UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

A Family Literacy Initiative

Using Participatory Action Research in Manila, Philippines

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between participatory action research (PAR) and family literacy in the context of an urban poor Filipino community. It provides an overview of the field of development and argues that participatory approaches to development may address barriers that have limited the effectiveness of past development initiatives. A review of literature on family and adult literacy, particularly in communities in the South, provides background for the case study. The case study describes the collaborative development and implementation of a community-based family literacy program which directly supported mothers and their young children. Utilizing the PAR approach resulted in the researcher and local participants gaining skills and confidence in family literacy programming and led to the sustainability of the project. The program was effective in confirming and increasing family literacy practices among at least six families and encouraging these families to practice newly-learned family literacy skills.

Preface

Between years as a teacher in British Columbia, I traveled extensively throughout Asia, Africa, Central and South America. Though I revered every one of these experiences, and despite travelling 'close to the people', I never reconciled my privileged position. I also felt I was only beginning to understand people who are culturally and economically different from me. In an attempt to obtain deeper knowledge about other people in other places, I left Canada and went to the Philippines where I taught in an international school in Manila. Surely, living and interacting in this setting would facilitate my learning about Asian cultures? However, though I was gaining tremendous knowledge as an educator, I associated almost exclusively with North American and European teachers and foreign service employees.

I was concerned about 'cocooning' myself away from the culture and poverty of the Philippines. In order to combat this concern, within the first few months of my first year in Manila, I began volunteering with a French non-government organization (NGO) who provided a home, basic needs, and support for street children. For three years, once weekly, I did arts and crafts activities with ten or more girls who had been previously involved in the sex trade. Interested in broadening my experience with local NGO's, I volunteered with the Bukas Palad Social Centre during my last year in Manila. I worked with children on literacy and English skills once weekly. Volunteering with both of these organizations provided me with a tiny window into the richness of Filipino culture as well as the complexity and challenge of the poverty that impacts seventy percent of the people in this country. My experience at the Bukas Palad Social Centre, in particular, confirmed my passion and interest in development work .

Two years ago, I left the Philippines to begin a master's program in development education at the University of Calgary. I was interested in gaining theoretical understanding of the field of development in order to better understand how countries in the North support poor communities in the South. I was awarded a research grant through the Canadian Bureau of

International Education - Canadian International Development Agency which allowed me to return to Manila and work 'on the ground' in a more intense way with members of the Bukas Palad Social Centre and the community. During my seven months in Manila, I acquired more cultural understanding than I had in four years as a teacher in the international school . Though I did not live in the community , I traveled by local transport, discovered tasty, low-cost meals sold by women out of their homes, and managed to learn a few Tagalog phrases. I witnessed the challenges of poverty every day and marveled at the ingenuity, tenacity and resilience of the people I worked with and encountered. I also realized that though I had learned much about the culture of poverty in an urban poor setting in the Philippines, as an educated, privileged Canadian, I realized that I will never fully understand the nuances of this culture nor completely reconcile with the disparity between the rich and poor within the Philippines and across the world. However, despite this lack of understanding, I learned that working collaboratively with diverse groups of people can lead to poverty alleviation.

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This , then, is the great humanistic and historical task
of the oppressed:

to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well.

- Paulo Freire, <u>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</u>

1. Introduction

For the past four decades, wealthy countries in the North[1] have provided support in the form of 'development aid' to poor countries, generally located in the South, in an attempt to close the gap between the rich and the poor. Historically, development theorists and researchers, ensconced in Northern universities and institutions, have created various plans or 'blueprints' for ways poor countries can become developed. These blueprints have been rooted in First world industrialization: development theorists and researchers have argued that underdeveloped countries will achieve modernisation by following the same road to industralization used by developed countries. Development practitioners, as experts, have largely approached aid provision using one of these 'macro' blueprints. They have attempted to graft Western notions such as modernisation, capitalism, democracy, and good governance onto poor countries.

Throughout this thesis, I will use the terms developed and developing, North and South, First World and Third World, and centre and periphery interchangeably. When using the terms 'developed', 'North', and 'First World', and 'centre', I am referring to industrialized countries in Europe, North America, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. When using the terms 'developing', 'South', 'Third World', and 'periphery', I am referring to select countries located in Africa, Asia, South and Central America, and the Caribbean. All these terms have limitations. Though, like most present-day literature, I use "developed" and "developing" most frequently , I recognize the assumptions implied by using such terms: there exists a universal notion that people worldwide want to emulate industrialized nations' perception of 'development' - they are willing to shed traditions and popular knowledge in order to gain modernisation and economic stability. However, many poor communities want to hang onto their diversity and culture and avoid social ills associated with modernisation. Using the terms 'North' and 'South' is shorthand for referring to the fact that industrialized countries are located in the Northern hemisphere while poor countries are located in the Southern hemisphere. However, there are many exceptions to this generalization (eg. Australia is located in the southern hemisphere). 'First World' and 'Third World', terms established after the second World War, set the stage for establishing an ideological framework which has dictated the relationship between the superiority of industrialized countries over other, less privileged countries. World Systems theorists overcome the dominance and uniformity assumed by terms such as 'Third World' or 'developed' by referring to countries or communities as centres (eg.Canada), peripheries (eg.the Philippines), peripheries of centres (eg.the Canadian Aboriginal), and centres of peripheries (eg.the Marcos family of the Philippines) (Shannon, 1989). Though these terms are more neutral and acknowledge internal diversities, they are readily misunderstood and not commonplace in the literature. For these reasons, I recognize the reductionism implied in all the terms discussed above. However, for the sake of clarity and efficiency , these terms will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

First World donor aid initiatives have met with varying degrees of success over the past forty years. Despite effort and enterprise on the part of development agencies, today "[t]he 500 richest people on the planet now control more wealth than the poorest three billion" (Loeb, 1999, p.46). Clearly, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. Sustainability of some projects, after donor aid agencies have fulfilled their 'commitment', has not been well-established.Too many development projects, especially at the macro level, have culminated in failure. In some cases, these failed projects have led to *furthering* situations of poverty and marginalization within communities. Obviously, there are many complex obstacles to the successful implementation of development projects. Perhaps theorists, researchers and practitioners from the North have not fully grasped the complexity of issues surrounding poverty alleviation in the South.

Not only have development experts from the North misunderstood the challenges of poverty alleviation, the world has changed markedly over the past forty years. The Cold War is over, yet we are now encountering the effects of globalization, urbanization, environmental degradation, and a worldwide AIDS epidemic. Oppressed communities are not just read about in the international section of newspapers; they now exist on the edge of our own communities. As well, people in poor communities located in both the North and South are finding their voices and beginning to speak out, as experts, about their notions of development.

Adult literacy programs in poor communities in the South have been implemented within this development context. Literacy has been considered by many development practitioners as a critical precursor to economic, political, and social development. Literacy initiatives have, in part, been responsible for improved literacy rates worldwide in the last twenty years. However, today there are approximately 900 million illiterate adults (Lind and Johnston, 1990 as cited in Abadazi, 1994). Research outlines the barriers to achieving literacy acquisition. Studies report that most illiterates do not actually enrol in programs. Women, in particular, have little time to explore literacy acquisition because of childrearing, domestic, employment, and community responsibilities. If illiterates do join a program, on

average, fifty percent drop-out. Even if individuals complete literacy programs, they may not be functionally literate. Furthermore, if 'neoliterates' do not use their newly acquired skills, they may lapse back into illiteracy. These findings indicate that many First World adult literacy theorists and practitioners do not understand the unique social and cultural factors associated with literacy acquisition in other communities. Not surprisingly, due to the well-documented ineffectiveness of literacy programs in the 1970's and 1980's, and despite Third World government requests, donor agencies such as the World Bank have refused to support large-scale literacy projects.

Based on failed development experiments, including adult literacy initiatives, alternatives to approaching development and literacy must be considered. Paulo Freire, liberatory educator and South American development practitioner, is a voice from the South that has been and continues to be highly respected by many First World development experts for the past thirty years. He offers alternatives to top-down development practices by suggesting that oppressed people themselves can begin critically looking at their situations of oppression; and by collaborating with their 'oppressors', and through acquiring relevant skills, can not only achieve emancipation but regain their humanity. Participatory processes as alternatives to traditional approaches to development, whereby members of communities actively and critically participate together with practitioners from the North to design strategies leading to poverty alleviation, have developed from Freire's pedagogy.

Not only do alternative approaches to development exist, but other approaches to literacy have also surfaced. Concurrent to many adult literacy initiatives failing in developing countries, the notion of 'family literacy' was emerging in the United States. While adult literacy focuses on individuals, the concept of family literacy targets literacy interactions and practices among family members. Programs support families as a whole, and children and adults separately, in learning and practicing literacy behaviours in families' homes. The premise underlying family literacy is that literacy is an intergenerational skill. The International Literacy Survey (O.E.C.D., 1997) conducted in countries in the North, indicates that education and literacy levels of parents are strongly correlated with predicted

literacy levels of children. as well as to family income and health status. Beginning in the early 1980's, family literacy programs surfaced in many peripheral American communities where poor and/or minority groups were not fully benefiting from public education. Though varying widely in models and methods. and not without socio-cultural limitations, these American family literacy programs attempt to interrupt the cycle of illiteracy among at-risk families. In many instances, these programs have been successful in supporting families in overcoming illiteracy. The nature of these program has led parents, especially mothers. despite their literacy levels, to enrol and participate regularly mostly because they recognize the benefits to their children.

It is the confluence of these issues that provides the impetus and foundation for this thesis. Based on my reading on development and literacy, I began to ask questions around the relationship between the notion of family literacy, participatory processes, and development initiatives. Are participatory processes to approaching development more effective than traditional approaches? Could employing participatory processes lead to the development of family literacy models that are more socio-culturally sensitive? Could socio-cultural models of family literacy address illiteracy in developing communities? Further exploration of this type of literacy program in communities in the South seemed feasible. valuable and worthy of investigation. Hence. the evolution of my thesis topic and question.

My research question is as follows:

How does participatory action research (PAR) enrich the process of developing and implementing an effective family literacy program in an urban poor setting in the Philippines?

I have chosen to use participatory action research as my research methodology because it is a well-documented example of a participatory process. It embraces the notion of community members working collaboratively with external researchers to improve situations of poverty and oppression. This methodology has been widely used in both the

North and South to facilitate the process of social change. I chose this participatory tool over other qualitative and quantitative tools because, based on the historical context behind the scholarly field of development, as a researcher from the North planning to investigate literacy in a community in the South, I could not gain an understanding of the complexity of these peoples' lives without working collaboratively with them. I would need to position myself as an equal participant in the process, at least in terms of power and knowledge. Related to PAR's subscription to equal participation is its promotion of a reciprocal exchange of knowledge which leads to both 'researcher' and 'subjects' benefiting from the process, not just researchers alone, as characterizes most other forms of research. Equally significant, these principles of PAR are among a compilation of principles which may lead to this research project being sustainable after my part in the process comes to an end.

After considering several sources, I borrow from other proponents and theorists to develop my own definitions of 'literacy' and 'family literacy'. For the purpose of this thesis, 'literacy' is *the range of skills and competencies - cognitive, affective, and behavioural - which enables individuals to function effectively in society within the context of the wider community (local, regional, national, and global) in order to improve their quality of life and that of society*. I define 'family literacy' as *the entire range of activities and practices that are integrated into the daily life of a family, including parents, children and extended family members, to promote literacy*. I argue that literacy-related skills are not limited to reading and writing tasks alone but also may include skills in numeracy, storytelling, drawing, playing games, and singing songs.

After completing an extensive review of the literature, I conducted research 'on the ground' in an urban poor community located in Manila, Philippines. I collaborated with Bukas Palad Foundation, a well-established non-government organization (NGO) with many pre-existing highly-effective community outreach programs. Almost all Bukas Palad employees were members of the community thus holding a deep connection with and compassion for people they worked with. Members of the community, in turn, trusted this organization in their endeavours to address poverty-related consequences such as tuberculosis,

malnourishment, poor education and limited housing. Bukas Palad community workers strongly endorsed and were familiar with participating collaboratively with foreigners. Over the seven month field study, several Bukas Palad facilitators and I developed and implemented a socio-cultural model of family literacy.

This thesis is comprised of six chapters and follows a three-fold process. Firstly, I investigate the work of four influential development theorists who position themselves at various places along the development debate continuum. Collectively, their work provides an historical context for development theory and practice, and articulates the diverse solutions posed to overcome current development dilemmas. Based on arguments presented by these theorists, I suggest that participatory approaches to development may overcome some barriers presently inhibiting the success of development endeavours. Secondly, I explore literature surrounding the underpinnings of family literacy. I review both family literacy programs located in the North and those few programs in developing communities found in the literature. Finally, I report on the fusing of participatory action research with family literacy program development and implementation through 'thickly describing' my field work and findings. Combining these three parts leads to augmenting and adding to the literature on the notion of PAR and family literacy in developing communities. Below is an explication of this three-fold process as it unfolds in five chapters.

Participatory Action Research in the Context of Development Theory

In Chapter 2, I present the work of four development theorists who collectively represent the present-day notion of development theory and practice and its inherent complexities. Largely from a theoretical perspective, John Martinussen (1997), a Danish development studies expert, sets the historical development context. I summarize his interpretation of modernisation, dependency, and sociological and political development theories. His exploration of alternative forms of development are outlined along with tentative solutions to the development debate.

Moving from a traditional to a postmodern perspective, Jane Parpart (1995), a Canadian development academic, critiques development and its relationship to gender. She analyzes the notion of the Northern development 'expert' and argues that postmodern feminist thinking has much to offer the discipline of development.

Both Martinussen and Parpart offer solutions to development vastly distinct from French political economist Serge Latouche (1993). Latouche contends that development initiatives are globally insignificant and fundamentally only benefit the 'grand society'. He sees tremendous ingenuity in 'outcasts', those living on the periphery of the centre. He argues that these informal societies have the capacity to define and solve their own development challenges without the misguided support of members of the grand society.

Finally, Freire, positioned in the South as a development theorist and practitioner, suggests development initiatives should begin with people in developing communities. He argues that the oppressed can become 'conscientized' about contradictions existing in their worlds and can take action against these oppressive elements (Freire, 1970). This process of achieving conscientization can be facilitated by those 'oppressors' who demonstrate 'true solidarity' behind the oppressed. Both the oppressed and their oppressors must work collaboratively to achieve 'praxis' - a cycle of reflection that leads to action- which in turn can lead to emancipation.

Freire's work influenced the emergence of participatory processes in development theory and practice. I also explore the literature on these processes. I outline principles of participatory action research and discuss recurring themes found in the literature on knowledge, participation, and the researcher-participant relationship. I also outline reasons for using participatory action research in this research project.

Family Literacy, Adult Literacy and Basic Education

In Chapter 3, I present research related to family literacy theory and practice. I rely heavily on Ruth Nickse's (1990) influential work on the diverse research base, including studies

from adult education and early childhood education, that underlies American family literacy programs. Nickse's typology of family literacy programs is elaborated. I also describe H.S. Bhola's historical anthropological interpretation of family literacy which addresses the culturally transformative nature of families.

I summarize four studies, as examples of family literacy programs in marginalized communities in the North. Three studies discuss American programs while the program described by the fourth study is located in the United Kingdom. These four studies were chosen from numerous ones found in the primarily American family literacy literature because they typify the diversity of family literacy programs that exist and provide a program description and evaluation.

I investigate family literacy programs as they occur in developing communities. I located four studies related to family literacy. The two most informative studies discuss and evaluate programs located in Turkey and Chile. However, I recognize that these two countries might be best categorized as *between* the Third and First World and not as developing countries. The lack of data on programs in developing countries gave me impetus to further explore the notion of family literacy in this context.

Though little information was found on family literacy in Third World countries, much has been written on adult literacy and basic education initiatives in these settings. I describe Helen Abadzi's (1994) literature review on adult literacy program constraints and her suggestions for improving the effectiveness of these literacy programs. Her work furthered my understanding of literacy in communities in the South and confirmed my assumption that literacy needs and issues are different in these communities than in peripheral communities in the First World. These differences are related to the *degree* and permanency of poverty and its consequences experienced by people in communities in the South.

The "World Conference on Education For All" at Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, is discussed

in this chapter as the outcomes of this conference provide rationale for the need for broader forms of basic education models in developing communities. These broader models include involving parents in their young children's education.

I close Chapter 3 with a critique of family literacy. I review theorists who challenge assumptions about the universality of literacy and its merits. I also describe Sondra Cuban and Elisabeth Hoyes' (1989) discussion about the implications of family literacy programs for women.

The Philippines and the Bukas Palad Social Centre

In Chapter 4. I provide some background information on the Philippines. I report on Philippine demographics. its varied ethnicity and language as well as its vibrant history and improving economy. Literacy rates and needs as well as a discussion of literature addressing barriers to literacy acquisition in an urban poor Filipino setting are described. I summarize significant political milestones, over the past twenty years, that attempt to address the crisis in public education. I also elaborate on the present status of basic education and nonformal education in the Philippines.

Having painted the backdrop to my research setting, I describe my partner organization, the Bukas Palad Foundation. I articulate the historical context and extensive and effective present day activities of the Bukas Palad Social Centre. I also describe the Tramo community where the social centre is located. Working collaboratively in a largely open and trustful manner with Bukas Palad community workers led to greater understanding, on my part. of the "fine balance between hope and despair" (Mistry, 1995. p.268) that characterizes the lives of poor people. As well, observations of the work carried out by devoted, empathetic community outreach workers employed with this NGO confirmed my faith in the capacity of microprojects to specifically and efficiently address issues related to poverty eradication in developing communities.

In the latter part of the chapter, I describe the methodology and research tools used in the data collection phase of this research. We employed a participatory action process to develop and implement the family literacy program. To document this process, qualitative tools such as semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, session planners, and log entries were utilized. Quantitative tools included an attendance roster. Data collected from these tools are reported in the case study and findings chapter.

In order to protect the anonymity of local facilitators and participants, I have used pseudonyms throughout this thesis. All direct quotes taken from interviews and questionnaires are exact, without correcting for English usage and spelling. I have not altered the quotes because I feel they are more authentic and informative in their original form.

The Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program

Chapter 5 provides a 'thick description' of the case study. My reconnaissance mission is described and local facilitators are introduced. The outcomes of a series of planning meetings in October, January, and March describe the development phase of the family literacy project. Important decisions are collaboratively made during these meetings which determine the evolution of the structure and nature of the program. The structure of individual sessions, which include Parent Talks, Child Care, and Family Activities, is described together with examples of activities. The roles and responsibilities of local facilitators increased as these sessions progressed. Pre- and post- research project interviews are summarized as well as issues around recruitment and retention. I discuss efforts made to establish connections with other NGO's addressing literacy and education in the Philippines as well as attempts at connections with a local public school. A discussion about the potential for the sustainability of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program closes this chapter.

Merging Theory With Practice

In the concluding chapter of this thesis, I articulate how development and family literacy theory discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 relate and apply to the case study. I also discuss ways the practical experience adds new insight to these two bodies of literature. Firstly, I address findings associated with PAR. I show that by employing participatory action research, a trusting relationship between local facilitators and myself was established which led to local facilitators becoming committed to the research process and to the benefits of family literacy in their community. I also demonstrate how participatory action research results in local facilitators and myself acquiring new skills efficiently and effectively. We learned to value each others' knowledge and we created new knowledge by developing and implementing a socio-cultural model of family literacy in this urban poor Filipino community. We used praxis - reflection which leads to action - a critical PAR principles to improve individual sessions and the program in general. I identify the extensive time required to create change when using PAR and the difficulties we experienced in approaching a truly equal level of participation between myself, as external researcher, and local facilitators. These challenges form the limitations identified by employing participatory action research.

I also articulate findings associated with family literacy literature, especially literature about programs located in developing countries. I demonstrate how this program qualitatively demonstrates 'effectiveness' among six regularly-attending families. I define 'effectiveness' in this context as *evidence of confirming, increasing, and/or acquiring family literacy practices*. Recruitment and retention challenges and how these experiences add and offer new insight to the literature are explored.

I close the chapter and thesis with lessons learned as a result of investigating the literature on PAR and literacy acquisition endeavours in developing countries as well as my 'on the ground' experience of collaborating in the development and implementation of a family literacy program in an urban poor Filipino community. Based on these investigations, I argue that family literacy programs have the potential to overcome barriers to literacy acquisition, especially if family literacy, as an essential concept, is integrated into adult

literacy program models. I share my attitude shift about development and my liberation, in small ways, as an individual as a consequence of this research experience.

This thesis is a combination of intellectual investigation, grounded experience, and personal exploration. It investigates the relationship between participatory action research and family literacy initiatives in an urban poor developing community. Little in the way of published research is available on this relationship. This thesis augments and offers new insight into theory on both participatory action research and family literacy. It is a piece of work that demonstrates promise in the capacity of poor communities, with the committed support of development practitioners, to address and change situations of poverty and oppression. These changes may lead to less disparity between communities in the North and the South, narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor.

2. Participatory Action Research in the Context of Development Theory

Roughly seventy percent of the world's population live in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the smaller islands in the southern hemisphere. A large number of these people live below the poverty line: "measured by the common standard of $1 a day, 1.3 billion people in the developing world live in extreme poverty" (World Bank Atlas, 1998, p. 15). The field of development research, theory and practice, has attempted for the past forty years to provide various explanations for the patterns of development and underdevelopment in communities in the South in order to eliminate or at least reduce poverty in these communities. This field has seen considerable debate from its beginning, and in the past decade some would argue that the field of development has been in a state of crisis (see, for example, Martinussen, 1991, Latouche, 1993, and Marchand & Parpart, 1995). Despite development efforts, poverty and illiteracy rates continue to be high, AIDS has become endemic in Africa and Asia, urbanization is choking major world cities and environmental degradation is prolific. Development theories and approaches have largely been unable to explain the complexities of communities in the South. Donor aid initiatives, relying on these theories to bring about development and modernisation, have resulted in many failures. Alternative solutions are frequently debated in the literature and the dialogue continues unabated.

Many theorists and practitioners have contributed to the field of development theory and practice. I will pull from the work of four development theorists to outline the historical and present context of the development discipline. John Martinussen (1997), a Danish development studies expert, provides a comprehensive review of development theory and research. Jane Parpart (1995), a Canadian development academic, looks at the development track record and argues for listening to voices from the South, as equal 'development experts', in order to decide why and how development should take place in developing communities. Serge Latouche (1993), a French political economist, is critical of the Western notion of development. He argues for *post - development* where members of informal societies take full control of their own development. Finally, Paulo Freire (1970), though one of the earliest development theorists and practitioners, continues to directly

inform the development debate with his influential work <u>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</u>. Ideas emerging from Freire's work provide the foundation for participatory action research (PAR), a development tool that emerged in the South as a way of encouraging participation in defining and solving problems among local community members. PAR addresses some of the concerns identified by Martinussen, Parpart, Latouche and others. Because I conducted field work in a poor community in metro Manila, PAR seemed an appropriate methodological tool to achieve community participation, knowledge exchange, and sustainability. An elaboration of PAR as it is presented in the literature will follow the development theory discussion.

2.1 Historical Context of the Field of Development Theory:
John Martinussen

John Martinussen (1997), defines development studies and research as "the societal reproduction and transformation process of the developing countries, in conjunction with the international factors that influence these processes "(p.4). Martinussen states, however, that "...many researchers have claimed that development studies in the last decade have been caught in a serious crisis, because mainstream theories have not been able to properly explain the patterns of transformation and stagnation in developing countries" (Martinussen,1997, p.3). Martinussen reviews these mainstream theories as well as emerging alternative theories of development.

2.1.1 Modernisation Theories

According to Martinusssen, in the 1940's, various traditional development theories emerged as subdisciplines of classical economic and sociological/political development theory. "Modernisation" theorists, proponents of traditional economic theories,were primarily concerned with how traditional values and social structures broke down and were replaced by more modern ones. They viewed the increase in wealth brought about by economic growth as central to the solution of development problems. According to Martinussen,"through economic dominance and political control, the industrial countries have actively tried to graft their own 'modern' and development-promoting cultures on

backward societies" (Martinussen, 1997, p. 56).

Conversely, early structural economists, largely Latin American academics, were concerned with the underlying reasons for the economic stagnation in Third World countries, especially in Brazil and Mexico. These theorists saw basic economic structures as a kind of steel frame which could not be easily changed through capital and growth in production and consumption. External factors were considered determinants of the development process. They argued for the centralizing role of the state and encouraged foreign investments and international loans.

2.1.2 Dependency Theories

Competing with these classical economic theorists were the dependency, and later the Neo-Marxist theorists. Martinussen explains these theorists believed that the most significant barriers to growth and progress were not the development-impeding aspects of traditional societies, as asserted by modernisation theorists, but economic domination of these societies by industrialized countries. Neo-Marxist theories emerged in the 1980's in response to the inability of the original Marxist theories to fully explain the causes and dynamics of development and underdevelopment. Neo-Marxist theorists realized the limitations of applying one simplified conceptual framework to the complex multifaceted societies making up the Third World.

2.1.3 Sociological and Political Theories

Sociological and political theories emerged in the 1960's as an attempt to explain politics and political change in the Third World. Many of these theories emphasized concerns around state-building and nation-building. For example, the Weberian-influenced class and state theories claimed that the strength of certain social classes, as opposed to economic processes alone, were primary to the state and regime. Political scientists also argued for various forms of decentralization as part of a country's democratization efforts.

2.1.4 Alternative Development - Civil Society and People- Managed Development

Martinussen outlines some of the emerging notions of alternative development. He states that despite on-going attempts by development theorists in both the North and the South to better understand economic, political, and social factors affecting the Third World, emerging theories remained unable to fully understand the needs of these communities. Nor did these theories address the agency of the poor. Perhaps those people actually living in central African villages or urban slums outside Rio de Janerio could contribute to the process of solving some of their own problems? Martinussen discusses the notion of civil society, the informal sector, and "people - managed" development in the context of alternative theories of development.

Civil society theories, as discussed by Martinussen, addresses the agency of the poor. These theories explain the challenges of nation-building and ethnic identity issues as they relate to development practices. Many development theorists today have shifted away from the market or state and now focus on civil society in the broad sense of the term, positing the household as the core of civil society. The interactions of citizens within households and the interactions within local communities and outside formal political and economic systems are considered. The household is not only defined as a unit of consumption, but also an important unit of production. Households are considered locally limited units that enter into wider spheres of activity, "often through social networks where interactions are based on mutual trust, reciprocal exchange and social obligations - altogether different from the forms of interaction in the market economy" (Martinussen, 1997, p. 313). Women often play dominant roles in these interactions.

The informal sector has been incorporated into theories of civil society (as well as into more conventional theories). Economically defined, the informal sector comprises at least four distinct groups: the self-employed, casual workers, workers employed by small scale firms not regulated by authorities, and "outworkers", those who work in their homes under a putting-out system (Streeten, 1994, as cited by Martinussen, 1997). Until the 1970's it was assumed by mainstream development theorists that this segment of society was bound to

disappear as a result of economic growth and structural transformation. However, these expectations were not fulfilled. Indeed,this sector experienced *greater* growth in employment than in the formal sector in many developing countries. Consequently, interest by theorists and practitioners grew in reaching an understanding of this process and various theorists since then have attempted to explain why this sector continues to grow in Asia and Africa.

Despite the resourcefulness of the informal sector, Martinussen reminds us that development theorists have little confidence in the agency of the poor. Many theorists are almost universal in their insistence that "existing authorities or large organizations of some kind or another ..." (Martinussen, 1997. p. 331) must be responsible for implementing strategies leading to development. Very few theorists emphasize the role of individuals, both men and women, as independent actors and facilitators of change. Martinusseen states that *people - managed development* is development which focuses on ordinary citizens; it starts and is controlled by civil society. Proponents of this approach, including David Korten (1990) and Robert Chambers (1993), recognize the remarkable, yet often disregarded ways in which individual men and women have managed their own development at the micro-level and the importance these individuals play in development theory and policy construction and implementation in the future. This approach to development reduces the importance of the corporate capitalist economy and the state. Guy Gran (1983). one of the most prominent people-managed development theorists, asserts that the most important aspect of a development approach involves empowering poor and oppressed social groups through making use of Paulo Freire's "conscientization" process. According to Gran, recognizing the power of local people, as Freire began doing thirty years ago, may be the most effective and logical approach to development issues. Freire's work will be summarized later in this chapter.

Martinussen offers tentative solutions to the development dilemma. He suggests there

[2] Martinussen uses the term "people-managed development" to discuss development initiated and carried out by local people. I will assume Martinussen is referring to what Orlando Fals-Borda (1991) and Robin McTaggart (1991, 1993), among others, refer to as "participatory development" discussed later.

should be more rigorous formulation of development theories. He argues that there is need for "a far more comprehensive debate and careful reflection on the theory of science positions (implicitly) adopted by development research and on its methodological principles" (Martinussen, 1997, pg. 357). He also recognizes that development theorists and practitioners are frustrated with the lack of progress in the field of development over the past four decades. Some of these researchers are supporting powerful attempts to revive monodisciplinary, primarily economic, theories of development. Martinussen warns that these theories simply do not grasp the complexities of the Third World and will not lead to more successful development initiatives.

Martinussen's description of the evolution of the field of development contextualizes the current development debate. His critique of mostly mainstream theories provides deeper insight into the challenges associated with Northern development theorists grappling with complex issues surrounding communities in the South. Now moving away from the traditional field of development, Jane Parpart (1995), looks through the postmodern lens to critique notions of gender as it relates to development.

2.2. Deconstruction of the Development Expert : Jane Parpart

Jane Parpart together with Marianne Marchand (1995) in their article on development, gender and postmodernism concurs with Martinussen's summary of traditional development theory and practice and its present state of crisis. Parpart and Marchand argue that the development enterprise,whether rooted in liberal or Marxist perspectives, has been influenced by Enlightenment thought. According to Parpart and Marchand, "[b]oth [perspectives] saw development as a fairly straightforward, linear process, in which a nation or people moved from underdevelopment, which was equated with traditional institutions and values, to full development, i.e.modern / rational / industrialized societies based on the Northern model" (Parpart & Marchand, 1995, p.11). These academics argue that development today is reinforced by the predominantly American version which attempts to provide effective prescriptions for Third World development with the goal of making the world modern, i.e. as Western as possible.

In a related article. Parpart (1995) discusses gender and development issues as they relate to the notion of the "development expert". Parpart argues that the "development enterprise for the most part has been predicated on the assumption that certain peoples and societies are less developed than others, and that those more developed, i.e.more modern, have the expertise and knowledge to help the less developed (or developing) achieve modernity " (Parpart. 1995, p. 221). The notion of the "expert" as purveyor of specialized knowledge became increasingly important in the industrialized world. Essentially, this knowledge, primarily Western scientific knowledge, was considered universally valid and applicable to all: it became the dominant form of knowledge.

According to Parpart (1995), dominant knowledge became owned and controlled: not everyone could qualify as an expert. Not surprisingly, development experts emerged as essential to the development enterprise. They assumed a critical role in the process of collecting, controlling, and transferring knowledge between the North and South. However, large mainstream development projects in the 1960's and 1970's experienced dramatic failures, resulting in the development establishment, including its experts, being heavily criticized. Even today, despite contradictory evidence, the North and its experts continue to be viewed as superior to people in the South.

For these reasons, Parpart agrees with Martinussen that alternative 'people-managed' practices to mainstream development have emerged. She explains that "new voices, very often from the South and from women, are entering the development debate" (Parpart, 1995. p.237). These scholars and practitioners are arguing that development theory and practice must be sensitive to differences within groups and must address layers of oppression based mainly on race, class, and gender. Only then can the complex lives of people in peripheral communities be understood and their problems addressed. Parpart argues that postmodern feminist thinking has much to offer the discipline of development. It encourages people to think outside of their conceptual frameworks and recognize that differences must be more than just heard.

