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## **4.2 EMERGENT THEMES**

### **4.2.1 Role of women members in their community**

Seven of the interviewees spoke/agreed that the role of women in the community is very instrumental in achieving a united community<sup>1</sup>.

Interviewee 4 discussed the following: "Here in the B-Section in Khayelitsha, when a member of the community passes away, R20 is collected from door to door from the neighbours to ensure that the family of the deceased is supported".

Interviewee 1, in support of the above statement, added that: "...even when a member of the community is in hospital, we, as the women in the community, make plans to go and visit our neighbour in the hospital".

There was a general consensus with this question - the women showed a strong sense of community spirit. They were proud to help their 'neighbours' as a community.

Often in the discussion the women individually mentioned the word 'different', as they further explained I understood it to illustrate that women were different to the men in the community, as men had a different role.

The interview took a significant turn when interviewee 3 mentioned that: "Our husbands play a different role, they are always the majority members voted into the street committees in our community. Women are not really in charge in our community. Men still make the decisions to protect the members of the community".

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<sup>11</sup> To preserve the authenticity of the feedback, interviewee's comments were quoted verbatim.











#### 4.4 ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Due to the current economic situation in South Africa, Cape Town and specifically in the B-Section where there is a lack of employment, Government has set up programs such as monthly social grants (financial aid) and has promised low cost housing in order to curb the current state of affairs of financial lack. Unfortunately service delivery (providing adequate low cost housing, water supply and basic sanitation) has been slow, therefore the women were riled up when responding.

Interviewee 5 stated that: "If government can create jobs and support our children with jobs that would be the best thing. I have less time to do wrong things such



Interviewee 3 stated that: "Government that we can live safely. In our area we are lucky as we are adults and they still live with us in backyards in sha

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Interview 3 added that: "We get disability grants and child support grants to support us with our livelihoods. What some of the youth does is use that money for alcohol. So it is sad that some of the money that government supports us with is wasted and not used for the right reasons".

Interviewee 6 stated that: "As a single parent I don't know what I would do if I did not get my daughter's grant. Even though it's not a lot of money it allows me to buy shoes for my child and also that she can take a lunchbox to school. I am very happy for the financial support from government as her father does not support her".

Interviewee 9 stated that: "We appreciate the money that government gives us but I would prefer that government gives our children skills and training to make sure that they can have brighter futures. They could maybe train them in skills that allow them to open their own businesses since they can't create jobs".

Interviewee 10 stated that: "The reduction of payment rates in our home has really helped because we are all unemployed so we are so happy that rates were totally reduced as we had no way to pay them at all. The grants allow us to feed the children; my sick mother also gets her pension and this eases the pressure a lot".

Interviewee 4 stated that: "I think that government made a progress in my life, because there are things that I wanted like RDP house, water and electricity and they even created community jobs and some of the children get free education".

Interviewee 1 stated that: "Government does not help me in any way. I don't see what they are doing besides giving grants for children and pensioners".

Interviewee 2 stated that: "We are still too poor but we hope things will improve".

Interviewee 8 stated that: "Government gave me a learnership (sic) and that prepared me for the job that I have now".

The women saw the support of government in two central ways. It was a 60/40 split with the majority stating that they appreciated what government did with all the social grants and the minority stating that they felt government has done nothing to improve their lives.

### **Patriarchy yes or no?**

There is little doubt that women in Africa face what can be termed multiple forms of oppression and marginalisation, which in turn necessitate multivalent feminist strategies. One could begin with an assessment of the patriarchal and male-centred nature of South African society. Zulu (1998) states:

South African society is profoundly patriarchal. Women remain among the most politically, socially and economically marginalised members of our society. They are oppressed through the social structure and institutions. They are underrepresented in all sectors of our society

except its lowest reaches. Civil and political organisations, like the African National Congress (ANC), are still male dominated. The situation is worse in the private sector. Companies resisting democratic change are not prepared to develop and implement gender-sensitive policies (Zulu, 1998: 147).

