statement and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The learning and teaching support materials are inadequate and have not been modified for many years. The facilitators do not receive the necessary professional support and as such are inadequately prepared to provide quality education to the visually impaired adult learners. The available assets within and outside BPALC are not mapped and therefore not recognized for effective utilization. The teaching, learning and physical environment around BPALC is not conducive to the promotion of quality education for visually impaired adults.

To respond to the findings of this research, several recommendations have been suggested and an empowerment programme has also been provided with a view to improve the quality of teaching and learning at BPALC. Suggestions for future research topics have also been made in order to close the gap that exists in research for the education of learners with visual impairment.

## **DECLARATION**

I, Elias Mathea Sekgobela, declare that the dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo for the degree of Masters of Education in Community and Continuing Education, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University, that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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E M Sekgobela

## ACRONYMS

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AAIB	American Association of Instructors of the Blind
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AEVH	Association for the Visually Handicapped
ALC	Adult Learning Centre
BPALC	Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre
CET	Centre Evaluation Team
CONFINTEA V	Fifth International Conference on Adult Education
EAEA	European Association for the Education of Adults
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FET	Further Education and Training
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NMEC	National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education
NQF	National Qualification Framework
PALC	Public Adult Learning Centre
PED	Provincial Education Department
SANCB	South African National Council for the Blind
SAQA	South African Qualifications Act
SBA	Site Based Assessment
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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# CHAPTER 1

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

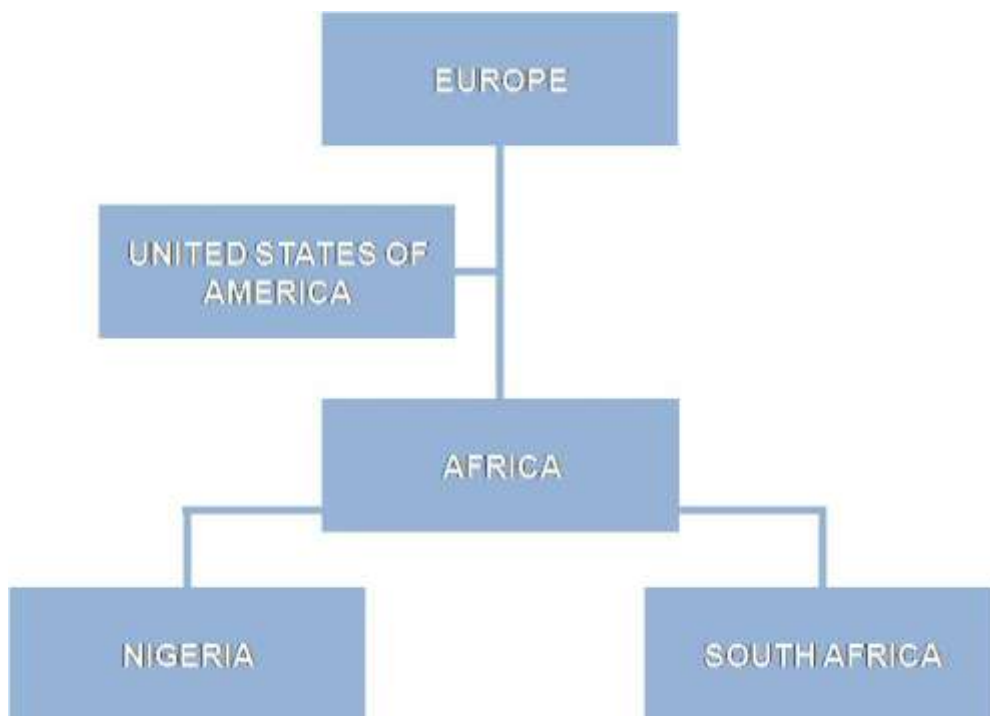
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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background to the study. The history of education for the visually impaired in Europe, the United States of America, Nigeria and South Africa is contemplated. The chapter also unpacks the statement of the problem, research questions, the aim and significance of the study as well as ethical considerations.

### 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The following is an illustration of the background to the study as applied.



**Figure 1.** Background to the study of the Education of the Visually Impaired.

The right to basic education, including Adult Basic Education and Further Education and Training is a constitutional right enshrined in the Bill of Rights, contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It stipulates that the state, through reasonable measures, must progressively make education available and accessible (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996). Former State President of South Africa, Dr Nelson Mandela (2004) had this to say:

*“We cannot claim to have reached anywhere near to where a society should be in terms of practical equality of the disabled. We continue to try. We realise that legislation and regulations are not sufficient for the end of the long walk to equality and non-discrimination”.*

In support of the above statement, Surty (2013) emphasised the importance of education, the raising of awareness, the development of conscientiousness, and eradication of stigmatisation as key elements in achieving non-discrimination against the disabled in practice and in our everyday lives. The majority of people in rural areas still believe that people born blind cannot be educated and as such keep them hidden away from the public, resulting in them staying illiterate. By the time they discover that education facilities are available, it is too late, and their only chance of attaining some education is through adult learning centres which are limited, far apart, scarcely funded and under-resourced. It can be argued that the formal configuration of Adult Education, in relation to the National Qualification Framework, its location predominantly in schools and formal workplaces, its use of school educators or corporate trainers and its focus on instrumental purposes, marginalise those who are outside the formal system, which are the poor; the unemployed; people with disabilities; the rural population; and their communities (Rule 2006).

The delivery of quality adult education depends on well-trained facilitators who play a pivotal role in addressing critical economic, political and social problems specific to learners across a variety of contexts (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation 1998). Well trained facilitators can do much to enhance the quality of the learning experience for adults.

In the light of the above statement, the study is intended to identify the educational needs and assets of BPALC in order to value, utilise and enhance it for sustainable development.

### **1.2.1 Education for the visually impaired in Europe**

The history of formal education for the visually impaired dates back to over 200 years, but it was in Europe that the first significant step to educate the blind started. Learners who were visually impaired received educational services from men and women who believed that children with visual impairment were capable of succeeding in education and in life (Holbrook & Koenig 2000). Dedicated individuals with a strong commitment to these

learners fought against the then prevailing societal attitudes to establish a starting point from which all educational services have emerged (Holbrook & Koenig 2000).

It was during 1784 that Valentin Haüy, who is often referred to as “*the father of the education of the blind*” undertook the first important step to educate the visually impaired people in separate residential institutions. It was the way people with visual impairment were ridiculed and treated that prompted Haüy to do something about their education (Holbrook & Koenig 2000) when he established the L’Institut Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles (Institute for Blind Youth). Louis Braille, a student at the school, later invented the embossed six dots system of reading and writing, now popularly known as Braille.

The demonstration by blind learners at the Institute for Youths to read and write, using pinpricked letters, perform music and carry out their daily activities gave Haüy the reassurance that blind persons can achieve much more than people perceived. He set about pursuing his interest in educating blind learners. His first student, Francois Lesueur, was an intelligent adolescent who was blind and had been supporting his widowed mother and siblings by begging. Francois agreed to study half the day and to continue begging the other half. Haüy eventually subsidized Francois’ education in order for him to quit begging and to concentrate on his studies. He believed blind people could achieve as much as other able-bodied people could, and with that he hoped to elicit admiration for their competence and not pity for their blindness. His contribution to the education of blind people became a lasting one. His first school for blind learners became a model for many such schools that followed (Holbrook & Koenig 2000).

Haüy emphasised reading and pursued the development of embossed print. He believed in the vocational potential of his learners and instituted vocational training at his school. Despite the many blind individuals who succeeded in educational activities during those early periods, public expectation for people with visual impairment continued to be low. There was little support for and encouragement of people who were blind, but Haüy had set the foundation for learners with visual impairment to obtain an education (Holbrook & Koenig 2000).

### **1.2.2 United States of America**

In the USA, educational programmes for learners with visual impairment followed Haüy’s model of residential institutions. The existence of the European residential school model

and the fact that, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century it was fashionable for the well-to-do to send their learners to boarding schools, made it seem logical and desirable to establish residential schools for learners with visual impairment in the USA. As a result, the following three first institutions for the blind were established:

- New England Asylum for the Blind (later to be called Perkins School for the Blind), established by Samuel Gridley Howe in Boston in 1829;
- the New York Institute for Special Education established in New York in 1831;
- Pennsylvania in 1832 (Holbrook & Koenig 2000).

These three schools, which were privately funded and supported, were the forerunners of subsequent educational programmes since they demonstrated the success of educating learners who were blind. It was a positive indication of hope towards people with visual impairment and it was followed by many such schools which were built and funded by the state (Holbrook & Koenig 2000).

African American visually impaired learners either followed the exclusive or inclusive education systems of their various geographic areas. Before the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans were generally denied any form of formal education, but slowly thereafter southern residential schools began to open separate facilities for them (Winzer 1993). By 1931 there were ten separate departments in residential schools and five independently administered schools for the African Americans (Koestler 1976).

Programmes for these learners were inferior due to the poor quality of equipment and educational materials. The dots in Braille books often became so worn that it became impossible to read. The limited number of segregated training facilities that were available for African American teachers is another reason for the inferiority of the programmes. Non-segregated training facilities were offered in other parts of the country but the travelling costs were unaffordable (Winzer 1993).

It was in 1871 at the convention of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind (AAIB), later called Association for the Education of the Visually Handicapped (AEVH) that Samuel Gridley Howe deplored the social sequestration of residential schools and advocated for public day school education in all subjects not requiring visible illustration (Holbrook & Koenig 2000). Howe also described a cottage system that he had recently implemented at Perkins as an alternative to large dormitories. There was strong opposition

to the cottage system idea from several residential school superintendents, who was of the opinion that education is for society and not for family life, and that the cottage system would promote an unhealthy attachment to family-style living in adulthood (Frampton & Kearney 1953). This argument is difficult to understand in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, looking at the present child development principle, but serves to confirm the evolution of the educational systems through the years (Holbrook & Koenig 2000).

### **1.2.3 Africa**

Many African countries adopted the European and United States of America's education systems for the visually impaired. The majority of these institutions were established and privately funded before being adopted by the state. Their curricula was always limited to the social sciences and vocational training, with added emphasis on music and crafts since it was believed that visually impaired adult learners must be prepared to take their places in the social and economic lives of the communities they lived in (Holbrook & Koenig 2000).

#### **1.2.3.1 Nigeria**

Nigeria is the largest and the most populous country in Africa with a population of about 140 million people, according to the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC 2008). The level of literacy among the male population varies between 40,9 and 82,6% while that of females ranges between 14,6 and 74,7%. Adult education as an academic discipline and a field of practice has largely been a 20<sup>th</sup> century development (NMEC 2008). The field is still evolving as experts, policy makers and practitioners meet periodically to discuss the form, content and other logistics of this very crucial out-of-school education system. The historical development of adult and non-formal education has been interwoven with the history of formal schooling. During the early decades of the colonial period, the British government in Nigeria had paid little or no attention to the provision of adult education (NMEC 2008).

The 1969 National Curriculum Conference in Ibadan led to the 1973 National Conference on Education which sought to draft the first post-independence policy on education in Nigeria (NMEC 2008). It therefore took Nigeria almost 17 years after independence to formulate and enforce a new national policy on education.

Actual formal education of visually impaired individuals in Nigeria started in 1944 (Omolewa 1981) and by 1946 a national literacy programme was well under way, although due to poor

implementation, it had limited success. It was introduced by the Sudan Interior Mission a century after the sighted had embraced Western Education (Adebiyi 2007). The main aim of the missionaries was to train visually impaired persons to read the Bible and learn skills which would make them self-reliant. The establishment of the first school for the Blind in Gindiri was an eye opener to the emergence of other special education institutions in Nigeria (Adebiyi 2007).

The development of education for the visually impaired in Nigeria can be divided into three stages:

- The Pre-Missionary stage
- The Missionary Stage
- The Post-Missionary Stage

- *The Pre-Missionary Stage*

The Pre-Missionary stage is traced back before the arrival of the missionaries in Nigeria. The actual missionary intervention in education in Nigeria was in 1840 (Adebiyi 2007). Prior to the missionaries having any impact on education in Nigeria, the blind were mistreated, akin to their treatment in most primitive societies in the world. Western education was not concerned with Special Education until a century later (Adebiyi 2007).

- *The Missionary Stage (1940 – 1970)*

It was only after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War that Nigeria began experiencing a dramatic turnabout in the education for individuals with visual impairment. The first school for the blind was established in Gindiri by the Sudan United Mission in 1953. It was followed by the Pacelli school for the Blind which was established by the Catholic Mission under Archbishop Taylor in 1962 (Adebiyi 2007). It was during this period that the education system in Nigeria implemented various educational ordinances which were, however, silent on Special Education.

- *The Post-Missionary era (1970 to date)*

The missionaries played a major role in the establishment of special schools and in the growth of Special Education in Nigeria (Zindi 1997). The Nigerian government became involved in the education of persons with disabilities as from 1970 (Adebiyi 2007). Zindi (1997) highlights the fact that complete involvement in the education of the disabled by the Nigerian government did not take place until the 1970s when the then Head of States, Major

General Yakubu Gowon, declared the government's interest in the education of the disabled. He directed that all the State Ministries of Education had Units for Special Education in order to strengthen the existing schools.

Elements of Special Education were introduced in colleges and universities' Faculty of Education throughout Nigeria, and a great deal of improvement was made in Special Education, especially in the education of persons with visual impairment (Adebiyi 2007).

### **1.2.3.2 South Africa**

Adult education as an agent of change has been prominent for several decades and has informed activities of civil society and government campaigns in various countries (Baatjes & Mathe 2004). For years countries worldwide continued to struggle in pursuit of a better education system for all, a system capable of providing quality education and training for all, regardless of their educational level. Prinsloo (2001) maintains that the predominant objective of any education system is one of providing quality education for all learners in order to enable them to realise their full potential, thereby enabling them to contribute to and participate effectively in the economy.

In South Africa, formal education of the visually impaired started in 1891 as a unit attached to Doofstommen en Blinden Instituut (an institution for the Deaf in Worcester, Western Cape) when Mr J Besselaar was given the responsibility to teach a class of four visually impaired learners (Maguvhe 2005). The unit developed and grew into what is today known as the Pioneer Institute for the Blind.

The South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB) was established in 1929 and had since played a central role in supporting and developing schools and adult learning centres for the visually impaired in South Africa. This organisation has continued to serve as the custodian of all institutions for the visually impaired and often represents these institutions in discussions with the Department of Education, especially on matters pertaining to education and support for the visually impaired. The organisation employs, among its staff, specialists in the education and support of visually impaired learners and provides adaptive devices and learning and teaching support materials designed specifically for learners with visual impairment at subsidised costs (Maguvhe 2005).

The Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training (1997) made several acknowledgements and commitments, among which the following can be referred:

- Education is an essential component of the reconstruction, development and transformation of the South African nation.
- The development of an enabling environment in which high quality Adult Basic Education and Training programmes can flourish throughout the country.
- There has been little or no recognition in the adult education sector as a whole, nor in particular, for the educators of adults.
- Adult education and training has suffered from an inadequate infrastructure and support system with minimal resources.
- State provided adult education has had an inappropriate, narrow, formal school focus.
- Despite its location in the schooling environment, adult education has not been able to draw meaningfully upon the professional educational resources and infrastructure of the formal school system.
- Adult education should contribute to the full personal development of each student and to the moral, social, cultural, political, and economic development of the nation at large, including the advancement of democracy, human rights and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Visually impaired adult learners also deserve quality education to enable them to compete fairly in the open labour market. Access to quality adult education is important throughout the educational spectrum. The National Qualifications Framework and Quality Assurance (2000) list the following to ensure quality in education:

- Access, mobility and progression: Qualifications and standards would be expected to be designed in such a way to ensure that they do not lead learners to a cul-de-sac and that they allow for continued learning and improved employment opportunities.
- Integration: Qualifications and Standards would be expected to integrate theory and practice, skills, knowledge, values and attitudes.
- Learning outcomes: Qualification and standards would be expected to clearly state the expected skills, knowledge, values and attitudes to be acquired, as well as the level and standards expected of these in order to guide learners and facilitators of learning.
- Redress: Qualifications and standards would be expected to ensure that the potential of citizens that were previously denied education and training opportunities is brought to the fore and recognised so that they can be improved for the individual's development and the country's socio-political economic development.
- Personal and National Development: Qualifications and standards would ensure that learners develop in such a way as to be responsible for their own socio-political-

economic development and for the reconstruction and development of the country according to the South African Qualification Act (SAQA 2000).

These guidelines apply also to the education of adults with visually impairment.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Inclusive Education for Adult Education for the Visually Impaired in South Africa appears to be far from being realised. Implementation of Inclusive Education in ordinary public adult learning centres is still a major challenge and very little, if any, is done to introduce it into the sector. Visually impaired adult learners still have to travel long distances to be admitted at the limited number of specialised centres catering for their needs. This makes it very difficult for many such learners who wish to receive some basic education or further their education. The majority of these learners cannot afford to travel such distances for safety reasons, and for those who can, are inconvenienced by the time allocated for such programmes. The only convenient arrangement for them to benefit fully is a residential centre, where they are provided with boarding and lodging for ease of access to the centre and basic health facilities. These arrangements are in contravention of what Inclusive Education advocates.

It therefore stands that the way in which people with disabilities experience inclusion and exclusion in education have not been satisfactorily dealt with yet. The most important problem that has to be overcome in this process is the training and empowerment of teachers in order to identify and effectively support adult learners with visual impairment (Prinsloo 2001). One of the goals of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) is that adult educators should have the same status as other educators, including appropriate salaries, working and living conditions, and opportunities for continuing training (CONFINTEA V 1997).