2.3 Post - Development and the Informal Society: Serge Latouche

Serge Latouche (1993) is highly critical of the motives behind, and outcomes of, development initiatives promoted by those living in developed countries. Like Martinussen and Parpart, Latouche asserts that the field of development is in a state of crisis. He states that "[t]oday, however, the great hopes placed in development have obviously been dashed" (Latouche. 1993, p. 39). Indeed, he suggests that "economic development produces maladjusted people" (Latouche, 1993, p.40). He believes that we in the industrial world have undergone a moral reformation, namely overvaluing consumerism to the exclusion of more important aspects of our culture and that this obsession will eventually lead to our demise. Latouche provides many illustrations supporting his notion of the foundering of the 'grand society'. For example, Latouche points out that with increased technology and efficiency, developed communities have anticipated increased leisure time. However, in our consumer-compulsive society, *even* time has become economized because of its utility value - this means that at all costs, time cannot be lost or wasted. In fact, Latouche argues that we enjoy *less* leisure time than our parents and grandparents.

2.3.1 The Demise of Development

Latouche argues that the grand society is a failed promise to its members. However, as 'privileged' humans, we feel we have an obligation to support the "outcasts" including the "new poor" (those who have lost their jobs to technological advances), Aboriginal minorities, and members of the "least advanced countries" in their attempt to enter our grand society, the industrial world.

Latouche is skeptical of the developed world's *real* motives behind development aid. He sees our interest in extending a helping hand to those less fortunate "so as to help them not just to survive but to enter into the club of the strong" (Latouche, 1993, p.113) as just another example of the myth of the grand society. Development aid, argues Latouche, is unquestionably profitable for donor agencies in the North. According to Latouche, "[a]id ends up itself becoming a veritable 'business'" (Latouche, 1993, p. 114). However, he

sees the impact of this aid as, at best, globally insignificant and at worst very negative; indeed he suggests that aid fails to achieve its objectives. Latouche does acknowledge that aid is not "necessarily bad, or even improper" (Latouche, 1993, p. 114). He cites examples of small-scale projects supported by NGO's that have been successful in improving the well-being of local populations in the long term. Yet, summarily, he argues for the notion of *post-development* , whereby the most effective aid First World development agencies can offer communities in the South is methods of combating the "infernal [aid] machine and to impede some of its mechanisms" (Latouche, 1993, p. 116)

2.3.2 The Ingenuity of the Informal

More importantly than the grand society's essentially self-motivated desire to provide aid to the 'outcasts', those living in informal societies on the periphery of the centre, is the underestimated capacity of the outcasts. Unlike Martinussen's earlier discussion about the 'informal sector' of society, Latouche refers to this group of people as members of the 'informal society' - a form of social life not an economic sector. The most obvious examples of existing informal societies are the slums of Rio de Janerio, Mexico City, or Manila - people living on the periphery of a developing megacity. However, such societies also exist in communities in the North - the Muslim community in the Spruce Cliff area of northwest Calgary or the Sisika Indian Reserve in southern Alberta may be considered examples of local informal societies. According to Latouche, informal societies, especially those located in the South, have managed to create 50 - 80% of urban jobs in most Third World cities by *not* following the law of economic maximisation, but of social maximisation (Latouche, 1993, p.134, 138). Latouche states that the informal society has creatively responded to limitations that life has presented to its people. It is much more able to improvise and be resilient than the grand society. Furthermore, these societies have demonstrated that much true wealth has been found in social solidarity.

Though the informal society has tremendous potential to solve its locally-defined development problem in its own ways, Latouche warns us that the informal society should not be co-opted as an "other" development solution. Indeed, he argues that the informal

society can be an alternative *to* development, as in post-development, in contrast to creating alternative development solutions. Related to this concern, Latouche views informal societies as providing hope for our futures as members of the grand society. He argues that " a synthesis between modern society's dynamism and the solidarity of traditional communities thus appears necessary and desirable" (Latouche, 1993, p. 231). Those in the informal society have a cultural richness that societies in the North should come to recognize, appreciate, and perhaps adopt.

Though Latouche's viewpoint is markedly different than most development academics and theorists, his perspective, particularly about the capacity of the informal society, informs my research with the Bukas Palad Social Centre,who supports those living in the informal.

2.4 Roots of Participatory Development: Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire (1970), considered one of the most influential development practitioners and liberatory educators in the field of development, would not agree with Latouche's concept of "post development" and the assumption that people from the centre should not be involved in helping those on the periphery solve some of their problems. However, he would concur with Latouche about the capacity and ingenuity of those living in informal societies. Yet, Freire sees local people, initially with the support of "external agents" or "animators", collaboratively developing and implementing solutions leading to the alleviation of oppression within local communities. As discussed later in this chapter, many core principles outlining the notion of participation of "grassroots" people and participatory development are rooted in Freire's works.

Unlike some theorists, Freire has had many grounded experiences. His influential work, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970), is based on his experience working in north-eastern Brazil with illiterate peasants in the mid1960's. According to Mathew Zachariah, Canadian development academic and practitioner, within forty-five days "Freire and his team were able to teach 300 peasants and labourers to read and write" (Zachariah, 1986, p. 34). These peasants also became more critical about reasons for their oppression. Freire has also

worked on literacy and emancipation in many other developing countries.

Freire argues that any situation whereby one individual or group exploits another individual or group in their pursuit of self-affirmation as responsible individuals constitutes oppression. Freire believes that "every being, no matter how 'ignorant' or submerged in the 'culture of silence' he (sic) may be, is capable of looking critically at the world in a dialogical encounter with others" (Shaull in introduction to Freire, 1970, p. 13). In Freire's pedagogy, external researchers interact with representatives of the community through a process of "dialogic, didactic communication" and "authentic participation". These conversations - reflections on the context of these people's lives - eventually lead people to take action to make change. Freire calls this reflection - action process "praxis". Praxis is the method local people use to become "conscientized".

Though Freire did not develop the notion of conscientization, he is recognized for bringing it into the fold of development literature. According to Zachariah, "[c]onscientization respected the dignity of the illiterate adults, began 'where they were at', and gave them a sense of confidence about what they could accomplish in this world" (Zachariah, 1986, p. 36). By engaging in this process, individuals critically relate themselves and their work to nature and culture. Without fear, individuals engage in knowledge exchanges that may reshape each other's social reality. They perceive their social, political, and economic contradictions. Achieving conscientization may enable oppressed people to gain the capacity to challenge existing power structures, becoming agents in their own social transformation. Though conscientization as a movement is not very evident today, it was a "radical theory of political education and action" (Zachariah, 1986, p. 36) and is particularly informing to this research project as I interacted closely with oppressed, illiterate people.

* * *

Based on arguments presented by Martinussen, Parpart, and Latouche, development theory and practice is being challenged equally by some groups of Northern experts and

communities in the South. Martinussen, from a traditional research paradigm, suggests that development theory should be constructed with consideration for ontological, epistemological, and methodological positions. Parpart supports alternative approaches to development that are managed by people in the South. Latouche suggests that 'development' must be defined and addressed by members of informal societies alone without the inherently misdirected support of Western development agencies. Paulo Freire has great confidence in the capacity and ingenuity of local people working collaboratively with external researchers to achieve change. Freire's notions of authentic participation, praxis, and conscientization provide the foundation from which participatory action research and other participatory development tools have emerged. The remainder of this chapter centres around PAR, its principles and debates.

2.5 Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research (PAR) can be discussed as a methodological research tool used in participatory forms of development. But PAR is more than a tool. It can serve a broader, greater purpose than a method for researchers to collect and interpret information. Unlike traditional research methods, PAR, as a way of thinking, may deeply impact the way both researchers and subjects view their own and each other's worlds. As will be discussed later, PAR proponents such as Orlando Fals-Borda and Robert McTaggert believe that the PAR process can lead to oppressed people mobilizing together to change their situations of powerlessness.

2.5.1 Reasons for the Emergence of PAR

In the 1950's and 1960's traditional research theory and practice was based on empiricism and positivism with a heavy reliance on instrument construction and rigor. According to Budd Hall (1981), a former secretary-general of the International Participatory Research Network, scholars from the South began obtaining training in the North leading to this dominant paradigm also extending to the developing world (Hall, 1981).

Rajesh Tandon (1981), writing from an Asian perspective, argues that two basic motives were behind the emergence and growth of participatory research. Professional researchers found the classical research paradigm insufficient as well as oppressive. Specifically, they challenged concepts such as the value-neutrality of the researcher, objectivity, universalism, and the researcher's unilateral control over the research process. Critics argued that the study of people and social phenomena cannot be carried out in the same way researchers investigate natural sciences.

Tandon argues that the second motive behind participatory research was the pervasive exploiting of a large majority of people as subjects in classical research experiments. People have been treated as objects without their knowledge or person being considered valuable. Knowledge, as we will discuss later, was and will continue to be a source of power. Participatory research emerged as an attempt to balance the power of knowledge, through validating other than what was considered superior forms of knowledge, in favour of oppressed peoples' knowledge.

Though Tandon and others consider the emergence of PAR as a response to the failure of traditional scientific and development policies, Fals-Borda emphasizes that "although the crisis of 'development' and its discourse is every day more widely felt and discussed, because PAR began much before, the alternative rise of PAR should not be interpreted as a response to it" (Fals-Borda 1991, p. vii).

Communities in the South through their own initiative, are mobilizing to create successful development efforts and resisting colonial and neocolonial practices. As discussed earlier, Paulo Freire had developed participatory forms of liberatory education in Brazil (Freire, 1970). Freire became instrumental in bringing together current ideas on participatory research around the world by collaborating with other organizations in Latin America, the United States, and Africa. As well, according to Hall (1991, 1993), the term "participatory research" was first used in Tanzania in the early 1970's by teams of students and workers intent on learning reasons behind unemployment and malnourishment in the Tanzanian coastal region.

Essentially then, PAR emerged through people in the South mobilizing together to address their situations of poverty and oppression. As discussed in the next section, PAR's roots are inextricably linked to its meaning and purpose.

2.5.2 Defining PAR

Reflecting its local and contextual nature, definitions of PAR vary in the literature. However, prominent participatory action researchers from communities in both the South and North generally concur about its essential meaning. Orlando Fals-Borda, a Columbian who has practiced and written about PAR in the Latin American context for twenty years defines PAR according to what it is *not*.. According to Fals-Borda, PAR is not exclusively research-oriented, adult education or sociopolitical action . PAR involves all three aspects. These aspects can be combined in an "experiential methodology" that implies gaining serious and reliable knowledge upon which to construct power for the poor and for their organizations and movements (Fals-Borda, 1991, p.3). Another prominent Latin American PAR researcher, regional secretary of Consejo de Education de Adultos de America Latina, Francisco Vio Grossi (1981), emphasizes the community's involvement in the research process "in the analysis of their own reality in order to promote a social transformation for the benefit of the participants, who are oppressed" (p. 43).

Most researchers in developed communities view PAR similarly to researchers in the South. Indeed, in wealthy countries, PAR is being utilized to emancipate oppressed peoples on the periphery of the centre. Hall (1981) agrees with Fals-Borda and others that participatory research is most commonly described as an integrated activity that combines social investigation, educational work, and action (Hall, 1981). Australian Robin McTaggart states that participatory action research is a form of action research in which professional social researchers participate together with members of communities in studying and transforming those communities. Additionally, he emphasizes that "if we decide that something *is* an example of participatory action research, we are suggesting that it is likely to have improved the lives of those who have participated" (McTaggart, 1997, p.26). McTaggart also warns that PAR can mean quite contradictory things to different

people. To minimize this contradiction, it is important to discuss terminology used to describe PAR.

2.5.3. Confusion of Terms

Is PAR different from participatory research, participatory rural appraisal, action research and other participatory approaches to development? A consensus is not evident in the literature. Fals-Borda states there is little significant difference between PAR and participatory research . However, Fals-Borda prefers to emphasize the action component of PAR since "we are talking about action - research that is participatory, and participatory research that unites with action [for transforming reality]" (Fals-Borda, 1991, p.10).

McTaggart (1991), recognizing PAR as a form of action research, notes that Scandinavian colleagues are surprised by the American insistence on adding the term "participatory" to "action research". Scandinavians question how action research can be possible if it is *not* participatory. McTaggart considers the distinction significant as there are many examples of *non* -participatory action research in the United States (and I would suggest in Canada as well). Later, in the opening of his 1997 text on PAR, McTaggart is even more emphatic about the distinction, saying that the addition of the term "participatory" is now *necessary* to distinguish authentic action research from all other research efforts and methods attempting to inform action in some way.

McTaggart also emphasizes that the word "action" should not need to be stated in the context of participatory research because participatory research is usually about actions people take upon themselves to transform their lives. However, again McTaggart believes adding the word "action" serves as an important reminder "that it is participants' own activities which are meant to be informed by the ongoing inquiry, not merely the future research directions of external researchers" (McTaggart, 1997, p. 2). Participants, then, are not "acted on" by researchers but "act" themselves, with the support of researchers, to make changes in their lives.

Greenwood, Whyte and Harkavy (1993) in their discussion on PAR as both a process and a goal enhance the debate by refusing to clarify terms. They argue that "clear and absolute distinctions between [PAR, field theory, action research, action science, and sociotechnical systems theory] do not exist because they each have multiple dimensions" (Greenwood et al., 1993, p. 178). They argue that all of these approaches involve various theories, models of human behaviour, and ethical and political commitments. Indeed, practitioners who claim to operate under the same terms often differ broadly in method (Greenwood, et al., 1993).

Throughout this thesis, I will use the terms PAR and participatory research interchangeably paralleling the use of the terms in most of the literature. However, I concur with McTaggart about his concerns about co-optation and misuse. In the field, I used the term "participatory action research (PAR)" almost exclusively as it served as an important reminder to all participants that the research method we were engaged in was both *participatory* and was meant to lead to *action* among all participants.

2.5.4 Principles of PAR

As with its historical context and definition, the literature varies in its discussion of specific PAR principles. These differences of opinion from around the world reaffirm the nature of PAR as an evolving and locally developed research tool. McTaggart (1991, 1997) offers the most expansive description of PAR. Though he is writing from a First World academic/employee (i.e. Xerox staff) perspective, McTaggart's elaboration of PAR principles is useful in the context of my research experience.They also generally coincide with other discussions of PAR principles found in the literature. In consideration of context, I have substituted McTaggart's term "worker" for "local participant".

McTaggart (1991) supports descriptive accounts of PAR because these "concrete cases can be useful to make extrapolations to different cases" (p. 169). However, he also argues that general principles can provide guidance in assessing the appropriateness and validity of descriptions. Principles can also lead to planning for concrete action. Following is a

summary of McTaggart's key principles of PAR.

- <u>Identification of the Individual and Collective Project</u>: PAR is concerned with both individuals *and* the culture of groups being committed to change themselves, individually and collectively. McTaggart sees the role of both researcher and local participant as being interested in improving their own work and in helping others do the same.

- <u>Changing and studying discourse, practice, and social organization</u>: McTaggart, citing McIntyre's work (1981), warns that we must recognize the relational tension between social practices and institutions. Individual identity as well as institutional culture come about through "mutually formative dialectical interactions" (McTaggart, 1993, p. 173). Obviously there can be enormous differences between ordinary community life and institutional forms of a university. As a Canadian university researcher working in an urban poor Asian setting, I would confer with McTaggart's point. McTaggart suggests that we must examine these interactions carefully in order to reveal new ways of describing situations: this examination is the only route to praxis.

- <u>Changing the culture of working groups, institutions, and society</u>: McTaggart discusses actual relationships that exist between academics, the participatory action research group itself, and the local participants and their community. The relationship between academics and local participants can remain largely imperialistic unless significant energy is directed at maintaining reciprocity of relations within the PAR group and maintaining control of the project and its staff. As McTaggart exclaims, "[w]hen status and power inequities exist, these must be suspended to allow collective work to begin, but combated in the course of that work" (McTaggart, 1991, p. 174). Indeed, he sees the role of the academic as enabling people to see what they already intuitively understand about their own subjectivity - for example, how they have been gendered, colonized, and

Westernized. McTaggart sees that participatory action research involves groups working together to change their language, their modes of action, and their social relationships. McTaggart's discussion of this researcher-participant tension is repeatedly discussed throughout the literature and will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

- Action and Reflection: Inherent in participatory action research are its small beginnings. PAR is a self-reflective spiral of cycles which includes planning, acting, observing, reflecting and then further planning, implementation, observing, and reflecting. The group as a whole uses the initial reconnaissance and reflective periods to decide how and why individuals and the group should proceed. Interestingly, the relationship between action and reflection in the form of "praxis" was developed by Paulo Freire in the late 1960's. Freire, however, is not recognized by McTaggart or many others as significant to the thinking behind participatory action research.

- Unifying the Intellectual and Practical Project: PAR is about people critically participating and collaborating in all phases of a research process. It is a systematic learning process that allows oppressed peoples to "theorize about their practices" (McTaggart, 1991, p.170) by being inquisitive about their worlds.

- Knowledge Production: The value of different peoples' knowledge is at the core of participatory research. Three types of knowledge are produced: knowledge developed by local participants, knowledge shared by the group, and knowledge developed by academics. Though these forms of knowledge are connected, the knowledge produced by local participants is most significant and should concentrate on improvements, from participants' perspectives, in their lives. More about knowledge production and popular knowledge will be discussed later.

- Engaging the Politics of Research Action: McTaggart reminds us that PAR is indeed a political process because it involves people making changes that will also affect other people. These changes may be resisted by both local participants and others. However. through PAR, by learning to critically analyze situations, researchers and participants can learn more about patterns of conflict which can enable them to overcome some of these resistances.

- Methodological Resources: Participatory action research draws on the research methods of phenomenology, ethnography, and case study. Participatory action researchers aim to uncover people's subjective experience of their situation. Information is collected using naturalistic research tools such as participant observation. interviews. and field notes. Ways of validating information include triangulation of observations and interpretations, and through participant confirmation. Participants objectify their experiences through personal journal writing where they reflect on both the practices they are studying and the processes of studying them. McTaggart sees the academic participant's role as, when appropriate, bringing social theory to the group's attention. But he warns that this knowledge must be shared with care to avoid "academic imperialism".

McTaggart argues that these core principles provide an effective guide to assessing the validity of case study examples. Others argue similar characteristics as being integral to participatory action research (see, for example, Hall, 1981 and Greenwood et al., 1993).

2.6 Elaborating Themes of PAR

Several themes emerge in the participatory action research literature. Most of these concepts McTaggart discussed in the preceding section. However, because of their significance to my own field work, they will be elaborated here. Issues around knowledge and power, participation. the researcher/subject relationship, and the ultimate objectives of PAR will be summarized. This discussion forms the critique of PAR as reviewed in the literature.

2.6.1 Knowledge

Unlike in classical research paradigms, different forms and values of knowledge are

discussed repeatedly in the PAR literature and go beyond 'knowledge production' as

simply a principle of PAR, as suggested by McTaggart in the last section. Without

becoming deeply enmeshed in an analysis of the construct of different types of knowledge

and its production. I will look at knowledge in two related ways - the value of popular

knowledge and the role of PAR in collaboratively producing new knowledge which may

lead to social transformation. But first the relationship between knowledge and power will

be addressed.

Knowledge and Power

Knowledge leads to power. Tandon (1988) explains that during this century, the

development of the dominant form of knowledge production has become a fast-paced

modern enterprise which has led to the dismissal of popular knowledge. He points out that

"control over knowledge and over the system of production of knowledge has been

traditionally used as one of the ways to control poor and oppressed people" (Tandon,

1988, p. 6). Yet, popular systems of knowledge and knowledge production have existed

alongside dominant systems of knowledge for centuries. Popular knowledge has been the

system of producing knowledge for the purpose "of the daily survival of poor and deprived

people" (Tandon, 1988, p. 6).' Because popular knowledge has been dismissed, and

because knowledge is linked to power, those who own and control popular knowledge

have suffered a loss of power over their lives, communities and cultures. This loss has

occurred primarily in the South as well as in several communities in the North . This loss

of power has led to abject poverty, oppression, and loss of human dignity and respect.

Participatory action research enables local people to recover popular knowledge as well as

produce new and valued knowledge. Ultimately, by regaining and acquiring this

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¹ Yet, is this form of knowledge only owned by oppressed people and only for daily survival? I would qualify this definition and purpose of popular knowledge by saying it is not necessarily knowledge for poor or deprived people *alone*. I argue that popular knowledge is universal: all people own and value some form of contextual knowledge. Popular knowledge may be used for purposes beyond survival. For example, my maternal grandparents' experiences living in India in the 1930's is contextual to me and adds to my understanding of the purpose of colonialism to those living before me.

knowledge. these communities can regain power leading to emancipating their situations of oppression.

Popular Knowledge is Valuable

How is popular knowledge relegitimized? Fals-Borda (1991) considers the "critical recovery of history" and "valuing and applying folk culture" as two important PAR techniques used to uncover popular knowledge. Through these processes, it is hoped that local people will begin to see the value and importance of *their* knowledge.

Franco Vio Grossi (1981) expresses this valuing of popular knowledge in a different way. He sees participatory research as a way of initiating a process of "'disindoctrination' to allow people to detach from their own cultural elements the elements that have been imposed on them and are functional to the status quo" (Vio Grossi, 1981, p. 46). Through this process, people will be better able to see their own position and take action to overcome their oppression accordingly.

Producing New Knowledge

Tandon (1988) and Hall (1981, 1993) agree with Fals-Borda that relegitimizing people's knowledge is an important outcome of PAR . As well, these theorists consider collaboratively creating new knowledge as one of the most significant purposes of PAR. Paralleling Parpart's critique of the development expert discussed earlier in this chapter, Tandon explains that along with the emergence of the dominant form of knowledge production came specialized professional researchers from elite institutions. These researchers, considered the *only* producers of knowledge, were "trained" to carry out research on poverty and development using "objectivity" and "neutrality" in the manner of the classical research paradigm. PAR researchers differ considerably from classical researchers because they not only attempt to recover lost knowledge but involve local people as equal participants in the process of producing new knowledge (Tandon, 1988).

How is this new knowledge created? Hall (1981) sees PAR's roles as integrating local, "raw and somewhat unformed" knowledge of ordinary people with dominant knowledge and expertise to perhaps create "reflected" knowledge (p.12). Fals-Borda (1991) argues that many forms of collecting and interpreting data should be used. More importantly though, he stipulates that this knowledge should be systematically shared with the community members because they own the knowledge. Community members should decide on what part of the information is important and how it should be disseminated.

Tandon (1988), Fals - Borda (1991), Hall (1981, 1993), and McTaggart (1993), all concur that oppressed peoples' producing and valuing popular knowledge and producing new knowledge lead to social transformation and social movements. Franco Vio Grossi (1981), however, warns that some proponents of participatory research believe that popular wisdom is *all* that is necessary for social transformation. According to Vio Grossi, " [t]hey argue that the people have all the answers because they have the real knowledge. Nothing is further from the truth. If that were the case, we would not need ... participatory research" (Vio Grossi, 1981, p. 46). However, Vio Grossi agrees that the expressed long term objective of PAR is that local people will independently solve old problems by producing new knowledge.

Having discussed the importance of recovering popular knowledge and producing new knowledge by involving researchers and local people in a collaborative, dialectical process, I will now examine the notion of participation as it relates to PAR.

2.6.2 Participation

Based on my review of the literature. Greenwood et al.(1993) are the only researchers who discuss the possibility of PAR *not* being appropriate in certain contexts. The authors state that "discussions of participatory action research generally fail to distinguish two important dimensions: the participatory intent of the research process and the degrees of participation actually achieved by a particular project" (Greenwood et al., 1993, p. 175). These authors argue that participation cannot be imposed on a research process; PAR is a process that

must emerge over time and is largely controlled by the local context. Greenwood et al. discuss a continuum identifying the role of researchers in the research process. 'Expert researchers', where the external researcher has full control over the process is at the opposite end of the continum to 'participatory action research' where control and implementation of the research is a collaborative process between researchers and members of the community.

How do local people participate in development projects? Cornwall (1995, as cited in Bornemisza, 1996) and Pretty et al. (1995, as cited in Moetsabi, 1999) both provide similar typologies that describe various levels of participation. Looking at the typologies clarifies the level PAR holds if practiced in its ideal form. According to Pretty et al., there are seven levels of participation with least participation being defined at the top of the chart, and the highest level of participation located at the bottom of the chart."Passive participation", at the top of the chart includes people participating after being told what is going to happen. The fifth level of participation is "functional participation" where people form groups to relate predetermined objectives of the project. This form of participation often only occurs later in a project after major decisions have been made. Organizations or communities tend to be reliant on external researchers, but may also conduct research independently. The sixth level of participation, "interactive participation", describes people involved in joint analysis which often culminate into forming or strengthening local organizations for social transformation. "Self-mobilization" is the highest level of participation where local people participate amongst themselves and independently of external institutions. They take initiatives leading to collective action addressing inequitable situations. Participatory action research, in terms of optimal levels of participation, should fall close to the bottom end of the chart. Ideally, groups involved in PAR have or will gain tools to conduct their own research leading to mobilizing themselves to effect change.

In his article on PAR principles, McTaggart (1991) addresses the corruption of the meaning of the term "participation". He reminds us that PAR is essentially a group activity.

However, as we will discuss later, in most PAR contexts, people of differing levels of power and influence, and with different skills in language are meant to come together collaboratively. Working in a fully participatory manner may prove problematic in some cases.

McTaggart (1991), clarifying the concept of PAR, separates the terms "participation" from mere "involvement". Summarily, the term "involvement" means to "include" while "participation" means to "share, take part" (Sykes, as cited by McTaggart, 1991). McTaggart claims that people are often involved in research but with little ownership over the theory or practice. Conversely, authentic participation in research involves "sharing in the way research is conceptualized, practiced and brought to bear on the life-world" (McTaggart, 1991, p. 171).

How can PAR researchers be sure individuals are participating authentically in the process? Tandon (1988) outlines several indicators of authentic participation. Local people must participate in setting the research agenda, deciding upon traditional (i.e. interview) and non-traditional (i.e. storytelling, songs) research tools, and in collecting and analysing data. People must participate in controlling the use of the data and "the whole process". By "whole process", McTaggart (1991) interprets Tandon as meaning that local communities have the right to change the PAR research methodology altogether and McTaggart insists that "[n]ot to recognize the inevitability of this is to engage in cultural imperialism" (McTaggart, 1991, p.171). McTaggart's warning is important because to be truly 'participatory' as an external researcher may involve not conducting research at all or conducting it in a form that is not valued by institutions or funding agencies in the North. McTaggart's point is not found elsewhere in the PAR literature I reviewed.

Sithembiso Nyoni (1991), in his discussion of PAR in the context of Zimbabwe, candidly discusses the reality of attempting full participation in a PAR process. He sees participation as "an active and dynamic process that does not try to hide what is actually happening" (Nyoni, 1991, p. 112).It is not a smooth or easy development process because local

participants become aware of the outside world's impact on their own lives which has contributed to their oppression.

Nyoni discusses his involvement as head of the Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP). In this example, discussions and dialogue among members of the organization must be continual and involve deconstructing and changing power inequities both inside and outside the organization. He states that "true participation" calls for continual rethinking and re-articulation of the whole process until the final goal is obtained; this process requires patience and perseverance and asks people to "find the answers within themselves" (Nyoni, 1991, p. 114).

Co-Opting Participation

Hall (1981),Vio Grossi (1981), and Stiefel and Wolfe (1981) discuss the potential misuse of the concept of participation. Hall, in his summary of themes emerging at a PAR conference in Yugoslavia, describes conference participants' discussions about important distinctions between participation and manipulation. Conference participants cited examples of organizations and institutions that, under the guise of "participation", have manipulated communities for purposes other than social transformation. However, authentic participatory research, because it encourages participants to be critical and maintain control of the research process "explicitly rejects manipulation" (Hall, 1981, p. 11).

Vio Grossi (1981) also discusses how participation can be a tool of manipulation. Many researchers see increased participation by local people as beneficial because it better informs their analysis of the data - it improves the external researcher's final product. Yet, Vio Grossi sees these researchers as actually "participant observers" who use new words to utilize old techniques where researchers alone produce new knowledge by researching on subjects. Used in this manner, participation is being co-opted in the interests of researchers and external institutions alone.

Stiefle and Wolfe (1994) discuss the vigorous adoption, or perhaps co-optation, of the importance of participatory practices by international agencies. The World Bank and organizations like C.I.D.A. and USAID now consistently emphasize the importance of 'participation' in policy and project guidelines. However, most examples reveal that participation is considered a *means* to achieve externally defined project goals rather than an *end* that empowers the community. Community involvement in these projects is predominantly aimed at maintaining existing power structures rather than transforming them.

Whether or not we use the label 'co-optation', it seems that some organizations and institutions, for a multitude of reasons, utilize participatory research processes for different purposes than those argued by Fals-Borda (1991),Vio Grossi (1981), Tandon (1988) and others. However, I suggest that using participatory research processes that lead to social transformation within communities may be presently outside the realm or capacity of some, especially large, donor aid agencies. Yet, these organizations, perhaps for the first time, are at least recognizing the importance of local people participating, by being actively included, in externally-determined development initiatives. Furthermore, though PAR proponents may argue these projects are not authentically participatory, these projects may still lead to immediate and specific poverty alleviation in communities. Perhaps with time and more voices, especially from the South, demanding authentic participatory research practices, these large donor aid agencies may involve local communities more significantly in the development process. As participatory development proponents argue, this reconceptualization of development may lead not only to short term poverty allevation, but to social transformation and more sustainable consequences of development efforts.

Authentic participation involves both external researchers and local people. As touched on earlier, establishing authentic participation can be challenging when people come from different positions of power and are from different cultures and social class. The literature addresses this challenging relationship between researcher and local participants, and provides practical suggestions of managing this dynamic.

2.6.3 Researcher / Participant Relationship

Freire, in his earliest work, alerted privileged, educated researchers to the complexities and vulnerabilities of the oppressed. He states that the oppressed feel an irresistable attraction towards the oppressors and their way of life. He is concerned that the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend to themselves become oppressors, or "suboppressors" because they are seduced by the world of the oppressor (Freire, 1970, p.49). In the role of external researcher, Freire's warnings are important to consider.

Fals-Borda (1991) defines the essence of participation as breaking down the relationship of submission and dependence connected to the traditional researcher - subject dichotomy. Rahman (1991) adds that "[i]t is not easy to establish a truly subject - subject relation at the very outset with people who are traditionally victims of a dominating structure - the inertia of traditional attitudes and images of the self and of others may keep the people implicitly subordinate in a research (as well as decision-making) process in which formidable outside researcher/activists are present" (Rahman, 1991, p. 17).

Vio Grossi's (1988) takes up questions external researchers ask themselves and others as they enter a local community. He states that researchers frequently ask questions like " How do I need to behave in order to lead the community to conduct the PR process by itself" and "What is my role as participatory researcher?"(Vio Grossi, 1988, p. 47). Vio Grossi acknowledges that it is difficult to offer "recipes" for the relationship between external researchers and local people. Local people understand how and why outsiders are different and are quick to assess an outsider's reliability and long and short term commitment to the community. Indeed, Vio Grossi warns researchers to avoid activities such as taking on responsibilities of manual labour as the researcher - local people relationship will not be based on becoming more "native", but on the loyalty of the outsider.

Freire (1970), Rahman (1991), Vio Grossi (1981) and Tandon (1988) also discuss the challenges external researchers face in trying to avoid imposing their own images and

ideals, both consciously and unconsciously, onto the research process. Indeed, Vio Grossi and Tandon argue that psychological, emotional, and social class barriers will always limit external researchers' understanding and adopting of people's perspectives. As external researchers from privileged backgrounds,we are simply not, nor will we likely ever be, part of the oppression experienced by poor people in developing communities.

Freire (1970) offers a solution to the external researcher-local participant tension. He suggests that all participants in a process of social transformation must become liberated. External researchers must become transformed themselves by critically analyzing and wanting to change their own positions of privilege. As 'converts', these individuals must genuinely commit themselves to the people and constantly re-examine themselves and their values. Taking this notion a step further, Freire sees that the great humanistic task of the oppressed is not to only liberate themselves but to facilitate the oppressors' liberation as well. Freire's solution is particularly informing to me in my position as an external researcher: his expectations of researchers in the PAR process seem daunting but present an important personal challenge. This notion of researcher transformation will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

Rahman (1991) offers a similar solution to this researcher-local participant difference. He suggests that putting local people in full control of the research process may alleviate the researchers' inability to understand local culture and their tendency to impose their own values upon the process. They take responsibility for defining the inquiry while "outsiders" become available for consultation at the initiative of the people. As Rahman sees it, "[t]hus made independent and masters of themselves, the people experience their capability and power to produce knowledge autonomously" (Rahman, 1991, p.17). Only then is a subject - subject relationship actually possible. Rahman views PAR as having the potential to go beyond the subject - subject principle and facilitate people controlling their own research. Fals-Borda(1991) concurs with Rahman, arguing that evidence of PAR's success occurs when external researchers become redundant and the transformation process continues without them.