The above refers to the various ways in which male hegemony in society marginalises women on a social, political as well as economic level. To support this view of gender inequality, Zulu (1998) refers to the fact that out of a total of 531,498 senior officials and managers, 415,505 are male and only 150,998 are women and that "...inequality between women and men permeates the whole social fabric" (Zulu, 1998: 148). Zulu also refers to discrimination in education, with far fewer women finishing school or entering university than men. An important point is that the educational system tends to reinforce gender roles and the self-perception and self-efficacy of women. "Old educational materials still reinforce traditional female and male roles that deny women opportunities for equal partnership in society" (Zulu, 1998: 148). The reinforcement of certain stereotypes which emphasise female "weakness" and inferiority and which lead to low self-esteem and low self-efficacy, have been noted in many studies on education, the media and by women throughout the world.

#### **4.5 SUPPORT TO WOMEN**

Some of the women interviewees in the B-Section complained of a lack of support from their community in general, their committees or police.

Interviewee 2 stated that: "There is no support for women in my community – you just have to wake up and do things yourself".

Interviewee 5 stated that: "We are not sure of any support because the local committees do not consult with us. We hear that money has come in for certain projects but we never see these things get off the ground. Or if the projects begin

certain people are offered the opportunity and not everyone. They choose each other and their families".

Interview 3 stated that: "Some people do not attend street meetings when they are announced, therefore they never know what is going on".

Interviewee 1 stated that: "There are a lot of women within our community that have skills such as baking, bead making and sewing but we don't even have any kind of support such as stipends to buy materials and start to work for ourselves so that we don't bother anyone begging for jobs".

The general consensus was that the women did not see any specific support directed at women in their community. They also explained that there was corruption within the committees because the committee members only helped the people they know and their families. Interviewee 6 went as far as to say that: "...if you are low-class you get nothing but if you are their friend you get everything".

## **4.6 IMPROVEMENT IN QUALITY OF LIFE AFTER 1994**

### **4.6.1 Health**

The women discussed how their quality of life had improved after 1994, and there were particular themes that came out such as that some women were happy and that there was improvement post 1994, new diseases, slow service at clinics and lack of personal cash flow to meet health needs.

Interviewee 11 stated that: "Before we were free from apartheid we used to struggle as we did not have enough clinics to accommodate us. Now in our area there are many places people can go to see a doctor. There is a lot of improvement and we are fine".

Interviewee 9 states that: "We have new challenges now such as HIV/AIDS. We did not have this before – but then I guess it's a new disease".

The interviewees suggested that their health is better now with the amount of medical facilities that they can go to should they not be feeling well. Some complained about slow service at the clinics.

Interviewee 7 stated: "We don't have money. You sometimes have to pay a lot for your child to see the doctor (private practice). I wish I had medical aid to take my children to the doctor when they are sick. At the clinic you have to get there by at least 5am to stand in line and maybe you can see the doctor by 10am. The lines are too long and too many people are sick all the time".

#### **4.6.2 Education**

Recently in South Africa there was a scandal that stated that books were not delivered at all to a particular province, therefore this topic was touched on in the interviews. Understanding the Limpopo textbook saga, <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/review/hsrc-review-september-2013/understanding-the-limpopo-textbook-saga> (Chisholm: 2013), The Textbook Saga and Corruption in Education. Southern African Review of Education (With Education With Production).

Interviewee 6 stated that: "The Bantu education system was crippling for us as we had to study in a language we did not understand. There was a lot of failure but we strived and fought for what we deserved even though many died for the cause (referring to the 1976 Soweto uprising). We have free education now and our children study in their mother tongue – life is definitely much better".

Some of the women stated that with free education in some schools it helps but they are still struggling to pay for school supplies. They are glad their children get to study in their mother tongue. Some of the group members had a different viewpoint.