Despite the development of a framework for an inclusive education system which is laid out in the Education White Paper 6 of 2001, visually impaired adult learners continue to be excluded in ordinary public learning centres as a result of the lack of knowledge and competencies by the responsible facilitators. One of the major contributors of this exclusion is the lack of teachers' skills in adapting the curriculum to meet a range of their learning needs (Chataika, McKenzie, Swart & Lyner-Cleophas 2012).

The recognition that education is a fundamental right and therefore needs to be freely available to all learners, underpins the notion that the education system should provide for and sustain such learning for all learners (RSA Constitution 1996). The key components of the new South African Education Policy are:

- meeting the needs of all learners; and
- actualising the full potential of all learners (South Africa 1997).

The government's provision of adult education within the formal system does not cater for a significant proportion of potential adult learners for whom the system is not accessible. This excludes millions of adults from learning and therefore violates clause 29(1)a of the Constitution: Everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education.

The location of Public Adult Learning Centres (PALC) in workplace venues particularly excludes the following:

- Those who cannot afford to travel to such public learning centres;
- Those who do not have access to a centre because there are none in the area;
- Those who have no interest in a formal ABET qualification;
- Those who face physical and psychological barriers to learning, such as adults with disabilities and adults whose school experience was so negative as to be a disincentive to further learning (Rule 2006).

There is a need for the introduction of huge and effective changes in learning and teaching methods, which include among others, new learning programmes and environments, and the combination of formal and non-formal learning strategies to broaden participation in more and practical and efficient ways. Such changes will entail high quality and competent facilitators. Developing overall strategies for lifelong learning is a formal priority in almost all countries and must be maintained at all costs for the survival of humanity (European Association for the Education of Adults 2006). It is clear that the above-mentioned duties and responsibilities require, on the part of the facilitator, some form of training to obtain such skills and professionalism which will provide the best possible quality education to the adult learners. The demand for such knowledge becomes more obvious if the facilitator has to deal with adult learners who experience some barriers, like visual impairment, to learning (Rule 2006).

## **1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY**

This study is aimed at identifying the educational needs and assets of Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre in order to value, utilise and enhance it for sustainable development (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993).

## **1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study intends to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify the current weaknesses at Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre for the Visually Impaired;
- To identify the current educational strengths at BPALC for the Visually Impaired; and
- To suggest an empowerment programme for addressing the educational needs and assets of BPALC.

## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main question of this research study is: “What are the educational needs and assets of Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre for the Visually Impaired”?

The sub-questions of this study are as follows:

- Which weaknesses does BPALC experience that impact on the provision of quality education for the learners?
- What strengths does BPALC have that can be exploited for the benefit of adult learners at the centre?
- How can the available assets of BPALC be utilised to address its educational needs?

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The author has been an educator for the visually impaired for thirty years. He assisted with the establishment of Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre for the Visually Impaired in 2000 after realising the challenges that visually impaired adult learners experience at ordinary public adult learning centres, which form the basis of this study.

Research about adult education for the visually impaired is deficient and as such very limited information about it is available. The study may thus add to the modest body of knowledge and understanding of the present situation in the education of adult learners with visual impairment, and it may contribute towards improving the state of education for the visually impaired adult learners at Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre. It may also inform curriculum advisors on issues like the provision of relevant professional support services and basic adaptive equipment for the visually impaired adult learners, issues which apparently are less attended to at present. The study is also a means to engage the community in the development of the BPALC.

The study may also serve to inform adult learners and facilitators at BPALC to recognise and take advantage of the available assets within the community. It will also open further discussions that will contribute in developing and improving the education of adult learners at the BPALC.

## **1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

An important aspect of research is the respect and consideration of those people who voluntarily or otherwise participate in the study. To the extent that these people are our colleagues and our subjects in the research process, they deserve to be treated with respect and humility, and for that reason, the following ethical considerations were strictly observed:

- Approval was sought from the Department of Education through the Hlogotlou Circuit (*Appendix 1*).
- All the participants signed consent forms to acknowledge their willingness to participate in the research (*Appendix 2*).
- Participation was voluntary and participants were not obliged or coerced into responding to questions which made them uncomfortable.
- Participants were made aware of the use of recording devices during interviews.
- Participants were fully aware of their rights to participation and the protection of their identity.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presents the background of the study. The history of education for the visually impaired through the centuries considers the historical background of Europe, the United

States of America, Nigeria and South Africa. The statement of the problem, the aim and objectives as well as the significance of the study is also outlined.

The background study has assisted in unpacking the development of education for the visually impaired over the years. The information shed some light on how education for the visually impaired has evolved and what the present situation is in comparison to those early years. Considering this information, it becomes clear that much has been done to improve on the foundation laid out many years ago, but that much still need to be done to improve on the quality of education for visually impaired adults. It is on the basis of this assumption that this study has been carried out.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the literature review which serves as a blueprint of this study. It broadly sketches out the needs-based and asset-based approaches in community building as well as challenges and milestones achieved in the field of adult education for adult learners with visual impairment.



*Figure 2. Presentation of the literature review for this research.*

### 2.2 NEEDS-BASED APPROACH TO COMMUNITY BUILDING

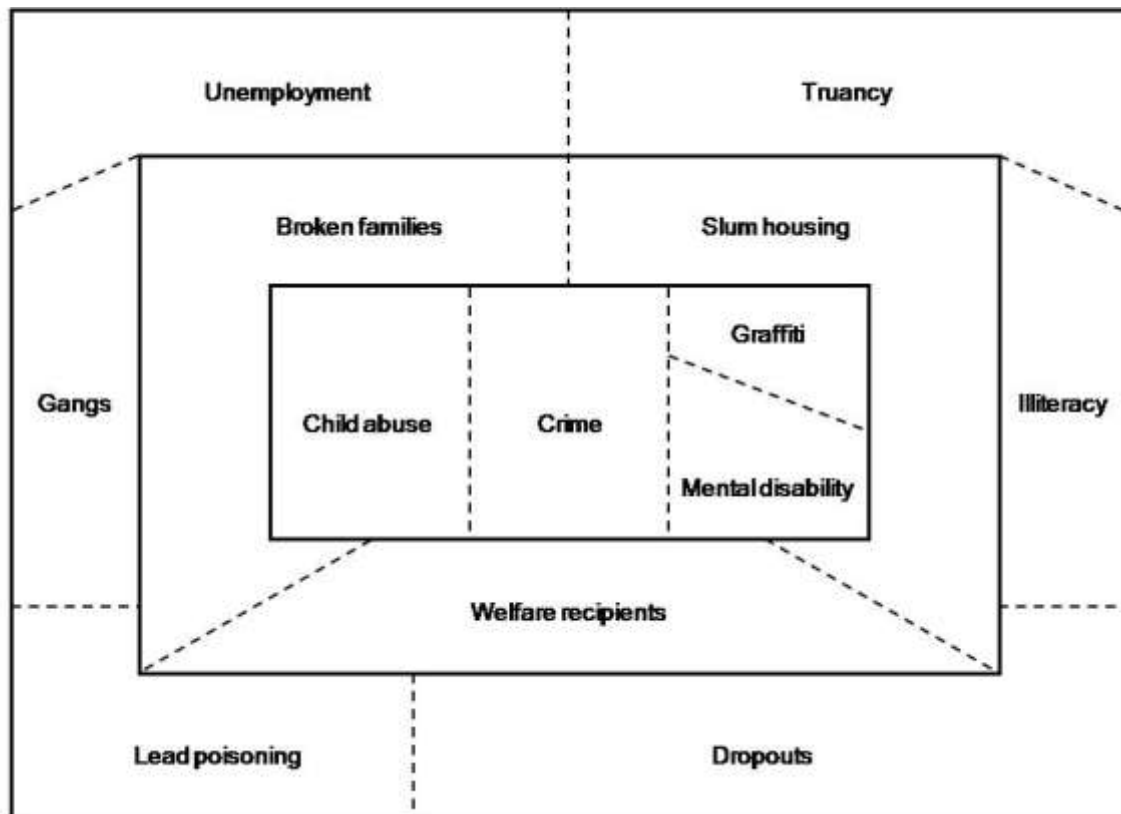
The needs-based approach to community building is also known as a traditional approach to community building. It is generally understood as a deficit model which focuses on the community's needs, deficiencies and problems (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993). This approach often defines poverty as the absence or lack of the basic elements required for human survival and has been the preferred approach to community development by non-government organisations in Africa throughout the 1950s and 1960s (Booy, Sena & Arusha

2000). A legacy of the needs-based approach in Africa is that many individuals receiving assistance have learned to define themselves and their communities by their needs and their deficiencies to the point where they can no longer identify anything of value around them. They have come to believe that only a state of degradation will enable them to attract resources (Russel & Smeaton 2009).

The needs-based development project starts and ends with a negative map of a given area that defines it according to its difficulties, needs, limitations and dysfunctional attributes. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) warn that debilitation starts when local people begin to absorb the maps created by such needs-based analysis, and use these to navigate their villages. People believing in this type of approach no longer see the capacities that are endemic to the real landscape but instead they see only what they lack. They do not see a community that possess numerous assets and untapped growth potential, but a place of real deprivation (Kretzman & McKnight 1993).

The needs-based approach is often top-down, starting with what is not available in the community, and outside-in, relying heavily on the efforts of external agents such as technical assistants. It can be argued that needs-based approaches not only teach local people that they cannot shape their own future, but also that they require services as an answer to their problems, and that such an assessment of the community may internalise a negative picture of itself and thus become powerless (Khadka 2012). Consequently, many lower-income communities become environments of service where behaviour is affected by the residents' belief that their well-being depend upon being clients (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993). Therefore needs-based approaches encourage both residents and professionals - who deliver services - to bypass available assets and resources within the community. In essence, a needs-based paradigm deprive communities the capability to solve their own problems. This approach does not afford the community control over their own development processes. The community turn to outside assistance because they believe their issues or problems are too complex for local residents to solve (Pettit & Kingsley 2003).

The needs-based approach is important in establishing the existing challenges and deficiencies in order to mobilise the community to address it themselves. The starting point for the needs-based approach is always the needs analysis of the community to enable them to find the relevant assistance. Needs identification helps the community to understand its deficiencies and to be able to plan accordingly.



**Figure 3.** Community needs map as adopted from Kretzmann and McKnight (1993).

### 2.3 ASSET-BASED APPROACH TO COMMUNITY BUILDING

In contrast to the needs-based approach to community building which addresses perceived “deficiencies and problems” through the use of outside experts and resources, the asset-based approach to community building genuinely empowers citizens and strengthens government and agency effectiveness by drawing on local residents’ resources, abilities, and insights to solve their own challenges (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993). It is an approach that sees community members as active change agents rather than passive beneficiaries or clients. It starts with what is already present within the community – not only the capacities of individuals, but also the existing commercial, associational and institutional foundation (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993).

The appeal of the asset-based community building is based on the premise that communities can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilizing existing, but often unrecognised assets, and thereby responding to and creating local economic opportunities. It builds on the assets that are already found in the community and mobilizes individuals, associations and institutions to unite in order to build on their assets, not to concentrate on their needs. The asset-based community building approach develops

policies and activities based on the capacities, skills, and assets of local people (Khadka 2012). It recognises the capacities of local people and their associations to build powerful communities (Khadka 2012).

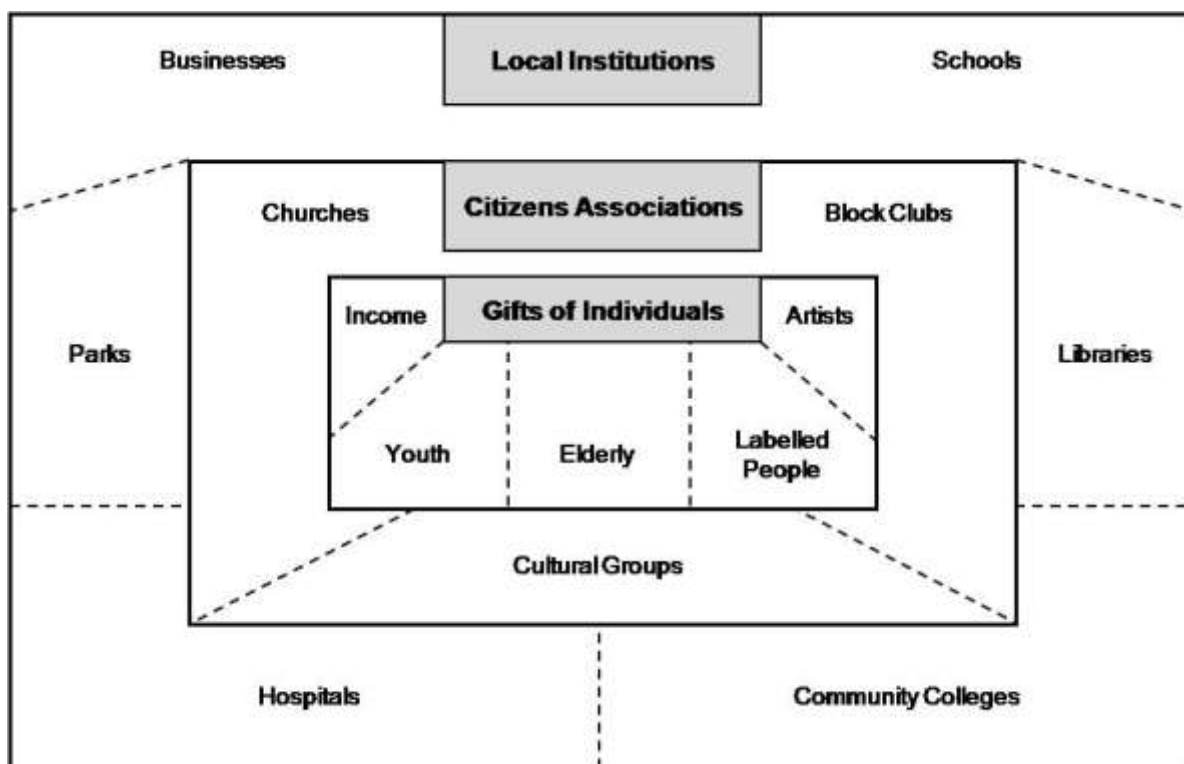
Every community has assets in individuals and families, local associations, local institutions of business, of non-profits and of government, as well as economic assets. Furthermore, every community has natural resources of space and physical resources, and identifying and recognising these assets is the basis for this approach. It is when these assets are connected that their capacities become stronger. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) refer to asset mapping as the documentation of all available assets within the community in order to discover the community's capacities and potentials. The key in the process of discovering a community's assets is a system which is asset-based, internally focused, and relationship driven (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993).

According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) there are four basic components to the assets of a community. They are:

- Individuals - every single person has capacities, abilities, and gifts;
- Associations - groups of citizens working together;
- Institutions - the formal representation of many associations;
- Economic assets - money generated by local and regional economic activities.

Building a stronger community is about bringing these various assets into relationship since community building is about relationships among people. The process of identifying capacities and assets, both individual and organisational, is the first step on the path toward community regeneration. It is also important to note that not all community assets are equally available for community-building purposes. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) further identified three types of accessible assets:

- *Primary building blocks.* These are the most easily accessible assets, which are those that are located in the community and controlled by those who live in the community.
- *The secondary building blocks.* They are the next most accessible assets, which are those assets that are located in the community but controlled elsewhere.
- *The potential building blocks.* They are the least accessible and are those potential building blocks located outside the community and controlled by those outside the community.



*Figure 4. An example of a community asset map (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993).*

## **2.4 POLICIES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED ADULT LEARNERS**

South Africa has some of the most impressive acts or policy documents that promote or relate to adult education and amongst them the following are worth mentioning:

### **2.4.1 Interim Guidelines for ABET (1995)**

The Interim Guidelines for the implementation of ABET (Department of Education 1995) reflects on the need to accelerate the development of an ABET system to address the high attrition rates in schools and the high number of adults who never attended school and the millions of adult South Africans who are functionally illiterate. The Interim Guidelines for the implementation of ABET emphasise that the provision of ABET is linked to the development of human resources within the broader strategy for national development, and that ABET is aimed at restructuring the economy, addressing past inequalities, and contributing to the creation of a democratic society. ABET is meant to provide people with a basic foundation for lifelong learning and equip them with skills and critical capacity to participate fully in society (McKay 2007).

#### **2.4.2 South African Qualifications Act (1995)**

The government established the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in 1995 which led to the development of the South African Qualifications Act (No 58 of 1995). SAQA's key functions were to develop and implement the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which:

- created a national framework for learning achievements;
- facilitated access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths;
- enhanced the quality of education and training;
- accelerated the redress of past discrimination in education, training, and employment opportunities; and
- contributed to the full personal development of each learner and the social development of the nation at large (McKay 2007).

The fundamental function of the NQF was to accredit unit standards, which results in qualifications even for basic-level learners.

#### **2.4.3 National Education Policy Act (1996)**

The National Education Policy Act (No 27 of 1996) protects the right to basic education, and in particular the right of every person to basic education and equal access to education institutions. The right to a basic education means, by extension, the right to good quality learning programmes with high quality learner support materials and teaching practices and appropriate learning sites. The policy states that as a result of high attrition rate in schools, millions of adult South Africans are functionally illiterate, and stresses the need for targeting out-of-school youth for basic education.