During my field work, I repeatedly asked myself and others what our final objective should or could be around the project - and should our particular PAR endeavour be achieving more 'action' than it presently was? What do other researchers and practitioners say on this question?

2.6.4 What is the Ultimate Objective of PAR?

Achieving specific actions - whether its restructuring the organization of an American manufacturing company (Greenwood et al, 1993) or mobilizing Bogota child labours (Salazar, 1991) - should be determined and accomplished through the PAR process itself. But are these actions the final outcome of PAR? The literature does not provide a clear answer to this question.

Vio Grossi,writing in the early 1980's on participatory research, argues that the concept of social transformation as it relates to participatory research should be clarified. He asserts that participatory research does not lead to just *any* action, "it is linked closely with a particular field of action that intends to lead to change in the functional conditions that engender poverty, dependence and exploitation" (Vio Grossi, 1981, p. 46).

Fals- Borda (1991) agrees with Vio Grossi, describing PAR as ultimately "creating its own field in order to extend itself in time and space, both horizontally and vertically, in communities and regions" (p. 6). The process moves from a micro to a macro level acquiring a political dimension. Indeed, Fals -Borda believes the final evaluation of PAR is the moving into this political dimension which applies theory to action. PAR can lead to the creation of a new type of state which is not as demanding and controlling but motivated by positive values and a "truly democratic human ideal" (Fals-Borda, 1991, p. 6).

Tandon (1988), however, does not see participatory research as leading to political action or social transformation. According to Tandon, "the primary objective of participatory research is the production of knowledge and encouraging the poor and oppressed, and those who work with them, to generate their own knowledge and control the means of

production of knowledge" (Tandon, 1988, p. 12). Social transformation cannot be (and has never been) a direct outcome of participatory research. Tandon asserts that social transformation requires interventions such as organization and mobilization that go *beyond* controlling and producing knowledge. Thus, participatory research only makes a small, but important contribution to social change and cannot lead directly to social transformation. However, Tandon asserts that participatory research is *linked* to specific social movements including environmental, labour, women's and human rights/peace movements.

As with other aspects of PAR, the debate about the ultimate objectives of PAR continues. However, from my point of view as an external researcher using the PAR process, I have gained a sense of Fals-Borda's use of concepts such as the "truly democratic human ideal", despite their ideal and abstract nature. I argue that the value of these ideals is that their achievement is meant to be *approached*, but are not necessarily possible to fully achieve. Though Tandon's argument seems more pragmatic and feasible when compared to Fals-Borda's position, all forms of knowledge creation may be transformative because acquiring new knowledge impacts how we think which changes how we behave. Therefore, if social transformation can be defined as changing the way we do things, in individual and/or global ways, then producing new knowledge as a direct outcome of PAR results in PAR indeed having the potential to be socially transformative. I concur with Vio Grossi that PAR is linked to action to bring about change in the concrete situations that create poverty and oppression. More discussion on this topic, based on the case study experience, will take place in Chapter 6.

To summarize, PAR theorists generally agree on several core principles underlying PAR. Unlike in the classical research paradigm, PAR theorists critically address and challenge issues around knowledge ownership and production. They discuss obstacles researchers and local participants have authentically participating and dialoguing through the PAR process, especially when these individuals come from vastly different backgrounds and experiences. Is PAR an appropriate tool for my researcher purposes?

2.7 PAR as a Research Tool

Based on the literature reviewed and my own experience working with individuals from other countries, I chose PAR as the methodological tool for my research. I understood that if I were to use PAR, local people, together with external researchers, participate to define and address local problems. Unlike in the classical research paradigm, I would not be a researcher simply taking information from 'subjects', and subjects would have a larger role than solely providing information for me. A reciprocity of knowledge would perhaps take place whereby I would learn from local people, possibly in the manner Freire suggests where I, as the researcher would become liberated by local people, and local people may gain information from me that will be useful to them in the future. In a related way, due to the nature of the PAR process, sustainability of the project, critically important to me, appeared to be more feasible using the PAR process than traditional research frameworks. Local people may use knowledge they have gained from this process to continue the family literacy program independently of me. Their skills acquired through this process may eventually result in broader social change in the community. For these reasons, I chose PAR over other methodological frameworks.

A more in-depth discussion of specific methodological tools used to facilitate and document the PAR process with be discussed in the fourth chapter. The next chapter will address family and literacy theory and practice, and basic education and adult literacy as these issues relate to developed countries.

3. Family Literacy, Adult Literacy and Basic Education: Theory and Research

As my research question addresses the development and implementation of a family literacy program, it is important to fully understand the notion of family literacy as it is presented in the literature. This chapter will provide various definitions of literacy and family literacy as well their historical context. I will also discuss research from many diverse disciplines which support family literacy initiatives. An explanation of family literacy program types will be summarized. Following this section will be a discussion of evaluations of family literacy programs in both developed and developing communities. Issues around adult literacy initiatives and basic education in developing countries, as they inform this research, will be shared. Critiques of family literacy programs and policy will conclude the chapter.

3.1 Definitions

3.1.1 What is Meant by "Literacy"?

How is literacy defined by researchers, practitioners, donor aid agencies, and government census collectors? "Literacy" as a concept or a skill has been defined in a variety of ways and the literature reveals little consensus. For example, Hautecoeur (1994) defines literacy as "everything to do with the written word" (p. 11). World Bank researchers state that there are three widely accepted alternative definitions to literacy, one of which states that an individual is literate when "s/he can write and read a short, simple statement related to everyday life" (World Development Report, 1997, p. 225). Southgate (1972, as cited by Taylor, 1983) defines "literacy" as "the mastery of our native language in all its aspects, as a means of communication" (pg. 87).

From another perspective, H.S. Bhola (1996), in his critical analysis of the concept of family literacy both in America and internationally, offers what he calls "new understandings of literacy" (Bhola, 1996, p. 35). He moves beyond the primarily school-based definition of literacy and suggests that family literacy practitioners adopt a semiotic theory of literacy. Semiotic theorists see literacy as the uniquely human capacity to make

symbolic transformations of reality first through spoken language and then through linguistic codes. With literacy has come the "ability to make second level symbolic transformations of reality already symbolically transformed, thereby adding a new potential to the inherent capacities of the members of the human species" (Bhola, 1996, p. 35). This capacity enables the newly literate person to more effectively interact with their environment including its economic, social, political, and cultural aspects. The newly literate person can begin challenging the literate agent of the state, of the church, and the civil society.

While in Manila, I interviewed Frank Lopez, executive director of ANTEP (Association for Non-Traditional Education in the Philippines) to learn about the ANTEP education programs. During this interview, Lopez articulated his organization's working definition of "functional literacy" which is also used by C.I.D.A.and the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) in the Philippines. It includes "the range of skills and competencies - cognitive, affective, and behavioural - which enables individuals to develop their potential, make critical and informed decisions, function effectively in society within the context of the wider community (local, regional, national, and global) in order to improve the quality of life and that of society" (Lopez, personal interview, Dec. 13,1998).

These definitions of literacy provide a broader conceptual framework within which definitions of family literacy can be understood.

3.1.2 Defining "Family Literacy"

As with "literacy", there is no agreement about the definition of family literacy among researchers and practitioners (for example, Lloyd, P. 1996; Skage, 1995; Morrow, L. M..1995). Morrow (1995) contends that "the complexity of the concept may keep it from ever having one definition that is embraced by all" (p. 7). Both Morrow (1995) and Skage (1995) cite the International Reading Association's Family Literacy Commission's definition: "family literacy encompasses the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in their community" (Morrow, 1995, p. 7 and Skage, 1995, p. 9) The commission discusses the equal importance of naturally occurring and

purposefully initiated literacy activities in the home. It suggests that not just reading and writing but activities such as drawing, making lists, and telling stories are considered literacy activities and these activities may reflect the ethnic, racial, or cultural heritage of the families involved. Ramarumo (1994) as a South African, defines family literacy as "the entire range of activities and practices that are integrated into the daily life of a family to promote learning" (p. 3).

For the purpose of this research, I will define both literacy and family literacy. Though the literature discusses stages of literacy development such as basic literacy or functional literacy, for the purpose of this thesis I will use a more general definition of literacy. Adapting ANTEP's definition of functional literacy, I will define literacy *as the range of skills and competencies - cognitive, affective, and behavioural - which enables individuals to function effectively in society within the context of the wider community (local, regional, national, and global) in order to improve their quality of life and that of society.* I borrow from Ramarumo's work to define family literacy. For the purposes of this thesis, it can be understood as *the entire range of activities and practices that are integrated into the daily life of a family, including parents, children and extended family members, to promote literacy.* Activities may include reading, writing, numeracy, storytelling, drawing, playing games, making lists, and playing music; though this list is not complete and may exclude important and unique literacy practices in other cultures, I consider these activities examples of activities that promote literacy.

3.2 The Emergence of Family Literacy Programs

The concept of parents influencing their childrens' education was articulated as early as 1908 by Huey. He wrote that children's learning in school "all begins with parents reading to their children" (as cited by Morrow, 1995, p. 6).

Sharon Skage, an Albertan, produced a comprehensive manual for family literacy practitioners, which includes a detailed summary of the historical context of family literacy. She states that though the term "family literacy" was coined by American Denny Taylor in

her 1981 doctoral dissertation, the concept of family literacy developed earlier and elsewhere. The importance of fostering a partnership between home and school first emerged in the 1960's in the United Kingdom and programs surfaced there in the 1980's. In 1969, the "Home Instruction Program for Preschool Children" (H.I.P.P.Y)was developed in Israel and targeted educationally-disadvantaged mothers and their children through home-based educational initiatives. This program was introduced to the United States in Arkansas in 1982. The concept of family literacy exploded in the United States throughout the 1980's. According to Laurel Puchner (1997) and supported by Cuban and Hayes (1996), the American family literacy movement grew out of concern about the inefficiency of adult literacy programs, global competitiveness, school success for children and teenagers, and the social disintegration of the family. In 1992, the Even Start Family Literacy Program became part of national Elementary and Secondary Education policy.

Family Literacy in Canada

The Canadian trend in family literacy initiatives is similar to the American one. In 1981, the Toronto Board of Education established Parenting Centres in inner city schools. A program for mothers with low literacy skills was developed during school time at primary schools in Montreal in 1983. Throughout the 1980's and 1990's, programs have been developed and implemented across the country, including Saskatoon, Brooks, Calgary, Nova Scotia, and Winnipeg. In 1994, the first Canadian National Conference on Family Literacy was held in Ottawa . In 1993, the Family Literacy Action Group was formed in Alberta (Skage, 1995).

3.3 Research Substantiating Family Literacy Initiatives

Ruth Nickse and H.S. Bhola, both significant influences on family literacy research and practice, substantiate family literacy programs by citing research from other disciplines.

3.3.1 Research From Other Disciplines: Ruth Nickse

Included in Nickse's (1990) influential work on family and intergenerational literacy is a

discussion on the research base underlying family and intergenerational[4] literacy programs. According to Nickse (1990), "the concept of family literacy is rooted firmly in a substantial base of research from related but diverse fields" (p. 15). Nickse provides a sampling of studies in adult literacy education, emergent literacy, cognitive sciences, early childhood development and education, and family systems theory which support the importance of family literacy.

Adult Literacy Education

Researchers have found that parents' education affects how well their children achieve. For example, low literate parents may have limited vocabularies that, in turn, inhibit development of vocabulary in their children (Kerka,1991).Other studies indicate that though parental variables such as intelligence and socioeconomic class do not explain differences in children's early reading ability, this skill seems to be enhanced if children have been read to and have parents that model reading themselves. Nickse argues that children who miss storybook time are not "literacy coddled" and start formal education less prepared for reading tasks. There may be intergenerational effects that begin and often maintain a cycle of low literacy among parents and their children. These studies provide a "compelling argument for equal priority on education for parents" and that "family literacy programs that do not provide literacy instructions for parents might well heed this finding" (Nickse, 1990, p. 16).

Nickse also reports on evidence that intergenerational and family literacy programs retain adult students longer than adult-only literacy programs.

Emergent Literacy

Nickse discusses the correlation between literate parents and the development of children's literacy. According to a widely quoted report from the United States Department of

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[4] Intergenerational literacy programs differ from family literacy programs in that adults and children work together but they may not be related. For example, a program where a group of adults act as reading models for a group of young children is considered an intergenerational literacy program. These programs are intergenerational because they span age groups (Nickse, 1990).

Education, parents are their child's first and most influential teacher (Anderson et al, 1985 as cited in Nickse, 1990) and conceptual and development literacy occurs during the first years of a child's life (Sulzby and Teale (1987) and Teale (1986) as cited in Nickse, 1990). The social context of literacy can be more important than a family's economic status. Nickse cites several studies indicating that culturally-specific literacy may be valued and practiced among new immigrant or inner-city families. Though important to children's literacy development, these families may not value or practice "school literacy" in their homes thus resulting in their children potentially experiencing future difficulties in school. For example, Taylor and Dorsey Gaines (1988) document a wide variety of verbal literacy activities in Black middle class homes that are not regarded as valuable in schools (as cited in Nickse, 1990). Nickse argues that early childhood family literacy programs are very important in communities where school literacy is not practiced often in the homes.

Cognitive Science

Cognitive science, as a recent and multidisciplinary science, changes and increases our understanding of how learning takes place. According to Nickse (1991), cognitive scientists argue that "knowledge and information-processing skills are socially developed and distributed within society both in and out of school and that cognitive ability is shaped significantly by the culture and society into which the child is born and reared" (p. 19). Cognitive development is directed by social groups who value certain skills and provide motivation to learn these skills.

External factors found in a culture may inhibit or enhance individual achievement, in formal education for example, regardless of individual intellectual capacity. Cognitive scientists suggest that educational programs must consider cross-generational consequences and the social nature of cognitive development. Nickse claims that knowledge gained from cognitive science research support the significance of diversing family literacy programs and the importance of situating them in nonschool settings where social networks thrive (for example, libraries, community centres, churches, and clubs).

Early Childhood Development

Findings from early childhood development research reinforces the importance of family literacy programs for young children, especially children at biological or environmental risk. According to Nickse, those who study the impact of poverty on development have found that families living at a low socio-economic level are more likely than other families to suffer from stress, depression, and fractious parent-child relationships.

Preschool and Elementary Education

Research has indicated that, regardless of the economic status of families, early intervention is more effective when parents participate in the program. However, as supported by cognitive science literature, studies addressing the value of parent involvement in schools indicate that long-term intervention is necessary in order for parents to "change their belief systems and think and act in new ways about child development" (Nickse, 1991,p. 20). Further, Nickse cites findings indicating that though literature suggests the importance of parents as partners in education, the power relationship between parents and educators remains strained and family literacy initiatives may include defining the roles of parents and staff and fostering links between the school and the home.

Family Systems Theory

Another area of study that supports the notion of family literacy programs is family systems theory. "Families" according to these theorists are defined as "any social unit with which an individual is intimately involved, unlimited by generational or physical boundaries" (Walker and Crocker. 1988 as cited by Nickse. 1991. p. 21). Every family,with its spoken and unspoken rules. is unique. Families work hard to remain homeostatic and are subjected to recursive causality meaning that children can influence parents as much as parents affect children's behaviours. Of course, families exist in the context of communities which can influence the family's response to a family literacy program intervention.

3.3.2 Historical Anthropological Research Base: H.S. Bhola

H.S. Bhola (1996), in his critical analysis of the concept of family literacy both in America

and internationally, also agrees that the practice of family literacy is guided by theory from a multiplicity of sources. He further acknowledges that coupled with this "theoretical borrowing" has been a pragmatic understanding of the problems of the family. But Bhola asserts that "borrowed concepts and pragmatic practice [have] remained fragmented", and though there are recent theoretical attempts to aggregate the concept of family literacy, integration of theory has not yet occurred.

Bhola advocates Emmanuel Todd's 1987 study The Causes of Progress, a model outlining the progress of nations, as a foundation for a promising theory of family literacy that addresses cultural transformation. Through an historical anthropological development lens and supported by quantitative data , Todd renounces the economic model of development, stating that development cannot be measured by indicators such as GNP or energy output. Development is intellectual, not material. Todd replaces the economic model with an anthropological model where the 'family structure' is considered primary. According to Todd's findings, individuals who have time and opportunity to acquire knowledge accumulate "cultural capital". Possessing cultural capital enables individuals to challenge the literate agent of the state, the church, and civil society. These individuals not only invest cultural capital into their own lives but into the lives of the families in which they are part of as well as the ones they will raise. Progressive family types (for example, where women postpone motherhood to gain more education and maturity) positively impact cultural development which correlates significantly to literacy rates in a society. Improved literacy rates lead first to political, then to demographic, and finally to economic transformation. According to Todd, the measurement of the spread of mass literacy, which is in a sense a measure of "the advance of the average mind ..." (Todd, 1987, as cited by Bhola, 1996, p. 38), is the best measure of development in a society.

Extrapolating from Todd's anthropological research, Bhola argues for an "ideal practice of family literacy" by focusing on the family more than, but not to the exclusion of, its individual members. He suggests that practitioners choose the *family* as the preferred social space for the delivery of the program. Though Bhola does not clarify 'social space',

perhaps he means practitioners should deliver programs in or near families' homes, community halls. schools or churches. Curriculum should view the family - as a whole - as the learner. foster cultural and knowledge capital of the family, and critique power relationships within the family with respect to gender and age, as well as those that exist at an institutional level between the family, the school, and the workplace[5]. The curriculum, while teaching school-like literacy, should also support multiple accesses to knowledge and education. Family literacy practitioners should be activists on behalf of disadvantaged families through pressuring schools and workplaces to support families more effectively and fairly.

As Nickse and Bhola have explained. research from a variety of disciplines abound in theoretical support of family literacy. After discussing how actual programs are grouped, outcomes of examples of family literacy programs will be presented.

3.4 Family Literacy Program Typology

The literature reports an abundance of programs, predominantly in North America, that typify themselves as family literacy initiatives. There is a considerable variance among these programs (see. for example. Lloyd. 1996 and Skage, 1995). Again Ruth Nickse (1990) offers the most comprehensive explanation of this aspect of family literacy programs. She argues that classifying programs is an important first step towards conceptualizing family literacy.

When distinguishing between various family literacy programs, Nickse uses an organizational matrix which examines programs across two critical dimensions: the type of program intervention (direct or indirect) and the type of participation (primary participants receive direct service with secondary participants benefiting indirectly). Each program type will be summarized, along with its advantages and limitations, below.

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[5] Though it is again difficult to know exactly what Bhola means about critiquing power relations, perhaps he is suggesting that family literacy practitioners discuss and strategize about various dominate/subordinate roles. However. is it within the realm of the role of a family literacy practitioners to analyze and perhaps challenge dominate/subordinate roles within families? In my view. such discussions may be inappropriate.

Type 1: Direct Adults - Direct Children

This type is a highly structured intervention and requires intense participation by parents with their pre-school children. Parents attend literacy classes and learn skills in parenting and child development. Parent and child activities are a key feature. Children receive preschool or other direct instruction. Attendance is monitored. Professional adult basic education and early childhood teachers work together as a team to facilitate the program.

This model is effective for non-working parents. The family dynamic is very powerful because of the high degree of interaction. However, limitations of this model include the need for qualified specialists and permanent space in a local setting.

Type 2: Indirect Adults - Indirect Children

Both adults and children participate in this model. Participation is less intensive or structured. Literacy is promoted for enjoyment alone. The curriculum is not sequential and families can attend sporadically, if necessary or preferred. Formal literacy classes are not provided but adults may receive tutoring. Libraries typically offer this type of family literacy program.

These programs may improve attitudes about literacy but do not teach reading or writing skills to adults or children in an intensive, sustained way. Unlike Type 1 programs, specialists nor space are required on a permanent basis.

Type 3: Direct Adult - Indirect Children

Adults are the main target of service while children may not participate at all. The curriculum may include literacy or English as a second language instruction with a family literacy component involving, for example, techniques around how to read to children. Parents may take materials home to work with their children.

Parents in Type 3 programs are not distracted by the presence of children and have more time to develop bonds with other parents. However, parent / child interaction is never

observed in the program setting, limiting parents receiving feedback about interactions with their children.

Type 4: Indirect Adults - Direct Children

Children are the primary beneficiaries in these programs and are usually enrolled in a pre-school or elementary school program. Parents' level of participation is usually related to their skill and confidence level. They do not receive literacy instruction.

The advantages of Type 4 programs are that children are captive and parents recognize their role in their children's literacy development. However, not addressing parents' own literacy needs may be a lost opportunity.

Though Nickse warns researchers and practitioners that using a typology tends to simplify phenomena, she argues for adopting a classification system that can clarify distinctions between programs by key components. A classification system facilitates program research, planning and training. She reminds family literacy educators that the typology does not completely account for mixed model types and the wide variation within each type. Nor should the classification system suggest that one type is superior to another.

Though considered ground-breaking to the development of an organizational structure for family literacy programs, Nickse's work has been criticized for being too broad in its classification of programs.Skage (1995) points out that "it can be argued that virtually any literacy or educational program can be included [in this classification system]" (p. 11).

Katherine Ryan, Suzanne Knell, and Barbara Geissler (1991), in their paper presented at the 1991 American Education Research Association annual meeting, evaluate Nickse's family literacy program typology. They argue that criteria including the 'family' as the unit of participation, and literacy activities being offered to both parents and children, and parents and children together , define family literacy programs. However, most programs are not able to meet the full range of criteria, indicating that family literacy should be considered an evolving concept.

I agree with Skage's criticism of Nickse's typology in that it may be too broad to effectively characterize family literacy programs as philosophically different from other literacy initiatives. Ryan et al. make valid points regarding the essential premise of family literacy. The 'family', not individuals as with other literacy programs, should be the focus of family literacy programs. Family literacy practitioners should attempt to provide direct instruction, even in some small way, to the family as a whole, as well as to parents and to children alone. Otherwise, important opportunities for learning may be missed. However, if one considers the inherent limitations of typologies in general, as pointed out by Nickse herself, then Nickse's typology may be useful as clarification for academics, practitioners, and funding agencies involved in theory development, and the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of family literacy programs.

3.5 Examples of Family Literacy Programs in Developed Countries

Discussions of family literacy programs abound in the literature, particularly in an American context. Yet, though there appears to be a strong research base in a variety of disciplines supporting the idea of family literacy, there is a shortage of studies regarding the actual *effectiveness* of existing family literacy programs. According to Nickse (1990), the literature on family literacy programs reveals that it "lacks [its own] theoretical and conceptual base" (p. 51). Sharon Skage (1995) claims that most research studies are qualitative in nature and lack empirical data. Elsa Auerbach (1989, 1995), based on her experience in developing family literacy programs, states there is a gap between research and the implementation of programs. Laurel Puchner (1997), in her doctoral dissertation comparing family literacy in the United States and Mali, states that American family literacy initiatives are supported by little empirical evidence that demonstrates programs actually fulfill their goals (p. 6). Though there is little in the way of published documentation about the effectiveness of family literacy, one should not assume that few family literacy programs are effective. It is possible that family literacy practitioners simply do not have the necessary resources or opportunities necessary to publish their findings.

Below is a sample of research available on family literacy programs found in the literature. These studies were chosen because, unlike others, they provide informative program descriptions as well as use rigorous tools to measure impact. This sampling should also inform the reader of the wide spectrum of programs that exist in the North. It is important to note that though there are descriptions of Canadian family literacy programs in the literature (for example, Skage, 1995), I was unable to locate studies reporting program impact.

3.5.1 Summary of the American Even Start Studies

In 1988, the Even Start Family Literacy Program was legislated under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and was reauthorized under the Improving America's Schools Act as part of the national Title One funding in 1994. The purpose of this legislation was to promote program development and implementation throughout the United States which would "... help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the Nation's low-income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program... " (P.L. 103-382, Sec. 1201 as cited by Gamse, B. et al, 1997). In 1996, the Even Start statue was amended to require intensive instruction in the adult and parenting education component of programs funded by the Even Start legislation. To be eligible for Even Start funding, a family must have an adult who is eligible for adult education programs or within the state's compulsory school attendance age and a child less than eight years of age. The two interrelated goals of Even Start programs are to "help parents become full partners in the education of their children and to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners" (Gamse, B. et al, 1997, p. 8). The Even Start legislation requires an independent evaluation of the projects funded under Even Start.

The first in-depth evaluation of the Even Start project was conducted on ten projects over an eighteen month period from 1991 to 1993 (as cited in Gamse, 1997) and assessed initial and short-term assessment of Even Start's effectiveness on child and parent literacy. Key findings include the following: more Even Start adults obtained high school graduate

certificates than parents in the control group. Even Start children achieved greater gains on school readiness measures than control group children at the first follow-up but by the time students entered kindergarten, little difference in readiness skills was observed.

A follow-up study to the original evaluation was conducted in 1995, two to three years after families had participated in the original study. Its primary objective was to assess the medium term impact of Even Start program participation on children in the original study. Only secondary sources were used for data collection and the data available varied extensively from school to school. Data included subject's participation in special programs, attendance, report card performance, and if available, achievement scores (though most schools did not administer achievement tests to young students). The authors reported that "... with the available measures, we found essentially no differences between Even Start and comparison children ..." (Gamse, B.et al, 1997, p. 24).

3.5.2 The Bookstart Pilot and Longitudinal Studies

In the United Kingdom, Wade and Morris (1998) report on a pilot study and a series of longitudinal studies involving both mothers and their children. In contrast to programs funded through the American Even Start legislation, the Bookstart program did not provide intensive instruction in adult education or parenting. Instead, 300 families with babies approximately nine months old, were given a free book bag via health clinics and health visitors which included a children's book and information about book sharing and library facilities. Initial analysis of the pilot study found results of the program encouraging.

Wade and Moore conducted an intensive follow-up study on twenty-nine of the original families two years after the pilot. Families were found to give higher priority to books and book sharing activities than did a comparison group. Children participating in the Bookstart program demonstrated more interest in books as evidenced by their questioning and predictive abilities.The authors concluded that "[t]hese positive behaviours ... were likely to be the result of regular and repeated experience of book sharing stimulated by the Bookstart pack" (Wade & Moore, 1998, p. 137).

A further longitudinal study investigated the potential long-lasting effects of the Bookstart initiative on children when they reached school age. Subjects included forty one of the original 300 families who were compared to a control group. Standardized measures of achievement scores were obtained for each child. Bookstart participants outperformed children in the control group on all achievement measures. Statistically significant differences were found in speaking, listening, and mathematical scores with highly statistically significant differences found on reading and number assessment scores. Interestingly, the fact that children who had participated in the Bookstart program were further ahead in mathematics suggests that familiarity with books can have impact across the curriculum. The authors conclude that "[i]ndications here are that early book sharing may lead to a general superiority as well as significantly establishing a foundation of literacy" (Wade & Moore, 1998, p.143). They also suggest that improved concentration and attention skills, which can also have long term effects on learning, are fostered by regular acts of book sharing.

3.5.3 The Family W.R.A.P. Program

Morrow and Young (1996) report on findings from a home/school family literacy program involving grade one through three students and their parents in an "at-risk" urban American public school district. Like the Even Start follow-up and Bookstart studies, only childrens' literacy levels were assessed. In this program, children participated in a school-wide Writing and Reading Appreciation Program (W.R.A.P.) program where classrooms had literacy centres with a variety of literacy activities and teachers modeled activities to foster an interest in reading and writing. Parents were given a set of materials that contained items similar to those used in the school W.R.A.P. program. They were shown how to carry out a number of literacy activities with their children at home. Parents participated in W.R.A.P. time periods in school, in monthly group meetings with other parents, and occasionally met with a mentor on an individual basis. The mentor was a university student pursuing certification in education.

Despite comparatively limited direct parent and parent-child program interactions, the findings of Morrow and Young's study are significant. Researchers used a variety of pre- and post-test assessment tools to measure progress among the children participants which was compared against children who were only involved in the school W.R.A.P. program. Parents' interest in fostering literacy activities at home was measured through interviews.

On all qualitative and quantitative measures, children participating in both the home and school W.R.A.P. program performed better than children only involved in the school W.R.A.P. program. In particular, their story retelling skill was significantly better than their peers in the control group. Interviews indicated that those in the family group read or looked at books more than children in the control group. Parents stated that participating in the W.R.A.P. family program helped them to work more easily with their children, learn from their children, and recognize that literacy can be fun.

The authors conclude that success of the home W.R.A.P. program was directly correlated to the collaborative efforts of the school and home. The program was successful because it was enjoyable, educational, and "sensitive to the interests of the parents, and the diversity of their backgrounds" (Morrow & Young, 1996, p. 64).

3.5.4 The Toyota Families for Learning Program

In 1991, the U.S. National Center for Family Literacy (N.C.F.L.) began the Toyota Families for Learning Program through a grant from the Toyota Motor Corporation. Philliber, Spillman and King (1996) describe the outcomes of this project which operated in thirty-two locations in ten cities during the 1992 - 1993 school year. Undereducated parents attended the program together with their three and four year old children. The children participated in a preschool program while the adults learned skills in various academic areas. Specific times were allocated for parents and children to work together, usually in the form of parents helping their children in the preschool classroom. All programs included early childhood education, parent literacy training, parent support groups, and parent-child interactions with variations occurring across programs.

This research was not longitudinal in nature. However, unlike both the Even Start and Bookstart longitudinal studies, the Toyota Program research included data on the literacy levels of both the parents and children. Significant findings were uncovered.

According to Philliber, Spillman and King (1996), "[r]etention is one of the most serious problems faced in adult education programs" (p .560). Hence, retention of families was documented and compared to other adult literacy programs. These authors found that more participants in the Toyota Family Literacy programs stayed in the program after six , sixteen and twenty weeks compared to adult-focused programs. Indeed, 59% of Toyota Family Literacy participants stayed in the program after twenty weeks of instruction compared to 40% of the participants in adult -focused literacy programs. Retention had a direct impact on parent literacy levels. Based on pre- and post-reading assessments, parents in these programs, on average, gained more than one grade level in reading. Participants who left the program within the first fifty hours of instruction gained very little, but those who stayed more than 150 hours "increased their reading skills by an average equal to about a year and a half of education" (Philliber, et al, 1996, p. 562).

The outcomes of the childrens' achievement, based on an assessment of their receptive vocabulary and observations, also showed gains. Though the children, on average fell within the bottom 11% during the pre-test, at the end of the year their skills had increased to a point where the average child in the program was at the 19th percentile. According to Philliber et al. children usually maintain the same percentile at the beginning and end of the year. The authors suggest that "[t]he fact that they were at a higher percentile suggests that while they were in the program [the children] were advancing faster than children not in the program"(Philliber. et al, 1996, p. 563). Researchers observed children using 'Child Observation Records' that measure six 'dimensions' of development including language and literacy, logic and mathematics, and social relations. Children who participated in the family literacy program made significant gains in all six dimensions compared to children in child-focused programs. This result is particularly supportive of the correlation between parents' interest in literacy and their childrens' development.

demonstrates that direct and indirect support of parents can lead to a change in literacy attitudes and behaviours. Where parents are directly supported, adult literacy levels may also show improvement.

Considering the setting of my field work, family literacy initiatives in developing communities are as important as evaluations of family literacy programs in the First World.

3.6 Family Literacy Programs in Developing Countries

Laurel Puchner (1993), in an article on international perspectives on family literacy states that "... family literacy in its American form has not traveled to the developing community" (p. 17). In an related article published four years later. Puchner (1997) states that "very little research on family literacy exists for developing countries contexts" (p.7). I would concur with Puchner's perception as my literature search yielded disappointingly few studies set in developing communities. Indeed, Puchner's 1997 case study, comparing family literacy programs in the United States and Mali, is similar to most articles on this topic. Her findings report attitudes and behaviours around the notion of 'family literacy' but not specific descriptions or evaluations of family literacy programs in developing communities.