Interviewee 5 stated: "The scandal with no books being delivered in some areas scared us. We were worried about the report card the children would get with no textbooks. The department seemed as if they did not care as they took long to solve this problem".

Interviewee 3 stated: “The minister should have been fired – she doesn’t care”.

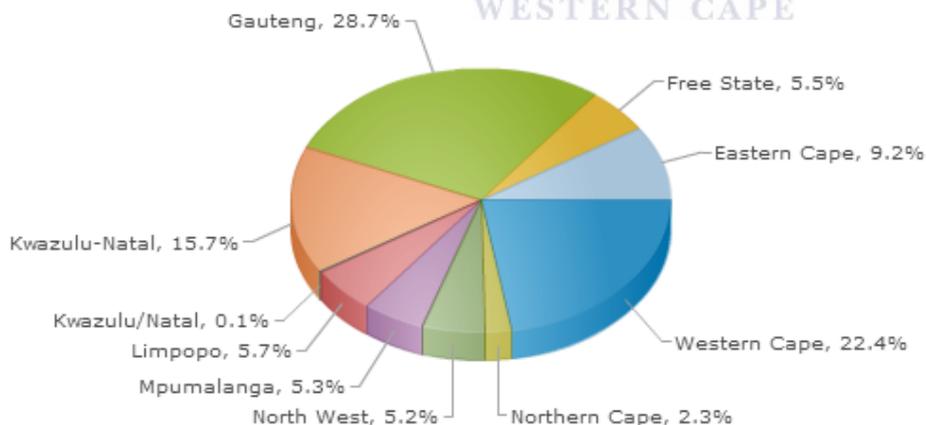
Interviewee 1 stated: “The classes are so crowded that my child does not get the attention she deserves”.

The point of overcrowding and textbooks was mentioned by the women as one of the main challenges that face their children. Teenage pregnancy was also mentioned by the women, blaming the teachers for abusing (sexual) their daughters and ‘destroying’ their lives.

### 4.6.3 Safety and Security

In South Africa the crime rate is at a high in the Western Cape according to Crime Statistics SA. The South African Police Service releases the latest crime statistics annually.

Figure 2: Crime statistics



Source: <http://www.crimestatssa.com/index.php>

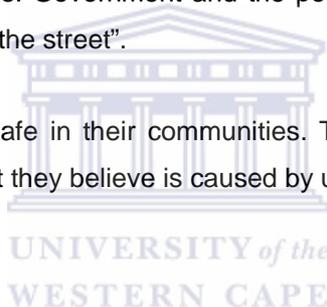
The women of Khayelitsha state that crime has increased severely over the last couple of years, and reflect on how there was less crime before.

Interviewee 5 stated that: “Back in the day communities lived in harmony, as we had a common cause. There was less crime and wrong-doing. Now that the fight is over against the previous oppressor and the youth have nothing to fight for, they have too much time on their hands and they are doing crime due to lack of activity or employment”.

Crime was a key discussion. All the women agreed that crime was destroying their community and the society at large. They stated that they are happy that the men in their community are helping the police to capture all the criminals. Their prevalent fear was rape for them and their daughters

Interviewee 1 concluded stating: “We are not safe. We live in fear of our own sons – they do drugs, and they are dangerous. Government and the police must fix this – these boys need jobs to keep them off the street”.

In summary the women do not feel safe in their communities. The women live in daily fear of their lives due to crime that they believe is caused by unemployment.



## **4.7 WOMEN LEADERS**

The second batch of women that were interviewed was women that were leaders in the B-Section area in Khayelitsha. Some of the women were street committee members, church leaders, political party councillors, KDF representatives and SANCO leaders.

### **4.7.1 Women leadership role**

It was very fascinating chatting to the women leaders and how they defined their role in the community. The main themes that came out were solving community member problems, strategy and working closely with the community.

Interviewee 11: “The role I play as a leader in the community is to understand the problems that people are dealing with. We then write this list down in terms of priority







































