#### **2.4.4 South African Constitution (1996)**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) states:

*“Everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and to further education which the state through reasonable measures must make available all forms of organised education and training that meet the basic learning needs of adults, including literacy and numeracy, as well as the general knowledge, skills and values and attitudes that they require to survive, develop*

*their capacities, live and work in dignity, improve the quality of their lives, make informed decisions, and continue learning”.*

Section 29 of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (1996) ensures the right to:

- a basic education, including Adult Basic Education; and
- further education, which the state must make progressively available and accessible.

#### **2.4.5 Multi-Year Implementation Plan for adult education and training in the Department of Education (1997)**

The Multi-Year Implementation Plan (Department of Education 1997) emphasise the need to target out-of-school youth as well as other categories of learners such as the disabled, women, and prisoners. The plan aimed to serve 2,5 million adult learners by the end of 2001, but could not even reach one third of the number at the time (Aitchison, Houghton, Baatjes, et al 2000).

#### **2.4.6 National Skills Development Act (1998)**

The National Skills Development Act (1998) emphasise the government’s commitment to promoting overall human resource development, which includes education reform. The Act stipulates that, for South Africans to participate meaningfully in the country’s economic and social development, as well as in their own advancement, they must have basic competencies, including the ability to read, write, communicate effectively, and solve problems in their homes, communities, and workplaces.

#### **2.4.7 Skills Development Levy Act (1999)**

The National Skills Development Act (1998) and the Skills Development Levy Act (1999), introduced by the Department of Labour, reflects the government’s commitment to promoting active labour market policies. These acts provided new institutions, programmes, and funding policies for skills development.

Despite these highly impressive legislations for Adult Basic Education and Training, implementation remains a problem because of budget constraints (Aitchison, Houghton, Baatjes, et al 2000).

#### **2.4.8 Summary of policies for visually impaired adult learners**

An analysis of the above policies clearly shows that much has been done in terms of policies to direct adult education, particularly the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The emphasis on Adult Basic Education and Training is the provision of people with the basic foundation for lifelong learning and equip them with skills and critical capacity to participate and contribute in building the economy. The policies revolve around ensuring that basic education and the provision of general knowledge, skills and values is accessible to all.

The policies do not, however, address how adult education for the visually impaired will be implemented or funded; the organisation and implementation of adult education for the visually impaired is one area that has been overlooked, and it also forms the basis for this study.

### **2.5 ASSUMPTIONS**

The author developed the following assumptions based on the existing literature in order to unpack the research question and clarify the scope of this research.

#### **2.5.1 Teaching and learning support materials**

Lack of sight makes learning difficult and must be compensated for by other sensory means to maximise the learners' learning experiences. The absence of sight effectively limits the amount of sensory data necessary for learning experiences (Erwin, Ayala, Fine, & Rubin 2001). Seeing is not only the perception of light or patterns by the eye but also the transmission of these patterns to the cerebral nervous system, which must ultimately be translated into images, movements and colours by the brain (Arentz & Van Genderen 2002). Teaching and learning of visually impaired adult learners must be based in, and supported by a multi-sensory approach. The multi-sensory or multidimensionality approach simply dictates that multiple educational media for the visually impaired adults will become less than mere memorisation of concepts and theories (Erwin, Ayala, Fine, & Rubbin 2001).

The lack of basic adaptive equipment and resources has the prospect of facilitators theorising most of the content and learners being deprived of quality education. Braille as a visually impaired adult learners' mode of reading and writing is a basic requirement for teaching and learning to take place. The unavailability of translation equipment and supportive reading materials makes it difficult for learning to take place. Unlike sighted

learners who have a wide range of reading materials to choose from, visually impaired adult learners have no luxury of choice and are more often restricted to note taking and the scarcely available Braille copies.

Books prescribed by the Department of Education as relevant to the curriculum takes months or even years before they become available in Braille. There are three major Braille producers in South Africa which are “Blind South Africa”, “Pioneer Printers” and “Tape Aids for the Blind”. Pioneer Printers, being the sole supplier of Braille books for schools (De Klerk 2008) cannot cope with the demand from all the special institutions of learning for the visually impaired. Whereas other sighted learners have access to libraries and a range of books to choose from, visually impaired adult learners rely on the facilitators’ words and the notes provided. The sighted learner is constantly exposed to text and images in their environment and quickly learns to recognise letters and pictures, but the same cannot be said about visually impaired people, who experience Braille for the first time at school (World Blind Union 2000).

Unlike ordinary print, Braille continuously evolves to be at par with international standards. Upgrading of translation software and printing hardware is very expensive and sometimes unaffordable, but indispensable. The average price for a Braille writer, which is the writing medium for the visually impaired person, is in the region of R9 500,00 and not easily available, as compared to a pen which can be purchased anywhere much cheaper (South African National Council for the Blind 2013). It is also a challenge to maintain the equipment to keep it working and up to standard. Full implementation of and access to the curriculum by the visually impaired adult learners is dependent on the availability of relevant adaptive devices. Adaptation of the learning environment for the visually impaired to his/her specific needs increases his/her chance of learning effectively. Unfortunately, the majority of public adult learning centres for the visually impaired are unable to afford such adaptations and the Department of Education appears lacking in the provision of such facilities at the present moment (Prinsloo 2001).

### **2.5.2 Training**

The successful implementation of adult learning policies and programmes depends to a large extent on the availability of knowledgeable, skilful, sensitive and socially committed facilitators (Youngman & Singh 2003). Evidence emanating from the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V 1997) indicates that there is a need to

transform training programmes for facilitators so that they are participatory and holistic and promote critically reflective practice and a common identity, and that they should also prepare facilitators to work with adult learners with special needs education.

Poorly-trained and part-time facilitators, who are often not professionally qualified, continue to be used to teach in PALCs for the visually impaired. This renders them dysfunctional with few or no support systems (CONFINTEA V 1997).

The initial and continued training of facilitators is therefore of equal importance. Such training should be able to meet and address a variety of needs, including strengthening and empowering facilitators in their specific learning programmes like those for the visually impaired adult learners. The issue of appropriate and relevant training therefore deserves greater emphasis and attention since facilitators may require a particular range of competencies to be effective. These competencies are based on a defined body of knowledge, skills and values, which include such elements as adult psychology, teaching methodologies, programme planning, social and political analysis, sensitivity, empathy and tolerance (Youngman & Singh 2003).

Facilitating learning programmes for the visually impaired adult learners' demand even further specialised training and competencies. Facilitators for visually impaired adult learners need to be professionals who are adequately qualified to address the unique educational needs of their subjects (CONFINTEA V 1997). The majority of facilitators at Public Adult Learning Centres are not qualified professionals and as such not competent enough to provide the necessary assistance. The present situation in South Africa is apparently not conducive to the effective implementation of adult education policies, since adult educators do not enjoy the above-mentioned benefits and many public adult learning centres are run by unqualified or under qualified facilitators, many of whom have only Grade 12. This stems from the common misconception that *"it is easy to teach adults"*, hence there is no need to be trained in this field, whereas evidence reflect an increasing recognition that adult education is a complex and demanding task that requires exposure to adult education as a field of study (Youngman & Singh 2003).

### **2.5.3 Staffing**

The capacity of individual facilitators to fully achieve their function is the basis for the success of their mediation processes. Education White Paper 6 (2001) expects individual

educators to possess skills or expertise to identify barriers to learning; to support learners in the classroom; to collaborate with other support services; to determine the levels of support needed by learners; and to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. Relevant support structures are crucial in enabling facilitators to meet the challenges.

Teaching is a constant and continuous learning process in order to meet the increasing change in teaching and learning approaches. The necessity of training and support of facilitators to think and work in a new frame of reference cannot be overemphasised (Prinsloo 2001). Professional support services capacitate and empower facilitators with the necessary skills to identify and deal with learning challenges in the teaching and learning environment (CONFINTEA V 1997).

Unlike at ordinary public adult learning centres, facilitators at an adult learning centre for the visually impaired will require special training to be able to perform their duties effectively. There is a need to adapt certain learning content for the visually impaired to be able to understand it. Awareness of the way in which visually impaired adult learners use their other sensory organs to learn is very important, but often ignored. Braille, as a tactile reading and writing mode for the visually impaired, should be a basic option for all facilitators at public adult learning centres for the visually impaired (South African National Council for the Blind 2013).

The working conditions of facilitators at PALCs must be improved. Facilitators at PALCs do not work as full-time employees. Their part-time status presents challenges and thus many qualified teachers are therefore not prepared to work under such conditions (Smith & Hofer 2003). The majority of facilitators at PALCs possess only Grade 12 without any teaching qualification. They are remunerated according to the number of hours taught per month unlike their counterparts in ordinary schools. They also do not qualify for other benefits such as pension or medical aid.

It is obvious that no qualified professional teacher would be interested in working under such insecure working conditions and as such quality education for public adult learning is compromised by this provision for the adult education sector. Post provisioning for PALCs is a challenge that needs urgent attention if quality education is ever to be realised. It is obviously more of a problem for adult learning centres for the visually impaired as they need specially trained and skilled educators to address their special educational needs, but the present working conditions are not attractive for qualified professionals and as such learners continue to struggle to obtain a better education (Smith & Hofer 2003).

## 2.5.4 Curriculum

A curriculum is a strong inclusionary and exclusionary instrument since it contains what is deemed essential information for learners to learn in order for them to become productive citizens in an inclusive society. It embodies the values of the community and shape the very essence of our teaching, how we teach, what we teach, and where we teach (Soudien 2006).

The present Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement is not adapted to accommodate learners with visual impairment, although it is prescribed for them too. Learners with visual impairment can perform as much as their sighted counterparts if their learning activities are adapted to suit their learning strategies. It is the author's opinion that learners will struggle to understand concepts and subject matter designed and presented with the mind of a sighted person.

The implementation of such a curriculum in its totality, without adapting it to the requirements of the visually impaired adult learners, is like "*teaching the sighted who cannot see*". The method of teaching is more focused on teaching the sighted and the visually impaired are not accommodated in the process. It becomes even worse when the responsible facilitators are not trained in the field of teaching the visually impaired.

Soudien (2006) suggests criteria for an inclusive curriculum by means of a two-level schedule, which are:

- Non-discrimination on the basis of characteristics such as race, ethnicity, sex, marital status and disability;
- Reflection of the cultural diversity of society, both locally and nationally;
- Reduction of stereotyping and elimination of prejudice, discrimination and bias;
- Culture-fair and unbiased examinations;
- Support for teachers in the achievement of multi-cultural education provisions;
- Maintenance and enhancement of multilingualism and home language.

Curriculum adaptation is a continuous process that adapts and modifies the prescribed programme to accommodate the needs of adult learners with visual impairment. It ensures that facilitators are prepared to welcome learners of all abilities and that such learners are allowed to perform to their maximum potential. It involves restructuring of the core curriculum and introducing other expanded curriculum programmes to accommodate the

needs of the visually impaired learners. Without the necessary adaptive equipment, curriculum differentiation and adaptation becomes impossible, and as such learners experience minimal life exploration (Lueck, Erin, Corn, & Sacks 2011).

Many blind people have been successful in the natural sciences. One example is that of the world renowned physicist and astronomer, Kent Cullers, who is totally blind and who has succeeded in paving for himself a career in what people would consider the sighted world. He is quoted below:

*“When I received my PhD degree from Berkeley in 1980, I was the world’s first totally blind physicist and astronomer. Because Braille can now represent mathematics and diagrams, not only the world but also the universe is open to blind people”* (Grice 2002).

The above statement supports the fact that visually impaired people can, given the necessary support, perform as well as their sighted counterparts and that their limited curriculum is ill informed and enough proof that facilitators themselves are to be blamed for their incompetency (Maguvhe 2005).

The findings of a national survey by Stefanich and Norman (1996) has shown that most teachers and college teachers have had little or no direct experience in teaching learners with visual impairment, therefore preferring to offer the less challenging social sciences subjects. Appropriate teaching strategies and the use of relevant technological adaptations are capable of making a difference in the education of the visually impaired. Through the use of the right intervention strategies, not only the world but also the universe can be conquered by the visually impaired. Their learning barriers become those facilitators who continue teaching them like they are teaching the sighted, and who continue underestimating their cognitive capacity to learn. Visually impaired adult learners must be allowed to make their own career choices and be assisted through their journey to achieve their goal by employing all available and relevant technological interventions. The only challenge they have is that they learn differently from the sighted learners, and that facilitators have to be creative in their mediation strategies. Visually impaired adult learners have the potential, like Kent Cullers, to contribute in a positive way to the economic development of their communities and society (Maguvhe 2005).

Lohmeier (2003) maintains that together with the core curriculum, learners with visual impairment need an expanded curriculum. The most important objective of curriculum

adaptations and modification is to try and match the cognitive, communicative, emotional and physical aspects of the curriculum with the abilities, strengths and needs of the learners. Hatlen (1996) sets out the following key components as an expanded core curriculum for the visually impaired learners:

- ***Mobility and orientation***

Mobility is one important aspect of independent daily living skills. The majority of people born blind in impoverished rural areas are deprived of educational facilities and independent skills. They fear venturing into the open unassisted and their dependency affects them and their immediate families. Visually impaired adult learners must be able to travel independently and mobility instructors are there to train them to be able to walk even in big cities without the assistance of anyone. This becomes very important when the learner has to walk to the centre or is employed in the open labour market (Hatlen 1996; Wagner 2008).

- ***Social interaction***

Wagner (2008) defines social competence as a multidimensional concept that consists of social skills and social capabilities which have a significant impact on the individual's self-concept, assertiveness, self-esteem, and ability to accept the impairment as part of the self. Visually impaired adult learners must be taught social skills to be able to integrate in all social circles with confidence.

According to Rodney (2003) and Wagner (2008) social education must form part of the curriculum of the visually impaired learners. The acquisition of social skills ensures confidence. Visually impaired adult learners without the necessary social skills find it difficult to be integrated into society and as such experience difficulties in obtaining employment. Unacceptable social behaviour can become a barrier to persons with visual impairment. Incompetence in social skills may also be attributed to lack of incidental experiences through observation that sighted persons experience on a day-to-day basis, such as eye-contact, facial experience and body postures. Formal instruction in social competence skills is therefore very important to the visually impaired (Rodney 2003; Wagner 2008).

- ***Independent daily living skills***

Independent daily living skills comprise the responsibilities individual learners must be able to accomplish on their own. Visually impaired adult learners must be taught skills such as basic health care, cooking, washing, using public and private services - like banking - without

assistance from others. The ultimate objective of education for the visually impaired must be freedom from dependency on others (Hatlen 1996; Wagner 2008).

- ***Recreation and leisure skills***

Facilitators must be able to involve capable adult learners in recreational sport activities to help them in developing themselves further and enjoying it throughout their lives (Hatlen 1996).

- ***Visual efficiency***

Some adult learners have some residual sight which must be fully utilised. These learners may not be aware of the benefits such remaining sight may contribute to their lives and therefore need some training to fully benefit from it, with professional facilitators who are able to identify and advise them accordingly (Hatlen 1996; Cox & Dykes 2001).

- ***Career training***

Due to the high unemployment rate of people with visual impairment, their curriculum must include career training as a way to prepare their inclusion in the labour market (Hatlen 1996).

- ***Transition services***

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2006) of the USA describes transition services as a coordinated set of activities for a learner, designed within an outcome-oriented process which promotes movement from one level of development to another, including community participation. These coordinated sets of activities are based on the individual learner's needs, taking into account his/her preferences and interests (Hatlen 1996; Pankasie 2000).

## **2.5.5 Funding**

It is the responsibility of the Member of the Executive Council to fund public adult education and training centres on a fair, equitable and transparent basis (Department of Education 1996). It would appear that PALCs for the visually impaired are underfunded resulting in them being unable to access certain basic educational needs. The Adult Education and Training Act 52 of 2000 stipulates that the Member of the Executive Council may, subject to

the norms and standards, impose different conditions in respect of different centres and different adult education and training programmes, if there is a reasonable basis for such differentiation. PALCs for the visually impaired qualify for such differentiation based on their special needs education and it appears that BPALC may not be benefiting from such a provision and that such lack of compliance affects curriculum implementation.

Adult learning centres for the visually impaired, by the nature of their educational needs, are costly and will require additional funding for their sustenance, or else the quality of education will be compromised. Their learning and teaching support materials are very expensive and not readily available (South African National Council for the Blind 2013).

The South African National Report on the Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education (2008) indicated that the allocation of government resources to all forms of adult learning is difficult to identify. However, the report clearly identified two areas, which are the Adult Education and Training directorates in the Provincial and National Education Departments and the funds paid via pay roll into the National Skills Fund. As Torres (2003) would argue, adult education in South Africa *“has always been trapped between attention and resources and overly ambitious expectations”*. Adult education learning facilities are thus limited by underfunding.

The table below provides information about the budgets of the nine provincial education departments over the medium term 2009/2013.

**Table 1.** Projections of expenditure on ABET in 2009/10 to 2012/13 by the Provincial Education Department (ZAR Thousands). (Adopted from Wilderman and Hemmer-Vitti 2010).