Below is a description of four published works available on family literacy initiatives in South Africa. Nepal. Turkey, and Chile which seem to address the concept of family literacy as something distinct from adult literacy or basic education initiatives in developing countries.

3.6.1 South African Context

M.M. Ramarumo's (1994) article describes the merits of family literacy in South Africa. As a result of apartheid, many Black families have been dislocated, and children have been deprived of their parents and have been denied basic education. Ramarumo asserts that "[t]his denial has consigned millions of Black South Africans to silence and marginalization from effective and meaningful participation in social and economic development" (p. 2).

Now an estimated fifteen million adults (over one third of the population of South Africa) are illiterate and have had little or no formal education. Intergenerational illiteracy is becoming a real concern as Black parents who lack formal schooling themselves cannot, without facilitation, support the literacy development of their children.

Ramarumo argues that parents play a critical role in providing the foundation for their childrens' learning. Even illiterate parents can contribute meaningfully to their child's development through activities such as oral storytelling and creating reading and writing opportunities. Ramarumo states that though it is not the parents responsibility to do the school's job, the home environment should foster behaviours such as attending to tasks and working with others.

Presently, according to Ramarumo, there are no official family literacy programmes at a national level in South Africa. He asserts that family literacy programs can empower parents to facilitate their childrens' education and stop the cycle of illiteracy in South African families. Family literacy initiatives should be a central concern to those involved in educating children. Ramarumo (1994) argues that "unless relevance of family literacy in the education of the child is firmly acknowledged, the reconstruction and development of South African society will not be fully achieved" (p. 10).

3.6.2 Nepal Context

Anna Robinson - Pant (1995), in her review of the literature on literacy programs and initiatives in Nepal, summarizes one study on family literacy. Pant briefly describes a pilot project in the Adal Gaon region; the project included a Nepali baby book program which contained information on childrens' health issues, a writing project (in which children wrote down family stories), a homework club, and a school-family communication program. According to the authors, this "programme has already proved 'much more than the intergeneration transfer of literate behaviour that has been described as Family Literacy in the United States'" (Manandhar, Leslie, and Shrestha, 1994 as cited in Robinson - Pant, 1995).

3.6.3 Turkish Early Enrichment Project

Cigdem Kagitcibasi (1997) writes about a longitudinal family literacy study in Istanbul, Turkey called the 'Turkish Early Enrichment Project' carried out with low socioeconomic families and their children. Altogether 255 families participated in the initial study from 1982 to 1986 with ninety mothers participating in mother training. The follow-up, in 1992, included 217 participates.

The initial mothers' training program consisted of two parts: a cognitive component and a mother-support component. The program lasted sixty weeks over a two year period. The cognitive component included worksheets and storybooks designed to help mothers promote their childrens' preliteracy and prenumeracy skills. Sessions were held in mother's homes and through biweekly guided group discussions. The mother-support component focused on fostering the socioemotional development of the child while empowering the mother to cope with parenting problems and needs of her own.

Results of these initiatives indicated that mothers' literacy skills and selfworth improved as they read and discussed storybooks with their children. Their skill in parenting and ability to communicate with their spouses were also positively impacted. Significant differences were found in the children's cognitive and achievement scores on standardized measures. Socioemotional development of children in the experimental group also showed positive effects.

In the 1992 follow-up study, parents and children were interviewed and childrens' cognitive development and school achievement were reassessed. More consistent and sustained school attendance among participants whose mothers had participated in the initial mother training program was the most important finding over time. As well, children surpassed participants in the control group on cognitive performance and attitudes, and self-concepts around education. Mothers and children developed better relationships among each other and with the father within the family.

The positive outcome of these studies have led to expanding its application and policy developments to other areas in Turkey. The model is being offered as a viable nonformal alternative for communities where public pre-schools are poorly attended. Since 1992, thousands of women and children have benefited from this project.

3.6.4. Proyecto Padres e Hijos - Chile

A fourth family literacy program discussed in the literature is located in Chile (Filp and Valdes. 1993). The 'Proyecto Padres e Hijos' (Parents and Children Project) was developed by the Centro de Investigacion y Desarrollo de la Educacion (C.I.D.E.), a non-governmental organization. The project began in 1971 as an alternative to kindergarten for children living in poor rural areas. It has experienced several shifts over the past two and half decades. largely as a response to significant political changes. Historically, international funding played an important role in the project with a gradual shift to national funding now taking place. Today, the purpose of the project "is to empower mothers and fathers in their parental role and to stimulate children's interactions with their family and environment in order to promote healthy socio-emotional. cognitive. and biological development" (Filp and Valdes. 1993, p. 211). In 1992, a total of twenty-seven programs were functioning. reaching 260 families and 580 children.

Filp and Valdes report on the program as it existed in the early 1990's. The Proyecto Padres e Hijos was organized around weekly meetings of ten to fifteen parents (usually mothers). Two "monitors" trained by C.I.D.E. coordinate meetings. Monitors were chosen by local organizations in the community and the only prerequisite was that they could read and write and show an interest in the project. Monitors promoted group discussions around selected topics usually supported by specially designed educational materials, simulation activities. and group activities. Parents received teaching materials to be used with their children at home. The curriculum was organized around units focused on child development and the role parents play in providing love, guidance, and challenge. One objective of the project was to create an environment where parents recovered confidence in

their parental abilities. This in turn was expected to positively influence children's development. The educational approach to the program was to encourage participants to learn in ways different to traditional school approaches. Groups were encouraged to formulate their own conclusions and information was provided by monitors only when requested.

Paulo Freire's framework for the development of a participatory and active education influenced how monitors facilitated sessions with parents. His ideas acted as a catalyst whereby monitors became aware of specific needs of individual communities and the power existing in the educational process. Freire's influence led to the "creation of social contexts in which poor people could speak (say their word), build on their experience and organize as a group to take action in matters that affect their lives" (Filp and Valdes, 1993, p. 221).

The recruitment of families, who in practice were represented by mothers, was carried out by monitors using different procedures. Door to door recruitment was the most frequently used strategy. Families then attended three to four meetings before the program began. In 1992, the average level of schooling of participant parents was incomplete secondary education yet despite this relatively high level of schooling, these families were poor. The drop out rate from the program was twenty percent.

The program impacted both parental confidence and children's intellectual functioning. Based on formative evaluation reports written after each group session, mothers reported an increase in self-esteem, confidence in their parental ability, and awareness of their child's emotional and cognitive needs. These changes became evident in new actions at home, the school, and the community. Though not discussed in detail by Filp and Valdes, based on studies conducted in 1976 and 1983, children demonstrated higher IQ scores, produced more sophisticated drawings, and were perceived by teachers to have comparatively higher reading skills. In the future, organizers intended to further encourage fathers to participate as well as plan to more closely orientate the curriculum to meet the

needs of unwed mothers.

Three of the four articles on family literacy in developing countries provide various forms of evaluations of family literacy programs. Tools used to measure progress are not discussed in two of the evaluative studies, leaving Kagiticibasi's study as the most informative study regarding the impact of family literacy programs in this setting. Considering this lack of data, and in support of Ramarumo's argument that family literacy initiatives may have merit in communities in the South, there needs to be further research on family literacy programs in developing community settings.

Though there is comparatively little information in the literature about family literacy initiatives in communities in the South, there is a large body of knowledge concerning adult literacy and basic education programs in these settings. This research offers valuable insight to family literacy programming in developed countries.

3.7 Adult Literacy Initiatives: Helen Abadzi

The literature indicates adult literacy programs in developing communities, despite several decades of implementation and evaluation, have met with little success. In a World Bank Discussion Paper, Helen Abadzi (1994) in a review of the literature, comprehensively documents barriers to the effectiveness of adult literacy programs, and offers possible solutions to these problems. This paper informs my research as there are many parallels between family literacy and adult literacy initiatives and Abadzi discusses issues not addressed in the literature on family literacy programs in the developed world. Relevant points in Abadzi's work will be summarized below.

Abadzi (1994) identifies adult literacy in many poor countries as a "problem-ridden area" and points out that in contrast to children's education, "adult literacy programs have yielded disappointing results worldwide" (p.1). Consequently, despite government requests, the World Bank rarely funds literacy projects. Abadzi identifies four major obstacles to adult literacy. Firstly, low initial enrollments plague most programs. For complex, largely

unknown reasons, illiterates fail to enrol in literacy programs. Secondly, literacy programs have experienced high drop-out rates with fifty percent per class being the average.Thirdly, many illiterates complete a course and still fail to acquire basic literacy skills. However, Abadzi reports that large government programs, responsible for most data on adult literacy programs, may be less efficient and effective than smaller, non-governmental initiatives that are locally developed but fail to publish results of their efforts. Finally, those participants who manage to complete a literacy program and gain literacy skills may in fact lapse back into illiteracy after the program has terminated. Predictably, participants living in urban and periurban areas tend to maintain literacy skills more adequately than participants living in rural areas: women lapse into illiteracy more often than men. Reasons for this relapse seem to centre around not using the skills after they have been taught or poor program instruction.

Abadzi identifies several factors, grouped as variables exogenous to the learner and variables that are participant-related, which limit the likelihood that an individual will become functionally literate. The literature indicates that agencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) tend to oversupply resources initially and undersupply resources later in the project. Methodological and instructional limitations impact participants acquisition of functionally literate skills. Content considered irrelevant and instructors lacking in motivation and skill are two examples of variables reported to impede literacy acquisition. Abadzi cites several studies that have found the length of study correlates with achievement and subsequent retention. According to Abadzi (1994), "there seems to be a consensus in recent publications that courses should last at least nine months and a minimum of 300 hours in order to provide sustainable skills" (p. 11).

Based on several studies, Abadzi identifies many participant - related variables impacting literacy acquisition among adults. Some of these variables are outlined below. According to the 'norm theory', individuals become accustomed to certain aspects in their lives, which are regarded as 'normal'. Illiteracy, like poverty or poor health, may be considered normal

to individuals and may partially explain why illiterates are not motivated to change their situation of literacy. Very poor people may even acquire a 'learned helplessness' believing there is nothing they can do to improve their lives. Some adults may desire literacy for themselves but believe they are too old to learn. As identified by one study, some illiterates develop effective coping strategies, such as memorizing certain facts or asking their children for help, making literacy acquisition a redundant skill to them. However, findings from other studies indicate that the more literate or neoliterate (newly literate) adults in a community, the more motivated illiterates seem to be to pursue literacy acquisition for themselves.

Abadzi's literature review also provides explanations for low retention rates in adult literacy programs.Though participants may be motivated to become literate, they drop-out of programs for a compilation of reasons. Participants may not be prepared for the effort and time commitment required to obtain even basic literacy skills let alone functional literacy skills. Competing priorities to literacy programs include lack of time to attend classes, exhaustive work, and a lack of understanding of what literacy has to offer. Women experience additional barriers to attending literacy programs. They may perform a double workload involving working long hours all day plus being fully responsible for childrearing and household responsibilities.Women in some cultures may be prohibited from becoming literate by male relatives.

The obstacles to adults becoming literate seem to be overwhelming. However, Abadzi reviews several instructional and facilitator variables that may facilitate improved literacy acquisition. In the context of my research, only those factors that apply to family literacy initiatives will be presented.

The need for adult illiterates to be treated with respect appears integral to literacy acquisition. Therefore, adult-centred teaching methods should be used rather than methods typically used with children. Learners should be given opportunities to define their own literacy needs which may diverge from what facilitators consider important. Adults must

understand the purpose of becoming literate in their own world and feel that literacy will enable them to solve problems more readily. Literacy instruction may be best provided to 'existing groups' engaged in a specific purpose, such as a farmers' cooperative, rather than to a group assembled solely for the purpose of pursuing literacy. Reading materials should be culturally appropriate and relevant to participants. Systematic review of key concepts should be an integral part of instruction.

Dedicated and skilled literacy facilitators "is perhaps the single most important determinant of literacy program effectiveness, and must be given the importance it deserves" (Abadzi, 1994, p. 31). Ideally, teachers should have as much formal education as possible. Nevertheless, Abadzi reports that neoliterates have been used effectively in some programs. Teacher training curricula should focus on adult classroom management issues and instructional challenges. Abadzi recommends a teacher training curricula that can be taught to facilitators in five to ten days and reviewed frequently.

Though Abadzi does not discuss family literacy initiatives specifically, her paper identifies key issues that will facilitate family literacy programming in developing contexts. As we will see, though parents generally participant in family literacy programs for the benefit of their children, understanding how to provide literacy instruction to parents in family literacy programs will facilitate literacy acquisition among parents which may ultimately impact literacy acquisition among all family members.

3.8 Basic Education Initiatives: Outcomes of Jomtien Conference

Like adult literacy initiatives, the history of basic education projects in developing communities and present day concerns is also informative to this research project. In a collection of papers edited by Lotty Eldering and Paul Leserman (1993), issues and challenges in basic education articulated at the World Conference on Education For All at Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 are discussed. At the conference, as stated in Eldering and Leseman's introduction, the international community including most of the world's governments, made a commitment to increase the educational opportunity for over one

hundred million children who have no access to basic education and literacy. In order to achieve this goal, "the family's educational and cultural functions must become priority areas for research and action" (Eldering & Leserman, 1993, p. 1).

In a related article, John Bennett (1993), discusses the educational context preceding the Jomtien conference and its outcomes. He states that education gains made in the previous two decades had been eroded by the simultaneous population expansion. In addition, investment in education had declined in the 1980's ultimately resulting in many children around the world still not having access to basic education. Most alarming is the reality that of the children who did have access to education in the late 1980's, forty percent of them dropped out before becoming literate. In order to address this situation, a broader definition of basic education was agreed upon at the Jomtien conference by the international community. Basic education now includes both an enlarged vision of education, and effective management both at the national and school levels. An enlarged vision of education moves beyond the traditional vision of primary schools and "would now reach out to the entire community from infants to adults with concentrated programs of quality and relevance" (Bennett, 1993, p. 13).

According to Bennett, as a result of the conference, the World Bank, United Nations Development Fund (U.N.D.P), UNICEF and UNESCO significantly increased their funding of basic education with the World Bank and U.N.D.P.more than doubling their basic education budgets. Reaction to the Jomtien conference has been positive with over one hundred countries formulating 'Education for All (E.F.A.)' goals; most countries' goals are focused on the four year primary school cycle. However, Bennett argues that this formal approach may not adequately respond to the socio-cultural context of various countries. He emphasizes that the most recent successful innovations in education are decentralized, non-formal in character and rely almost completely on community interest and involvement. In some countries, early childhood and adult education are being neglected altogether perhaps because "family and community education are notoriously difficult to promote (not least in a context where the media are dominated by commercial

concerns), implement, and evaluate" (Bennett, 1993, p. 16). Bennett states that the first six years of life is the foundation of an individual's physical, affective, social, and cognitive well-being: primary school programs typically do not begin until the age of six. Therefore, as Bennett argues, mothers are well-placed to improve the quality of life, especially the health and education needs, of their very young children. Bennett cites King and Hill (1992) as suggesting that "the education of mothers is as important in its effects (*i.e. low fertility rates, decreased infant mortality*) as any other educational enterprise" (Bennett, 1993, p. 17, italics mine). Bennett recognizes that international NGO's such as Save the Children have done significant work in promoting child welfare and parent education in the context of the community. However, he argues that not just international NGO's, but developing country education ministries as well, should establish or improve health and education services for young children where mothers are actively involved in the process.

The information on development efforts in adult literacy and the status of basic education in developing countries informs my efforts to establish a family literacy program in a developing community. The challenges of adult literacy programs of the past must be considered when developing a family literacy program aimed at supporting parents and their children. The impetus of broad, community-based basic education programs recommended at the Jomtien conference and outlined by Eldering and Leseman, and Bennett, further confirms the potential of educating mothers along with their children through non-formal education initiatives.

After reviewing the literature on family literacy theory and practice, and family literacy, adult literacy and basic education initiatives, it is now important to understand the critiques around the notion of family literacy and family literacy programs. Though these critiques are rooted in the North American context, they can inform family literacy in developing communities.

3.9 Critiques of Family Literacy and Family Literacy Programs

Critics challenge family literacy initiatives on several levels. Below is a discussion of overly ambitious policy makers, the inappropriateness of the "transmission model of family literacy", the lack of consideration of gender in developing and implementing family literacy programs, and the potential for co-opting the notion of family literacy in developing communities.

3.9.1 Family Literacy Results in Poverty Elimination?

Nickse (1990) warns us that though family literacy programs can provide a strong foundation for families to gain literacy skills, "family literacy programs cannot be expected to alter basic social and economic problems faced by participating families" (p. 20) and "improved literacy alone cannot aid families in poverty" (p. 60). Politicians and policy makers cannot assume funding family literacy initiatives in isolation will absolve them from other poverty-eradication efforts.

3.9.2 Whose Literacy?

Elsa Auerbach (1989, 1995) is probably one of the most well-known critics of family literacy initiatives. She argues that using narrow definitions of literacy which focus on school performance ignores important literacy practices in the home. There are critical implications for family literacy programs that adopt these school-based definitions. Auerbach states that American national and state policy makers and educators, frustrated with the current challenges in the American education system, have come to blame inadequacies within the family as the root of childrens' failure in school. The assumption is that nonmainstream families (for example, low income, cultural minorities, or families who speak English as a second language) may lack appropriate environments for fostering literacy development because of inadequate parental skills, practices and resources. Consequently, it is argued that illiteracy *always* breeds illiteracy in an intergenerational cycle. The objective of most American family literacy programs is to strengthen ties between home and school "by transmitting the culture of school literacy through the vehicle of the family" (Auerbach, 1989, p. 169). Rather than supporting parents in their role of

fostering literacy in their homes, parents learn that they are deficient in many ways and indeed may be a detriment to their children's educational progress.

Auerbach examines some of the assumptions made by the "transmission of school - practices" family literacy models. She concludes that homes of nonmainstream families are not necessarily "literacy-impoverished" but practice a range of literacy activities that go beyond school-related reading. Also, many families, regardless of literacy skills, consistently and mutually support each other in literacy activities and have children who are successful readers at school. In the context of this research, Auerbach argues that family literacy programs should not function under the "deficit hypothesis" model where practitioners assume that parents are inadequate at providing a supportive literacy environment and thus must learn how to do so. Instead, she argues for a "social contextual model" of family literacy where literacy activities are not limited to school-like reading and writing activities and parents' literacy skills and practices are valued. She suggests that "we draw on parents' knowledge and experience to inform instruction rather than [ask] 'How can we transfer school practices into home contexts?' "(Auerbach, 1989, p. 177). Curriculum development should be collaborative and participatory and use Freirean problem-posing strategies to focus on social issues and cultural practices. As issues emerge, they should become the content of literacy activities. The goal becomes increasing the social significance of literacy in family life by celebrating a broad range of literacy practices.

Crowther and Tett (1997)'s work is informed by Auerbach's work. They are family literacy practitioners in Great Britain and describe a project entitled "Connect". Connect recognizes that while people have different literacies which they make use of within different domains of life, not all literacies are equally valued by family literacy practitioners and policy makers. They advocate developing family literacy programs around what participants know rather than assuming that participants are passive while practitioners are active in the role of sharing knowledge about literacy. These authors warn practitioners and researchers that literacy is political: they argue that an 'objective literacy' does not exist;

"the language through which literacy is accomplished is never neutral in relation to the values and interests in groups and classes in society" (Crowther & Tett, 1997, p. 208).

Taylor (1993), the first to conceptualize and label family literacy in the early 1980's, concurs with Auerbach, stating that " sixteen years of ethnographic research in families and communities have taught me that sex, race, economic status, and setting cannot be used as significant correlates of literacy" (p. 551). Taylor suggests that some of the tenents of the National Center for Family Literacy imply that poverty is caused by the people themselves and that they are fully responsible for the conditions in which they and their children live. Taylor reports that researchers and educators involved in the field of family literacy are disturbed by the political implications of the national family literacy movement. For example, Taylor (1993) cites a special report published by the National Center on Family Literacy (1990) which states "undereducated parents usually do not pass on positive educational values to their children. Neither, in many cases, do they provide an adequate economic, educational or social environment" (Taylor, 1993.p.551). From this perspective, parents are blamed for conditions in which they and their children live; the notion that families are forced into poverty for complex reasons and are not poor by choice seems to have been overlooked by the National Center for Literacy. Taylor asserts that practitioners must discard pre-packaged programs on family literacy and turn to research with families in naturalistic settings, with women, and with cultural minorities in order to better inform family literacy practices.

Laurel Puchner (1997), in her discussion on the concept of family literacy in both the United States and Mali, also agrees with Auerbach's critique. She states that American family literacy models "reflect a set of norms that have been established by mainstream social policy" (Puchner, 1997, p. 7). These models disregard the way that families in different cultures and contexts impact the development of literacy and adapt literacy to their own needs. She also describes several assumptions that American policy makers and family literacy practitioners make about literacy development and support. These individuals assume that mothers pass on literacy values and skills to their children while in

many cultures extended family members and older siblings foster literacy behaviors in young children. In some families, especially many new immigrant families in North America, children can also be their parents' teachers. Literacy skills may be influenced by activities other than reading and writing. For example, oral storytelling and music, both literacy related skills, carry great importance in many cultures. Practitioners may also assume that children can only succeed in school when parents do school-like literacy activities in the home, converse with their children in school-like ways, and communicate with their childrens' teachers. However, as many studies indicate, educators cannot assume that parents who do not interact with the school do not care about their children's education. With many cultures, the contrary is true. Many parents highly respect teachers and want the best education for their children but do not want to interfere with the educational process. These parents support their children's education in the home, even if they cannot help them directly.

Finally, in this discussion about the importance of promoting different forms of literacy, Ype Poortinga (1993) reminds us of the assumption held by many in the developed world around the universal notion of literacy. Poortinga suggests that the goal held by UNESCO and other aid agencies to promote literacy acquisition around the world, independent of culture and future aspirations, "reflects an educational philosophy that is not of all times and societies" (Poortinga, 1993, p. 53). Poortinga's point reaffirms the significance of establishing socio-cultural models of literacy where communities determine their own literacy needs.

3.9.3 A Gender Consideration

Sondra Cuban and Elisabeth Hoyes (1996) participate in the family literacy debate as well. They argue that most family literacy practitioners overlook gender issues. According to these authors, women may be looking for a "serious educational opportunity for *themselves*, aside from their children...and women tend to be one-dimensional individuals in family literacy theory, research, and program practices " (Cuban & Hoyes, 1996, p. 5). Women's learning is often only considered in the context of their children.

Cuban and Hayes use a gendered perspective to analyze what Elsa Auerbach (1989) calls the "transmission model" of family literacy programs where parents, particularly mothers, are trained to pass on reading skills and other learning behaviours to their children. They uncover several disadvantages to women participants in transmission models of family literacy. Women, as conduits of literacy for their children, are not the subjects of their own learning and their "intellectual abilities" are largely neglected (Fossen & Sticht, 1993, as cited by Cuban & Hayes, 1996, p.7)⁶. Additionally, mothers' child rearing and home literacy practices may be devalued. Indeed, mothers report feeling parenting discussions can be invasive.

Cuban and Hayes argue that women need to be viewed as whole persons with competing priorities. Their view of their own complex lives may be different from that of a family literacy practitioner's view. Many mothers want to change or expand their traditional roles and it is essential that family literacy initiatives provide activities that allow mothers to explore career options, develop advocacy and critical thinking skills, and consider new futures for themselves and their families.

Practitioners need to be aware that though mothers may desire pursuing literacy skills, they are also threatened by its potential impact on women's relationships within the family and their roles as mothers. Cuban and Hayes cite several studies that indicate some mothers see their family as major barriers to their own learning. For example, studies indicated that mothers learning literacy skills began to see their childrearing responsibilities as taking away from this learning. Some parents wanted less rather than more time with their children during program sessions as their childrens' literacy learning was interfering with their own learning. Understanding and respecting the various literacy behaviours practiced

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⁶ Bennett's citation of King and Hill's findings, discussed in the Basic Education Initiatives section, presented earlier in this chapter, supports Cuban and Hayes' argument. To recapitulate, King and Hill (1992) found that " the education of mothers is as important in its effects as any other educational enterprise" (Bennett, 1993, p.17). Bennett adds that educated mothers can "dramatically change the quality of life of their children and inspire social and economic progress in their communities" (Bennett, 1993, p. 17). These comments indicate mothers should gain educational skills because they can impact their families and communities. However, mother's own intellectual needs are not being considered. What about illiterate women in the community who are not mothers? Should they have the privilege of acquiring educational skills?

by women in different cultures is also important to women participants.

Cuban and Hayes suggest a number of ways family literacy programs can become more valuable and meritorious to women. They recommend that practitioners encourage women to develop critical thinking skills through reading childrens' storybooks in a discerning way. These skills can facilitate a critical reflection on the roles of women which can lead to women learning to confront gender bias. Through participatory approaches, leadership skills can be fostered through encouraging mothers to define and articulate their personal literacy goals and take on leadership roles in the family literacy program and in their communities. Encouraging men to facilitate family literacy programs as well as become participants demonstrates for children that literacy is not just "women's work". Finally, practitioners should support mothers in their desire to pursue adult education.

3.9.4 A Development Context

H.S. Bhola's (1996) work should also be heeded by family literacy practitioners working in developing communities. In his critique of the concept of family literacy in the context of United States and internationally, he discusses the outcome of the World Symposium on Family Literacy (W.S.F.L.) held in Paris in 1994 during the International Year of the Family. This symposium offered family literacy workers from around the world an opportunity to share experiences, discuss problems and build solidarity through the establishment of professional networks. He states that the idea of family literacy, American-style has traveled to other First World countries as well as has been adopted by literacy practitioners in Africa, Asia and Latin America. However, he feels many of the participants at W.S.F.L. were simply relabeling traditional, long-established and often ineffective literacy programs with the "still ambiguous program label of family literacy" (Bhola, 1996, p. 36).

To recapitulate the critiques of family literacy , Nickse reminds policy makers that family literacy programs do not directly result in the elimination of poverty. Auerbach and others argue that the "transmission of school practices" model of family literacy is exclusionary

and based on inaccurate assumptions. Cuban and Hoyes point out that family literacy practitioners, in their efforts to support childrens' literacy needs, often view mothers as one-dimensional, forgetting that these women have literacy needs as well. Finally, Bhola warns family literacy practitioners in a developing context that labeling programs as family literacy programs may be simply renaming ineffective adult literacy programs of the past.

This chapter has discussed theory and practice behind the notion of family literacy in both developed and developing countries. The history of challenges associated with adult literacy programs in the Third World along with present day expanded basic education priorities adopted by most developing countries confirms the need for non-formal education initiatives such as family literacy programs in communities in the South. The next chapter will paint a picture of the Philippines where primary research for this thesis was conducted. It will also outline the methodology used to collect data.

4. Context and Methodology

4.1. The Philippines

In order to more fully understand the context of this research project, it is important to sketch the contours of the Philippines, including its demography, people, history, and economy. As I am researching aspects of literacy, it is also appropriate to gain a better understanding of the situation of literacy in the Philippines.

4.1.1 Demographics

The Philippines is an archipelago of over 7,100 islands and has a population of more than 67 million. Comparing the Philippine's size to Canada, it covers half the area of the province of Alberta. Population density in the Philippines is relatively high; in 1997, 608 people lived per square kilometre compared to three people in Canada. The population has been increasing rapidly, stretching resources. Recent years have experienced large scale migration from rural areas to the cities, especially Metro Manila. Nearly two-fifths of the population are younger than fifteen years of age. Family planning programs exist but are concentrated in rural areas.

Manila, the setting for my research, is located on central Luzon Island. It is the capital, the largest city and the most important seaport in the country. The Manila metropolitan area, or Metro Manila, spans an area of 636 square km. About 12% of the population of the Philippines is concentrated here. At the 1990 census, the city of Manila had a population of 1.6 million while the Metro Manila area registered 8 million people (Canadian Foreign Service Institute, 1998).

4.1.2 The People and Language

Filipinos are predominantly of Malay descent mixed with Chinese, Spanish, Indian, and Arab ancestry. Pilipino, a language based on Tagalog (the language spoken around Manila and by almost one-third of the country's total population), and English are both official languages. Tagalog is spoken in 93% of Manila's households. English is the language of

status and privilege and is the primary language of government, administration, higher education, mass media and business. However, over the past few years a nationalistic movement encouraging Pilipino at universities and in the media has emerged. There are more than 100 regional languages. More than four-fifths of the population is Roman Catholic and the southern island of Mindanao is home to a sizable Muslim minority.

4.1.3 History

Recent history of the Philippines has been steeped in Western colonialism because of its strategic location. The first Western explorer. Ferdinand Magellan, landed on the islands in 1521 and claimed the land for Spain. Islam and indigenous animism religions were replaced with Roman Catholicism. By the mid 19th century, after several hundred years of exploitation, intellectuals and students began to press for change. Joze Rizal, writer and physician, became impatient with the slow reform process and began mobilizing others to revolt. He was executed for his actions in 1896, becoming a martyr who continues to be revered today.

When the Spaniards lost the Spanish-American War, the Philippines was ceded to the United States. In 1901, taken by the concept of colonialism, the United States government maintained control of the Philippines especially as it offered a military and commercial presence in the region. During World War II, the Japanese gained control of the Philippines for two years. The United States reconquered the area in 1944 and granted the Philippines full independence in 1946.

After independence, the political system was modeled after the American system, with a separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches and with a popularly elected president. In the 1950's and early 1960's, the Filipino elite maintained power and instituted some reforms, though most agriculture reforms were resisted by the 'mestizoz' (intermarried Spanish and Filipinos who were wealthy landowners). In 1965, Ferdinand Marcos won the presidential election. Rebellious movements which had developed among peasants during the Japanese occupation, resumed activity in Marcos'

first years as president. In addition, Muslims on the southern island of Mindanao began demanding change. Between 1972 and 1981, the country was placed under marital law by President Marcos who justified the move by saying it was the last resort against complete civil disorder. After he ended martial law, Marcos continued his dictorial rule. However, people were becoming increasingly alarmed by the corruption of his family and cronies while the economic situation deteriorated. In 1983, opposition leader Benigno Aquino returned to the Philippines from the United States and was assassinated at the airport. Marcos was implicated in the plot. In 1986, Aquino's wife, Cory, after losing a fixed election, launched a nonviolent "People's Power" protest that forced Marcos to give up power. His family and allies were exiled to Hawaii. Cory Aquino was elected president: her six years in office were characterized by numerous coups and a struggling economy. In 1992, Fidel Ramos became president. He was a well-liked leader who confronted prolific corruption and firmly established the Philippines as an important member of the international community. Ramos' term ended in 1998 and he was replaced by Joseph Estrada, a poorly educated, charismatic movie star cum politician. He appeals to the masses and enjoys his position of power, but is not as well-respected as Ramos was by the elite or international community (Doronila, Philippine Daily Inquirer, March 8, 1999).

4.1.4 Economy

The Philippines is primarily an exporter of raw materials and an importer of manufactured goods. The economy is based largely on agriculture (rice, coconuts, and pineapples), light industries (processing of agricultural products), and services. A market economy predominates though more intervention by the government has increased in the 1990's. Inflation is high in the Philippines with purchasing power increasing at a slower rate. Wages are among the lowest in East Asia (Canadian Foreign Service Institute, 1998).

The Philippines is the world's largest exporter of labour. By some estimates, 4.5 million Filipinos work abroad, sending home $5 - 10 billion a year. Filipinos are sought after elsewhere in Asia and in North America as domestic workers, entertainers, merchant mariners, middle managers, bank tellers and clerical staff because of their proficiency with

English ("Different Kind", 1998).

In 1996. of 157 countries, the Philippines ranked 87th in terms of GNP per capita (US $1002) (World Bank Atlas, 1998). For the first time in years, the Philippines was enjoying an increase in its gross national product in 1994 through 1996. It has not been as impacted as other countries in the region during the recent emerging market economic crisis (Atencio, Manila Bulletin, May 12. 1999). Presently, the foreign debt of $42 billion, comprising 70% of the gross domestic product, is considered one of the Philippines' most serious economic problems (Canadian Foreign Service Institute, 1998).

Despite the recent economic progress in the Philippines, 71% of the people in the Philippines live in poverty (World Bank Atlas, 1998).

4.1.5 Literacy Rates, Needs, and Barriers to Acquisition

Statistics show that 95% of the population, both men and women, are literate (Canadian Foreign Service Institute, 1998). However, despite the reported literacy rates, Rosario de Guzman, director of a regional Bureau of Nonformal Education, claims there are anywhere between six and ten million functionally illiterate people nationwide: this statistic is confirmed by the World Bank (de Guzman, 1999. p. 3-4, Philippine Education Sector Report, 1999). This situation has seen some improvement in the past decade. However, according to a recent World Bank Education Sector Study on the Philippines, "despite considerable advances in adult basic literacy and some post-literacy education, nearly half the existing workforce has less than basic education and drop-out rates remain high in elementary school" (Philippine Education Sector Study, 1999, p. 3-1).

Because my research took place in an urban poor setting in Manila, literature on understanding literacy knowledge and needs in this context is of interest. Maria Luisa Canieso-Doronila, out of University of the Philippines - Manila, conducted an ethnographic study on literacy in the Philippines. She found that literacy characteristics are very diverse with the urban poor setting being particularly unique. Urban poor people generally come

from one of the provinces where a different dialect is spoken and traditional or popular knowledge is emphasized. However, much of the popular knowledge has little use in the city. For example, rice farming and fishing knowledge is redundant in this setting. Reading, writing, and computation are necessary in urban settings for things such as payment of debts, writing letters of application, doing simple bookkeeping or repairing household appliances (Canieso-Doronila, 1996, p. 99). However, literate *practice* is not extensive because, as articulated by Abadzi in Chapter 3, individuals often adapt to their situations of illiteracy. In this case, illiterate urban poor adults typically memorize instructions to avoid reading and writing.

Canieso-Doronilla (1996) also identifies barriers to illiterate marginalized Filipinos participating in adult literacy classes. In her study, marginalized groups of a dominant majority (i.e. people from the provinces living in Metro Manila slums) were reluctant to attend classes because it was 'nakakahiya' (embarrassing). People stated their poor eyesight or unsteady hands were responsible for their inability to read and write. However, when asked why they wanted to become literate, one of the most common answers was "to gain knowledge and understand things" (Canieso - Doronila, 1996, p. 132). Canieso-Doronilla points out that urban illiterates, unlike illiterates in rural areas such as fishing or rice villages, feel excluded from knowledge and information available to the majority. This situation is compounded when the written language is in English and not the regional dialect (as is generally the case in Metro Manila), further limiting non-literate members of the community access to knowledge. Canieso-Doronila warns that many government agencies and NGO's tend to disregard the complexity of reasons for illiteracy in the Philippines and attribute poor literacy rates to poverty alone.

* * *

In summary, the Philippines is a country of beauty and complexity. Its people, of mixed ancestry, have experienced colonization or overthrow by Spain, Japan, and the United States with Spanish and American influences remaining imprinted on the culture today.

Politically, Filipinos experienced martial law along with corruption and oppression under the Marcos regime. Fidel Ramos, as president from 1992 to 1998, was effective in returning the country to stability and brought the Philippines, as an economic player, to the table of the international community. Today, Joseph Estrada, elected as president in May, 1998, is suffering criticism from both within and outside the country around his inability to govern with direction and confidence.

Understanding the situations around basic and nonformal education and the present crisis is important in terms of informing my own research . A closer look at the educational system in the Philippines follows.

4.2 Education in the Philippines

.... We shall find our way by the light of Knowledge ......
by Jose Rizal

Reverered for his fight for emancipation in the 1890's, Joze Rizal's pronouncement is still believed today. Filipinos generally hold a high regard for education, believing education can lead to success. Teachers are given full responsibility for being conduits of knowledge: it is assumed this knowledge will lead to an individual's economic security. However, though education is compulsory and accessible to all, the limited tax base coupled with the present economic situation, restrict the government's ability to fund the burgeoning needs of the education sector appropriately.

The educational system is roughly modeled after the one in the United States. Almost all children of school age are enrolled at the primary level, and in urban areas most advance to the secondary level. In order to gain a full picture of the education context in the Philippines, a historical background will be provided and the present situation summarized.

4.2.1 Historical Context
The Philippine educational system is anchored in several legal documents including the

New Constitution of the Philippines, the Educational Code of 1982, and the Medium Term Plan of the Country (Surtaria, M.C., Guerrero, J.S. & Castano, P.M., 1989).The history of the debate about language of instruction will also be discussed.

The New Constitution (1987)

Unlike other countries in the region, education priorities are mandated in the Constitution. The Education Code of 1982 became the educational provisions of the 1987 Constitution. Contents of Article XIV of the Constitution includes establishing and maintaining a complete and adequate system of education that is free for elementary and high school students (Sutaria et al., 1989). A key provision of the Constitution requires that the State "assign the highest budgetary priority to education" and access to education is the guaranteed "right for all"(Philippine Education Sector Study, 1999). Since then the government has taken a number of important steps, some but not all have been consistent with the constitutional mandates.

The Medium Term Plan of the Country (1987 - 1992)

Education was recognized as "the most important instrument for national development" (Sutaria et al. 1989, p. 4). Educational objectives in this plan included both democratizing access to education and improving the quality of education and training opportunities.

Language of Instruction

Determining the appropriate language of instruction has been a complex and highly controversial issue. After independence from the United States, a variety of languages and dialects were used depending upon the region. In 1974, in response to the lack of language standardization, the Bilingual Education Policy was established. This policy stipulated that "all subjects in school from grade one to fourth year high school, except for Science and Mathematics (taught in English because texts were only available in English), and English language class, would be taught in Pilipino" (Gonzalez, A., 1982, in Guingona, S. (Eds.) 1982). Pilipino, English, and in some cases local dialects, are all languages of instruction in public schools today. Many argue that students receive subquality instruction in English

now, despite the fact that it is generally viewed as a critical skill to the economic development of the country.

As indicated above, education has been given priority by the government. Has this emphasis on constitutional and development policy translated to real educational opportunities for poor children and semi- or illiterate adults? As my research project focuses on family literacy, gaining accurate knowledge about *actual* educational experiences of children and nonformal opportunities for adults informs my work. A summary of basic and nonformal education initiatives follows. After this discussion, I will look at factors contributing to the present crisis in the education system.

4.2.2 The Status of Education in the 1980's and 1990's

In late 1980's, an educational congress, the Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) was mandated to review and assess the entire educational system. The document "Making Education Work: An Agenda for Reform" authored by Angara et al. (1991) was one of the outcomes of this congress. Over the past year, in-country representatives of the World Bank have assessed the present status of the education system. The "Philippine Education Sector Study" (1999) represents the culmination of their findings. These two documents are the most reliable data to date available on the Philippine education system (Deacon, personal communication by interview, Dec. 5, 1998) and together are my principal sources of information on the status of education in this country over the past two decades.

Basic Education

The Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) has responsibility for the formulation, planning, implementation, and coordination of basic (primary and secondary) education. Basic education is compulsory for children six years old through to thirteen. However, according to the EDCOM report, schools were not accessible to all pupils in the 1980's. This past decade has seen an improvement in this situation with universal net primary enrolment rates and secondary enrolment reaching 64% by 1997. Cycle completion

rates are also high, especially at the secondary level where nine out of ten students who enter grade seven finish all four years.

Despite improved enrolment rates, issues of retention inequity exist between the rich and the poor. The EDCOM authors likened the formal school system to a "giant sorting machine which keeps children from well-off city families and throws out children from rural and poor families" (Angara et al, 1991. p. 9).Today, the situation persists. Though there is little difference in enrolment at the grade one level, those who are 'rich' stay in school to grade six 95% of the time while one out of four from the poorest third of the population drop-out (Philippine Education Sector Study, 1999). As discussed in Chapter 3, students who leave school in the early grades often lapse into illiteracy (Canieso-Doronila, 1996).

Not only is there disparity between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in the education system, there is increasing concern over the poor quality of school facilities and teacher competency. Today, forty eight percent of elementary schools do not have water while 61% of schools have no electricity. According to the EDCOM report, most teachers do not have the minimum qualifications necessary for teaching. In 1990, only 11% of the examinees passed the Philippine Board Examination for Teachers and the highest scores on the examination were obtained by non-education graduates. In a 1991 study, teachers performed only 9% better than their students and alarmingly, teachers had lower scores in Filipino that students. According to members of EDCOM, "[t]eaching, because it is perceived as a poorly esteemed profession, doesn't attract or hold the best" (Angara et al, 1991. p. 24). The Philippine Education Sector Study indicates that inadequate school facilities and poor teacher competency has led to poor achievement by students. Again,this situation impacts the poor more significantly than the rich. Indeed, some public (and private) primary and secondary schools in the Philippines "rival those found anywhere in the world" (Philippine Education Sector Report, 1999, p.3-2). However, generally, only the wealthiest Filipinos have access to these leading institutions, either by residential proximity to good public facilities or because families can afford private institution fees.

Nonformal Education

Nonformal education (NFE), in the Philippines, refers to any systematically organized educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal school system which is designed to provide alternative learning to out of school youths and adults (de Guzman, 1999, p. 6). NFE began as a civic movement in the early 1900's with the occurrence of educational lectures in towns and villages.Today, programs characteristically combine literacy training with livelihood skills and are usually seen as creative and indigenous efforts to attain education. The bulk of the NFE literacy programs are delivered by DECS, through its Bureau of Nonformal Education, and by a few national NGOs. However, according to the Philippine Education Sector Study (1999), "[f]inancial support provided to the NFE subsector by Government has always been limited" (p.4-2). In 1998, NFE's share of the total education budget was only 0.2% and is only enough to cover 17,000 learners. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are an estimated 6 - 10 million functionally illiterate youths and adults in the Philippines today.

Crisis in Education

According to the EDCOM Report Highlights," [t]he quality of Philippine education is declining continuously" (Angara et al. 1991, p. xii). The educational commission report identified many barriers to quality education. Most significantly. the authors state that in the 1980's,the Philippine government was spending 20% less of the national budget on education than it was in the 1960's. In 1990. as a percentage of the gross national product, the Philippines invested 1.3% in education, "the lowest in ASEAN [the Association of South East Asian Nations]. and much lower than the Asian average of 3.3.%" (Angara et al. 1991, p.3). Though basic education is the biggest part of the education budget, it comprised only 66% of the total budget which was about 20% less than the average allocation for basic education in Asia in the 1980's (Angara et al, 1991). The EDCOM report predicted that even if the government decided to increase the education budget, the budget would still not be able to meet the ever-widening requirements of basic education.

A recent news article in Nation Today articulates the present situation. It reports a plea

made by the Education Secretary, Andrew Gonzales to the private sector. Gonzales states that the 1999 P81.29 billion (Cdn $3.24 billion) "is but a pittance ... and that the 1999 DECS [Department of Education, Culture, and Sports] budget was only enough to handle approximately 30 percent of the total requirement of 21,000 classrooms leaving a shortfall of 15,000 classrooms and .... leaving the country 9000 teaching positions short" (Villanueva, Today, Nov. 27, 1999)

Despite the present educational crisis, the World Bank, in another recent news article, commended the Filipino government for giving financial priority to education. The article quotes Vinay Bharghava, World Bank country director, as saying, "[t]he government rightly emphasizes rural development, education, and strengthening of institutions at all levels to improve the implementation of pro-poor projects" (Atencio, Manila Bulletin, May 12, 1999). The government has delegated another commission, the Presidential Commission on Education Reform, which has been given a year to study the Philippine education system (Atencio, Manila Bulletin, Feb. 5, 1999). Hopefully, recommendations from this commission will lead to budget reforms that will begin to improve the present status of education in the Philippines.

* * *

With a deeper understanding of the Philippines including its land, people, history, economy, literacy characteristics and needs, and education system, it is now appropriate to contextualize my research partner organization, the Bukas Palad Foundation, located in a squatter area of Metro Manila.

4.3 Bukas Palad Foundation

The Bukas Palad Foundation, a Christian-based NGO, has social centres located in Tramo and Tambo, Pasay City, Metro Manila. It serves disadvantaged people living in the vicinity of the social centres. This NGO demonstrates integrity and dedication, offering support to thousands of needy families. The goal of Bukas Palad Foundation is "to love the person and help him or her discover his or her dignity and self-worth as a child of God to develop

his/her potentials fully so as to become self-sufficient, a responsible and productive member of the family and community" (Experience of Bukas Palad, pg. 2).A summary of the Bukas Palad Foundation and its history and present programs will be discussed below. My information resources include several year-end reports and information pamphlets, interview notes with the foundation's president and community workers, notes from quarterly report meetings I attended, and observations recorded as log entries.

4.3.1 Historical Context

Members of the Focolare Movement, an Italian-based spiritual movement founded by Chiara Lubrich in the 1940's, came to the Philippines in 1981. This movement, with members now living in many countries worldwide, works to alleviate poverty and help people grow spiritually. Lubrich and others, disturbed by the widespread poverty in Manila, became committed to alleviating the situation by creating a social centre in a slum area of the city. This commitment led to the development of Bukas Palad Foundation, Inc. a non-governmental institution whose motto is "Malaya tayong tumanggap bukas palad tayong magbigay (Freely we receive, freely we give)". The theme underlying the motto is the assumption that there is not a person too rich to receive nor a person too poor to give. In 1983, a dilapidated warehouse in Tramo was donated by a family close to the Movement and with the support of the community and 'Divine Providence', the warehouse was transformed to a social centre that was open to all in its vicinity. Becoming connected to the community was difficult for the Focolare members initially as they lacked social work skills. However, to facilitate this process, members visited people in their homes to establish rapport. Eventually, families began coming to the centre and offering help. A weekly medical clinic was the first service provided. Today, seventeen years later, the foundation has served 4000 families in the community.

4.3.2 Bukas Palad Today

Presently, both the Tramo social centre where I conducted my research (hereafter referred to as the Bukas Palad Social Centre for purposes of clarity), and another centre in nearby Paranaque are operated by the Bukas Palad Foundation. Vastly different than other local

institutions, the organizational structure of the Bukas Palad Foundation is 'flat'. Administrators and workers alike do not hold titles and little preferential status is enjoyed by those who have the most responsibility. In an effort to ensure full participation by community members, only nine of the sixty-four workers are from outside the community.

Eight programs providing thirty-three services are offered to members of the community through the centres. Services include small interest-free loan programs; job skill and placement programs; a variety of medical and dental clinics run by volunteer doctors, dentists, and midwives; nutrition and herbal medicine programs; and "adoption at a distance" programs (local families receive financial support from Focolare families abroad for school fees, uniforms, and supplies). In 1995, a fifty unit housing complex was constructed with the support of the community for social centre workers and other local families. One of the largest, most effective services offered is the early childhood education program serving 400 children. The pre-school is taught by local women trained by other early education NGOs.

4.3.3 Characteristics of the Tramo Community

The area around the Bukas Palad Social Centre is polluted, noisy and bustling. Children run the narrow streets playing with makeshift toys. Adults loiter outside their homes speaking in Tagalog (the common language in Manila) to neighbours. Unkempt dogs and roosters are abundant. Few cars and trucks pass through the area because of the congested streets. Public schools are within walking distance for most children. Public health clinics, though not always open, are situated in the centre of the community. 'Sari-sari' shops (little kiosks run by families from the front of their homes) sell food and commodities from the market. Basketball courts are found every few blocks. Small chapels are on most corners as most families, especially female members, are devoted Roman Catholics. Newspapers are available at a kiosk a distance away but books and magazines are not sold in the vicinity.

Most families served by the social centre are squatters who pay relatively exorbitant rent to

an "owner" for very small rooms with no running water. Many of these rooms congregate on the canal, which was once flowing with water, and is now an open sewer. The stench, especially during the heat, is unbearable. Electricity through Pasay City has just been made available to the canal community with the help of the Bukas Palad Foundation: individual families are responsible for their consumption. Running water comes from central taps and families are charged by the bottle. Rooms are stacked atop of each other creating immense crowding. Many of these homes are made from bamboo and discarded material (i.e. particle board from construction sites). They do not withstand tropical rainstorms or typhoons which occur frequently in Manila.

Formal employment for most squatters and many others in the community is largely temporary. People works as construction workers, tricycle drivers, office custodians, and salesclerks. The recent economic crisis in Asia, though not as severe in the Philippines, has impacted upon the poor in this community with many men, in particular, suddenly out of work. As with most informal societies, many families provide services, for a fee, to others - as washer women, tricycle drivers, manicurists, garbage collectors, food vendors, and sari-sari owners.

It was within the context of the Tramo community and in collaboration with the Bukas Palad workers that I developed and implemented a family literacy program using PAR as a methodology. My reasons for choosing this research methodology, as discussed in Chapter 2, include my interest in working as an equal and in a participatory manner with local community workers. I hoped through this process we would acquire reciprocal knowledge and create the possibility of a family literacy program that would be sustainable after the completion of my research. I used several qualitative and one quantitative methodological tool. What follows is a brief explanation of the benefits and limitations of each tool.

4.4   Methodology

The research tools used to address my research question were primarily qualitative in nature, and included semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, session planners and log

entries from field observations. Quantitative records of attendance patterns were also maintained. The interviews together with session planners and log entries investigate the effectiveness of the family literacy program. Questionnaires, session planners, and log entries documented the participatory nature of the project. Below is a description of the tools and their inherent strengths and limitations in the context of this research.

Before discussing research tools, it is important to clarify terms I will be using in this chapter, the case study and in the findings chapter. 'Local facilitators' refers to the three and then five women from the Bukas Palad community who participated in developing and implementing the family literacy program. When I use the term 'facilitators', I am referring to local facilitators and myself as a group. I am the 'external researcher'.

4.4.1. Interviews
Pre- and Post- Research Project Interviews

In order to gain information about family backgrounds and literacy needs, interviews were conducted by local facilitators and myself in families' homes. This setting was chosen as the most appropriate place to conduct interviews because it eliminated families having to make a trip to the centre. It allowed for more privacy enabling parents to talk reasonably candidly. We were also able to make important observations about the families' surroundings, economic situation and literacy practices: in particular, being in people's homes enabled me as a Canadian researcher to better understand the context in which parents and their children were living. As well, other program planners (i.e.midwives, teachers) from the centre typically obtained information in this manner and it was important to be consistent with them. We conducted fifteen pre-program interviews.

Post-research project interviews were conducted after the thirtieth family literacy session. The purpose of these interviews was to gain information about the impact of the family literacy program on families in the community. Eleven interviews were conducted. Local facilitators and I conducted the interviews.

I compiled and interpreted data from the fifteen pre- research project interviews to gain as much information as possible about individual and family literacy skills, attitudes and needs in the community. However, only four of these original families attended the program on a regular basis to the thirtieth session. Two other families joined shortly after the first session and also participated in the program regularly until the thirtieth session. These six families attended at least half of the program sessions. In order to demonstrate program effectiveness. I only used data from post-research project interviews of these six families.

I designed a question sheet as a guide for the interview processes which local facilitators approved. Pre-research project interview questions (Appendix A) investigated parent and children backgrounds and educational experiences. Questions also solicited parents' input about the purpose and content of family literacy programs. Post-research project interview questions (Appendix B) addressed a variety of topics including knowledge and skills mothers and their children gained by attending the family literacy program.

Local facilitators and I conducted the interviews following a semi-structured format. We used the set of questions as a guide during each session. All interviews were conducted in Tagalog. the local language. Any interviews I conducted were done in Tagalog with one of the facilitators translating for me. All questions on the guide were asked each family, unless inappropriate, and answers were translated and recorded in English on the question sheet. Additional questions were asked by interviewers and parents when elaboration of information was required.

Local facilitators. after observing how I asked clarifying questions and recorded responses, became very efficient at conducting interviews independently. As well. rather than simply visiting families as they had in the past. local facilitators began using the semi-structured format and notetaking when conducting interviews for other Bukas Palad programs.

Though this tool had many benefits, especially for contextualizing the community, informing the process of developing and implementing the family literacy program, and

investigating the effectiveness of the program, it was not without limitations. Though local facilitators became better at translating questions and responses verbatim for me, my most informative interview was conducted with a mother who spoke English fluently. This experience indicated I was missing information during other interviews because of my inability to speak Tagalog.

Secondly, my presence as a foreigner in the squatter area was novel and immediately apparent to neighbours. Visiting homes led to some parents and children feeling uncomfortable. In these situations, parents would not answer questions in depth or would only provide answers they perceived I wanted to hear. Neighbours asked families why I was there which made some families uncomfortable. My presence, then, biased information obtained from several interviews.

A third limitation involved the lack of rigorous consistency in questioning. Some parents had difficulty expressing their experiences because they exist in the present and are generally not highly literate. Some parents found articulating their past educational experiences or specifying skills they learned as family literacy program participants challenging. In some instances, interviewers would often prompt parents by providing suggestions which parents would repeat back to the interviewer which would then be recorded as the parent's response. This prompting challenged the validity of some parents' interview responses.

A fourth problem is the time and human resources personal interviewing, translating, and collating required of families, local facilitators and myself. Many interviews took over an hour to conduct and several hours to summarize. Surveys and questionnaires are less time consuming but are not as personal nor do they enable interviewers to ask clarifying questions. Mostly importantly, they can be inappropriate for semi-literate or illiterate people.

4.4.2 Questionnaires

I chose questionnaires to gain information about local facilitators. Questionnaires rather than interviews can be completed at one's convenience and considering that facilitators had many responsibilities, this tool seemed to be more appropriate. Facilitators were candid in their responses and perhaps more candid than they would have been in face-to-face interviews. It also enabled me to unobtrusively document English writing skills indicating proficiency levels.

I designed the questionnaire (Appendix C) which included queries about local facilitators' educational and employment backgrounds, their responses to the participatory process and to the notion of family literacy in the Bukas Palad community. Facilitators completed the questionnaire independently over several days. All responses were recorded in English.

As with interviewing. using the questionnaire as a research tool resulted in some problems.Though encouraged. none of the facilitators asked me for clarification of any questions which may have lead to questions being potentially misinterpreted. Also. some of the facilitators had difficulty writing at this level in English. Thus their responses were more limited than if they had completed the questionnaire in Tagalog. Upon reflection, I realize that having the local facilitators write in the language of their choice should have been an option because accurate and detailed information was more important than obtaining individual English writing samples.This was an oversight on my part and not rectified during the research process. Finally, though questionnaires offer more rigorous consistency in questioning. I suspect that some facilitators collaborated together on answers.

4.4.3 Log Entries

I recorded important observations in a log book daily while at the Bukas Palad Social Center. At the end of most days, I recorded impressions on my computer of the day's events (including actual sessions as well as facilitators' planning meetings), any significant informal conversations, and broader reflections (Appendix D). These entries resulted in

thick descriptions of my experience working at Bukas Palad. Compiling and analyzing data from these entries at the end of the field work led to uncovering themes about the participatory nature of the project.

Limitations of log entries was the obtrusiveness of making notes during informal conversations over lunch or outside of meeting times. As I pulled out my little green book, I occasionally sensed that people thought I socialized with Centre workers only to gain more information for my research and not out of genuine interest. As well, summarizing events every evening became a tedious, seemingly inefficient process which produced copious material that became difficult to analyze.

4.4.4 Session Planners

To document the plan and outcomes of each family literacy session, I designed a session planner (Appendix E) which was approved by local facilitators and revised several times. This planner was filled out as we organized each session and at the end of each session, personal reflections about the session and our own performances were recorded. Completed session planners became part of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program manual and were referred to for idea generation.

Though meant as a planning, reflective and documenting tool, the session planner did not serve our planning needs well. Often the planner was completed after the session had taken place and by myself as other facilitators found the task onerous and difficult to do during discussions. However, the "Reflection-Action" section of the planner was effective as it stimulated much dialogue. Facilitators discussed their experiences, reflected on their performances and discussed methods of improving skills. When I suggested we stop using the planners, local facilitators insisted we continue the process for planning and documentation purposes. They also agreed to take more responsibility for completing the session planners.

4.4.5 Attendance Collection

Attendance was taken by one of the facilitators during every session. Participating mothers' and childrens' names were recorded as well as those names of families that did not attend, and if known by other participants, reasons for their absences.

Collecting attendance was the only quantitative method we utilized. It required minimal effort to record attendance each session and enabled us to see participation patterns quickly and easily.

4.4.6 Consent and Anonymity

In keeping with my ethics proposal, all members of the research project, including local facilitators and participating mothers, signed a consent form giving me permission to use information collected through using these research tools. Though the consent form was in English, the information was translated and explained before participants signed it. In order to protect the anonymity of local facilitators and participants, I have used pseudonyms. I have kept all direct quotes taken from interviews and questionnaires as exact, without correcting for English usuage and spelling. I have not altered the quotes because I feel they are more authentic and informative in their original form.

4.4.7 Validation of Data

As discussed in Chapter 2, both McTaggart (1991) and Fals-Borda (1991) argue that knowledge gained from the PAR process should be shared and validated by local participants. In an attempt to accomplish this PAR principle, all local facilitators and Edith Villamor, the executive director of the Bukas Palad Foundation, read and responded to the first draft of the case study. These women, without exception, reported that my interpretations of the development and implementation of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program were accurate and valid. One local facilitator asked me to delete a particularly sensitive comment she had made about another facilitator (which I did). No other participants asked for changes to be made. I will send a copy of the thesis to the Bukas Palad Foundation as they also own the knowledge acquired through this research process.

This chapter has provided an understanding of the Bukas Palad Social Centre as it is located in the Filipino context. It has described and critiqued specific research tools employed to address my thesis question. A description of the actual research project will occur in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 - The Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program

With the generous support of a Canadian International Development Agency (C.I.D.A.) - Canadian Bureau of International Development (C.B.I.E.) Innovative Research Grant, I spent seven months in Manila conducting field work. I arrived mid- October 1998 and returned to Canada mid May 1999.

5.1   Reconnaissance

After reading the literature on participatory action research, and listening to the advice of other researchers. I recognized the importance of spending the first few weeks in Manila acquainting myself with the culture and functions of the Bukas Palad Social Centre. Fern (not her real name), a Bukas Palad worker, became an excellent 'ambassador' over these few weeks, explaining the history and present functioning of the multitude of programs offered by this social centre to the community. She was also a conduit to how and why people live as they do here.

My log entries indicate that during our first meeting. we discussed issues of sustainability of this family literacy project. Fern mentioned another foreign special education teacher's recent involvement in the Bukas Palad community, describing how this woman had worked with children for six months in a play therapy group. At the end of her experience, the teacher asked Fern to continue the program. Fern shared with me her regret that she did not have enough knowledge to continue the teacher's work independently. I emphasized that I did not want to be the "expert researcher" in this case but wanted to participate in research with the other local facilitators. However, Fern's understanding of the importance of engaging in 'participatory research' remained unclear to her because she then asked, "When will *you* start the program?". I responded with, "When we decide what the program will be." And the participatory nature of the project began.

I spent several weeks, between typhoon days, interviewing Bukas Palad facilitators, shadowing community workers, and visiting the local elementary school. We convened as a group several times before commencing our first family literacy session on November 10,

1998. During this reconnaissance period, I expressed several concerns in my field notes. I was aware, from the first planning meeting onwards, of my perceived position of power to the local facilitators. I was concerned that we were pushing to begin the program without sufficient dialogue, planning, and training. As well, I wondered if the program requirements would stretch personnel and resources too far as each of the local facilitators had other significant Bukas Palad responsibilities. Finally, I was conscious that I would find it personally challenging to remain focused on just the family literacy project as there were a variety of critical needs. including malnourishment, sickness, and unemployment, among families in the community that seemed more pressing than literacy acquisition.

Local facilitators willingly shared information and precious time, between their many community responsibilities (as outlined below), during this reconnaissance period. A brief description of their backgrounds will follow before moving on to the development and implementation of the family literacy program.

5.2 Meet the Local Facilitators

Edith Villamor. executive director of the Bukas Palad Foundation. delegated three local facilitators to the family literacy project with Fern being my key connection to the organization and community. All women had other significant Bukas Palad, Focolare and personal responsibilities. They were chosen for their respective skills and strong facility with English.Three months into the project, the family literacy program became more developed and required more planning time. Edith decided to assign two additional facilitators, Tara and Darcy. to the project. They joined us in mid February. Below is a brief background on each facilitator and their perceptions of their contributions to the program. This data was collected from the questionnaire that facilitators completed as well as from my log entries of observations; all quotations have been lifted from the questionnaire. As in Fern's case. pseudonyms have been used to protect confidentiality.

Fern: Fern came from Quezon province and had lived in the Tramo community for ten years as a Focolare member and employee of Bukas Palad. Fern learned to speak English

in public school and through foreign friends. Her roles at Bukas Palad had many and varied, with her most recent responsibilities involving caring for the elderly in the community and orientating both local and foreign visitors to the Bukas Palad concept. Fern's educational background included four years at college pursuing a Bachelor of Education. Fern was single, in her mid 30's, and lived in the housing complex. She was directed by Edith to "prepare the mother from community who will join the BPFLP (Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program)". Fern considered herself an important contributor to the planning and implementing team because she was responsible for initiating rapport with new mothers. visits mothers who had not attended sessions, and made suggestions for the 'Parent Talk'(discussed more later in this chapter).

After several months of demonstrating significant commitment to the family literacy project. Fern seemed the most likely of the facilitators to assume full program responsibilities after I left the Philippines. However, in February, Fern announced that she was leaving the organization to pursue a catering business. The next few months were spent wondering who would assume Fern's many and unique Bukas Palad responsibilities, especially her family literacy program commitments. A few weeks prior to my departure, Fern met with me again to inform me that she had reconsidered her original plan. She stated that because she valued the family literacy program and knew it might not be sustainable without her support. she had decided to postpone her entrepreneurial plans until she felt comfortable others had been trained to fully assume her family literacy and other Bukas Palad responsibilities. I was delighted by the change in plans and felt Fern's interest in foregoing her own plans was testimony to her deep commitment to the concept of the family literacy program.

Zedna: Zedna came from Aklan province and had lived in the Tramo community for one and half years as a Focolare member and employee of Bukas Palad. She had a degree in Bachelor of Elementary Education and had recently passed examinations enabling her to get her license to teach in the Philippines. Zedna had learned English in school and college and while working as a nanny and teacher with a family in Greece. She was responsible for the

education program at the Bukas Palad Learning Centre. She oversaw three schools and twenty-four teachers. Zedna lived and managed a house next to the social centre with several other Focolare members. She was chosen by Edith to work on the family literacy project . Zedna reported that " I was a little bit afraid to face all the responsibility but then I realize what I am doing is not for myself but for my love to those people who wants to be part ..." She considered herself an important contributor to the planning and implementing team because she shared her ideas which "[was] a big help to contribute and make the plan be more organized and well done".

Zedna's commitment to the family literacy program was inconsistent because of her other Bukas Palad and Focolare responsibilities. She was forced to arrive late and leave early from several planning and training sessions and from family literacy sessions. Zedna left the organization in April to return to her province as a public school teacher.

Sharon: Sharon was brought up in Nuena Esya, a province north of Manila and had lived in Manila for six years. Sharon learned English through her relatives who adopted her and her siblings when Sharon's father died. Her relatives did not speak the same dialect as Sharon, thus they communicated in English. Sharon began both midwifery and computer programming degrees but failed to complete the courses for undisclosed reasons. Sharon had worked at Bukas Palad Social Centre for three years. Her employment experience included working at Bukas Palad as a teacher and teacher assistant to five and six year olds. Sharon was a wife, mother of two, and lived in the housing complex. She was asked by Zedna to join the family literacy project "since the program was for the family, there should be at least experienced person [i.e. a mother from the community] so that there would be a reference on dealing with family lives" (italics mine). Sharon considered herself an important member of the planning and implementing team because she acted as "a reference around family relations and provide songs and some activities."