Province	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Real change 2009/10 – 2010/11 (%)	Real av. ann. change 2009/10 – 2012/13 (%)	Real av. ann. change 2006/07 – 2012/13 (%)
Eastern Cape	211 832	299 269	400 411	330 860	33,7	12,6	8,3
Free State	135 761	103 985	106 761	113 270	-27,5	10,2	4,2
Gauteng	322 974	335 812	357 328	377 626	-1,6	-0,5	10,4
Kwazulu-Natal	180 408	138 837	147 419	154 790	-27,2	-9,4	8,2
Limpopo	129 676	140 366	146 247	155 020	2,4	0,2	60,9
Mpumalanga	98 737	97 846	104 638	112 003	-6,2	-1,5	0,9
Northern Cape	38 899	29 843	30 499	31 175	-27,4	-11,6	-0,2
North West	130 584	144 289	150 002	156 290	4,5	0,3	4,3
Western Cape	30 958	32 541	34 132	36 138	-0,6	-0,6	0,6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 279 829</b>	<b>1 322 788</b>	<b>1 477 437</b>	<b>1 467 172</b>	<b>-2,2</b>	<b>-1,1</b>	<b>6,8</b>

According to the table above, expenditure on adult education and training is projected to grow from R1,3 billion in 2009/10 to R1,5 billion at the end of the present Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). This translates into a real average annual decline of 1,2% over the present MTEF and, overall, over the six-year period, a 6,8% real average growth rate. It is thus important to note that the ABET sector has been receiving the shortest end of funding for a sustained period of time (Wilderman & Hemmer-Vitti 2010).

The table further indicates only relative spending of provinces on ABET, but it does not indicate to what extent the budget allocation matches the relative needs in each province. In its reply to the Institute for Democracy in Africa (IDASA), the Department of Higher Education and Training acknowledged that no real funding increases have been set aside for the ABET programme over the last three years because a process has not been put in place to review the programme (Wilderman & Hemmer-Vitti 2010).

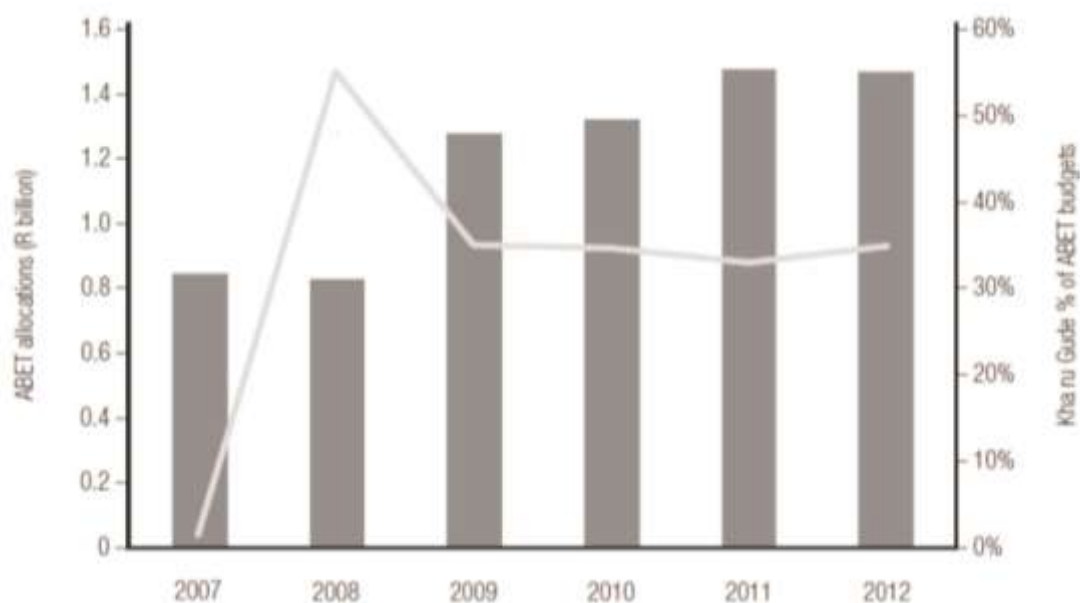
The Department of Higher Education and Training also indicated that a new policy on ABET is being developed. As far as the norms and standards for the ABET sector are concerned, the said department also acknowledged that the policy has not yet been implemented. According to the Readiness Assessment Survey conducted by them in 2010, the indication

was that the Provincial Education Departments were not going to be ready to implement the funding norms by January 2011. In the Government Gazette No 35024 (2012) of the Department of Higher Education and Training, the minister published General Notice 111 which indefinitely postponed the implementation of the National Norms and Standards for funding of Public Adult Learning centres (NSF-ALCs), stating among others, the following to be in place before implementation:

- Costed Adult Education and Training programmes to determine a funding formula to determine the centre allocations in implementing the funding norms;
- Capacitating of Adult Learning Centres (ALCs) in financial management to ensure proper management of their allocations;
- Certification of ALCs by Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) on the capability of managing and accounting for public funds in line with the ABET Act;
- Centre Evaluation Teams (CETs) established by PEDs to evaluate centres for quality rating to determine the enrolment target of the ALCs for each year (Department of Education and Training 2012).

While there have been delays and confusion in the formal ABET sector, the government's mass national literacy campaign (Kha ri Gude) has made impressive gains over a relatively short period of time. The campaign was launched in 2008 with the goal of enabling 4,7 million adults over the age of 15 to become literate and numerate in one of the eleven official languages (Department of Education 2010). This is presently the only campaign with special effort targeting adult learners with visual impairments.

The table below provides Kha ri Gude allocations as a percentage of adult basic education and training budgets 2007/08 – 2012/13.



**Table 2.** Provincial Budget Statements of Kha ri Gude 2010. National Estimates of Expenditure in 2010 (Wilderman and Hemmer-Vitti 2010).

Current provincial funding of ABET is provided on an ad hoc basis. There is a widespread view that ABET, together with Further Education and Training and Education for Early Childhood Development, are usually victims of ‘residual funding’ in the provincial budgetary process. Public schooling is the first priority and once the needs for it is determined, only then is funding for the other three sub-sectors, ABET, FET and ECD determined. Furthermore, in several provinces, there is evidence that funds allocated for ABET, FET and ECD are often re-directed when there is a crisis in the schooling sector. This can only confirm the low status of the adult education sector in South Africa and how desperate the situation is (Pillay 2009).

The present policy provision at national level and the provincial autonomy on budgetary decision-making between sectors and within programmes is not convincing that there will be major positive improvements from the current funding practices. The challenges experienced by the general public adult learning centres at present are testimony to the above assertion. Public adult learning centres for the visually impaired are the most affected as even the present funding model does not adequately provide for their needs (Pillay 2009).

Government funding for adult education is less than 1% of the total education budget in a country where four and a half million adults have never been to school (Rule 2006). While the overall amount for adult education might increase at a national level, it does not necessarily translate into increased provincial spending for adult education, especially in percentage terms (Asmal 2002). The Institute for Democracy in South Africa’s (IDASA)

review of provincial education budgets indicates the neglect and actual decline of adult education as a priority in the government's spending. Seven of the provinces consistently continue to allocate well below 1% for adult education (Wilderman & Hemmer-Vitti 2010).

The Constitution of South Africa points out that, regarding the right of adults to basic education, the state must, through reasonable measures, make it progressively available and accessible. The question might be: What is a reasonable allocation for adult education? The Dakar Framework's target of improving levels of adult literacy by 50% by the year 2015, of which South Africa is a signatory, is far from been realised at the present level of provision. There is a need to improve at the level of provision in order to achieve the signed Dakar Framework target. South Africa needs to almost double its enrolment of adult learners, which translate into increasing the present budgetary allocations to bring the target to within reach (World Education Forum 2000).

Since the constitution states that "*everyone has a right to basic education, including adult basic education*", the effective exclusion of a large percentage of people who fall outside the formal framework could be taken as a violation of this right; one such category of people that is neglected is adults with disabilities (Rule 2006).

The programme-based funding model of adult learning implies that:

- on average 1% of the education budget has been allocated to adult learning in the form of ABET by provincial education departments;
- over 90% of the provincial allocation has gone to PALCs;
- despite the 'norms and standards' policy of the National Education Department and the recommendation of 'programme-based funding' there is little evidence of this in practice;
- funding for adult learning via the skills levy and a new injection of funding into a national literacy campaign over the next five years, has increased the funding substantially, however, there is some concern about quality relating to efficiency and effectiveness (Wilderman & Hemmer-Vitti 2010).

### **2.5.6 Governance**

Chapter 3 of the Adult Education and Training Act 52 of 2000 stipulates that every public centre, except a public centre contemplated in section 21(1)(d) of the South African Schools Act 1996, must establish a governing body. The governing body of such a public centre must consist of the following:

- Elected members
- The centre manager, in his or her official capacity
- Co-opted members
- Any representative of any sponsoring body
- Any representative of an organisation for disabled persons, where applicable; and
- Any expert in the field of adult education and training, where applicable.

The act further stipulates which members qualify to serve as members of the governing body. These are:

- Educators at the centre
- Members of staff who are not educators; and
- Learners at the centre.

Governance at educational institutions is about creating, implementing, supervising and evaluating policies and rules, which guide and govern the actions of the institution and its members. It is concerned with the creation of policies for the institution and ensuring that the institution is run according to the set policies. It is about raising funds for the institution for the sole purpose of providing the best possible quality education. Governing bodies at public adult learning centres are dominated by parents since they have the primary responsibility for ensuring the smooth running of the centres (Department of Education 2000).

### **2.5.7 Mission and vision**

A mission is a statement that defines the reasons for the existence of any organisation, in other words the ultimate purpose of the organisation within the society. It is one of the three pillars of any organisation, which are vision, objectives and values. It defines and directs the boundaries, both of which are critical to the organisation's effectiveness and success. All members of the organisation should be able to identify with it and it should help them feel proud, excited and part of something much bigger than themselves. Members should be encouraged to stretch themselves to the limit in order to uphold and achieve their mission statement. Organisations without mission and vision statements have no direction and are doomed to fail (Harshman 2006).

Mission statements are developed in consideration of the following: the served community; the broader society; the primary activities of programmes; the staff and volunteer

competence; the history of the issues that the organisation is addressing in the community and the values held by the staff and volunteers (Harshman 2006).

Values are beliefs and attitudes that guide behaviour and relationships with others. Values are often undeclared as well as difficult to universally define. Harshman (2006) attributes the following aspects as fundamental in defining values: respect for others and one's role within the organisation; integrity; loyalty towards the organisation; innovation; honesty; trust; cooperation with other members and dedication to quality work.

It therefore becomes apparent that members of an organisation should share the same values in order to identify with the mission and vision of the organisation and that any conflict of interest in values will negatively impact on the individual's working relationship with others and his/her capacity to work towards achieving the mission and vision of the organisation. Our view of the world is influenced by the values we hold, and our values become the basis for our personal vision, mission, goals, objectives and actions (Harshman 2006).

It is also true that mission statements should be achievable based on the available staff, and that all staff members must be supported to work in a unified way toward a common cause. It is therefore very important that all facilitators have a paradigm shift from working as individuals and start putting all their efforts together for the common cause of the mission and vision of the organisation (Harshman 2006).

A vision is a statement about what an organisation wants to become, or how the organisation would like to be. Similar to the mission statement, all members should be able to identify with it and work towards its achievement. It provides shape and direction to an organisation's future. Vision incorporates objectives for the future, which objectives must be shared by the community the organisation serves in order for the community to provide support. Vision, in the context of public adult centres for the visually impaired, should include values of equality, tolerance, acceptance and the celebration of diversity (Swart & Pettipher 2005). The vision of an organisation embodies people's highest values and aspirations. It inspires people to reach for what could be and to rise above their fears and preoccupations with current reality (Swart & Pettipher 2005).

### **2.5.8 Assessment and evaluation**

Assessment can be defined as the process of obtaining information that is used to make educational decisions about learners, to give feedback to the learner about his or her progress, strengths and weaknesses, to judge instructional effectiveness and curricular adequacy and to inform policy (Kanjee, Bettinger, & Braun 2006). They define assessment as the process of trying to determine what students already know about a topic before instruction. It is the gathering and synthesising of information concerning students' learning.

Evaluation refers to the process of arriving at judgements about abstract entities such as programmes, curricula, organisations, and institutions. In most education contexts, assessments are a vital component of any evaluation (Kanjee, Bettinger & Braun 2006).

Assessment and evaluation is about accountability to those we seek to help and those from whom we accept resources. They are fundamental aspects of good programme management. Gosling (2010) attributes the following aspects to monitoring and evaluation:

#### ***Quality assurance***

- To provide data on programme progress and effectiveness;
- To improve programme management and decision making;
- To provide data to plan future resource needs;
- To provide data useful for policymaking and advocacy.

#### ***Accountability***

- To allow accountability to stakeholders, including donors, partners, and project users or beneficiaries.

#### ***Learning***

- To provide opportunities to learn from experience of the current project;
- To provide evidence about what works and what doesn't work to inform future programmes and scaling up.

One of the most important functions of assessment and evaluation is to determine which learners are allowed to proceed to the next level of schooling. Assessment results and evaluations are also used to track the functioning of different components of the system, and

sometimes used to hold accountable the individuals responsible for those components (Gosling 2010).

Evaluation is a process that aims to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, merits, sustainability and or impact of an intervention, programme or project. It aims to provide valuable management information, judge the value and merits of an intervention, and draw lessons for future actions and decision making. The evaluation process is an analysis or interpretation of the collected data which explores deeper into the relationships between the results of the programme, the effects produced by the programme and the overall impact of the programme. Evaluation appraises data and information that inform strategic decisions, thus improving the project or programme in the future (Gosling 2010). It facilitates the drawing of conclusions about five main aspects of the intervention:

- relevance of the intervention strategy;
- effectiveness of the strategy;
- efficiency;
- the impact of the intervention; and
- whether the programme will be sustainable (Gosling 2010).

The information gathered in relation to the above aspects during the monitoring process provides the basis for the evaluative analysis. Public adult learning centres offer programmes that deserve to be monitored and evaluated for quality assurance. It is a means to ensure and guarantee the adult learners' rights to quality education. Due to the lack of monitoring and evaluation tools and processes at public adult learning centres for the visually impaired, the quality of education that these learners receive is compromised. Assessment and evaluation in public adult learning centres should be an embedded practice like in ordinary schools. Challenges facing such adult centres will be picked up well in advance and the necessary interventions employed. Assessment and evaluation in any organisation is inevitable if the mission and vision of that organisation is to be realised (Perrin 2012).

## **2.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### **2.6.1 Educational needs**

Warnock and Norwick (2010) define educational needs as *“needs required by learners for educational purposes which are additional to, and different, from those generally required by ordinary adult learners”*.

UNESCO (2011) defines educational needs as *“needs designed to facilitate the learning of individuals who, for a wide variety of reasons, require additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet learning objectives in an educational programme. Reasons may include, but are not limited to, disadvantages in physical, behavioural, individual, emotional and social capacities”*.

In the context of this study, educational needs refer to the challenges, problems and deficiencies encountered in the learning process of the visually impaired adult learners.

### **2.6.2 Educational Assets**

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) define assets as the *“gifts, skills and capacities” of individuals, associations and institutions within the community*. It is a wealth of qualities or strengths that communities can deploy in their midst to strengthen their capacities to build or develop themselves.

According to Obayuwana (2012) educational assets are *“all forms of awareness, expertise, and knowledge acquired by the individual through formal learning or by experience, which provide a better understanding of one’s own immediate plight and the laws of nature or society”*.

Educational assets in the context of this study refers to the overall capacities, strengths, potentials, expertise, abilities, gifts, and skills available within a community which may be used in addressing the educational needs of that community. These may assume the form of institutions, associations, organisations, families, and cultural formations that the community may tap into for their development.

### **2.6.3 Adult learner**

According to Taylor, Marienau and Fiddler (2000) adult learners are *“those adults who engage in learning activities that may promote any sustained change in thinking, values, or behaviour. Adult learners participate in many types of formal and informal education activities that they hope will help them function effectively in the changing world around them. They have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, and a need to be seen and treated as being capable of taking responsibility”*.

Illeris (2006) defines an adult learner as *“any adult individual engaged in a process that leads to permanent capacity change and which is not due to biological maturation or ageing”*.

For the purpose of this study, an adult learner is anyone above school going age that is visually impaired and formally engaged in learning activities.

### **2.6.4 Facilitator**

Schwarz (2005) defines a facilitator as a *“person who explicitly helps a group solve a substantive problem and learn to improve its process at the same time”*. Murphy (2005) refers to a facilitator as a person *“who guides a group through processes to discover its specific outcomes by serving the group in whatever ways needed to help it be successful in its assignment”*.

In this study a facilitator refers to adult educator who mediates the learning and teaching programmes of adult learners for the visually impaired adult learners.

### **2.6.5 Public adult learning centre**

The Adult Education and Training Act 52 (2000) define a public adult learning centre as *“a centre established to offer adult education and training”*. The term ‘adult learning centre’ refers to *“any organised educational institution where persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong, develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour”* (UNESCO 2009).

A public adult learning centre in the context of this study refers to a centre registered with the Department of Education and Training for the purpose of providing basic education and training to adult learners with visual impairment.

### **2.6.6 Adult Basic Education and Training**

The National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) defines adult basic education and training as “*all learning programmes for adults from Levels I to IV, where level IV is equivalent to Grade 9 in public schools or Level I on the NQF (Adult Basic Education and Training Act No 52, 2000). Adult basic education is equated with nine years of schooling. It includes the two fundamental learning areas of Language, Literacy and Communications, and Numeracy/Mathematical Literacy, as well as a growing number of core learning areas, including Natural Science, and Technology; as well as the learning areas in the elective category which include Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME), Tourism, Agricultural Science and Ancillary Health Care*” (Department of Education 2000).