Tara: Tara was working as a volunteer teacher assistant at Bukas Palad when she joined the family literacy project in January. She started earning a salary two months after being

involved in the project. She was born in Manila and learned English while attending college. She remained in college for one year and then started a family. She had worked in a variety of jobs such as an enumerator and typist before volunteering at Bukas Palad. Tara became responsible for Child Care sessions. Tara claimed "I've also learned many things and ideas to share to others and developed self-confidence more with a great help from God".

Darcy : Darcy came from one of the provinces. She finished high school but stated that "in the province low standard of education. That why I am ashamed because I'm pour in English. But I can read and write well but not good in English". She moved to Manila in 1967, and after having several jobs and a family, began working at Bukas Palad in 1988. Darcy managed the Production Centre where she taught women how to sew products to be sold and she became a member of the family literacy project in January. She considered herself an important member of the team because she was responsible for making weekly home visitations to recruit families and ensure families continued to participate.

5.3 Planning Meetings

After gaining a general sense of the community, local facilitators and I convened as a group. Once the program began, we met frequently to plan individual sessions and develop long range plans. The first three planning sessions were audio taperecorded and later transcribed. Throughout the rest of the planning meetings, I took notes which I summarized in the evenings. I stopped audio recording meetings because the background noise at the social centre was making many segments of the recordings inaudible.

Strategies to facilitate understanding and participation during meetings

Throughout the seven month period. I used specific strategies to foster understanding and participation during meetings. For example, as the meetings were conducted in English , I encouraged the facilitators to ask for clarification when they did not understand and asked them to cue me to slow down my speech when necessary. I wrote key words on a black board or piece of paper which offered a structure for the local facilitators to follow.

Showing local facilitators the transcript of our second planning meeting was an effective strategy for increasing participation. The transcript clearly demonstrated that I had done most of the talking. I expressed my hope that others would contribute more in subsequent meetings. Local facilitators were able to readily see the quantitative difference in their individual contributions against mine. They understood the difference immediately. As trust and knowledge became better established over the succeeding months, local facilitators spoke more freely and with confidence. However, in the context of participation, I must add that despite the local facilitators' comparatively few contributions initially, I was impressed by their candor during the planning phase. For example, during the very first meeting, Sharon clearly stated her concern about setting too many goals. I wondered about the source of the candidness: was it due to their familiarity with working with foreigners, their cultural confidence, or other variables? Without question, the local facilitators' openness helped make the planning phase productive.

Writing agendas and taking minutes, from my perspective, can lead to controlling what issues are discussed and documented at meetings. Sharing this responsibility seemed to me to be an important exercise to encourage participation by all facilitators. However, though local facilitators wrote agendas several times, they did so reluctantly. They also shared minute taking but found this task difficult: their difficulty in summarizing what was being said impacted the flow of thinking during our meetings. I, for one, became impatient with both processes and found it easier to carry out the tasks myself, justifying my impatience with the fact that in this very oral society, perhaps agenda writing and minute taking was a Western construction. Perhaps these procedures served my research purposes alone in that they allowed me to document decisions made as the program evolved. However, requesting that local facilitators participate in these activities seemed to inhibit rather than foster the participatory process.

Despite efforts to relinquish control over aspects of meetings, I was instrumental during all planning meetings throughout the seven month research period, in deciding what decisions had to be made and when they needed to be made.

5.3.1 October Planning Meetings

During the initial planning meetings, I briefed the three original local facilitators, Fern, Zedna and Sharon, on the concepts of family literacy and participatory action research. I shared my definition of literacy and family literacy as outlined in Chapter 3. I listed activities such as numeracy, oral storytelling, drawing, game playing, and songs as examples of family literacy. Local facilitators began to understand that family literacy behaviours and practices does not have to be limited to practising the written word. I explained participatory action research (PAR) (Appendix F) by creating a two page handout defining the methodology and summarizing the phases. The handout seemed too complex for the facilitators to absorb quickly but they agreed to read it on their own time. When I summarized the handout for them, they seemed to gain more understanding. During these initial meetings, we also made important collective decisions about literacy needs, the program model, target participants, and language of instruction.

Discovering Literacy Needs and Skills in the Community

During the initial planning meetings, we brainstormed what we perceived were the specific literacy needs in this community. Canieso-Doronila's (1996) ethnographic research on literacy in the Philippines, as discussed in Chapter 4, was somewhat informative to our discussion. We asked ourselves the same questions posed in Canieso-Doronila's research: "What meaning and value do Filipinos' attribute to having literacy skills?"(Canieso-Doronila, 1996, p.130). The local facilitators' perspectives on this issue was critical to our program design and implementation. Zedna stated that she felt people needed literacy skills to work in Manila. Others agreed. Fern reported that many of the adults did not necessarily want to become literate themselves, but hoped that their children would become literate which would enable these children to assist their parents in managing literacy activities. According to Fern, many children read the Bukas Palad form and leaflets to their parents rather than vice versa. Parents were also reported believing that the more literate their children became, the more capable they would be to care for their parents later in life. All three facilitators agreed that most adults in the community were not necessarily interested in learning to read and write at this stage in their lives. I elaborated here, stating that perhaps

many parents, particularly women in this community, had developed a fear of the written word after so many years of being unable to access it. I argued that if we were to have an impact in this community, we needed to be cognizant of the attitudinal wall that these people have erected around their own capacity to become literate. The other facilitators appeared to find this information both accurate and insightful.

As stated in Chapter 4. Canieso-Doronila (1996) warns us that many government agencies and NGO's tend to disregard the complexity of the reasons for illiteracy in the Philippines. Obviously members of this community make up the poor of Manila. Yet, the local facilitators' varying opinions about the literacy needs in the community indicate that the issue is indeed complex. We eventually agreed, during the first planning meeting, that we needed to survey community members to better clarify what their literacy needs were. We would also have to accept that some parents would only be interested in developing their children's' literacy skills and not skills for themselves.

Determining the 'Effectiveness' of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program

During these initial planning meetings we also discussed how we would determine the effectiveness of this program over a period of time. As will be explained in the next chapter. local facilitators and I agreed that formally assessing pre- and post-program literacy levels of parents and children was beyond the scope of this project. We hoped that families would learn family literacy skills and attitudes and practice them in their homes (i.e.actively reading books to children) as well as realize that behaviours they presently engaged in fostered literacy skills and should be practiced more (i.e.singing songs, telling family stories): the local facilitators and I agreed that evidence of these activities occurring in homes would serve as indicators that the family literacy program was effective. Therefore we agreed that interviewing parents at the beginning and end of the research project as well as recording our observations throughout the project would be our methods of data collection to determine whether or not the program was effective.

Who Should Participate in the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program?

During the first planning meeting, Sharon asked me if aunts could be members of the program. This prompted a discussion about who should be our target participants. Based on my experience and the reading of the literature, I suggested that the definition of "family" is very different in Canada than it is in the Philippines. For example, Filipino families include the nuclear family plus grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. The local facilitators agreed that our program should reflect a socio-cultural definition of 'family'. We decided that at least initially parents, regardless of literacy levels, who had children under the age of seven, would likely benefit the most from our program. Our assumption was that though many parents in the community may be at least semi-literate, they did not necessarily engage in literacy-enriching activities with their children because they did not recognize the importance of such activities or could not afford to purchase books, crayons, paper, etc. useful in carrying out literacy activities in the home. Including extended family members such as aunts and grandmothers was also agreed upon. As will be elaborated on later in this chapter, we briefly discussed fathers as participants but local facilitators felt their participation would be unlikely.

Although we discussed target participants during the first planning meeting, I had already communicated with Edith Villamor about recruitment. In my haste to commence the program, I had emailed Edith before arriving in Manila, requesting her to organize the process of recruiting families. I made this request unilaterally and without having detailed information about the nature of the program. This was a mistake and led to confusion and embarrassment on my part later on. However, in fulfilling my request, Edith solicited Fern's assistance in identifying families that would benefit from literacy initiatives. Fern developed a relationship with nine families by visiting them in their homes several times before my arrival, informing them of the upcoming literacy program.

What Family Literacy Model is Appropriate for Bukas Palad?

As discussed in Chapter 3, Nickse (1990) conceptualizes family literacy programs as direct adult/child: direct adult/indirect child: indirect adult/ direct child : indirect adult/indirect

child. Though I have reservations about the broadness of this typology, like most typologies it served my purposes well in terms of clarifying different family literacy model possibilities for local facilitators. I articulated my bias towards pursuing a largely family activities program that would be categorized as an indirect adult / indirect child model. I contend that family literacy programs should provide some form of direct instruction to families, and to parents and children separately; however, I pushed for a more indirect approach as our initial model with the hopes of working more directly with individual family members as we gained skills and confidence. I was quite inflexible in my comments during this discussion because I felt I needed to provide direction on this issue being the most knowledgeable of the group about family literacy programming. The local facilitators agreed with my suggestions, stating that many of their community outreach programs began small and developed slowly. Over the seven month period, as we became more skilled in our respective roles, the model evolved with more direct instruction being provided for both the children and the mothers.

Pilipino or English ?

As discussed in Chapter 4, Pilipino and English are both official languages. Yet, premised on American colonization, English is considered an elitist language spoken only by the middle and upper class. Speaking English also facilitates obtaining employment in the city or as comparatively well-paid overseas workers. As well, in public schools, English, Mathematics and Science is conducted in English with Pilipino being the language of instruction for all other subjects. However, because of poor English speaking models in schools, students seem able to read and write in English but are unable to speak it well. Although we recognized that most of the parents and their children did not speak English well, local facilitators explained that there was a strong motivation by community members to learn English. Local facilitators reported that parents in this community typically want to improve their own and their children's' English speaking opportunities.

What, then, should be the language of instruction? We debated this question at length during the first and second planning sessions. The debate continued over several months.

Initially, we decided that because we were focusing on family literacy and not English as a second language instruction, we would conduct sessions in Tagalog (the dialect spoken in Manila), but that some children's' books and information would be shared in English. Eventually, all sessions were conducted in Tagalog because it was the language families were most comfortable with. During the sessions, Fern or Zedna translated for me. However, evidence of omitted information was obvious during these translations. Typically, because of the pace of discussions, a long conversation was summarized and translated to me in one or two sentences: I missed many subtle interactions because I did not speak Tagalog.

Interviewing Families

During the second planning meeting, we decided to interview families in their homes, following the practice of community workers in other Bukas Palad Foundation outreach programs. As discussed in Chapter 4, these meetings would serve as a way of recruiting families to the program as well as uncovering information from the community about literacy levels and needs, target participants, language of instruction, and the program model. We agreed that I would design the question sheet to be used during interviews (Appendix A). Local facilitators approved the question sheet during the third planning session. We decided that all facilitators should be involved in the interview process and families should be interviewed in their homes as practiced by other Bukas Palad community outreach programs. The families Fern had contacted and other families identified by community workers were the families we initially interviewed.

Outcome of Pre-Research Project Interviews

Initially, the interview process began with me asking the questions while Fern translated. Then, in keeping with theoretical principles behind participatory action research which indicates the importance of local community members participating in data collection, Fern, Zedna and later Darcy conducted the pre-program interviews themselves. Below is a summary of the information obtained from these interviews.

We conducted fifteen pre-program interviews in total. Nine of these interviews were carried out with families that Fern had identified before the program began. Six other families were interviewed later on in the project after attending sessions one or two times. Though we asked to interview both mothers and fathers, in every instance, mothers answered the interview questions alone and on behalf of their husbands. In some instances, fathers looked on but did not participate. This behaviour seemed to reflect the division of labour in this community: mothers were responsible for and knew the most about their family's education and needs.

Most families who were interviewed moved to Manila from a province but have lived in the Tramo area for at least five years. One mother had resided here for thirty-five years. Only two mothers spoke English well enough to converse with me. Other parents spoke Tagalog (the national language) as a second language with their first language being a provincial dialect.

Parents' educational background seemed to be limited by poverty. Though education is accessible and free to all, the cost of uniforms and supplies prohibited many parents from graduating from high school. Mothers interviewed attended school for an average of five to six years. One mother reached third year college while another received only two years of schooling. Background educational experience of thirteen fathers (two households were headed by mothers alone), as reported by their wives, indicated that generally fathers had obtained higher levels of education than mothers. One father had an engineering degree while seven others had at least started high school. However, one father had not attended school at all. Reasons for dropping out of school included "too expensive", "too many children in family", and "needed to find work". Though it appeared that poverty alone explained poor public school retention, one mother's comment indicated that the situation may be more complex. With one more year of college left before obtaining her degree, this mother was forced to drop out of the program because the grant she had been awarded had been used to support her siblings and parents. As she stated (in English) during our interview, "I had to walk to school. No transport. How can I go to school when my

stomach is empty." Her father's response to her having to leave college was, "I grew up, didn't study, it's okay, no big deal". This mother's comments may indicate that education was not perceived as necessary by some individuals' parents. It is important to note, that based on this small sample, those parents who had received the most education appeared to be less 'at risk' to the threats of poverty than other families.

As indicated in Chapter 4, information from these families matches, to some extent, nationwide statistics on education. Both the women and men, like other adults in the country had equal access to school at an early age. However, as we will see, some of the adults we interviewed support Canieso - Doronila's statement regarding literacy attrition: "[i]t is reported that eventually most of these drop-outs (students who leave school after four or five years of instruction) slide back to semi-illiteracy" (Canieso-Doronila, 1996, p. 17).

Pre-research project interviews showed that literacy levels of mothers ranged from well - developed English reading and writing skills to no literacy skills at all. Data on fathers' skills was not obtainable. Later on during session Parent Talks (elaborated below), most mothers were observed reading short stories in Pilipino and writing a business letter.

Mothers were asked what types of literacy activities they and their husbands engaged in at home. Most mothers reported enjoying comics and Filipino 'pocketbooks' (similar to the Harlequin romance series in North America). One mother read the newspaper and English books regularly. Fathers read comics and the newspaper. Neither parent engaged in writing activities except to occasionally write letters in local dialects to relatives in the province or overseas. In terms of other literacy related activities, five parents reported singing to their children while two parents told childhood stories to their own children.

All children participating in the family literacy program at least half of the time were attending the Bukas Palad learning centre (pre-school) or public school. Most families were benefiting from the 'Adoption at a Distance' program which paid for the children's

uniforms, supplies, and daily snacks. Three children were reported to be having difficulties in school. Mothers reported rarely communicating with the teachers unless their children were misbehaving.

Parents were almost unanimous in their desire for the program to be offered twice weekly. Most parents wanted it to be held for a couple of hours in the afternoons after chores were completed. Mothers with small babies were assured that their babies could also participate in the program. When asked, all mothers stated it was unlikely their husbands would participate in the family literacy initiative.

We saw books in three homes we visited. Six homes had televisions, one home had a radio, and two homes had a ghetto blaster.

During the pre-research project interviews, mothers' reported interest and need for literacy skills for themselves varied. Those mothers with some skill in reading and writing already, were keen to improve their literacy skills in both Pilipino and Tagalog. However, beyond personal satisfaction, mothers were not necessarily able to see the benefit of developing these skills. For example, during letter writing lessons, few mothers saw merit in learning how to write letters of complaint because they felt that such letters would not be taken seriously. As well, illiterate mothers were very focused on their lack of skills and not able to imagine the benefits of being literate.

Upon reflection of the pre-research project interview schedule, it became evident that we had neglected to ask a very important question: 'What did parents perceive as their family's literacy needs as marginalized members of an urban community?'. No explanation, other than simply an oversight, can be provided for this omission. Importantly though, over the course of the seven month project, mothers' perception of their family's literacy needs became clear . They, without exception, wanted their children to at least complete high school. As one mother stated during a Parent Talk, "[It is] every mother's dream seeing her children finish college". Mothers felt more education would lead to better jobs (though this

was not necessarily their own experience). It also became clear through Parent Talk discussions, that mothers were generally concerned about how to support their children in their academic endeavours. One mother explained, "I really want them to finish college but how to support them?". By completing high school or college, individuals would become at minimum functionally literate and it would be unlikely that these well-developed skills would be lost.

Returning now specifically to the nine families Fern had identified as interested in a 'literacy program', we decided after conducting interviews, that only the needs of seven of the families could be met by our program model. The other two mothers, interested in developing literacy skills for themselves had children in upper elementary school. They agreed that they would not gain from the program as their children were too old. We encouraged these mothers to pursue adult literacy programs in the community (at the time I was under the impression such programs existed but later learned this was not the case). However, turning parents away after they had sustained interest in the literacy initiative over a two month period, was awkward, inappropriate, and largely my responsibility.

<u>Building Resources</u>

During this initial planning phase, using monies from my research grant, we purchased books for our Bukas Palad Family Literacy Library. By the end of the seven month period, we had purchased or had received donations for over 175 books, puzzles, and toys. I had brought some popular North American children's' books and nursery rhymes with me to Manila that I considered culturally relevant (for example <u>Henny Penny</u>, a nursery rhyme about a hen). Some of these books were also available in Manila but at exorbitant prices. We purchased the bulk of the children's books at a local bookstore because they were more culturally-appropriate and very inexpensive. These books were produced in the Philippines by Filipino authors and illustrators and were in Tagalog with some books having an English parallel text. Content of books typically centred around children's' issues such as not wanting to go to school or washing regularly. The text was usually simple, humorous and accompanied by large, colourful illustrations. Once the program was established, we

asked mothers what types of books they wanted to read. They suggested dictionaries, books on nutrition and health, and books about Filipino history. We purchased books that matched most of these topics. Local facilitators covered books in plastic and monitored use by employing a book lending system and following up when books were not returned on time. As predicted, some of the books and toys went missing or were damaged while being borrowed. Local facilitators were very concerned about the damage but I suggested it was more important that resources were being well used.

5.3.2 January Planning Meetings

We spent a week in early January planning the next twenty sessions and setting goals. These planning sessions moved slowly as facilitators seemed less interested in working after a long, relaxing Christmas break. The local facilitators asked if I would develop a family literacy manual to be used by them as a resource after I left in April. I suggested that this task could be achieved collaboratively. I agreed to design a 'session planner' to be used as a guide for planning, reflecting, and documenting our experiences (Appendix E). The other facilitators agreed to use this planner to prepare for each session. We also agreed to include the session planner, copies of all teaching materials and an inventory of resources in the manual.

During this week, we carefully planned four sessions and designated responsibilities.

5.3.3 March Planning Meeting

This meeting was organized as one of the training sessions (elaborated later in this chapter). Its purpose was to plan the summer session (April to June, 1999) of the family literacy program. We agreed there would be eight sessions, once a week, and we determined activities and designated responsibilities. Facilitator planning session dates were scheduled. As my role in the project was soon over, Sharon offered to take on the principal facilitating responsibility and Fern agreed to assist her. At the end of the session, local facilitators stated they felt relieved, knowing that a specific plan was in place for the next two months.

5.4 Structure and Content of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program

We conducted thirty sessions between mid-November and the end of March. Typical program participants included mothers and one or more of her children under the age of seven and occasionally extended family members (aunts, cousin, grandmothers). For the first ten sessions we adapted ideas from a Canadian-based family literacy handbook (Core Literacy, 1992). As the program evolved we developed more locally-appropriate activities. We began each session with 'Parent Talks' with parents while their children played with toys and books in another space. Then parents and children participated in activities together. We closed each session with storytelling, songs, and a book exchange. Below is a description of each of these aspects of the family literacy program.

5.4.1 Parent Talks

The 'Parent Talks', comprising 30 - 45 minutes of each one and half hour session, evolved as the focal point of each session with the Child Care and Family Activity plans connecting to Parent Talk topics. Initially, the Parent Talks were exactly that - parents talking together and with us about the importance of literacy in their homes. Specifically, talks centred around the importance of parents as their children's first teachers, the significance of parents (regardless of their literacy levels) modeling literacy behaviours, and various methods of reading books to children.

After Christmas, the Parent Talks took on a more specific role by encouraging participants to practice reading and writing skills for their personal literacy development. Parents responded positively to these tasks regardless of their literacy levels. The content of the talks also changed, becoming more focused on sharing knowledge around child-rearing, health, and nutrition.

Over the seven month project, we experimented with different methods of communicating with parents during Parent Talks. During initial sessions, we wrote an agenda in both English and Tagalog on the blackboard. This practice lapsed into disuse because facilitators

did not see the benefits. Later on, we generated 'concept webs' where we wrote a topic in the middle of the blackboard and recorded mothers ideas and connections as extensions of this topic. Parents were able to read back their thoughts and use the web to help them write paragraphs. We also found that explaining family activities to the parents before children arrived was a very successful technique. When there was a misunderstanding around a family activity, we modeled the strategy for parents using an actual student from the Bukas Palad preschool. Showing the end product, such as a completed puppet or Valentine's card, was also very effective and facilitated parents understanding of expectations (see Appendix G for photographs).

5.4.2 Child Care

The Child Care sessions began as a daycare facility. Children up to the age of seven were provided books and toys to engage in for 30 - 45 minutes while parents participated in the Parent Talk. Beginning with the fifteenth session, we planned specific activities for the Child Care component that were linked to Parent Talks. Despite children being so different in age and ability, local facilitators were able to design activities that engaged all children in literacy learning - no easy task. Though these activities required careful planning and preparation, this alleviated stress and confusion for the facilitators during Child Care and led to skill development among the children.

5.4.3 Family Activities

Generally, family activities ran for 30 to 45 minutes each session, and included storytelling, songs, and book exchange opportunities that were connected to the Parent Talks. The activities included making family books; puppet making; engaging in pre-reading, pre-writing and pre-math activity centres; playing family games; and making cards. We found that generating ideas around family activities was relatively easy with local facilitators having many ideas.

A theme was designated for each week. Themes included pre-reading, pre-writing, and pre-numeracy skills; letter writing activities; herbal medicine; nutrition; and child rearing

practices. This theme linked discussions and activities in Parent Talks with Child Care and Family activities.

Unlike Parent Talks and Child Activities, the Family Activity part of each session was particularly valuable in allowing facilitators to observe mothers interacting with their children. These observations enabled us to suggest alternate ways of working together as well as afforded us the opportunity to model more appropriate interactions. For example, during one session, we noticed mothers were *doing* the crafts for their children rather than assisting the children in the activity. During the next session, we discussed the importance of children 'owning' the finished product, regardless of its appearance. We demonstrated how mothers could work hand over hand with their children to cut paper, draw and colour. Mothers seemed to readily understand the importance of children participating in the activity's process, and demonstrated their knowledge during subsequent family activities.(See Appendix H for photographs.)

5.4.4 Field Trips

We planned four field trips throughout the seven month project. Each trip increased in popularity. The trip to Museo Mambata (the Children's' Museum) had forty participants, a record turnout when compared to all thirty family literacy sessions.

5.4.5 Facilitator Responsibilities

At the beginning of the project, we agreed that each facilitator needed to feel competent in managing any one of the different components. Fern, Zedna and I took on different responsibilities each session whereas Sharon, because of her teaching responsibilities, was only able to participate in the Child Care or Family Activity components. After mid February, Tara organized Child Care activities while Darcy supported all of us where needed. When questioned, facilitators had definite role preferences.

Responsibility changes:
Between the tenth and twentieth sessions, there was confusion and frustration about which

facilitator should be responsible for what. Sharon crystallized the tension by saying during one meeting: " I think we are doing successfully though sometimes we really need to help each other especially when we have many responsibilities to deal with aside from the family literacy program". In January and February, the time commitment and expectations for success seemed to be increasing while other Bukas Palad responsibilities were also intensifying. The conflict was very apparent to me during the weekly planning sessions when local facilitators would volunteer others for jobs. The conflict was evident for several weeks and the tension subsided only after I had long talks with two facilitators and then designated a particular responsibility to each facilitator.

5.5 Facilitator Training

In January, I began to offer weekly training sessions for interested facilitators. We held seven sessions and covered a variety of topics, as dictated by the local facilitators. I provided information on family literacy concepts and strategies found in the literature, the writing process, and letter writing techniques. We discussed and wrote about recruitment and retention concerns (see Appendix I a and b for local facilitator suggestions). These sessions facilitated Parent Talks as local facilitators felt more informed about how to conduct these talks. In hindsight, training sessions should have been offered before the family literacy program began as the knowledge gained significantly impacted the facilitators' performance and confidence.

5.6 Achieving Goals

Upon my initiative, during two of the planning sessions, we set goals. This activity proved fruitful as facilitators were able to see that their intense efforts were leading to specific accomplishments.

In October, for the first ten sessions, our goal was that at least six families would attend the family literacy sessions regularly. We agreed to limiting our objectives to just one goal in keeping with the notion of starting small. By the end of the tenth session, five families were attending almost every session.

During the January planning sessions, we set additional goals for the next twenty sessions. These goals were more ambitious than the goal for the first ten sessions. They included the following:

1. regular attendance by eight families
2. encourage the deepening of the relationship between mothers and mothers, mothers and children, and children and children around family literacy activities
3. focus Parent Talks on information relevant to mothers through reading and writing activities
4. continue developing family literacy behaviours at home.

After the thirtieth session, we revisited these goals and felt that much had been accomplished. We had achieved the first goal: eight families were attending regularly. Several sessions in March were attended by thirteen families. An average of seven families attended each session for the last twenty sessions. The second goal was also obtained. All facilitators had noticed bonds developing among several mothers (see Appendix K for letter written by one mother explaining her absence that day to facilitators and other mothers), and mother-child interactions generally improved in families that had been attending often. In two cases, children across families were developing friendships through Child Care activities.

Upon reflection of the third goal, facilitators recognized that we provided more writing than reading opportunities during Parent Talks and towards the end of the thirty sessions, we did not ask mothers to read and write consistently. We did not quantitatively measure mothers' reading and writing skills nor their retention of relevant information. However, interviews, observations, and writing samples indicate that mothers benefitted from practising literacy skills.

In response to the fourth goal, we did not specifically measure changes in literacy behaviours in the home but relied on parents' responses to interview questions. Based on

these reports, all parents began engaging in more literacy behaviours in their homes. All parents reported reading books to their children, an activity that most had not engaged in previous to participating in the family literacy program. Parents also reported singing songs learned in the program at home and talking more to their children when going to the market, shopping, washing clothes, and cooking.

5.7 Recruitment and Retention

We found both recruitment and retention issues significant challenges to the Bukas Palad family literacy initiative. Attendance fluctuated significantly over the course of the project. Twenty five families attended at least one family literacy session. Fourteen families dropped out of the program after attending at least one session. Over the five month period, six families attended more than half of the time. Our first five family literacy sessions were attended by an average of four families while the last five sessions of the project saw an average of eleven families.

5.7.1 Recruitment

Based on the aforementioned data, on average, one new family attended the program almost every session. Recruitment was an ongoing process and concern. As discussed earlier.visiting families several times and interviewing them became our first recruitment strategy. It was adapted from methods other Bukas Palad community workers employed to recruit community members. This method was successful for initial recruitment purposes but required extensive time and personnel.

During the initial stage of the project, we were satisfied with having a small number of participants in keeping with the Bukas Palad practice of starting programs slowly and keeping them small. However, during our January goal setting discussions, recruitment and retention among families became a concern. These issues were also discussed during the third training session.

Several potential barriers to recruitment practices as well as creative ideas to stimulate recruitment emerged from these discussions. Ginger, a training session participant and spokesperson for the community, recommended that 'dayuhans' (foreigners) should not recruit because "mothers do not think an Americano can understand their problems, need, and they are shy and embarrassed about their poor skills". Ginger also alerted us to reasons why some families do not want to join the family literacy program. These families were uncomfortable about the religious nature of some Bukas Palad community outreach programs. Ginger expressed her own concerns about joining the family literacy program stating "I have a fear that I might not religiously attend the seminar and I wonder if it will still be possible for me to join?"

Beyond home visits, we discussed other recruitment strategies. One facilitator suggested creating and distributing flyers or notices about the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program. Another suggested that we organize a formal meeting with parents of children in the Bukas Palad Preschool Program to offer a "deep explanation" of the family literacy program. Mothers participating in the family literacy program could attend the meeting and share their experiences with other parents.

During the months of February and March, the mothers created a poster advertising the family literacy program which was posted in the social centre. We recruited one mother through this method and fielded questions from other mothers. We also solicited the support of other community out-reach workers and Bukas Palad pre-school teachers to develop a list of families with young children. Fern and later Fern and Darcy then visited these families informing them of the program activities and schedule. They visited the families two or three times before the families attended a family literacy session. At the end of the research project, local facilitators were planning to organize recruitment meetings at the beginning of the school year with parents of the pre-school program.

5.7.2 Retention

Over the course of the thirty sessions, where possible, I documented in log entries and on

session planners reasons why families were absent from a session and why families dropped out of the program altogether . This process of documentation was neither rigorous nor necessarily conclusive. Only some mothers offered explanations for absences and even then seemed uncomfortable, perhaps feeling the queries were invasive and judgmental. Of the fourteen mothers who attended only one or two sessions and then dropped out, eight responded to our queries about their apparent disinterest. Below is incomplete information explaining why families were absent from sessions and why families opted to drop out of the program after attending only one or two sessions.

As reported by some mothers to local facilitators, reasons for missing sessions of the program included family deaths, jeepney accidents, rat bites, eye conjunctivitis, dengue fever, embarrassment about poor writing skills, laziness, heat, rain, census collection, and temporary work.

Though on average, a new family joined the program almost every session, many of the families did not continue attending the program regularly. Only six families attended at least half of the thirty sessions. Reasons families attended the program for a few sessions and then dropped out included children needing to sleep in the afternoon, children being naughty during sessions, mothers feeling children were too young to benefit from activities, mothers feeling uncomfortable attending when their friends no longer did, mothers finding the course material too difficult, and mothers having too many responsibilities. Two mothers dropped out because they obtained paid employment. We were particularly concerned by mothers feeling their children were too young or poorly behaved to benefit from the program. We were also disturbed by those mothers who found the activities too difficult. We attempted to convince these mothers that the program could be more tailored to meet their family's needs but none of these mothers returned to the program.

Edith Villamor offered another explanation for the high drop-out rate. She said that our poor retention rates may have been partially explained by "ningas cogon" which when

translated from Tagalog into English means "grass burns quickly and then dies down" (Villamor, personal interview, Feb. 2, 1999). Ningas cogon is considered a characteristic (with negative connotations) typifying Filipinos and may clarify why, after establishing initial bonds with local facilitators, mothers and their children attended the program a few times and then soon lost interest.

5.8 Participation by Fathers

Before my arrival in Manila, Edith Villamor had discussed the importance of including *both* mothers and fathers in the family literacy program with local facilitators. Based on literature reviewed, I strongly concurred with Edith. Local facilitators and I discussed this issue during initial planning meetings, agreeing that including fathers was going to be a very challenging exercise for a multitude of complex reasons, primarily related to the 'machismo' mentality among men. Among other responsibilities, according to local facilitators, childcare, childrearing, and education are considered the sole responsibility of mothers and other women in the family. To become involved in such duties as a man would cause a loss of stature and respect among male counterparts.

We made several efforts to include fathers in the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program. These endeavors included organizing field trips around fathers' work schedules, and assigning activities for them to do with their children at home. Unfortunately, over the research project's thirty sessions, we had very little direct or indirect participation by fathers. Two fathers attended field trips over the six month period and were very uncomfortable when they were the only fathers participating. According to mothers, reasons for fathers' apparent disinterest in attending the program included needing leisure time after a week of work, viewing education of children being the sole responsibility of the mother, and embarrassment over their own lack of literacy skills. To counteract this lack of interest, the Bukas Palad administrative staff stated a commitment to hiring a male family literacy facilitator in the future. However, finding a man in the community who is able to overcome the pressure of being machismo, and is interested and skilled in the area of family literacy may prove very difficult.

Though fathers did not participate directly in the program, evidence suggests that they did endorse its objectives. Mothers reported that fathers enjoyed books borrowed from our library both for themselves as well as to read to their children. They were also interested in hearing about session activities and field trips. As will be discussed next, more fathers 'lingered' during post - program interviews compared to pre-program interviews. Most importantly, with the exception of one man, all fathers supported their wife and children's participation in the family literacy program, in some cases taking on extra household or childcare duties to allow their families to attend the program.

5.9 Post - Research Project Interviews

After the thirtieth session, my involvement as one of the facilitators came to an end. The program continued after this session, but it was an appropriate time to conduct interviews for the purpose of this research. Information from these interviews contributes to addressing the effectiveness of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy program. I suggest that the only data relevant to addressing the effectiveness of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program is data obtained from those families who participated in the program with some regularity. Hence though we interviewed eleven families. I have only included information about six families as they were the only families who attended the program for more than half of the sessions.

As with the pre-research program interviews, interviews were conducted in Pilipino. However, I conducted all interviews while Fern translated. Four of the interviews were conducted in homes and two occurred at the Bukas Palad Social Centre. Only mothers answered the questions, though in four instances, fathers listened and provided additional information through their wives when they deemed it necessary. Fathers' new interest in the interview process, compared to when we conducted pre-research project interviews may indicate their increased interest in the program. Below is a summary of information obtained from these interviews.(Refer to the interview schedule as Appendix B.) Essentially, interview questions can be categorized into two themes: questions about the format and structure of the family literacy program, and evidence of changes in literacy

behaviours in the home. I organized questions around program structure in order to evaluate the structure and gain feedback for future sessions. Documenting of mothers reporting that literacy practices and skills within their families had changed after participating in the family literacy program was also important to determining program impact. Both sets of questions addressed the effectiveness of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program. Our observations of families will be discussed as they relate to mothers' responses during the post-research project interviews. The interpretation of this information will be discussed in the next chapter.

Response to the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program

I was interested in exactly why mothers wanted to participate in the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program. All mothers provided specific and definite reasons for participating. Their responses ranged from "I want to be happy" and "we never experience this with our husbands" to "interested because I know I can learn a lot". All responses indicated that families enjoyed and learned by attending the program.

Mothers were asked what part of family literacy sessions they enjoyed the most. Four of the six mothers reported 'liking' the Parent Talk activities. As one mother stated, "it really has helped me a lot. I have to think, what I have to say, how do I correct. Challenging. Herbal medicine I also learned a lot". Yet one mother claimed "it is really difficult for me. I ask my daughter for help and feel ashamed. I will do the assignments alone if I can" (Note: interestingly, all facilitators agreed this mother had become noticeably more verbal and confident since we first interviewed her six months before.) Mothers' responses generally indicated that they considered Parent Talks enjoyable and beneficial. One mother found family activities challenging. According to this participant, " I found it really hard to encourage children, they don't want to follow me, don't listen". This mother's response alerted us to the possibility that some mothers may find the Family Activity part of the session frustrating: a recognition that must be addressed through candid discussions and strategizing during Parent Talks.

Mothers reported their children most enjoyed playing, borrowing books, listening to stories, and participating in the Child Care activities. One mother shared that her son asks to go to the Centre every day, even on weekends!

Literacy Skill Changes Within Families

Mothers specifically reported skills they and their children learned by attending the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program. For themselves, mothers had learned "how to supervise children", "business letter formats", "working together with my children to teach them", and "to learn reading".

I considered interviewing some of the older children to determine if they could articulate what they had learned by attending the program. However, I realized that many of these children lacked sufficient language to express their learning. Instead, while interviewing mothers, I had some children draw pictures (see Appendix J for example). Most children scribbled or drew pictures about stories they had read from the family literacy library which indicates that they were able to remember aspects of the stories. Mothers reported their children learned skills including how to "say sorry to each other", "play with other children", "read", and "listen more to stories".

All mothers reported that, through their participation in the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program, they had learned several literacy-related activities which they were now engaging in with their families at home. A sample of activities included reading to their children, being better able to help their children with homework, giving their children more attention and being more patient with them. Most mothers also reported that they themselves read and wrote more at home now.

Most mothers were able to readily articulate what *more* they wanted to learn and what they wanted their children to learn. Responses included wanting to learn how to read, how to make handicrafts to earn money, how to write stories, practice higher math skills, sew, become better at cooking, and learn proper child rearing practices. They wanted their

children to learn more about reading and math and how to be 'good' children.

Facilitators' Observations

Our observations, as documented in the reflection section of session planners and in my log book, confirm mothers' responses during the post-research project interviews. We witnessed most mothers finding their 'voice' and becoming significantly more articulate during Parent Talks. Most mothers responded enthusiastically when solicited for input on particular topics. Discussions became informative, lengthy, and animated.

Though parents appeared to become more confident during Parent Talks, we did not witness significant changes in literacy levels among mothers. However, some mothers claimed that the assignments allowed them to demonstrate literacy skills for the first time since their own school days. We were unable to confirm literacy levels of mothers during the pre-research program interviews, but were able to get a sense of mothers' literacy skills during Parent Talk activities. Of the six mothers included in our data, three of them appeared to have basic literacy skills. They were able to read both children's books and books intended for adults. They were also able to write a one paragraph business letter during one of the Parent Talks. Two other mothers appeared semi-literate because though they could read simple children's books, they were unable to write one or two sentences about themselves. One woman appeared illiterate as she did not demonstrate any reading and writing skills.

We noted improved skill level in the regularly attending children during Child Care activities. Many were able to interact with their peers more readily, increasingly attend to stories and illustrations, answer story comprehension questions, use scissors, and work with crayons and pencils.

Improved mother/child interactions were obvious among several mothers during Family Activities. Mothers began to assist their children on activities rather than doing activities for their children. Some mothers began disciplining their children using techniques that were

discussed during Parent Talks. For example, Alice began quietly talking to April when she wanted to leave Alice's lap instead of pinching her as we had observed her doing previously.

One of the strongest pieces of evidence of changes in literacy behaviours is that our family literacy library was very well-used. At the end of each session, almost without exception, mothers and children signed out books. During most Parent Talks, mothers were informally asked if they had been reading to their children. They always reported in the affirmative and their descriptions of the stories and their reading experiences confirmed books were being read at home. Many mothers also cited examples of their children reading to parents, to other siblings, and to neighbours children. Fathers were also reported interested in both the children's' books and books for parents. Avid response to borrowing books began with the very first session. Pre-program interviews indicated that parents were not reading books to their children.

5.10 Attempting Other Connections

In an effort to connect our family literacy program to other programs existing in the community and Manila. I interviewed NGO directors of education and health projects and Fern and I spent several afternoons at the local elementary school. Meeting experts working on in-country development projects proved informative to me personally but unfortunately led to little established connections with Bukas Palad Foundation.

A large Australian aid project entitled P.R.O.B.E. (Philippines-Australia Project in Basic Education) had been operating for four years in several regions in the Philippines. I interviewed Peter Deacon, the Australian project leader, to learn about this basic education development initiative and perhaps establish some links for the Bukas Palad Foundation and family literacy program. PROBE's purpose was to develop resources and share innovative strategies with public school teachers in an effort to support the quality of instruction in schools. However, PROBE was not operating in Metro Manila because, as I learned during the interview, the level of resources and instruction in Manila public schools

far exceeded what exists in other regions. Disappointingly, though learning about the project was illuminating, it appeared that no links would be possible between Bukas Palad and PROBE (Deacon, personal interview, Dec. 5th, 1998).

Assuming NGOs pursuing nonformal literacy initiatives would more closely parallel the Bukas Palad Family Literacy program, I contacted Frank Lopez, the executive director of Association for Non-Traditional Education in the Philippines (ANTEP). His project, funded for several years by C.I.D.A., included both an early childhood education program for children three to five years old and a functional literacy program for thirteen to thirty-nine year olds. Programs ran twice weekly for a total of 150 hours and most adult participants were able to read the newspaper and write a paragraph about themselves by the end of the course. Curriculum in the form of locally developed modules have been created for each program. Both programs paralleled aspects of our family literacy project in terms of objectives, content, and challenges. Like the PROBE project, the ANTEP project operates in several marginalized regions but does not exist in Metro Manila. Mr. Lopez concurred with Mr. Deacon regarding comparative resources in Metro Manila. He stated that poor people living in Metro Manila have access to schools, hospitals and many government and NGO agencies. According to Mr.Lopez, "squatters" simply needed to learn how to access these resources. Elsewhere in the country, education and health resources were limited. However, despite ANTEP not functioning in Manila, I assumed there would be some mutual benefits to these organizations establishing a connection. Yet, upon this suggestion, Mr. Lopez stated that "Bukas Palad should not come to ANTEP for ideas about literacy unless they had exhausted all other government agencies" (Lopez, personal interview, Dec. 8, 1998). As with PROBE, there appeared to be no possibility of links between ANTEP and Bukas Palad Foundation.

Other education initiatives were currently operating in Manila through the Asian Development Bank and World Bank. However, any connections I made with these institutions resulted in gaining updated information regarding education in the Philippines. Links were not established with Bukas Palad Foundation.

Based on Parent Talk discussions, it became clear that parents did not communicate with their children's' teachers. All mothers expressed frustration with not knowing how to best help their children achieve in school. To address these concerns, Fern and I observed classes in the local elementary school and met with the principal to investigate the possibility of fostering better communication links between parents and the school. Spending time in primary classes indicated that teachers approached instruction in a lecture-style format and appeared overwhelmed with classes of 45 plus students. Both teachers and students lacked sufficient resources. Students received very little individual attention.

The principal confirmed what mothers participating in the family literacy program were saying. Though a parent-teacher association had recently been established in the school, parents rarely interacted with teachers directly unless their child was demonstrating behavioural or academic difficulties. Parents were prohibited from being volunteers in the classroom. Parents were able to solicit teachers to provide extra help for their children but only as tutors outside school hours at a rate of P1500 a month (if families in this community are working, they do not generally make more than P150/day). According to Mr.Soriano, who has many years experience as a Filipino educator, "in all my history never have I known a parent to get help from a teacher to do homework with their child"(Soriano, personal interview, Dec. 14, 1998). It seemed parents in the community would have to create other ways of helping their children when they experienced difficulties in school.

Mr. Soriano also alluded to a remedial literacy and job training program for youths and adults that was commencing in a month's time at the school and funded by the non-formal education department of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports. Fern and I expressed interest in working with teachers of this program to encourage participation among local community members (i.e. adults interested in pursuing literacy for themselves). We collectively agreed the family literacy program had taught Bukas Palad community workers about the difficulty in recruiting community members to literacy programs and our new knowledge could inform the public schools' literacy initiatives.

However, though we began helping the local school recruit out-of-school youths and poorly literate adults, because the program was poorly managed and organized and required a minimum of twenty students to operate, it never actually started up. Again, we were disappointed that no sustainable connections were made between the local school and Bukas Palad Foundation.

I also contacted Mike Jamais of the Remedious AIDS Foundation. I made this connection hoping that Mr. Jamais' organization would be willing to work collaboratively with Bukas Palad community workers, and if appropriate family literacy facilitators and mothers to inform them of health issues, particularly associated with sexually transmitted diseases. Mr. Jamias was interested in establishing a connection with the Bukas Palad Foundation and was willing to meet with Bukas Palad community workers and members of the community. Due to the lack of transparency regarding artificial birth control and AIDS in this country and out of respect to the religious nature of the Bukas Palad Foundation, I felt Edith Villamor, the executive director of the foundation, needed to make additional contacts with Mr. Jamais. I passed along Remedious AIDS Foundation information to her; she opted to not pursue the contact.

Finally, our most successful collaborative efforts occurred within Bukas Palad Foundation itself. I shared information on successful literacy programs for new mothers with the social centre's midwife. Together we translated Alberta Speech and Language Association pamphlets into Pilipino which outlined techniques for stimulating language for babies and toddlers. The midwife began distributing these pamphlets to new mothers and discussing the importance of establishing literacy activities in the home when children are very young. Mothers are responding positively to this information. As well, an additional proposal is being considered by the foundation whereby mothers will be given information together with baby books and educational toys in a "Book Bag" soon after babies are born.

5.11 What Next?

My involvement in the family literacy program ended in late March, after the thirtieth

session. However, Sharon as principal facilitator, along with Fern, Tara and Darcy continued to develop and monitor summer sessions. I had the opportunity to attend two of these sessions and was impressed by the preparation and content of each activity. Seven or eight families participated in each session.

Edith Villamor and other administrators were supportive of sustaining the program, recognizing its impact on the community. Plans have been made to recruit more parents through the pre-school when school reconvenes. The program has sufficient funding to operate for another year without relying on the Bukas Palad Foundation for financial support.

This chapter summarizes thirty sessions of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program. It is a mere sketch of my experience over the seven months of field work. The final chapter of this thesis analyzes the data collected throughout this process and attempts to fully address the research question.

6.   Merging Theory With   Practice - Findings

In this concluding chapter. I will determine how my thesis question relates to data collected through the literature review and case study. Firstly, it is important to restate the thesis question:

How does participatory action research (PAR) enrich the process of developing and implementing an effective family literacy program in an urban poor setting in the Philippines?

Two parts make up this question and though these parts are inherently related, in the interest of clarity. I will discuss them separately. Although a complexity of findings were revealed in my research process. I will elaborate on those findings I consider most relevant to the literature on participatory action research and literacy programs. Firstly, I will address participatory action research. as the methodology used in this thesis, and how this methodology has enriched the development and implementation of the family literacy program in the Philippines through its participatory and reflective nature, and its emphasis on valuing different people's knowledge. Secondly, I will discuss findings associated with the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program itself. 'Effectiveness' for the purpose of this research will be defined and discussed. I will outline findings related to recruitment and retention as well as gender issues. Finally, I will elaborate on significant lessons learned as a result of engaging in this research.

6.1 The Findings Associated with PAR

Using participatory action research as a methodological research tool enriched the process of developing and implementing the family literacy program in Manila, Philippines in several important ways. Local facilitators became committed to the notion of family literacy. Both local facilitators and I became skilled in implementing the program. However. though PAR proved an effective tool, it was not without its limitations. Before elaborating on these findings, I will discuss the level of participation evident throughout

the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Project.

6.1.1 Participation Leads to Trust

People participate at different levels in development projects. As delineated by McTaggart (1991) in Chapter 2, local facilitators were not merely involved or "included" in the research project, they actively participated by "sharing, taking part" in the process. As discussed in Chapter 5, local facilitators were part of most decisions made around the design of the program. They participated in implementing every session, and took part in researching, reflecting about, and evaluating the program. In particular, as will be discussed later, local facilitators' influence around issues such as recruitment and retention strategies and activity choices directly impacted the effectiveness of the project. Over time, this participation led to trust being established between myself, local facilitators, and mothers. Considering this type of participation, using Pretty et al.'s (as cited in Moetsabi, 1999) participation typology discussed in Chapter 2, I argue that local facilitators and I interacted at the 'functional' level of participation whereby we formed a group to achieve predetermined objectives of the project. As discussed in Chapter 5, local facilitators initially relied on my knowledge as external researcher, but as a result of using participatory methods, are now able to independently implement the family literacy program.

6.1.2 Local Facilitators See Benefits of PAR

Not only did I perceive local facilitators as full participants in the project, they generally perceived themselves in this way. Based on the questionnaire completed by local facilitators (Appendix C), they generally felt that working collaboratively with me was beneficial to the project because of differing areas of expertise and group decision-making practices. Fern stated that "now I can see result we had done our program better". Tara reported that "when there is meeting session and evaluations, we shared ideas to make the preparations good", while Sharon crystallized the rewards and challenges of collaboration by stating " it's really hard for us at first to build this team. I mean there are so many problems that we encounter. But here we are." Though initially local facilitators felt some unease with the participatory nature of the project, by the end of thirty sessions, all five local facilitators demonstrated

increased comfort in this process. This was evident in their confidence in making contributions and disagreeing with me and each other. However, as alluded to by Sharon, we experienced challenges inherent with a diverse group of people working together. These challenges will be expanded upon later in the chapter.

6.1.3 Not Fully Participatory

Though local facilitators and I engaged in a participatory process that they endorsed, local facilitators did not take part in *identifying the individual and collective project*, a key principle outlined by McTaggart (1991) in Chapter 2. I was able to conduct research in Manila because I was awarded an innovative research grant from the Canadian Bureau of International Education (C.B.I.E.). The C.B.I.E. research grant proposal format, as with most development project proposals, requires clearly stated project objectives and goals, and a methodology and work plan outline *before* grants are awarded. This requirement may limit potential researchers from carefully collaborating with local people about the most important needs in the community. In my case, Edith Villamor, the Bukas Palad Foundation's president, and I briefly discussed the feasibility of a literacy program within the Bukas Palad community before I wrote the research proposal. However, if the PAR process had been followed more authentically, I should have determined the parameters of the project in collaboration with more representatives of the the Bukas Palad community.

6.1.4 Committed to Family Literacy

Despite this lack of initial collaboration, local facilitators indicated their commitment to the notion of family literacy in their community in the questionnaire. Fern stated that "parents from community have a big problem how they can help their children in their school activities especially on their own assignment. Because many parent were not able to reach higher education even up to high school." Sharon considered family literacy programs important "because it was for the family... Although the parents are aware of the importance of education for their children it is still a major part that they don't know how to help their children because in their own self they are lacking of it. Education must start in home and it should begin from the parents. Illiteracy is one of the biggest problems in this

country. It is really a big help that BPFLP (Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program) is starting to break the illiteracy in our community ". Towards the end of the project, Fern provided the most significant example of facilitators being committed to the program. Months before, Fern had decided to leave the family literacy project and the Bukas Palad Foundation altogether to pursue her own entrepreneurial aspirations. However, the person meant to fulfill Fern's Bukas Palad commitments was unable to do so. Just before the thirtieth session, Fern decided to postpone her plans as she realized that, in particular, the family literacy program needed her skills and direction in order to be sustained after my commitment had ended.

6.1.5 Local Facilitators Acquired New Skills

The participatory nature of the research project enabled local facilitators to become skilled in recruiting, implementing, and evaluating the program independently. Local facilitators learned data collection techniques for recruitment and evaluative purposes, and how to complete session planners. They learned how to conduct interviews using an interview schedule. Some local facilitators not only began using the interviewing technique in other aspects of their work, but they also taught other community workers how to conduct interviews in this manner. This type of skill transference demonstrates significant proficiency by the facilitators in using the interviewing skills learned.

Local facilitators also learned family literacy facilitation skills through the participatory action research process. As a group, at the end of each session, we informally discussed our own and each other's performances offering encouragement and, if necessary, recommendations for improvement. These reflective sessions built trust among the facilitators. They also led to demonstrated skill improvement. For example, Fern facilitated a pretzel letter making activity with mothers early on in the program. She had not prepared for the lesson appropriately which led to mothers using wrong ingredients and children being at risk of burning themselves on the hot toaster ovens. As a group, we reflected on how the lesson may have been conducted differently. Several sessions later, Fern facilitated another cooking activity which was well-thought out and organized: Fern demonstrated

marked improvement as a result of our input.[7]

6.1.6 Benefits to the External Researcher

Not only did local facilitators acquire skills, but as an external researcher, I also acquired new knowledge and skills through the PAR process. Local facilitators were instrumental in teaching me about the complexities of the community and culture. As a result, I acquired extensive knowledge about culturally-appropriate family literacy practices. For example, early on in the program. I designed a puppet making activity for mothers to do with their children. However. I became frustrated because parents constructed the puppets themselves without including their children in the activity. Three sessions later, I coordinated a field trip to the local fire station which was intended for the children. I had assumed mothers were well-informed about the purpose of fire stations. However, during the activity, it became apparent that mothers had little knowledge of fire stations or how to access them in case of an emergency. They appeared to gain more knowledge and enjoyment from the experience than their children. Initially, I had difficulty accepting that parents enjoyed these types of very concrete learning experiences. Over the seven month period, the local facilitators helped me to better understand the needs of the mothers through their consistent suggestions of activities which I would have assumed more suitable for children. The local facilitators made sure we planned activities that were at the parents' level and interest.

As stated earlier. the participatory nature of the PAR process led to trust. The outcome of this trust was that both local facilitators and I readily acquired knowledge and skills about the community and family literacy. Though local facilitators may have acquired these skills through a transmission model of delivery where I instructed and modeled for them recruitment. evaluation, and family literacy practices, I suggest that they learned more rapidly by actively participating in all aspects of each session. As well, employing a top-

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[7] The last entry in my log book, dated March 23, 1999, demonstrates newly acquired faciliator skills as well as how mothers in the group bonded: "has been one of those very moving days for me. Fern did a totally stellar job preparing for the cooking demo .... The mothers seemed so cohesive together - Alice leaning on Anabelle ... Wendy calling Remy her best friend. And when I looked into the RC, all of the children were involved despite being multiaged. Tara has been excellent at preparing materials and working with these children. The ideas flow through Sharon to Tara in such a wonderful way. So, every one is benefiting here...We had 13 mothers today! and 16 children - 29 participants....".

down model would have limited my knowledge and skill acquisition resulting in a less effective family literacy program and significant missed opportunities. I would argue that, ultimately, using the PAR process, the facilitators taught me more about cultural appropriateness and the complexity of poverty and development initiatives, than I taught them about family literacy.

6.1.7 Valuing People's Knowledge

Discussed in Chapter 2. the valuing of different peoples' knowledge is at the core of participatory action research. We endeavored to practice this principle when developing and implementing a culturally-appropriate family literacy program. My knowledge of family literacy *together* with local facilitators and participants' understanding of the community and culture led to new knowledge being created. Mothers. in particular, were instrumental in giving facilitators new knowledge about how poverty specifically implicated them and their families and how literacy needs were related to this poverty. Sharing our respective knowledge led to us designing an effective program structure to meet the needs of families in the community. We learned how to recruit and retain families. We learned how to address the needs of women and realized we must be more creative in addressing the unique needs and attitudes of men. Creating this new knowledge may be the first of many steps community members must take to address aspects of poverty and oppression.

Tandon's point. discussed in Chapter 2, that "control over knowledge and over the system of production of knowledge has been traditionally used as one of the ways to control poor and oppressed people" (Tandon. 1988. p. 6) was evident throughout the research process. Local facilitators undervalued their knowledge of the community and culture. They were surprised by how the importance of their knowledge was significantly related to the establishment of an effective family literacy program. I stated again and again that it was their knowledge, not mine, that informed questions surrounding literacy needs, recruitment and retention strategies, and appropriate activities for mothers. Local facilitators played this same role as reinforcer with mothers. During Parent Talks, they confirmed that mothers' existing parenting and literacy practices were effective. Like local facilitators, mothers were

surprised their knowledge was considered valuable.

Employing participatory techniques has led to trust being established between participants. With this trust, existing knowledge was legitimized and new knowledge was created. However, participation alone has not been responsible for this outcome. Praxis contributed to the creation of new knowledge.

6.1.8 Reflection Leads to Action

As discussed in Chapter 2, McTaggart (1991) identifies 'action and reflection' as another key PAR principle. He suggests that PAR projects begin as small initiatives which operate by planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and then replanning, further implementing, observing and reflecting. Freire labels this process of action and reflection 'praxis'. We engaged in praxis throughout the family literacy project. As mentioned above and in Chapter 5, we reflected on activities, family interactions, and our own and other facilitator's performances at the end of each session. These reflections were recorded in session planners. Initially, facilitators felt awkward discussing their own and other facilitators' performances but they became more comfortable with the process over time. These reflective discussions led to change and improvement. Based on these discussions, our model evolved from what Nickse (1990) would typify as an indirect adult/indirect child to direct adult / direct child structure leading to activities becoming more participant focused. Facilitators' skills improved. Observations made about families and their needs were articulated and if necessary, action was taken. For example, after one session, Fern told us she had noticed a mother's extreme discomfort with the writing activity. We agreed that Fern should speak to the mother privately suggesting alternative ways of approaching the writing tasks.

Personal reflection also led to action. My reflections at the end of each day led to many changes in how I approached sessions. For example, during one evening's reflection I noted that "we must teach and model for the parents appropriate ways of working with their children" and that "we were trying to do too much in each session". This led to a

discussion during next day's planning meeting around using a student to model parent-child interactions and lessening our objectives for each session. I had suggested that local facilitators keep a reflective journal as well but this task, layered on top of their other many responsibilities, proved too onerous. We also encouraged mothers to reflect on notions such as family literacy practices and session activities. Some mothers were motivated to accomplish this task. However, we were negligent in consistently requiring mothers to reflect about the program.

Though time-consuming and sometimes difficult to consistently implement, these collective and individual reflective elements of PAR led to improved program implementation. In addition to the many ways PAR enriched the process of developing and implementing the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program elaborated above, it is important to discuss limitations associated with using the PAR process.

6.2 Limitations of PAR

McTaggart (1997) states, as discussed in Chapter 2, that "if we decide that something *is* an example of participatory action research, we are suggesting that it is likely to have improved the lives of those who have participated" (p. 26). I have argued that this Bukas Palad Family Literacy Project is an example of a PAR case study and as such, although in a limited way, has improved the lives of mothers, their children, local facilitators as well as my own life. Despite this, as a research methodology, it has limitations. The two most significant limitations within this project were the time-intensive nature of PAR and the challenges surrounding the external researcher- local facilitator relationship.

6.2.1 PAR is Time - Intensive

According to Bernard (1995), the data collection phase of some hypothesis-testing research may be completed in a matter of weeks. Even applied anthropological research, using rapid assessment methods, can be completed in weeks or months. The data collection phase of this research was, due to financial constraints, conducted over a seven month period. However, I argue that seven months was not sufficient time for us to maximize the

potential benefits of PAR. As discussed in Chapter 2, if we agree with Tandon that, "the primary objective of participatory research is the production of knowledge and encouraging the poor and oppressed, and those who work with them, to generate their own knowledge and control the means of production of knowledge" (Tandon, 1988, p. 12), then local facilitators and I only just began to accomplish this objective over the seven month period. We did produce new knowledge, and as I argued in Chapter 2, this new knowledge can lead to some form of social transformation. However, with more time, additional knowledge around building a family literacy program in the Bukas Palad community may have been acquired which may have, in turn, led to further social transformation. Sharing more skills among facilitators, collecting quantitative measures of effectiveness, and encouraging mothers to become more involved in goal setting and reflecting about the program are examples of aspects of the process that may have evolved with more time.

6.2.2 External Researcher - Local Participant Relationship

Not only is PAR time-intensive compared to other forms of research, the external researcher-local participant (i.e. local facilitators and families) relationship is also challenging. As discussed in Chapter 2, the literature addresses some of the complexities of this relationship. However, my experience with this project suggests that proponents of PAR are somewhat unrealistic in the expectations they have of external researchers. I agree with Rahman (1991) "that it is not easy to establish a truly subject - subject relationship at the very outset with people who are traditionally victims of a dominating structure ..." (p. 17) and would go further to argue that it may not be possible to *ever* truly establish this subject-subject relation. I am more in agreement with both Vio Grossi and Tandon's arguments which essentially state that psychological, emotional, and social class barriers will always limit external researchers' understanding and adopting of local people's perspectives. The reasons I challenge the notion of an authentic subject-subject relationship are based on my field experiences and are discussed below.

Internal Tension

As external researcher, I was often fraught with internal tension. In the reflection section of

my log. I made approximately forty entries. Of these forty entries, twenty entries were around researcher-local facilitator tensions. Examples of entries include "I don't want to set up or perpetuate the boss/worker dynamic but feel this may be happening" and "the [tension] between taking on too much control and sharing my knowledge. Should I be comfortable with leading the sessions at first - modeling what I am talking about, with the expectation that the other facilitators will follow and continue after I leave? I think I must show some of what I am talking about with the expectation that the other facilitators will monitor its appropriateness". I struggled daily with how much direction I should provide; if I should challenge other facilitators' methods; and how I should ensure that local facilitators also control the process. I was not sure how to reconcile my roles as external researcher and 'equal' participant. The tension between these roles was perplexing; establishing a balance was difficult.

Different Ways

"How can I reconcile my own needs with those (sometimes differing) needs of the Focolare movement. Bukas Palad organizers, the community?". This log entry, recorded at the beginning of the process, illuminates the tension between external researcher and local participants identified by Vio Grossi and Tandon. I was psychologically, emotionally, and socially different from local facilitators and families. These differences resulted in having to occasionally forfeit *my way*, despite my sense of it being the *only way*, in order to reach consensus within the group. For example, during the January planning meetings, I suggested partially adopting an adult literacy program to guide our Parent Talks. Local facilitators wanted to run the Parent Talks more informally. I was reluctant to agree to this suggestion, because I feared a more informal approach would lead to more work. However, I accepted the local facilitators' suggestions and Parent Talks remained informal. In the end, it is likely that Parent Talks were equally effective and involved the same amount of work as a more structured adult literacy curriculum.

Another more challenging situation arose around religious differences. As a predominantly Catholic organization, the Bukas Palad Foundation was active in promoting natural birth

control and opposing artificial methods among community members. Local facilitators suggested we have community workers responsible for promoting natural planning make a presentation to mothers during a Parent Talk. I strongly oppose advocating natural birth control techniques, yet remained silent during this discussion and, if necessary, would have agreed to having the guest speakers in the family literacy program. In both instances, in an effort to accept all people's knowledge as valid, and to reach a consensus, I had to reject my techniques and withhold my beliefs.

Patience - Not Always

Facilitating the PAR process requires patience and diplomacy, especially when working with a diverse group. In the Bukas Palad experience, I had to practice patience, especially around session planning and recruitment activities. For example, we had frequently discussed the importance of preparing well in advance for each session. However, local facilitators repeatedly disregarded this step, resulting in several sessions appearing poorly organized and haphazard. As well, local facilitators were responsible for the recruitment process yet were not always active in this responsibility. This resulted in some sessions, despite our effort and time, being poorly attended. I was not sure how to respond to these personally frustrating situations and endeavored to patiently and diplomatically revisit these issues with local facilitators.

Perceptions of Power

As an English-speaking, Caucasian foreigner, I was perceived as different and superior by some local facilitators and community members. These assumptions were challenged through the participatory nature of PAR, and local facilitators began to understand that there were more similarities than differences between us and that all members of the group were equally valued and valuable. However, this perception did not altogether disappear within the group both because it was historically rooted and because some of my actions contradicted it. In a note addressed to me, Tara illustrated this perception. She wrote, "at first I was nervous when you were around. .... I felt you're strict and I'm ashamed if ever my performance is not good. But later, all my worries were gone because you really happy

and appreciated very little things I did for the program whiched helped me a lot to improve and develop my self-confidence more". From this note, it seems Tara relied on my reinforcement alone, as the person in power, for verification of a job well done and may have considered the opinions of other members of the group as less important.

Tara's reference to my "strict" nature stems from her witnessing my unmasked frustration and anger. I occasionally left my emotions unchecked which resulted in taking on the role as the most powerful participant in the group by telling others how sessions should be conducted. Afterward, I became frustrated with myself for forgetting the participatory nature of the process and abusing my position of privilege. As a culturally-appropriate coping strategy, I learned to articulate my concerns to other people who would then inform local facilitators of my concerns. However, with some local facilitators in some instances, I may have partly eroded the trust that we had worked so hard to establish as a group.

Coping Strategies

As well as coping strategies mentioned above, I developed several other effective strategies to deal with the inherent difficulties of being both an external researcher and an equal participant, and the challenges of working with a diverse group of people. My evening reflections of the day's events, discussed earlier in this chapter, allowed me to view interactions and activities more objectively. These reflections led me to apologize when necessary and approach future situations with more understanding.

On another level, I choose my living environment around the potential challenges of being immersed in the Bukas Palad community. At the beginning of the project, I opted to live with friends outside of the community rather than living in the Bukas Palad housing complex. This led to me enjoying a 'privileged expatriate existence' at times, which included eating at expensive restaurants and going to beach resorts on the weekends. Though I struggled with living 'between worlds' and felt that this living arrangement may have limited my understanding of the Bukas Palad community and its people (for example, I learned less Tagalog than I would have if I had lived in the housing complex), in

hindsight I realize that enjoying moments of North America familiarity with North American friends enabled me to return to my research with energy and renewed sensitivity.