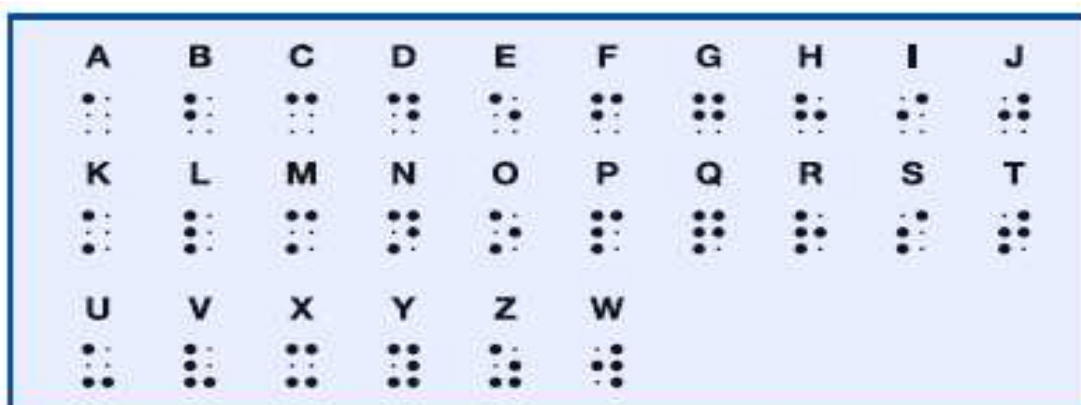
Adult Basic Education and Training is “*the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts. ABET is flexible, developmental and targeted at specific needs of particular audiences and ideally, provides access to nationally recognised certificates*” (Department of Education 2000).

In the context of this study, adult basic education and training refers to the provision of basic literacy and academic education for the visually impaired adult learners.

### **2.6.7 Braille**

Braille is “*a system of touch reading and writing used by blind and visually impaired persons. It is named after its French inventor, Louis Braille, who became blind following a childhood accident*” (World Blind Union 2000). The National Braille Press (2000) refers to Braille as “*a system of six raised dots created in 1821 by French school boy Louis Braille. It is an essential tool with which people with profound or total loss of sight can learn to read and write*”.

For the purpose of this study Braille refers to the mode of reading and writing for visually impaired adult learners.



**Figure 5.** Illustration of letters of the Braille Alphabet (National Braille Press 2000).

### 2.6.8 Visual impairment

According to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries, and Causes of Death (2010), definition of visual impairment is based on “*visual acuity obtained with the best possible refractive correction which is achieved by testing subjects with pinhole or refraction. It is a condition sometimes referred to as visual disability*”.

Visual impairment is defined as “*a functional limitation of the eye(s) or visual system and can manifest as reduced visual acuity or contrast, sensitivity, visual field loss, photophobia, visual distortion, visual perceptual difficulties, or any combination of the above*” (American Optometric Association 2007).

In the context of this study, visual impairment refers to a condition where a person’s visual acuity is such that he or she is unable to use normal print as a medium of reading or writing, and therefore has to use Braille.

### 2.6.9 Community

Community is defined as “*a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical location or settings*” (MacQueen, McLellan, Metzger, et al 2001). Minkler, Meredith and Wallerstein (2003) defines community as “*characterised by a sense of identification and emotional*

*connection to other members, shared symbol systems, shared values and norms, mutual influence, common interests and a commitment to shared needs”.*

For the purpose of this study, community refers to all participants who are engaged in the teaching and learning process of visually impaired adult learners.

### **2.6.10 Curriculum**

Tanner and Tanner (2007) define curriculum as *“that reconstruction of knowledge and experience that enables the learner to grow in exercising intelligent control of subsequent knowledge and experience”.*

Pillai (2001) listed the following aspects, among others, to define curriculum:

- A program of studies;
- A sequence of courses;
- Everything that goes on within the school, including extra-class activities, guidance, and interpersonal relationships;
- A series of experiences undergone by learners in a school;
- That which an individual learner experiences as a result of schooling;
- An aggregate of courses of study in a school system;
- Planned and unplanned concept, content, skills, work habits, means of assessment, attitudes and instructional strategies taught in the classroom and the variety of school activities in and out of class that influence present and future academic, social, emotional and physical growth of learners.

A curriculum is a comprehensive plan that reflects the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of societies that are intended to be passed on to the future generation [Pillai Sa].

In the context of this study, curriculum refers to all learning activities offered to Level I to Level IV visually impaired adult learners at BPALC.

### **2.6.11 Inclusive Education**

The Education White Paper 6 (2001) characterised inclusive education as:

- Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support;
- Accepting and respecting that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which are equally valued and an ordinary part of our human experience;
- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners;
- Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status;
- Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners;
- Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curricula or educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning;
- Empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning; and
- Acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal modes and structures.

The global vision of inclusive education - as set out by the World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 - is universalising access to education for all children, youth and adults, and promoting equity. It means being proactive in identifying the barriers that many encounter in accessing educational opportunities and identifying the resources needed to overcome those barriers (UNESCO 2009).

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provides assumptions that are based on the reviewed literature. The review has also assisted in unpacking the complex aspects of adult education for the visually impaired. It also clarified the needs-based and asset-based approaches in community building. The chapter concludes by providing definitions of key concepts upon which this study is based.

## CHAPTER 3

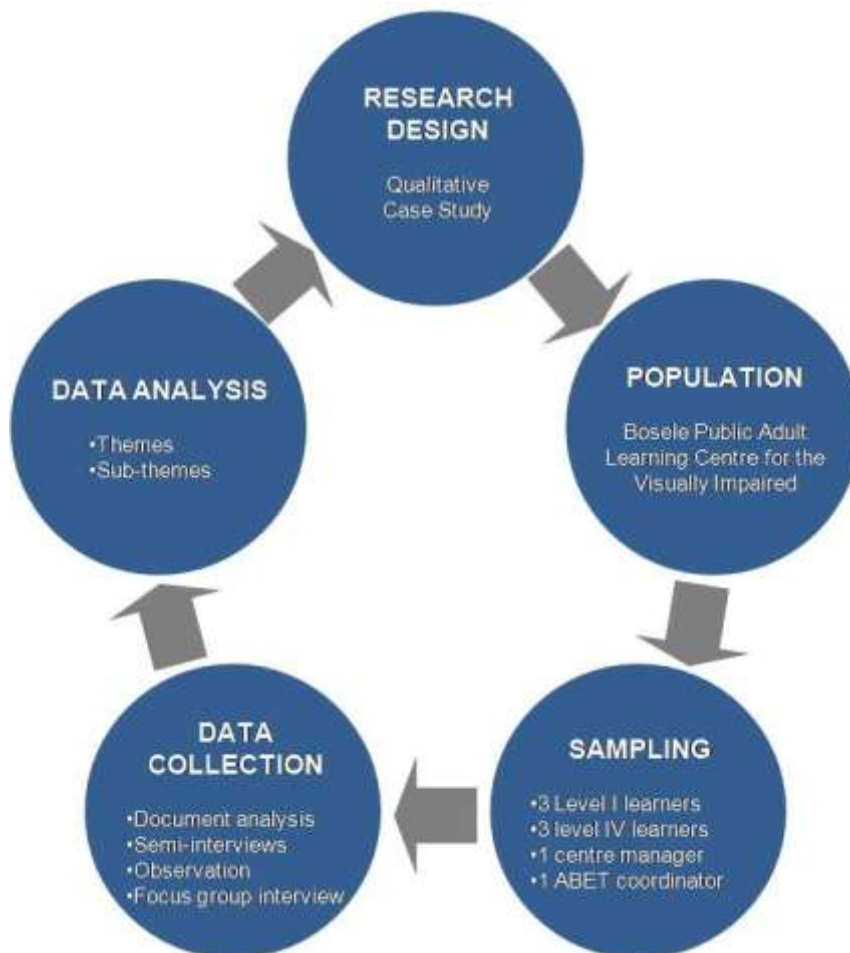
### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research design is qualitative. An interpretivist case approach is applied, informed by the research question: “What are the educational needs and assets of Bosele public adult learning centre for the visually impaired?”

The following serves as a representation of the methodological process as applied in this study:



**Figure 6.** A representation of the methodological design of this study.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The research design is qualitative while an interpretivist case study approach is applied, informed by the research question: “What are the needs and assets of a public adult learning centre for the visually impaired: an educational study of Bosele”.

Qualitative research is about studying things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Marshall & Rossman 2010; Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Merriam 2009). Qualitative case study design affords an opportunity of examining a phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. A research method that facilitates a deep investigation of a real-life contemporary phenomenon in its natural context is a case study. Yin’s (2012) above definition of a qualitative case study would be the most suitable method to address the research question under study.

The primary purpose of a case study is to understand something that is unique to the case with the intention of contributing to the solution of that problem (Bickman & Rog 2009). It further indicates that a case study is generally grounded in systematic and scientific methodology and is highly pragmatic in nature. The aim of this study is to identify the educational needs and assets of Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre in order to value, utilise and enhance it for sustainable development. This can only be achieved by engaging individuals of BPALC in order to capture their experiences as related by themselves to better understand the case.

The primary focus is on collecting and generating data to obtain better insight into BPALC’s needs and assets (Bickman & Rog 2009). As a case study it enables the researcher to examine in-depth the experiences of the research participants which in turn assist in understanding and securing knowledge about their challenges. This will also assist in addressing such challenges. Merriam (2009) indicates the capacity of a case study to afford the researcher a better understanding of the case under research.

This study assumes the interpretivist case study approach by interacting with and having a dialogue with the studied participants’ environment, because individuals with their own varied backgrounds, assumptions and experiences contribute to the on-going construction of reality existing in their broader social context (Hennik, Hutter, & Bailey 2011). Interpretivism subscribes to the belief that reality is constructed by social actors and people’s perceptions of

it (Wahyuni 2012). Interpretivism as a case study approach will therefore uncover inside perspectives from the research participants' perspective (Neuman 2011).

### **3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

The target population of this study is comprised of Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre for the Visually Impaired. It is located in the rural district of Sekhukhune in Limpopo Province about 45 km north-east of Groblersdal and 165 km south-east of Polokwane. The centre is registered with the Limpopo Department of Education as a public adult learning centre for the visually impaired and falls under the Hlogotlou Circuit. It is the only centre for the visually impaired in the Sekhukhune district offering academic programmes from ABET Level I to Level IV.

Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre for the Visually Impaired was first established in 1987 as a unit of Bosele School for the Blind and Deaf. Bosele as a school for the blind and deaf was confronted with the challenge of the many learners who either became blind later in age and could no longer be accommodated at an ordinary school setup, or graduated from Grade 6 and could not proceed any further because of their age limit. These learners would have the option of being employed in the nearby sheltered workshop but still had no option of furthering their studies since they could not benefit from the provisions of the available ordinary ABET Centres.

Despite the many challenges that the centre experienced during its existence, there are some milestones to be shared; there are continually challenges to be confronted. This study is one way of addressing it.

The choice for selecting this particular centre was informed by its specialisation in education for the visually impaired, which suits the type of research conducted and the convenience it offered in terms of accessibility. The author is an educator for learners with visual impairment at the primary section, and the centre happens to be a unit within his work station - an advantage for the research purpose.

Purposive sampling techniques were employed in response to the nature of the study design. The targeted sample population consisted of ten participants in total: three visually impaired adult learners for each of Level I and IV, two facilitators, one centre manager and one ABET coordinator. Level I participants were targeted for their initial challenges and

experiences with Braille learning, while the level IV learners shared their learning experiences through all levels. The facilitators were sampled in order for them to share their teaching experiences and challenges. The centre manager was sampled in order to share her experiences from the managerial side of the centre while the ABET coordinator's role was due to her role as the representative of the Department of Education.

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION**

Different data collection techniques were employed for the purpose of validating the findings, which implies that triangulation was applied for data collection. Triangulation is a process of verification that increases validity by incorporating several viewpoints and methods (Guion, Diehl, and McDonald 2011). It refers to the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods or investigators in one study of a single phenomenon to converge on a single construct, and can be employed in both quantitative and qualitative studies (Yeasmin & Khan 2012). Semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, observation and document analysis techniques were used in order to triangulate.

The data collection process was conducted according to the following four phases:

#### ***Phase 1 - Document analysis***

Policy documents, registers, learners' portfolios and progress reports were requested with a view to confirming and verifying available educational needs and assets of BPALC. All types of written communication, which presented information on the research question, were taken into account (Nieuwenhuis 2007). Such records also served as evidence of whether assessment and evaluation was in place. The available documents also served to corroborate or present a different view of what participants said about the centre. Document analysis further offered the advantage of establishing whether applicable policies were implemented, while the records and reports provided evidence of the centre's development.

#### ***Phase 2 - Semi-structured interviews***

Semi-structured interviews are particularly useful as data collection tools for accessing individuals' attitudes and values – things that cannot necessarily be observed or accommodated in a questionnaire (Silverman 2006). Semi-structured interviews by their nature afford the researcher direct personal contact with the participant in answering questions relating to the research problem (Bless, Higson-Smith, and Kagee 2006). A semi-

structured interview technique was preferred due to its flexibility and the advantage of obtaining further information through extended questioning.

Semi-structured interviews imply some form of verbal discourse. Participants provide information through verbal interchange or conversation about the research topic, although non-verbal behaviour and the interview context are also noted by the researcher and become part of the data.

This type of interview opens up to a wealth of information as it is not limited to only the predetermined questions. It also allows for other extended questions to be posed during the interview process. Participants express their opinions better in an open interview than in a structured interview where only pre-determined questions are raised (Flick 2006; Rubin & Rubin 2012). This interview technique was selected in order to be subjected to all the participants' experiences surrounding the centre as openly expressed by themselves.

### ***Phase 3 - Observations***

Observation as data collection technique has the advantage of providing information that might have been missed during interviews.

This phase provided the opportunity to conduct a qualitative observation of the educational facilities. The author adopted the role of a non-participant observer, discerning the physical environment and the teaching and learning materials and processes objectively. This objective approach afforded an understanding of the different viewpoints honoured by the rest of the community members. It is an act of observing events or behaviour in a specific context and documenting clearly and accurately the information provided by the observation (Gideon & Moskos 2012).

As a means to establish available educational resources at the centre, all facilities, the buildings, the furniture, as well as the available adaptive learning devices were inventoried for availability and conformity.

### ***Phase 4 - Focus group interviews***

A mini-conference examined in detail the group members' opinions about the educational needs and assets of the centre. This allowed for the capturing of valuable data from the participants' perspectives and provided an opportunity of obtaining even more information

through their deliberations. A focus group interview is also a way of listening to people and learning from their experiences (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick 2008).

The opportunity to communicate in this focus group interview afforded the participants a safe environment where they shared ideas, beliefs, and also learnt from their experiences. It created an opportunity to experience responses other than their own and encounter multiple viewpoints about the educational needs and assets of BPALC from the other participants' viewpoints. An added advantage was that the interaction of the participants opened further debate which saved time in collecting more information about the research topic (Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick 2008).

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

The aim of data analysis was to respond to the research topic, "Educational needs and assets of BPALC". Content analysis involved the subjective interpretation of the content of text data. This was achieved via the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns from the semi-structured and focus group interviews and relating them to the documents analysed (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). Data collected through document analysis, observation, semi-structured and focus group interviews are equally important in responding to the research topic. The process of data analysis has been continuous throughout the research process to avoid losing meaning and focus. Data collection, data analysis and interpretation were not considered in isolation but as interrelated, simultaneous and interacting procedures (Creswell 2007).

The process involved the transcription of the audio recorded data and categorising it accordingly. The aim was to understand the various elements of the data through an inspection of the relationships between concepts, to see whether there are any patterns or trends that can be identified to establish their themes (Babbie & Mouton 2001). The categories of themes and sub-themes, spontaneously presented by the participants, were fully considered, analysed and interpreted within the context of the research questions and the assumptions as laid out in Chapter 2. Questions in the interview guide were structured to respond to the thematic and relevant information around the problem statement and related assumptions, making it easier for such themes to be easily identified.

The observation phase was taken into consideration and brought to the fore in relating it to the responses of the various participants. Elements observed during this phase were the

available furniture, learning and teaching support material, buildings, adaptive devices and teaching and learning processes. This phase was important since it helped in consolidating and validating the participants' responses. The results of the document analysis phase were also recalled in order to establish a link with the participants' responses. These documents included admission registers, attendance registers, learners' portfolios and inventories. The analysis involved verifying and confirming the educational needs and assets of BPALC against the responses from the participating learners, facilitators and the centre manager.

## **3.7 REFLECTIONS**

### **3.7.1 Proposal writing**

As a novice researcher, the writing of the proposal was not without challenges. From deciding on the most appropriate topic for the research to the ultimate approval of the topic and the research proposal, it was a learning experience that introduced the researcher to the world of academic writing as opposed to ordinary, everyday writing. The research topic has undergone numerous stages of metamorphosis before its present form.

The author's experience in the field of education for visually impaired individuals often excited him, but oblivious of certain basic professional writing techniques, ideas were often hurriedly penned on paper without organising them first. He came to realise and understand the importance and need for working under supervision, for more often it was only after feedback from his supervisor, that he realised the obvious mistakes committed in his writing.

Proposal writing has exposed the researcher to a world of information from experts in the field of education for the visually impaired. He came to realise and appreciate the fact that education is constantly evolving and that many positive changes have taken place in the education of learners with visual impairment since the Medieval Ages. Exposure to the views and opinions from different researchers and academics in this particular field of study has brought realisation of different approaches to any one particular challenge. This has helped in shaping his approach to the writing of the research itself.

### **3.7.2 Literature review**

The literature review provided context for the research and justified the significance of conducting the research; it ensured that the research hasn't been done before (Boote & Beile 2005). It was during the literature review that the author became familiar with the

history and background to the education of the visually impaired. It also brought appreciation for the importance of an asset-based community building approach as opposed to the more common needs-based approach.

The literature review has shown that the majority of communities can benefit from the asset-based approach to community building and desist from relying on outside assistance in trying to build their communities. The review revealed a range of information about adult education for the visually impaired which aided in shaping the research approach. It also became clear that the sector on adult education for the visually impaired is under-researched and that more needs to be done to bring it on par with the other education sectors.

### **3.7.3 Data collection**

The following data collection techniques were engaged: document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and observation as well as focus-group interviews. Each of these phases supplemented and validated the other and aided in consolidating the final data analysis.

The author's interaction with the participants was very informative and assisted in answering the research question. The lived experiences of both learner and facilitator participants changed some of the preconceived views about BPALC. One particular learner participant related her frustrations and feelings of hopelessness in achieving her objectives due to the challenges of the centre. Her contribution confirmed the author's assumptions about the lack of proper adaptive devices for the visually impaired adults.

There were also challenges in the process of data collection, for example when the battery of the recording device went flat in the middle of a focus group interview, something which was not anticipated because of a miscalculation of the interview period. The interview was interrupted whilst arrangements were made for the recharging of the battery. Fortunately it could soon proceed with all the participants still being available.

Very often, during the interview process, the questions had to be rephrased several times to elucidate the meaning due to the language barrier and certain concept limitations in Sepedi - concepts used in the context of this study are not commonly found in Sepedi. Another challenge was that participants were not familiar with many of the concepts used in the study. Concepts like 'adaptive device', 'assets', 'adaptation of learning content', 'curriculum'

and many others had to be explained to most of the participants prior to the interview, especially Level I learners.

#### **3.7.4 Data analysis**

Analysing data is one of the most arduous activities in the research process. All the interviews with the research participants were in Sepedi and part of the analysis process was to translate the responses into English.

It was easy to establish the participants' shared common challenges: every participant reiterated what others have already said, albeit in his or her own words, the emphasis always being on the lack of teaching and learning support materials.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

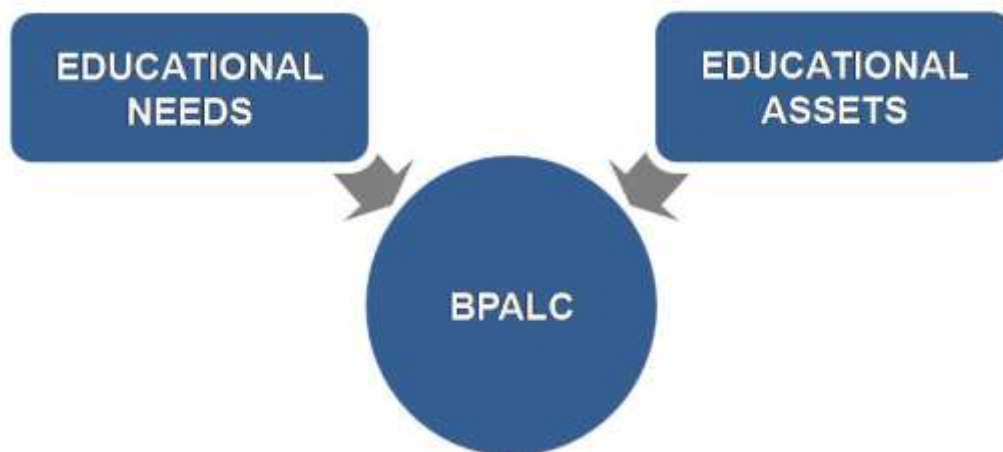
This chapter reflected on the research design employed, the targeted population and how sampling was conducted. It also reflected on data collection procedures and analysis. The different data collection techniques were dealt with in phases in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the entire data collection process. The chapter concluded by unpacking the analysis of the data.

## CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

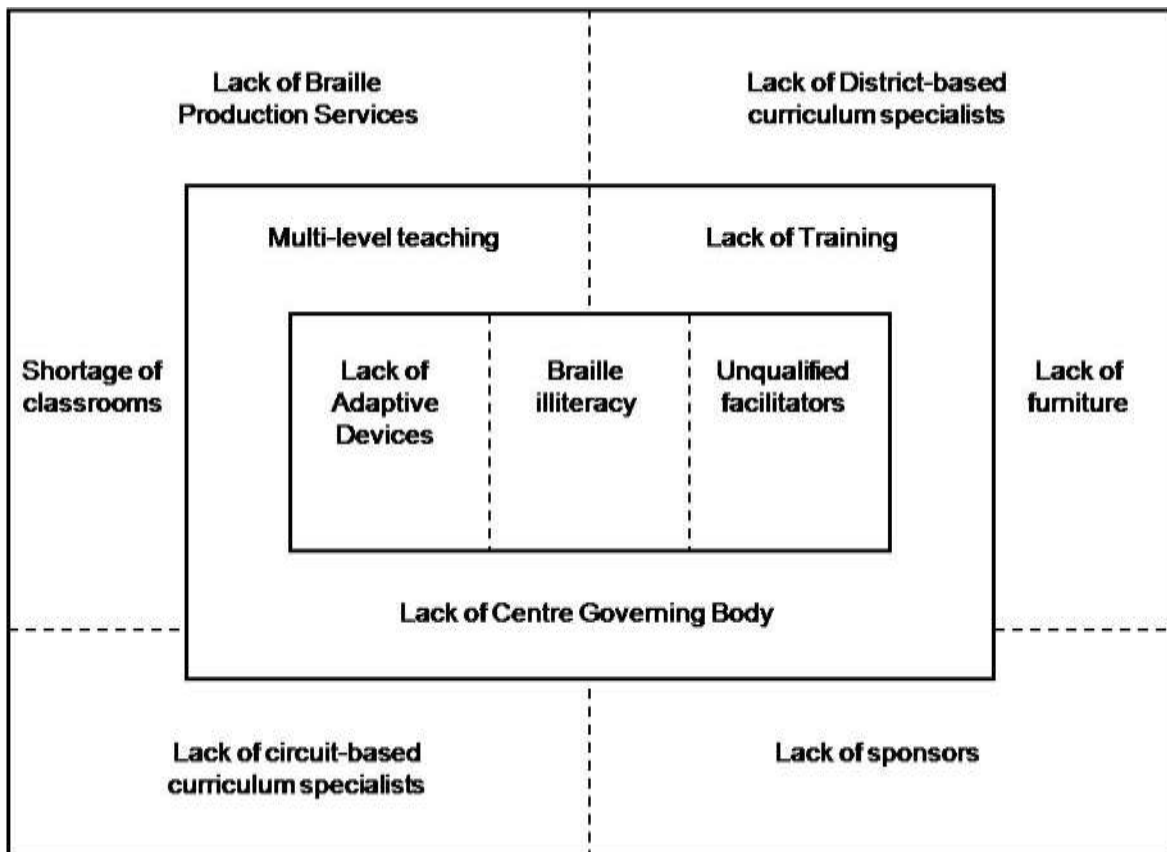
The findings of this study, which reflect on the educational needs and assets of Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre for the Visually Impaired, are discussed in this chapter. It includes a detailed discussion of the findings from the collected data via the four phases, namely document analysis, semi-structured interviews, observation and focus group interviews. It concludes with a presentation of the asset map of Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre.



*Figure 7. Presentation of the findings of this study.*

#### 4.1.1 Educational needs

Educational needs as defined in Chapter 2, and in the context of this research, are challenges; problems and deficiencies encountered in the learning process of the visually impaired adult learners at Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre for the Visually Impaired. A major challenge in the education for adult learners with visual impairment at BPALC is the professional capacity to effectively mediate their learning areas.



**Figure 8.** A needs map of BPALC for the visually impaired (Adapted from Kretzman and McKnight 1993).

### **Document analysis**

Documents analysed reflected a lack of policy documents both in print and Braille format. Records reflected only the following documents as curriculum support material:

- Policy documents on adult education and training;
- Learning programmes (National Curriculum Policy Statement (NCS));
- Site based assessment question papers.

These documents were only available in print format and the facilitators, who themselves are visually impaired, were not catered for in Braille format, resulting on their reliance on sighted people to read it to them. This was confirmed in the file of one facilitator who is visually impaired. All copies of site based assessment questions papers in the file were in ordinary print format. Local formal tasks were handwritten.

- Learners' portfolios were not kept. According to one of the interviewed facilitators, they are not aware of such records and how they should be compiled since stationery is not

provided by the Department of Education. Responding to how they keep records of the progress of learners, he replied accordingly:

*“We never heard about such things, and we don’t even know how they work as the Department does not even provide us with stationery or ask for such things. The only records we submit to the Circuit are the marks for the Level IV learners and we just select the work of the best learner and submit as evidence”.*

- The admission register reflected a total enrolment of 22 adult learners divided into the following levels: three Level I learners, seven Level II learners, three Level III learners and nine Level IV learners.
- The attendance register reflected good attendance practice as all adult learners are accommodated within the campus of BPALC.
- The requisition register indicated that a requisition which was made three years ago never received a response.

### ***Semi-structured and focus group interviews***

#### *Learner interviews*

- Lack of learning and teaching support material as evidenced by several learner participants, one of whom said the following:

*“If we could at least get some Braille books to read on our own. There are no books to read at all”.*

- Lack of Braille production facilities which impact negatively on learning and teaching since visually impaired facilitators rely on sighted facilitators to read for them and learners have their notes dictated to them.
- Curriculum adaptation is not observed by either the facilitators or the Department of Education. More often question papers are delivered in print format and learners have to rely on facilitators to dictate to them. One learner participant said the following during a focus group interview:

*“When we sit for the Site Based Assessment (SBA) examinations, the question papers we receive are for the sighted. It then means that the facilitator must dictate for us, even though we can read Braille”.*

- The books delivered are in print form and Braille books are not catered for accordingly. One of the learners reflected:

*“You’ll be fortunate to have a Braille copy for yourself for one day, which is absolutely not sufficient because it will take you some weeks before you get such an opportunity again”.*

- Multi-level teaching, the result of insufficient classes, has a negative impact on both the learners and facilitators alike. Facilitators find it very difficult to efficiently attend simultaneously to both levels’ needs. One participant learner indicated how some facilitators forget that they are at differing levels and sometimes accuse them of underperformance.

*“When you ask for the spelling of a particular word, you are told you are compared with someone who dropped out of Grade 10 and in the same class. It is so painful to be told, this is level 3, and how did you progress from the other levels not knowing such spelling ...”*

- On the same challenge of multi-level teaching, another learner said the following during focus-group interviews:

*“Each level should have its own class. In 2009 I was doing Level I and was promoted to Level II but I was occupying the same desk in the same class with Level I learners, and that did not augur well with me because I could not see the difference, and the Level I learners mistook me for a Level I learner too. My morale was always low”.*

- At least two learner participants indicated their despair to achieve their intended goals due to the unavailability of adapted materials and the struggle to cope with it. The disillusionment from the learners’ side to achieve their educational objectives was raised by one learner as follows:

*“I see no chance of succeeding. If we could get at least some Braille books to read. How things are here at Bosele gives me no hope at all. I don’t see myself succeeding. Lots of things don’t go well here, people’s certificates,*

*statements are not released and are said to be pending and they have to come back and supplement – many are endlessly coming back for supplementary examinations ..”*

One particular learner complained about sighted facilitators' lack of Braille skills, which impact on effective teaching:

*“I remember being taught by Ms Maleka (pseudonym). She was using her own print copy for the sighted, whilst we did not have one for Braille and writing on the board and teaching about exponentials, something I did not even know how to write in Braille. I don't know whether the Department of Education ever consider whether the person will be able to teach blind people, or she was appointed simply because it is for the ABET learners who are blind, because the fact that she is here but cannot explain to me how exponential is written in Braille is questionable”.*

### *Facilitator interviews*

- Lack of reading materials. In confirming what the learners said about lack of teaching and learning support materials, one facilitator put it this way:

*“The other challenge, which is very important, is the lack of books. Books are not available and it doesn't look like they will be for a very long time. The other challenge is the lack of Brailers. Learners have to wait for the others to finish before they have their chance to write”.*

- The centre has no allocation of funds from any source and as such cannot afford even basics like Braille paper, photocopiers and faxing facilities. In response to a question about funding, one facilitator answered:

*“Actually, the only budget available is that of payment of the facilitators' salaries. There is no budget for the buildings, or whatever. We survive by the grace of God”.*

Further enquiries about the procurement of basic teaching and learning support materials established that the process was not well defined. The centre manager normally submits a requisition to the ABET coordinator for further submission to the relevant procurement section. She indicated that they seldom receive feedback about their submissions and that the procurement process seldom produces any positive

results. A requisition register kept for record purposes reflected requisitions made three years previously but was still pending.

- When each of the facilitators was asked how he/she was appointed, the study revealed that there is no consistency in the appointment of staff. Facilitators interviewed did not apply for the position and no specific professional qualification was required for the appointment as long as the candidate had Grade 12. The issue of the criteria for appointment at the centre was also raised by one learner participant who complained that some facilitators cannot read or write Braille, which in his opinion is a basic requirement. It affects the learners negatively.
- The visually impaired facilitators registered their frustration when having to cope with the ever evolving Braille codes. The challenge was with the newly developed Unified Braille Codes (UBC), since they often have to struggle to introduce it to their learners. They are not familiar with the codes and only learn about them accidentally in magazines supplied by Braille South Africa and the South African National Council for the Blind. One of the facilitators remarked on how they are affected by this state of affairs:

*“I am a Braille teacher, but I am not informed about its new developments. I keep applying the same old methodology”.*

- All the facilitators concurred that post provisioning at the centre did not consider the weighting of learners according to their disability. Learners with visual impairment are supposed to be weighted so that one learner carries a weighting of eight, which implies that one learner with visual impairment is an equivalent of eight learners who are not disabled.
- None of the interviewed facilitators could recall ever attending any form of professional development seminar or having professional staff from the Department of Education to engage them in professional development or training. They actually lamented about operating in isolation and that they are not up to date with new trends and developments in the new curriculum statement. The visually impaired facilitators complained about having no access to policy statements in their mode of writing and reading, which is Braille.
- Sighted facilitators are not skilled in reading and writing Braille, and that affects their teaching as they cannot control the learners' work and as such are unable to offer

assistance in writing or reading to the Level I learners who need the skill to read and write.

### *Centre manager interview*

- On time allocation for the learning programmes, the centre manager indicated that not enough time is allowed considering the fact that visually impaired adult learners first have to be taught how to use the writing device. She also hinted that the teaching of Braille to adults needs time.

*“Time allocated to the learning programmes offered is not enough at all. It is too little if you consider that unlike at ordinary adult learning centres, our learners still have to learn how to use the Brailleurs. They really need extra time for that”.*

- The Department of Education does not provide the relevant reading and writing materials. Books delivered are in print form.
- Confirming what another learner complained about sighted facilitators who did not know Braille, the centre manager indicated how challenging this is when they have to make notes for the learners or mark their work:

*“Some of us do not know Braille and have to rely on others when we have to provide learners with notes or mark their work. Visually impaired facilitators know Braille but cannot read normal print and we have to dictate notes for them and at the end there is the challenge of making copies for each of them. It is time consuming and frustrating, but that is how we work here”.*

- On further enquiries regarding staff development and empowerment, the centre manager confirmed what other facilitators said. She also could not remember attending any workshop intended for their development.
- In her own words, the centre manager acknowledged that when two levels are combined, they tend to focus on the higher level, with the effect that the lower level is often compromised and seldom receive the necessary attention.

*“Going back to the issue of classes: Level I cannot be compared with Level II and Level III cannot be compared with Level IV, because if Level III is combined with Level IV, very often we focus on those who are going to sit for*

*Level IV examination and teach the syllabus of Level IV to even Level III learners due to lack of classes”.*

- On the support of the centre governing body, the centre manager accepted the fact that it was the requirement of the Department of Education that such a structure be established, but that she does not know the process to follow since she is uninformed:

*“The centre does not have a governing body presently. It has been noted, but we have not managed to establish because we do not even know how to start. The Department of Education demands that such a structure be established, but just do not know how to do it”.*

- The centre is composed of two centre management team members: the centre manager and one visually impaired facilitator.

#### *ABET coordinator*

Although the ABET coordinator was invited to participate in an interview, she did not respond to the formal invitation or a follow-up sms.

#### **Observations**

The Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre is located within Bosele School for the Blind and Deaf.

- The centre is allocated its own building within the same campus of Bosele School for the Blind & Deaf. It consists of one block of buildings at the far western end of the school, separate from other buildings. The block consists of only two classes with two indoor storage rooms for books and other learning and teaching support materials, with an outside toilet and shower which presently is out of order.
- During observation, it was also noted that the two classrooms could accommodate at least twelve adult learners each. The learners used ordinary single desks which are not modified or adapted to accommodate the learners’ Braille writing Perkins machines. The centre enrolled adult learners for Level I to IV who must share the same two classes during any learning session.

- The ablution facilities have not been operational for a period of three years. Learners have to use the facilities in the hostel, which is some distance away and not accessible for newly enrolled visually impaired adult learners who still need to be orientated in terms of mobility.
- There is no provision for Braille production facilities, which are basic educational requirements for a centre like BPALC.



**Figure 9.** Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre for the visually impaired.



**Figure 10.** Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre combined class of Levels III and IV.

Further observation reflected a lack of supporting documents for facilitators. The researcher also attended part of a lesson on Life Skills offered by a visually impaired facilitator. He perused one of the adult learners' personal file and another from the centre manager. The centre manager's file contained a copy of her own curriculum vitae, a year plan, respective learning area lesson plans, previous and recent Site Based Assessment tasks in print format, and her own hand-written learner activities. The learner's file contained a few notes in Braille, copies of Site Based Assessment tasks in print format and some few unmarked class activities.

#### **4.1.2 Educational assets**

##### ***Document analysis***

Very little information about educational assets was found during analysis of the available documents. The centre is composed of five facilitators, including the centre manager, who is the only qualified professional member of BPALC, with a Primary Teacher's Diploma qualification, as reflected in the centre manager's file in which she compiles all relevant official records. The file contains, among others, her daily preparations, learners' and facilitators' personal profiles, copies of previous questionnaires and examination results, records of delivered learning and teaching support materials".

##### ***Interviews***

###### ***Learner interviews***

Learners interviewed ranged from Level I to Level IV. They could not offer much information in terms of educational assets.

- One learner became blind during Grade 8 and came to BPALC to be skilled in Braille. Her sighted background and academic level benefited other learners in lower levels since she acted as their resource as evidenced by one learner participant:

*"Some of the learners in our class were in higher grades before coming to attend at BPALC. They know most of the things we are doing and we mostly ask for their assistance with most of the subjects and those who know Braille better, also help us in the hostels after school".*

## *Facilitator interviews*

All facilitators interviewed were visually impaired. One of them attended Bosele School for the Blind from Grade R to Grade 7 and completed Grade 12 at a another secondary school for the blind. She had a good knowledge of Braille since it was her only mode of reading and writing. When asked about how she came to be appointed at BPALC:

*“I was approached by the former centre manager to come and assist with Braille teaching. I was not interviewed and I was just given some forms to complete”.*

- The second facilitator interviewed attended an ordinary school until Grade 10 when he became blind. He later attended BPALC to acquire Braille skills before proceeding to complete Grade 12 at a school for the blind. When asked about how he was appointed to become a facilitator at BPALC, he said:

*“I started on 05 May 2008. Initially I volunteered because I knew about the centre as I also attended here. I was officially appointed on 01 September 2008 when a position became available. It was actually by default because I did not apply for the position because I was not even aware of its advertisement. It happened that the person who was supposed to appear for the interviews, did not make it to the interviews and I was invited by the ABET coordinator to take his place, and that is how I was appointed”.*

- When asked about how they ensure maximum utilisation of the assets available within BPALC:

*“At least there are two of us who know Braille, and we are responsible for teaching Braille to all the learners. The centre manager is a professional teacher and is sighted and can assist us in completing our claim forms and other forms required by the Department of Education. They do not know Braille and we mark their work for them and we type their notes in Braille. We actually rely on Bosele School for the Blind and Deaf for many things, because what we do not have, they have. We usually come to you sir, for a lot of things because you always assist us with many things”.*

- Responding to the question on how the community is engaged in the affairs of the centre, one facilitator replied:

*“No, I don’t want to lie, I don’t remember taking any steps to involve the community, unless we come across some disabled person, who cannot see, and we start talking to his/her parents about where to refer him/her for help”.*

- Another facilitator said the following in response to the same question:

*“According to our belief, the biggest responsibility lies with the Department of Education – even if we have to involve the community, we don’t know how”.*

- All the facilitators interviewed consider Bosele School for the Blind and Deaf, the circuit office and the clinic as the community around them. They rely mainly on the Bosele community for their survival and could not think beyond it. Bosele as a school for the blind and deaf has qualified educators to whom they are often referred to for professional and social assistance. All adult learners share most of the facilities with Bosele learners, including boarding and lodging.
- They also referred to the nearest clinic as their support system in terms of health conditions and educational reference issues. The clinic is about 100m away and easily accessible. They also referred to the circuit office, which is across the street and also easily accessible. The centre manager and all learners and facilitators can easily walk to the circuit office for any enquiries related to their learning and teaching. It is also easy for the circuit coordinator to attend to urgent matters when called upon.

### *Centre manager interview*

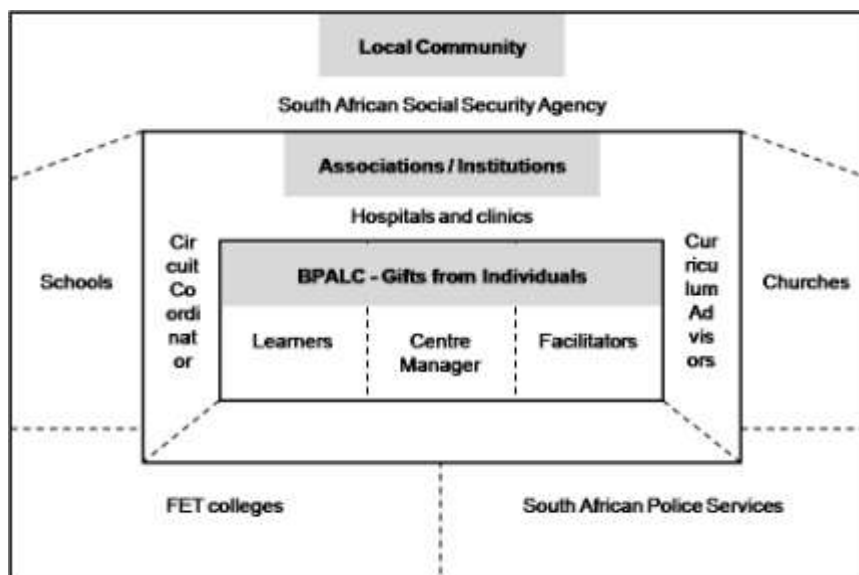
As indicated above, the centre manager is the only qualified professional teacher. She is responsible for the following tasks:

- completing claims for the visually impaired facilitator, compiling SNAP surveys when required to do so;
- submitting requisitions for the required educational needs;
- keeping the Department of Education records;
- receiving and responding to applications from prospective adult learners;
- providing professional guidance to the other facilitators;
- correspondence with the Department of Education and other stake holders like the principal of Bosele School for the Blind and Deaf and staff.

- Responding to a question on what other educational assets she has identified to be employed in developing the centre, it was clear at first that she did not understand what assets are, but after further explanations, she indicated that Bosele School for the Blind and Deaf and its staff members are the sole support system of the centre:

*“We never thought about that. For any help we look to the Department’s intervention or else we rely on Bosele and its staff. They help us a lot because they are experienced and knowledgeable. They also have resources that we do not have like the translation software and embossers”.*

The map below shows all the categories of the community’s assets of Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre community.



**Figure 11.** An asset map of BPALC for the visually impaired (Adapted from Kretzmann and McKnight 1993).

## 4.2 CONCLUSION

The findings of the study were discussed according to the four phases of data collection, namely document analysis, semi-structured interviews and observation as well as focus group interviews. Extracts from the participants’ responses during interviews were included in order to convey their actual opinions. The overall findings helped to delineate the problem statement and further confirmed the assumptions as discussed under the literature review of the study. The present state of education at Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre also became clear.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **MAJOR CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

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#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The major conclusions drawn from this study and the literature review are presented and further highlight recommendations and suggestions for future research. In an attempt to address the educational needs and assets of BPALC an empowerment programme is also presented.

#### **5.2 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE LITERATURE**

Very little has been written about South Africa's adult education, especially for the visually impaired, a fact acknowledged by the Report of the Task Team on Community Education and Training Centre (2012). This report also highlights among others, current challenges, inadequate infrastructure provisioning, and weak financial funding support in the PALCs which fails to attract large numbers of adults and youth. A number of questions still remain unanswered in the sector for adult learners with visual impairment, i.e their educational needs and assets and the distribution of facilities for the visually impaired adult learners within the country.

Every adult education system must be geared to respond to the educational needs of individual citizens as well as the broader society. Quality education, which is the right of everyone, can bring about change to a person's quality of life, self-image and the capacity to engage actively in activities of the community. A stronger and more cooperative relationship between the education and training institutions and the communities can help provide quality education for all. It is only through the active participation and cooperative relationship between all community institutions and the public adult learning centres that better results can be achieved (White Paper for the Post-School Education and Training 2013).

Education provides a route out of poverty for all individuals and promotes equality of opportunities. The achievement of greater social justice is closely dependent on equitable access by all sections of the society to quality education. This allows for more rapid economic growth (White Paper for Post-School Education and Training 2013).

Maximum utilisation of all available community assets can eventually guarantee the provision of quality education. This can be achieved through cooperative participation by all individuals within the community. The starting point is the recognition and documentation of all available assets within the community in order to engage it in the process of building the community. Public adult learning centres for the visually impaired are fundamentally community assets that can help in building the community. They may assist in the development and improvement of the quality of life of community members (Kretzman & McKnight 1993).

Visually impaired adult learners have the capacity to perform in the same way as their sighted counterparts (Maguvhe 2005). Public adult learning centres for the visually impaired, like other institutions of learning, need the participation and support of the entire community to be able to realise their objectives. Their activities cannot be separated from those of other institutions of learning in the community since adult education is about community building (Khadka 2012; Soudien 2006).

### **5.3 MAJOR CONCLUSIONS**

The aim of this research was to identify the educational needs and assets of BPALC for the visually impaired in order to value, utilise and enhance them for sustainable development of the centre. The main research question, namely “What are the educational needs and assets of BPALC for the visually impaired?”, is presented in Chapter 4 of this study. Below follows a summary of the major conclusions.

#### **5.3.1 Educational needs**

- Basic learning and teaching support materials are critically inadequate and inappropriate to the needs of the learners. These are resources like adapted books, Brailers, Braille paper, talking calculators, embossers, adaptive devices and suitable furniture. These are fundamentals that separate public adult learning centres for the visually impaired from the ordinary public adult learning centres.
- There is a lack of classes, resulting in multi-level teaching which affects quality teaching and learning. Learners of different levels are taught in the same class which has negative implications on the mediation of the learning programmes, as well as some psychological effects on the learners and facilitators.

- Effective teaching and learning, in line with the requirements of quality education for all as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), is compromised. Without the necessary and relevant learning and teaching support materials, learners struggle to achieve their maximum potential.
- There is a lack of supportive systems, e.g qualified and skilled facilitators with the relevant skills necessary for the education of adult learners with visual impairment. The demand for certain basic skills like Braille literacy and curriculum adaptation are not met and facilitators struggle to meet their facilitation requirements.
- The centre experiences serious financial challenges due to a lack of allocated funds for the general procurement of basic day-to-day necessities like Braille paper, faxes, phone, and production facilities. These challenges negatively affect the performance of both the learners and the facilitators.
- The curriculum is not adapted. Facilitators have no recourse to adaptive devices and as such continue to teach in the same way as if they are teaching the sighted with major negative impacts for the learners. The majority of learners who were interviewed had indicated their despondency in achieving their objectives as a result of the frustration that emanate from this challenge.

### **5.3.2 Educational assets**

The following major conclusions regarding the educational needs and assets of Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre for the visually impaired adult learners have been drawn:

- ***Knowledge and skills***

Skills and expertise of individuals within BPALC were established as follows:

- Facilitators with Braille skills and experience in education for learners with visual impairment;
- Capacity to facilitate and mediate learning areas by the centre manager;
- Learners who have already acquired higher grades from ordinary schools;
- The centre manager with professional qualifications to provide guidance to other facilitators;
- Expert advice on educational matters by the centre manager.

- ***Institutions and associations***

- Provision of spiritual and social intervention by the neighbouring churches;
- Provision of health care by the neighbouring clinic;
- Social security welfare intervention by the neighbouring South African Social Security Agency office;
- Care of cultural issues by cultural groups;
- Curriculum adaptation by experts from Bosele School for the Blind and Deaf;
- Curriculum implementation by the circuit curriculum advisors;
- Security and the protection of human rights by the South African Police Services (SAPS);
- Document verification and certification by the SAPS;
- Career guidance for further education and training by Bosele School for the Blind and Deaf personnel;
- Provision of information and technological services by Bosele Media Centre personnel.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations from this study are grouped according to educational needs and assets:

### **5.4.1 Educational needs**

- The provision of relevant learning and teaching support material is a basic requirement and cannot be overemphasised. These include the necessary adaptive devices and suitable furniture to accommodate the Braille books and Brailleurs and as such should be made available.
- The creation of centre-based support teams. These are professionals with the necessary skills to support the facilitators as well as the visually impaired adult learners and should be established and easily accessible.
- Adequate classes should be provided with a view to limiting congestion and multi-level teaching.
- It is recommended that BPALC's environment and furniture be safe and user-friendly.
- A post provisioning model in accordance with recommended weight for adult learners with visual impairment should be considered.

- The establishment of a Braille production unit with skilled support staff in order to ensure the translation and production of Braille materials for the visually impaired adult learners should also be considered.
- Reasonable funding should be considered to ensure that basic teaching and learning support materials could be procured.
- Curriculum adaptation is crucial to ensure that visually impaired adult learners are not disadvantaged, and are offered the same quality education as their counterparts without compromise. An adapted curriculum should not necessarily be a downgraded curriculum, but adaptation should seek to compensate for the loss of the learner's visual sight. The adaptation must include all site based assessment papers and final examination question papers. This means that competent and specialised moderators must be employed at both district and provincial levels in order to conduct the moderation of such assessments.
- Facilitators for the visually impaired adult learners should be professionals with relevant skills for facilitating and mediating learning and teaching. It is imperative that facilitators for the visually impaired adult learners be reasonably literate in Braille since Adult Basic Education is effectively about literacy while Braille is the literacy means for visually impaired people.
- Continuous professional development programmes are fundamentally essential to ensure all facilitators for visually impaired adult learners are continuously updated on new developments in methodologies and policy issues related to the field. Braille is not static but continuously evolves; new codes are developed and introduced with a view to improving the system and to bring it on par with internationally recognised standards (SANCB 2013). Facilitators of the visually impaired must be empowered by occasionally attending seminars and workshops about Braille development.
- There is a need for the establishment of Circuit and District based support teams whose members are professionals with experience in education for adult learners with visual impairment. This is to ensure that facilitators for adult learners with visual impairment benefit from workshops and are well equipped with policy implementation methodologies relevant to the needs of learners with visual impairment.
- The Department of Education must allocate a budget for the centre to enable the management to procure basic day-to-day necessities and to cover the general running costs of the centre.

- It is also recommended that a governing body for the centre be established in order to provide, among other functions, the following:
  - adopt a constitution;
  - develop the vision and mission statement of BPALC;
  - promote the activities and the programmes of the BPALC;
  - supplement the procurement of the learning and teaching support materials for BPALC;
  - elicit public support for BPALC;
  - be responsible for the budgeting and financial management system of BPALC;
  - recommend the appointments of facilitators for BPALC;
  - ensure that a conducive learning environment exists for BPALC; and
  - promote the best interest of BPALC and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners (Department of Education 2000).

#### **5.4.2 Educational assets within the community**

##### ***Knowledge and skills***

- BPALC's Management Team should continuously map out the centre's assets in order to engage them in addressing the centre's educational needs.
- The centre management must ensure that the centre and the school (Bosele School for the Blind and Deaf) work together in sharing facilities and expertise. The school is composed of experienced and specialist educators whose expertise could be used in the development and empowerment of BPALC's staff.
- Take note of and partner with the community's assets (learning institutions, resource centres, health and social welfare institutions).
- Engage churches in fundraising and outsourcing of educational resources.
- Invite experts in education for the visually impaired to assist and empower the facilitators with the required skills and methodologies to employ in their teaching.

#### **5.5 EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME**

This section presents an empowerment programme that intends to address challenges in Braille illiteracy, adaptation techniques, multi-level teaching and didactics in teaching adult learners with visual impairment at BPALC.

**Table 3.** Proposed empowerment programme for BPALC.

<b>BASELINE</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Braille literacy</li> <li>• Adaptation of learning programmes</li> <li>• Multi-level teaching</li> <li>• Theory and practice in teaching visually impaired adult learners</li> </ul>					
<b>VISION:</b> To ensure that all facilitators are empowered and skilled to effectively facilitate and mediate their learning programmes					
<b>PROGRAMMES</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>APPROACH</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>OUTCOMES</b>
<b>Braille literacy skill</b>	Braille specialists from Bosele School for the Blind	15 January 2015 22 January 2015 29 January 2015 05 February 2015 12 February 2015 19 February 2015 26 February 2015 05 March 2015 12 March 2015 19 March 2015 16 April 2015 23 April 2015 30 April 2015 07 May 2015	Contact sessions with skilled facilitators	Primers, Perkins Brailers, Braille paper, stylus, writing frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competency in reading and writing Braille.</li> <li>• Competency in teaching and marking Braille</li> </ul>

<b>PROGRAMMES</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>APPROACH</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>OUTCOMES</b>
		14 May 2015 21 May 2015 28 May 2015			
<b>Adaptation of learning programmes</b>	Specialist educators: Bosele School for the Blind	15 January 2015 22 January 2015 29 January 2015 05 February 2015 12 February 2015 19 February 2015 26 February 2015 05 March 2015 12 March 2015 19 March 2015 16 April 2015 23 April 2015 30 April 2015 07 May 2015 14 May 2015 21 May 2015 28 May 2015	Contact sessions	Computer, translation software, embosser, thermoform, Braille paper, stylus	Competency in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adapting learning content,</li> <li>• adapting question papers, assignments</li> <li>• designing diagrams</li> <li>• setting question papers</li> </ul>
<b>Multi-level teaching</b>	Circuit-based curriculum advisors	23 February 2015	Workshop	Policy documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to mediate two levels in the same class at the same time.</li> <li>• Diversity in learning and teaching approach</li> </ul>

PROGRAMMES	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE	APPROACH	RESOURCES	OUTCOMES
<b>Didactics: Theory and practice in teaching adult learners with visual impairment</b>	Specialist educators: Bosele School for the Blind	14 January 2015 21 January 2015 28 January 2015 05 February 2015 12 February 2015 19 February 2015 26 February 2015 04 May 2015 11 May 2015 18 March 2015 25 March 2015 15 April 2015 22 April 2015 29 April 2015 07 May 2015 14 May 2015 21 May 2015 28 May 2015	Contact sessions with specialist educators from Bosele School for the Blind	Guides on Didactics and Andragogics: Education for the visually impaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding adult learners with visual impairment.</li> <li>• Competency in implementing best practices of mediating learning areas to the visually impaired adult learners</li> </ul>

This programme is intended for both visually impaired facilitators and facilitators who are Braille illiterate in order to empower them and equip them with skills to read and write the Unified Braille Code as an internationally recognised Braille code. It is the basis for every facilitator at a public adult learning centre for visually impaired.

The programme provides for both sighted and visually impaired facilitators. Experts in Braille are organised by the centre manager to facilitate and coordinate the lesson activities. These may be teachers from Bosele School for the Blind and Deaf who will offer the Braille lessons during agreed upon periods, which may not interrupt the normal working periods.

## **5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, very little has been written about adult education for the visually impaired in South Africa. This research enquiry explored only one aspect of the sector, which are the educational needs and assets of a public adult learning centre for the visually impaired. Further research needs to be done in order to close the gaps that still exist in addressing education for visually impaired learners. The following are some suggested topics for further research:

- Educational needs and assets for visually impaired students at South African Universities: A multiple case study about South African Universities.
- Educational needs and assets for visually impaired students at further education and training institutions: A multiple case study about further education and training institutions in South Africa.
- Educational needs and assets of public adult learning centres for the visually impaired in South Africa.
- Challenges encountered by visually impaired adult learners at further education and training institutions: A case study.
- Challenges experienced by visually impaired educators teaching at ordinary schools.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

In this final chapter the major conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for future research was presented, as informed by the findings of the study. In addition to the recommendations, an empowerment programme is proposed which will empower all facilitators with Braille literacy skills for proper control of their learning programmes. The programme is meant to address basic Braille literacy skills, adaptation techniques, multi-level teaching techniques and theory and practice in teaching adult learners with visual impairment.

The participants' responses contributed to the research question. The educational needs of BPALC have been well documented and the educational assets have been mapped out. It was found that adaptation, as a requirement for effective teaching and learning to visually impaired adult learners, does not receive the necessary attention from either the facilitators or the Department of Education. The facilitators experience frustration due to lack of support and the required learning and teaching support materials.

The facilitators are not professionals in the field of education for the visually impaired, which makes it very difficult for them to offer quality education to the learners. Sighted facilitators are not skilled in Braille reading and writing and as such cannot assist learners in reading and writing Braille. They are also not provided with any form of professional development programmes or training to develop and empower them in their teaching methodologies. Multi-level teaching is both a teaching and learning barrier as visually impaired adult learners are deprived of individual attention due to overcrowding and limited time.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT BOSELE PUBLIC ADULT LEARNING CENTRE FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

---

**Enquiries: EM Sekgobela**

Cell: 083 218 9269  
Fax: 086 543 7072  
Email: eliasmathea@yahoo.com

P O Box 31440  
Superbia  
POLOKWANE  
0759

05 August 2013

The Circuit Manager/Coordinator  
Hlogotlou Circuit  
Private Bag X647  
Groblersdal  
0470

#### **Request to conduct research at Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre**

I am a Masters student at the University of Limpopo under the supervision of Mr MM Maphutha. The focus of my research title is: *Educational needs and assets of a public adult learning centre for the visually impaired: A case study of Bosele*. The aim of the study is to explore the educational needs and assets of Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre in order to identify the current educational challenges and assets and to develop a relevant intervention programme based on the findings.

The purpose of this letter is to request permission to conduct research at Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre for the Visually Impaired. All ethical measures will be complied with for minimal disruption of lessons and the research report will be made available to your Circuit as well.

Yours sincerely

Elias Mathea Sekgobela

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES**

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P. O Box 31440  
Superbia  
POLOKWANE  
0759

05 August 2013

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Dear Sir/Madam

#### **Request to conduct research**

I am a Masters student at the University of Limpopo under the supervision of Mr M.M Maphutha. The focus of my research title is: *Educational needs and assets of a public adult learning centre for the visually impaired: A case study of Bosele*. The aim of the study is to explore the educational needs and assets of Bosele Public Adult Learning Centre in order to identify the current educational challenges and assets and to develop a relevant intervention programme based on the findings.

The purpose of this letter is to request permission to interview you as a relevant participant in my research study. The following ethical measures will be adhered to:

- Your privacy and identity will always be protected;
- You reserve the right to object to any form of recordings of the interview session or any practice you are uncomfortable with;
- The relevant research information will be made available to you on request;
- Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage.

Yours sincerely

Elias Mathea Sekgobela

*Kindly complete and sign the attached consent form and return to me.*

---

**APPENDIX 3**  
**CONSENT FORM**

---

**CONSENT FORM**

I, the undersigned, give my written consent to participate in the research undertaken by E.M Sekgobela, a Masters student at the University of Limpopo.

I understand and agree with all the stipulations in the covering letter. I voluntarily agree to participate, and that I have not been coerced or intimidated in any way.

Full name of the participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed on this day \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ 2013.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE**

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The following documents will be requested for analysis:

- Time register
- Attendance register
- Policy statements
- Inventories
- Requisition registers
- Lesson Planning
- Class Time-Table
- Progress reports
- Portfolios
- Minutes of meetings held over the past six months

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE**

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There will be one focus group interview session. The focus group interview will attempt to discuss the assumptions as laid out in the Theoretical Frameworks.

The Focus Group will consist of the four facilitators, the Centre Manager and three learners and will discuss the following:

- Lack of basic adaptive and appropriate teaching and learning support materials;
- Training and empowerment;
- Staffing and professional support;
- Community based assets;
- The curriculum.

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS**

---

The following aspects will guide the interview process:

#### **FACTS AND FIGURES**

1. When were you appointed as the facilitator at BPALC?
2. How did you find out about BPALC?
3. How many facilitators are there in BPALC?
4. How were you appointed to work at BPALC?
5. Who is responsible for the payment of your salary?
6. How many learners do you have in your class?
7. How many periods do you have per week and how long does each last?
8. What is your opinion about the time allocated for the learning areas per week at BPALC?

#### **ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT**

1. What is in your opinion, the difference between adult education and regular education?
2. What is the difference between teaching sighted adult learners and visually impaired adult learners?
3. What are the basic methods for the teaching of visually impaired adult learners?
4. What basic resources ensure effective curriculum implementation to the visually impaired adult learners?
5. What adaptive and assistive devices are available at the centre to ensure effective teaching and learning for the visually impaired adult learners?
6. What is, in your opinion, your challenges regarding curriculum adaptation?

#### **TRAINING AND EMPOWERMENT**

1. What special training were you offered for the work you do at BPALC?
2. What is the duration of the training?
3. What is the structure of the training programme?
4. In your own opinion, do you think the duration of the training was enough?
5. What forms of other empowerment programmes are available for you at BPALC?
6. What further professional development studies are you engaged in at the moment?

#### **STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT**

1. How many members of staff are there at BPALC?

2. Which other members form part of your support staff?
3. What is in your own opinion, the main challenge with staff provisioning?
4. What other forms of professional support do you receive and from whom?
5. What support do you receive from the Department of Education?
6. What is your opinion about the level of support you receive from the Department of Education?

### **COMMUNITY BASED ASSETS**

1. How do you involve the local community in your own teaching and learning mediation?
2. Which other organisations or institutions forms part of your professional support structure?
3. In what ways has the community benefited you in your work?
4. How many community members are actively involved in the day-to-day running of the centre?
5. What assets and other resources have you acquired through community intervention?
6. What further plans do you have in place to involve the community to assist you in implementing the curriculum?

### **CURRICULUM**

1. Which curriculum does the centre offer to the learners?
2. What is the learner-facilitator ratio in your class?
3. Which subjects do you offer and for which Levels?
4. How many periods do you offer per week?
5. How are the learners involved in their subjects' selection?
6. How do you ensure that the curriculum is suitably adapted for the visually impaired adult learners?
7. In your own opinion, what are the challenges regarding curriculum implementation?
8. What do you suggest can be done to improve on the standard of teaching and learning for your learners?

## **APPENDIX 7**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEARNERS**

---

The following aspects will guide the interview process:

#### **FACTS AND FIGURES**

1. Where do you come from?
2. When did you enrol at BPALC?
3. Why are you enrolled at BPALC?
4. How did you find out about BPALC?
5. How do you travel to the centre?
6. How much do you pay for tuition fees?
7. How many are you in class?
8. How many periods do you attend per week?
9. How long does your lesson last?

#### **ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT**

1. What is the difference between learning at an ordinary Public Adult Learning Centre and BPALC?
2. Which methods are basically used by facilitators at BPALC?
3. Which adaptive devices do you use to make learning easier?
4. What do you use as your mode of reading and writing?
5. How accessible is the reading materials?
6. What teaching and learning support materials make teaching and learning easier for you at BPALC?
7. What are, in your opinion, the challenges you encounter in accessing learning materials?

#### **STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT**

1. How many members of staff do you have at BPALC?
2. How many facilitators do you have?
3. How many are you in your class?
4. What is your opinion about the relevance of the teaching and learning support materials at BPALC?
5. What is your opinion about the level of learning support you receive from the facilitators?
6. What other forms of professional support do you receive from the Department of Education?
7. What do you like about the teaching and learning mediation at BPALC?

8. What is your opinion about the facilitators at BPALC to mediate their learning areas?
9. In your opinion, what do you think could be done better to improve the present teaching and learning situation?

### **CURRICULUM**

1. Which subjects are you enrolled for at BPALC and for which Level?
2. Why did you decide on those subjects?
3. What do you plan to do after completing Level IV?
4. How relevant is your choice of subjects towards achieving your goal?
5. What challenges makes it difficult for you to perform to your maximum ability?

## **APPENDIX 8**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE CENTRE MANAGER**

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#### **FACTS AND FIGURES**

1. When were you appointed as the Centre Manager at BPALC?
2. How did you find out about BPALC?
3. How many facilitators are there at BPALC?
4. How were you appointed to work at BPALC?
5. Who is responsible for the payment of your salary?
6. What is the total enrolment of learners at BPALC?
7. How many periods do you have per week and how long does each last?
8. What is your opinion about time allocation per period per week?

#### **ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT**

1. What is, in your opinion, the difference between adult education and regular education?
2. What is the difference between teaching sighted adult learners and visually impaired adult learners?
3. What basic methods are used for the teaching of visually impaired adult learners?
4. What basic resources are used to ensure effective curriculum implementation to the visually impaired adult learners?
5. How accessible are such resources, and who is responsible for their procurement?
6. What adaptive and assistive devices are available at the centre to ensure effective teaching and learning for the visually impaired adult learners?
7. What are, in your opinion, your challenges regarding curriculum adaptation?

#### **TRAINING AND EMPOWERMENT**

1. What special training do the facilitators at BPALC have?
2. What is the duration of the training?
3. What is the structure of the training programme?
4. In your own opinion, do you think the duration of the training was enough?
5. What is your opinion about the facilitators' capacity to mediate their learning areas?
6. What form of other empowerment programmes is available for the staff at BPALC?
7. How many of the staff members are enrolled for further studies?

#### **STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT**

1. How many facilitators are there in the centre?
2. What constitute BPALC's management team?
3. What constitute BPALC's governing body?
4. How many adult learners are enrolled for this academic year?

5. What is the basic educational qualification of a facilitator at BPALC?
6. How are facilitators appointed at BPALC?
7. How are the salaries of the facilitators at BPALC funded?
8. What is the learner-facilitator ratio at BPALC?
9. How is the actual workload allocated to BPALC's staff?
10. What challenges do you encounter in terms of staff provisioning?
11. What other forms of support do you receive and from whom?

### **COMMUNITY BASED ASSETS**

1. How do you involve the local community in developing BPALC?
2. Which other organisations or institutions are involved in the educational development of BPALC?
3. In what ways has the community benefited BPALC?
4. How many community members are actively involved in the day-to-day running of the centre?
5. What educational needs and resources have you acquired through community intervention?
6. What support do you get from Bosele School for the Blind & Deaf?
7. How are the teachers at Bosele School for the Blind & Deaf engaged in developing BPALC?
8. What plans do you have in place to involve the community?

### **CURRICULUM**

1. What is the primary objective of BPALC?
2. Which curriculum does the centre offer to the learners?
3. What choice do the learners have in terms of their subject selection?
4. How do you ensure that the curriculum is suitably adapted for the visually impaired adult learners?
5. In your own opinion, do you think the implementation of the curriculum is successful, and why?
6. What has been the general performance of Level IV learners in the past three years?

## **APPENDIX 9**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE ABET COORDINATOR**

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#### **FACTS AND FIGURES**

1. When were you appointed as the Hlogotlou Circuit Coordinator of Public Adult Learning Centres?
2. How many Public Adult Centres are there in the Hlogotlou circuit?
3. How many Public Adult Learning Centres for the Visually Impaired are there in Hlogotlou Circuit?
4. How many facilitators are there at BPALC?
5. How were you appointed as the Circuit Coordinator?
6. What is the overall learner enrolment of BPALC?
7. How many periods do learners at BPALC attend per week?
8. What is your opinion about the time allocated to the learning areas per week at BPALC?

#### **ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT**

1. How many Public Adult Learning Centres do you coordinate?
2. Among them, how many are for the visually impaired adult learners?
3. What is, in your opinion, the difference between ordinary public adult learning centres and public adult learning centres for the visually impaired?
4. What special provisions are in place for the public learning centres for the visually impaired?
5. What challenges do you encounter in terms of learner material provisioning?

#### **TRAINING AND EMPOWERMENT**

1. What special training should facilitators at BPALC have?
2. What is the duration of the training?
3. What is the structure of the training programme?
4. What is your opinion about the structure of the training programme?
5. What further service-learning programmes are in place to develop the facilitators?
6. What is your opinion about the facilitators' capacity to mediate their learning areas?
7. What forms of other empowerment programmes are available for the facilitators at BPALC?
8. What, in your opinion, is the challenge facing BPALC in terms of training and support?

## **STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT**

1. What is the role of the circuit coordinator?
2. How many facilitators is on the BPALC staff?
3. What is the basic educational qualification requirement for a facilitator at BPALC?
4. How are facilitators appointed at BPALC?
5. How are the salaries of the facilitators at BPALC funded?
6. How is staff provisioning determined at BPALC?
7. What guidelines are in place for the procurement of learning and teaching support materials for learners at BPALC?
8. What forms of professional support do you offer to the facilitators at BPALC?
9. What challenges do you experience in the provisioning of support to BPALC staff?

## **COMMUNITY BASED ASSETS**

1. How do you involve the local community in the educational development of BPALC?
2. Which other organisations or institutions are involved in the educational development of BPALC?
3. What educational needs and resources have you managed to acquire through community interventions?
4. What further plans do you have in place to engage the community in developing BPALC?

## **CURRICULUM**

1. Which curriculum has BPALC registered with the Limpopo Department of Education?
2. What choice do the learners have in terms of their subject selection?
3. Which programmes are organised by the Circuit with a view to specifically empowering BPALC facilitators in curriculum implementation?
4. How do you ensure that the curriculum is suitably adapted to the needs of the visually impaired adult learners?
5. In your own opinion, do you think the implementation of the curriculum by BPALC is successful? Why?
6. What has been the general performance of Level IV learners in the past three years?

## APPENDIX 10

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

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Dear Participant

Following your formal consent to participate in the research study, kindly be informed that the interviews shall be conducted as scheduled below and that a reminder will be communicated to you well in advance.

DATE	TIME	INTERVIEWEE	
26 August 2013	08H30 – 09H15	Facilitator A	√
	09H30 – 10H15	Facilitator B	√
	11H30 – 12H15	Learner A	√
	14H00 – 14H45	Learner B	√
	15H00 – 15H45	Learner C	√
27 August 2013	08H30 – 09H15	Centre Manager	√
	11H30 – 12H15	Learner D	√
	14H00 – 14H45	Learner E	√
	15H00 – 15H45	Learner F	√
28 August 2013	14H00 – 14H45	Abet Coordinator	?
07 October 2013	11H00 – 12H00	Focus Group	√

I Hope you will find the schedule in your favour. Please do not hesitate to contact me in case you request for rescheduling of your time/date.

Warm regards

EM Sekgobela  
(083 218 9269)