*   *   *

I argue that the findings discussed above indicate that, for the purposes of this project, participatory action research was an effective method of developing and implementing the family literacy program in the Bukas Palad community. The participatory and reflective nature of PAR along with its emphases on relegitimizing popular knowledge and creating new knowledge enriched the process of developing and implementing the family literacy program. Local facilitators endorsed the PAR process and recognized the importance of individual contributions to group decision making. This endorsement led to local facilitators becoming committed to the notion of family literacy. The PAR process led to trust being established among all participants in the process including local facilitators, mothers and myself. It also led to knowledge owned by both local facilitators and mothers being relegitimized and to the creation of new knowledge. Through participation leading to trust, local facilitators acquired skills and confidence that now enables them to develop and implement the family literacy program independently and effectively. I acquired knowledge about the community and culture as well as skills around culturally-appropriate family literacy practices. With continued administrative support of personnel and resources, the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program will be sustainable. Though PAR is not without its limitations, if a more traditional research approach had been employed, where I had positioned myself as the *only* expert, and local facilitators assisted rather than participated in the research, I argue the program would not have been as effective or potentially sustainable.

I have attempted to demonstrate how PAR has enriched the development and implementation of an effective family literacy program in a developing environment. Before defining and elaborating on the notion of 'effectiveness', I will discuss how this thick description, alone, informs the family literacy literature. After arguing the effectiveness of

the program, I will address gender issues as they offer new insights to family literacy initiatives.

6.3 Description of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program

Many family literacy practitioners turn to the literature before developing and implementing programs. As discussed in Chapter 3, outcomes of adult literacy programs in the South may be informative to family literacy practitioners. As well, program descriptions and evaluations of North American and European family literacy programs can provide valuable information. However, there are only a few programs in the literature that offer thick descriptions of family literacy programs in developing communities. The description of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program will augment discussions such as the Early Enrichment Project in Turkey (Kagitcibasi, 1997) and the Proyecto Padres e Hijos operating in Chile (Filp and Valdes, 1993). Though practitioners must be aware of the limitations of grafting one model of family literacy onto a different context, this research project may add to their ability to effectively develop and implement family literacy programs in similar settings.

6.4 The Effectiveness of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program

Many literacy programs discussed in the literature use quantifiable measures of improved literacy skills to determine program effectiveness. However, as mentioned in Chapter 5, such measures were not used with Bukas Palad participants. During the initial planning meetings, I had argued against formally assessing literacy levels of program participants for several reasons. Firstly, as a teacher trained and experienced in using various assessment tools, I was aware of the cultural limitations of using tools normed on North American children (for example, the Brigance Diagnostic Battery) with different populations. Creating normed, culturally appropriate instruments was beyond the scope of this research project. Secondly, the short term nature of the research project precluded being able to identify significant literacy differences. This notion is confirmed by studies such as Philliber et al. (1996) and Abadzi (1994), discussed in Chapter 3. These studies indicate that a minimum of 150 - 200 hours of instruction should be provided before quantifiable

differences in literacy skill will be evident. Thus, even if the project would eventually positively effect literacy skills among families, this change could not be quantifiably measured over a maximum of sixty hours of instruction. Thirdly, considering the cultural nature of the community and based on Canieso-Doronila's (1996) research indicating Filipino's considerable and deep-rooted embarrassment about poor literacy skills, I predicted that facilitators, parents, and children would be very uncomfortable with participating in a literacy skill assessment, especially before developing a rapport with one another. I was particularly concerned that collecting pre-program literacy skill data before program involvement would have discouraged families from participating in the program. For these reasons, using quantitative measures of skill improvement appeared not to be the most valid form of determining effectiveness of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program. During the initial planning phase, local facilitators supported my reasons against formal assessment.

I argue, however, that the effectiveness of the program to the thirtieth session was still possible to determine using qualitative measures such as interviews and log entry records. For the purpose of this research, effectiveness' of the program will be determined *by evidence of confirming, increasing and/or acquiring family literacy practices*. As outlined in Chapter 3, I define literacy as: *"the range of skills and competencies - cognitive, affective, and behavioral - which enables individuals to function effectively in society within the context of the wider community (local, regional, national, and global) in order to improve the quality of life and that of society"*. I also define family literacy as: *"the entire range of activities and practices that are integrated into the daily life of a family, including parents, children and extended family members, to promote literacy"*. I consider activities and behaviours around reading,writing, numeracy, storytelling, playing games drawing, and playing music as all examples of activities that promote literacy.

Based on post-research project interviews and log entries, the Bukas Palad Family Literacy program was effective in confirming, increasing, and/or acquiring family literacy practices within the home by members of all six families participating in at least half of the thirty

sessions. This data will be reviewed and interpreted below.

Confirmation Leads to Increase

It appeared that families were simply unaware that in many cases they were already practising family literacy activities in the home. For example, mothers were surprised and pleased to discover that activities such as making Christmas decorations and telling family stories with their children were all examples of family literacy activities. Confirming existing parenting practices appeared to bolster these women's confidence as competent parents and seemed likely to lead to mothers practicing these activities more often in the home.

Acquiring Skills

As evidenced by post-research project interviews reported in Chapter 5, all six families reported that they now read to their children at home and that five of the six mothers did not do so before participating in the program. Most significantly, all families reported and demonstrated a sheer delight in readily and consistently reading, rereading, and discussing children's books in the home. As well, fathers read to children, children read to parents and other adults, and families read to their neighbours. As discussed in Chapter 3, research indicates parents reading to young children at home is one of the most critical readiness skills parents can provide their children for future literacy development. Research also demonstrates that many illiterate and semi-literate parents are typically reluctant to engage in storybook reading.

Other examples of acquiring new literacy skills became evident among both mothers and children. Most mothers became more confident and verbal during Parent Talks and some mothers enjoyed practising already developed literacy skills. Tney reported being better able to support their children while completing homework, conversing more among family members, and singing new songs learned at the family literacy program. Children improved in concentrating, attending to stories and reciting songs. With continued participation by these mothers, more literacy skills may have been acquired by individuals

within a family and families as a whole.

Most significantly, though most difficult to measure, these six mothers and their children seemed to acquire new *attitudes* about the notion of family literacy. Mothers recognized that not only were they already practicing many effective family literacy skills, the new skills they had acquired such as daily story reading, supporting homework, talking through problems, and going on short trips to the park or zoo were well within their capacity to accomplish as poor and poorly educated families. Believing in their own abilities to practice these skills may lead to these skills being sustainable. Attitudes around family literacy appeared to change among these families as a result of regular participation in the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program. These attitudinal changes, generally the most difficult to alter among individuals, will likely be sustained whether or not the program continues in its present form.

The first thirty sessions of the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program were effective in promoting the acquisition of new and reinforcing existing literacy behaviours and attitudes among families attending the program regularly. Mothers and children practiced and began acquiring literacy skills for themselves. Findings about the effectiveness of this program may add confirmation to the notion that family literacy initiatives are capable of addressing complex literacy issues in communities in the South.

6.5 Recruitment and Retention

As discussed during program descriptions in Chapter 3, literature on adult literacy and to some extent literature on family literacy initiatives located in communities in the South, addresses recruitment and retention factors. Abadzi's (1994) literature review on adult literacy programs indicates that recruitment of illiterates is problematic and the drop-out rate among adult literacy programs in developing communities can be as high as fifty percent. The Chilean family literacy project discusses recruitment strategies and identified the drop-out rate at 20% during the 1992 year. Our experience with recruitment and retention may add new information to the literature, especially with respect to the Philippine setting. As

with any literacy project in any community, understanding these issues is critical to designing and implementing a more effective and sustainable family literacy program.

6.5.1 Recruitment

As stated in Chapter 5, over the thirty family literacy sessions, on average, one new family joined the program each session with a total of twenty-five families attending the program at least once . Though we strove to develop alternative, less time-intensive recruitment methods, we found that like other Bukas Palad community out-reach programs, frequent home visitations seemed the most effective recruitment method. As evidence of this finding, four of the six families attending over half of the family literacy sessions were recruited by Fern before my arrival. There are differences in the way these families were recruited compared to the other twenty-one families who participated. Fern visited the families in their homes *several* times over the six week period. We learned that a relationship was established in a non-threatening environment which eliminated the need for parents to initially go to the social centre. As one facilitator stated, "individuals [need to] share experiences from community workers" before they feel comfortable joining the program.

Committed mothers themselves were also effective at recruiting relatives and neighbours. Of the twenty-five families that attended at least one session, ten of them came to the program because they knew one of the participating mothers. Some of these families had been participating in the program over several weeks by the end of the data collection period.

As discussed in Chapter 5, another finding around recruitment strategies relates to comments made by Ginger, a training session participant and spokesperson for the community. She stated that foreigners should not recruit because they do not understand families in these communities and intimidate them. She also made us aware that the religious nature of Bukas Palad community programs inhibited some families from participating in the family literacy program. Though local facilitators did not recognize my

presence or the organization's strong Catholic affiliation as barriers to the recruitment process. I considered Ginger's comments worthy of further investigation as she lived in the community but was not well connected to the Bukas Palad Foundation, and thus was perhaps more objective than local facilitators.

6.5.2 Retention

As stated in Chapter 5, attendance fluctuated significantly over the course of the project. Over the seven month period, six families attended half of the time. Fourteen families dropped out of the program after attending one or two sessions. The first five family literacy sessions were attended by an average of four families while the last five sessions of the project saw an average of eleven families.

Few explanations for poor retention are provided in the family literacy literature in developing communities. Abadzi (1994) outlines specific program- and participant-related reasons explaining why adults drop-out of literacy programs. Some of Abadzi's explanations provide valuable insight to why retention was challenging for the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program while the Bukas Palad experience may offer new insights to adult and family literacy initiatives.

As explained in Chapter 5, data on reasons for absences and for dropping out of the Bukas Palad program is informative but perhaps incomplete. Mothers identified a spectrum of reasons ranging from laziness to a family death for being absent from a session. Eight mothers who dropped out provided facilitators with explanations. These mothers reported that their children were too young or poorly behaved to benefit from the program, the activities were too difficult, or mothers had too many responsibilities. Though we attempted to meet the needs of all participants, we recognized that needs of families varied enormously making our aspirations difficult to accomplish all the time. Reasons for dropping out are similar to Abadzi's explanations for why adults, particularly women, drop out of adult literacy programs. As well, rather than attributing retention problems to program limitations alone, Abadzi's discussion around complacency, learned helplessness

and well-developed coping strategies among poor illiterates offers additional possible explanations for why these mothers opted to drop out.

Equally significantly though, are the reasons why six families participated in more than half the sessions and why, towards the end of the project, nine families in total were participating regularly. Though not quantified, mothers frequently reported attending sessions, despite competing priorities, because their children enjoyed attending and asked repeatedly,"When is 'family literacy?'". Local facilitators and I agreed that if it were not for the Child Care and Family Activity components of the program which offered engaging activities for the children and an opportunity for mothers to experience a break from their children, the mothers may not have attended sessions as regularly as they did. This finding offers an important new insight to literature on both adult and family literacy programs. Abadzi (1994) argues that many illiterates will not join literacy programs for a plethora of reasons including uncomfortableness with poor literacy skills and, in the case of women, overwhelming childcare and work responsibilities. With family literacy initiatives that support *both* parents and their children, these two barriers to initial recruitment and retention may be overcome: mothers may overlook their own perceived inadequacies if they believe their participation will benefit their children's education. Because children are cared for throughout each session, mothers are free to explore their own literacy interests.

These findings on recruitment and retention offer new insight to literature on family literacy in developing settings. The initial recruitment process for family literacy programs in developing communities needs to be carried out *after* the target audience has been determined and over a long period of time *before* the program start-up. In the context of an urban poor setting in the Philippines, repeated home visits where a connection is established between facilitators and families is important to the recruitment process. Encouraging families to urge neighbours to participate in the program is another effective strategy. The impact of the role of external facilitators should be carefully investigated before external facilitators decide to participate in the recruitment process. Some retention barriers to adult literacy programs may be overcome by family literacy initiatives. Mothers

may attend the program regularly, regardless of inhibitions about their literacy skills, because their children are able to attend the program, eliminating mothers' childcare responsibilities. As well, children enjoy and benefit from the program.

Not only does this thesis augment and add new insights to literature on information about effectiveness, recruitment, and retention of family and adult literacy programs, it also offers new insights to other gender-related issues.

6.6 Gender Considerations

Unlike other literacy initiatives, family literacy programs do not appear to encourage participation by fathers. In the majority of programs discussed in Chapter 3, mothers and their children most often comprised the program participants. For example,the Turkish Enrichment Project (Kagitcibasi,1997) and the Proyecto Padres e Hijos (Filp and Valdes, 1993) specifically stated that with rare exceptions, mothers were the only adult participants. The Bukas Palad Family Literacy program was very similar primarily due to the "machismo" attitude of men in the community. In order for family literacy initiatives to be fully integrated into homes, both mothers and fathers should be actively recruited. As discussed in Chapter 5, though fathers appeared to endorse the family literacy program, our attempts to encourage fathers to actually attend the program through organizing field trips on weekends and assigning activities for them to do with their children at home, largely failed. However, these failed strategies add new insight to the literature, especially in the Filipino context, and alerts practitioners working in similar settings that participation by fathers must be creatively addressed at the development and implementation stages.

Gender issues in family literacy programs, particularly the critique offered by Cuban and Hayes (1996) discussed in Chapter 3, identify concerns family literacy practitioners should address about marginalizing women in the practitioners' efforts to promote family literacy. Cuban and Hayes argue that the transmission model of family literacy where mothers are trained to pass along reading and related literacy skills to their children may neglect the intellectual needs of mothers. Mothers may feel their existing parenting practices are not

valued and they may find alternative parenting practice discussions invasive. Cuban and Hayes suggest several ways of increasing the merit of family literacy programs. They argue for adopting a more participatory approach to program development and implementation where mothers decide on content and activities. Using participatory action research in the Bukas Palad program, as we have discussed, enabled local facilitators to participate in the development and implementation of the process. It has also resulted in local facilitators interacting in a participatory manner with mothers. Unlike other Bukas Palad community programs where community workers taught participants, the facilitators and parents in the family literacy program collectively discussed and determined appropriate literacy, childrearing, nutrition and health practices. This process led to mothers informing and confirming each other's practices. Mothers were asked, as a group, to determine the content of Parent Talk sessions. Mothers were able to articulate their interests which led to facilitators designing activities mothers enjoyed and considered valuable. Based on my own observations, the PAR process appeared to bolster mothers' confidence and self-esteem. As discussed earlier, if mothers' intellectual needs are addressed they are perhaps more likely to attend family literacy programs and learn literacy skills plus health, nutrition, and childrearing skills that will have enormous impact on their families' livelihood. Our experience lends confirmation to Cuban and Hayes assertion that participatory approaches to family literacy may result in mothers considering family literacy programs beneficial to both them and their children as opposed to potentially devaluing and invasive.

6.7 Lessons Learned

The process of taking courses, completing a literature review, and especially, conducting primary research in the field in preparation for writing this thesis have contributed to an incredible journey of learning for me. I have gained many personal and academic lessons from this experience. Below I will discuss my most significant realizations. These lessons will focus on the project itself, knowledge gained that may inform family and adult literacy initiatives, the connection between participatory action research and literacy as these two notions relate to development, and the capacity of both micro and macro initiatives to be effective in the developing context.

External Researcher Coping Strategies

Researchers and practitioners planning to employ participatory action research, especially in a culturally different setting, should be prepared to experience internal tensions as both external researcher and equal participants. They should expect to engage in activities based on their own experiences and knoweledge or even on moral grounds with which they disagree. PAR researchers should also be prepared to practice patience and diplomacy while in the field and find culturally-appropriate ways of expressing their frustration. As well, it may be important to develop effective personal coping strategies in the field. Without demonstrating sensitivity, patience and diplomacy or developing ways of dealing with difference, PAR researchers may risk destroying the trust essential to the PAR process.

Requirements of Sustainability

As discussed in Chapter 2, one reason I chose PAR as the methodological tool for this research was because I was interested in the sustainability of the project after my role as external researcher ended. Factors supporting sustainability are in place for this project. Firstly, the Bukas Palad Board of Directors and administrative staff endorse the family literacy initiative. Resources and money are available for its continuation. Secondly, local facilitators are sufficiently skilled and motivated to continue recruiting and implementing the program independently. Thirdly, nine families have demonstrated and articulated significant interest in continuing to participate, with at least three new families expressing interest in joining the program. However, the sustainability of the project is in jeopardy. It is in jeopardy because local facilitators have many competing priorities as community workers employed with the Bukas Palad Foundation. They each are able to contribute in small ways to the program but no one facilitator has sufficient time to manage the recruiting, planning, and implementing of the program. The lesson learned here is that at the beginning of the research process, the Foundation should have designated one existing employee, or hired a facilitator from the community, to ultimately be fully responsible for facilitating the family literacy program. In consideration of the seeming reluctance fathers have to participate in

family literacy programs, a father from the community would have been the most ideal candidate. This community worker should have few other Bukas Palad responsibilities. The employee's salary could have been initially incurred through a budget line in my Canadian Bureau of International Education research grant. If the program proved effective, the Bukas Palad Foundation could have assumed responsibility for this expense.

Family Literacy Programs as a Transitional Bridge

I have also come to understand that the notion of family literacy in the development context has considerable merit and may address barriers around other literacy programs. As demonstrated in this thesis, family literacy initiatives can be effective in changing literacy practices and attitudes, and improving literacy skills among families. These programs may overcome barriers outlined by Abadzi (1994) that affect adult literacy programs in developing communities. Abadzi states that many illiterates do not enrol in literacy classes because they are embarrassed about their literacy skills, do not see the merits of literacy in their lives, and / or , for women in particular, do not join because they have too many other responsibilities. However, mothers who are illiterate may be more likely to join a family literacy program because their children attend the program with them and benefit from and enjoy the activities. Some of these mothers may gain enough confidence and interest in the benefits of literacy that they will become motivated to join an adult literacy program. Family literacy programs may function as a transitional bridge to accessing adult literacy programs for these parents.

Integrating Family Literacy Initiatives with Adult Literacy Programs

I argue that adult literacy initiatives in communities in both the North and South *informed by the notion of family literacy* may be more successful at fostering literacy in the community than traditional adult literacy programs. I argue that, compared to family literacy programs, adults can more efficiently and effectively gain literacy skills through well-developed, participatory-based adult literacy programs. Yet without significant restructuring or reorganizing, principles of family literacy could be readily integrated into these adult literacy programs and this integration could address limitations of both types of

programs. Firstly, as Abadzi (1994) stated, women in particular may be unable to join adult literacy programs because of responsibilities such as childcare. To remove this barrier, adult literacy programs should not only provide childcare, but also opportunities that foster literacy skill development among children. A small portion of each session could be designated to parents and children engaging in literacy activities together. Secondly, adult literacy content modules may become more meaningful if topics included ways parents can better support their families, including promoting literacy in the home. Thirdly, unlike most family literacy programs, men participate in adult literacy programs. If these programs provide a family literacy component, fathers may learn the importance of their role in promoting literacy in the home. Significant, critical opportunities for learning will be missed if the concept of family literacy does not become an active and essential part of adult literacy programs.

Literacy is not a Panacea

Another significant lesson learned involves the relationship between the acquisition of literacy skills and the overcoming of poverty. Firstly, regardless of literacy levels, people in the Bukas Palad community are acutely aware of their situations of poverty. Though these people may not be able to understand the larger economic, political, and social reasons underlying their poverty, they can articulate some solutions. Parents' foresight in eagerly promoting their children's' education, ideally leading to these children, as adults, obtaining secure, well-paying jobs, which may in turn minimize the poverty experienced by their parents, demonstrates a solution to poverty many parents hold in the community. Yet, this solution, in itself may not alleviate poverty for these families. I met several literate and working parents in the community who were raising families in extreme poverty. In these cases, even employment did not lead directly to eradication of poverty. Poverty, particularly in these urban poor developing community settings, is exceptionally complex and literacy is not in itself a panacea. However, I would argue that literacy acquisition, at least in urban settings, is the foundation upon which individuals become more capable of tackling many barriers of their poverty and oppression. Due to the complex nature of poverty, literacy initiatives should not take place in isolation, but as a critical, integrated

part of poverty alleviation initiatives.

Objectives of PAR

Throughout this research project, I continually wondered whether or not we were engaging in authentic participation leading to social transformation of oppressed people in this community? As I argue in Chapter 2, by relegitimizing knowledge and producing new knowledge, all participants in this project were socially transformed in some small ways. But in order for people to change their situations of oppression and poverty, proposed by some proponents as the ulitimate objective of PAR, social transformation must occur on a much broader scale. I realize that certainly within the realm of this research project, obtaining large scale, perhaps political, social transformation would be an ambitious goal. However, more importantly, *working towards approaching social transformation leading to poverty alleviation* was a valuable way for local participants and myself to conceptualize our actions and activities. I argue that engaging in participatory action research is an effective method for diverse groups of people to determine and address development problems.

Much like the assumptions about literacy acquisition as a panacea, participatory action research cannot, in isolation, address the complexities of oppression and poverty. However, together with literacy acquisition, I suggest that the first steps towards achieving emancipation is oppressed individuals learning the value of participatory processes to solve community problems.

The Merits of Development

Before I began the research project, I became skeptical about countries in the North promoting development in the South, through reading Martinussen, Latouche, and Parpart and talking with people working in the development enterprise. I was particularly wary of religious-based NGO's and their evangelistic, imperialistic motives. I was disturbed by the failures of many, especially macro, development projects. These failures seemed largely related to Northern 'experts' assuming a universal notion of development as well as

believing they understood the reasons for and complexity of poverty in Third World countries. As Latouche suggests, because of these development failures, I wondered if we in the North should be promoting the notion of "post-development" because perhaps capable, ingenious people in the South would be better than 'experts' in the North in solving Third World development problems. However, largely through working closely with the Bukas Palad Foundation and people in the surrounding community, my attitude about development has changed.

Bukas Palad Foundation, as an NGO involved in micro-development projects, has significantly lessened the effects of poverty among many families in the community. This impact has been the result of extended reconnaissance missions early on, and a sustained, consistent commitment to the community by its workers. This organization understands the layers and levels of oppression experienced by people in this community. They realize that indifferent families, after receiving support (for example,through malnourishment or health clinics) from Bukas Palad Foundation over a period of time, give back to the Foundation in money and time. Most heartening are the personal stories of many individuals living in the community who had, with the support of Bukas Palad, progressed along the continuum of oppression to a place of dignity and agency.

As a Christian-based organization. Bukas Palad Foundation is more genuinely concerned with supporting people than changing or promoting their religious beliefs. The community workers' full acceptance and endorsement of me, my lifestyle and lapsed religious practices, was surprising and further confirmed my sense that poverty alleviation is the main objective of this organization. Indeed, the community workers' strong spiritual beliefs seem to foster their compassion and seemingly limitless energy to give to others.

While conducting my research. I also became knowledgeable about several effective macro development projects currently underway in the Philippines.These macro projects are managed by highly-competitive private enterprises and as 'big business', their initiatives are benefiting individuals and companies in the North. However, these projects are

attempting to employ participatory processes that engage local people in determining their own development needs. I had the privilege of observing some of these projects 'in action' and witnessed the many ways people in local communities were also benefiting from the development initiatives.

Though my experiences have been limited, the Bukas Palad Foundation, as a locally-based NGO involved in grassroots development projects, and the several effective macro development initiatives I learned about while living in Manila, have together transformed my skepticism about development. I do not share Latouche's view about the notion of 'post-development'. Today, many communities in the South, partly through participatory processes, are finding their 'voice' and demanding that donor aid agencies use collaborative tools in the development process. Instead of 'post-development' then, I argue for authentic participatory development initiatives where communities in both the South and North gain economically, socially and politically in the process of narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor.

6.8 Final Comments

Based on the findings elaborated on in this chapter, participatory action research has enriched the process of developing and implementing a family literacy program in the Philippines in many ways. I have outlined the effectiveness of this endeavor and how the research augments and adds new insight to the literature on literacy programs, particularly in developing communities. Because macro literacy initiatives of previous decades essentially failed, they are rarely supported by developed government foreign aid programs today. Yet, literacy acquisition remains a critical first step to for many communities overcoming poverty. Thus, further exploration of the relationship between literacy and development should be undertaken. Studies should focus on longitudinal research investigating the potential of family literacy programs in developing settings. Research should also be carried out on how the notion of family literacy can enhance adult literacy initiatives.

Freire speaks about the capacity of the oppressed to liberate their oppressors. In some ways, through my research with the Bukas Palad Foundation and the community it works with, I have become more liberated. For example, I clearly recall, after spending my third day walking through the squatter community, meeting friends for a drink at the swank Peninsula Hotel in the evening. I was appalled at the realization that our bill amounted to a year's 'tuition' (uniforms, books, supplies) at the local school that many families in the community could not afford. The disparity between these two worlds, only kilometres apart, was incomprehensible. Further, without any intention of romanticizing, I was struck by the ability of people in the Bukas Palad community to live life at a slower pace while valuing and celebrating simple pleasures and small miracles. As a result of my research experience, I now try to look more critically at my actions and activities, especially as they may further the oppression of others in my community and in the world. I am learning the art of living slowly and appreciating the wonderful people and pleasures that surround me.

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Appendix A

Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program
Pre - Research Project Questions

Date of home visitation: _____

Interviewers: _____

Name of mother: _____

Name of father: _____

Childrens' names and ages: _____

_____

                          _____

_____

Address: _____

How many years has the family lived in this community? _____

Where are the parents from originally ?:   mother _____

                                            father _____

Why did they moved to Tramo?

_____

Educational Background of Family:

A. Mother

Educational background of mother (include years in school, reasons why she left).

_____

What did the mother enjoy and not enjoy in school?

_____

What types of literacy activities does the mother do?

    • read ? (what types of books) _____

    • write ? (for what purpose)   _____

- solve math problems (sums) _____

- tell stories ? _____

- sing songs ? _____

- talk to their children about _____

B. Father

Educational background of father (include years in school , reasons why he left).

_____

What did the father enjoy and not enjoy in school?

_____

What types of literacy activities does the father do?

- read ? (what types of literature) _____

- write ? (for what purpose) _____

- solve math problems (sums?) _____

- tell stories ? _____

- sing songs ? _____

- talk to their children about _____

C. Children

Educational experiences of children?

_____

_____

Do any of the children have difficulty in school? In what ways?

_____

D. Home Environment

Does the family have a T.V., ghetto blaster, and /or books (if yes to books, what kind?)

_____

E. Reasons for wanting to participate in the BPFL program?

What would the mother/father like to learn at the BPFLP?

_____

What would the parents like their children to learn?

_____

Is the father interested in attending any of the BPFL sessions, field trips, or in helping the children with family literacy homework?

_____

Are there any questions we did not ask or anything else you would like to tell us?

_____

Appendix B

Balad Palad Family Literacy Program
Post Research Program Questions
March, 1999

Date of home visitation: _____

Interviewers: _____

Name of mother: _____

Name of father: _____

Childrens' names and ages: _____
(star * children names who participate in BPFLP)

We would like to ask you some questions about your families' participation in the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program (BPFLP). Your responses will help us to improve this program . It will also Sacha with her research about family literacy programs in poor communities. This interview should take about 20 to 30 minutes.

1. Why do you attend the BPFLP?

_____

2. What three things have you learned by attending the BPFLP?

_____

_____

_____

3. What three things have your children learned by attending the BPFLP?

_____

_____

_____

4 .What do you like the most about the BPFLP ? (eg. parent talk, borrowing the books, listening to the stories, working on the family activity).Why?

_____

5. What do your children like the most about the BPFLP? (eg. working with Tara in the RC, working with you during the family activities, singing songs, listening to the stories, reading the library books at home?)

_____

_____

6. What more would YOU, as the parent and person, like to learn in the BPFLP?

_____

_____

7. What more would you like your CHILDREN to learn in the BPFLP?

_____

_____

Literacy behaviours in the home and how they have changed

8. What activities (reading, writing, counting, talking, singing, dancing) do you and your children do at home that you learned at the BPFLP? Give me two examples.

_____

9. How often do you read books to your children now? How often did you read books to your children before attending the BPFLP?

_____

10. Where and when do you read books to your children in the home?

11. Do **you** read books or write more often at home now?

_____

12. How do the Parent Talk assignments make you feel? Any comments?

_____

Participation by husband/father:

13. Can your husband attend the BPFLP? If he can, what stops him from coming to the program?

14. Would your husband attend a BPFLP field trip? Where would he like to go?

_____

15. How does your husband participate in the family literacy program at home?

_____

Mother's educational aspirations for their children and their educational involvement

16. What educational level would you like your children to reach? Why?

_____

17. Besides education, what do you want for your children?

_____

18. Do you think a child's school success is due more to the teacher and school or parents? Why?

_____

19. Do you do anything special when your child receives a good school report? What?

_____

20. Do you do anything special when your child receives a poor school report? What?

_____

21. Do you help your child with his/her homework? How?

_____

Ideal Family Views

22. What is the best age for a boy to marry?   _____

23. What is the best age for a girl to marry?   _____

24. What is the best number of children to have?   _____

175

25. Should women work inside or outside the home? Why or why not?

_____

Conscientization

26. From most important to less important, what are the three most serious problems you experience as an individual in this community ?

     a. _____

     b. _____

     c. _____

27. How can you and/or people in your community solve these problems?

_____

28. Is developing better literacy skills as a woman going to lead to solving some of these problems?

_____

29. **We will continue the BPFLP on April 8, 1999!** We will organizing one session a week for the summetime. We plan to make geoboards. go to the zoo, write family stories. make puppets. etc). Do you think you will continue coming to the program? Do you know any other families that would like to join us?

_____

** Don't forget to be ready for your family performance on Tuesday or Wednesday. **

Comments/Questions/Questions we didn't ask?

<u>**Appendix C**</u>
Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program Planners
... REFLECTIONS - ACTION...

We have been working together for 9 weeks now! I need to know a little more about you, and how you are feeling about the Family Literacy program and your part in it. Please answer the following questions by yourself and as honestly as possible. I will only share what you write down with others if you agree.

If you have questions about the questions!, please ask the others, ask me tomorrow (Friday), or phone me at home on the weekend (895-5433).

Please write your response on the back or on another sheet of paper ! I will pick them up on Monday! Thanks !!!!

A. Personal Data

1. Name
2. Age
3. Educational experience
4. How did you learn to speak, read, and write in English?
4. How long have you lived in this community?
5. What other jobs have you had?
6. List all of your responsibilities at Bukas Palad.
7. How long have you worked in Bukas Palad?
8. How did you become involved in the BPFLP?

B. Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program (BPFLP)

1. Why do you think the BPFLP is important for members of the Bukas Palad community?
2. What roles do you enjoy the **most** in the BPFLP? Why?
3. What roles do you enjoy the **least** in the BPFLP?Why?
4. Do you feel you contribute to the decisions being made about the BPFLP? How?
5. Why do you feel comfortable working with me? Do you like the participatory style of setting up the BPFLP? Why?
6. What **more** would you like to learn from me? Write at least 3 specific things.
7. Why are you an important member of the BPFL program planning team? Include at least 3 reasons.
8. Why do we work together well as a team?
9. Would you consider keeping a journal for 10 of the next 20 sessions? After each session, you would take a few minutes (at your convenience) to think about the session by writing down information such as what you learned that

session, ideas that came to you, ways you could improve your performance, etc. The journal would be private unless you wanted to share what you have written with us.

Thank you so much for your time! I am enjoying working with each of you, both individually and together, immensely. I am impressed by your commitment and hard work!
Sacha

Appendix D
Reflections, Questions ......

- Feb. 16th - should I continue to feel frustrated by the lack of families when every session we have has a new family join us, the sessions are improving each time? Is this that I am not satisfied or that families and practitioners are not satisfied?

- why is it that Fern and Zedna do not see the natural opportunities to promote family literacy? Fern did not (immediately) realize that the opportunity with the Agda children on sat but was very helpful once we got the children together and I asked her what to do? Zedna did not want to include the family literacy initiative in the Family Fun Day with 150 families !!!! Could she have advertised in some way?? is this being territorial or simply an oversight? Not sure but I think an oversight.

- Feb.16th -this program may not survive without the likes of Fern after i leave.
- Feb. 17/99 do Z and F and the others see me as not being able to have fun, not being rewarding enough and only wanting the job to be done correctly (my way) and always finding something wrong rather than celebrating what is right?

- Feb. 17/99 I am finding that because I am forced to document the happenings daily, that I gain much better insight into what is happening. The computer is my end of the day "rant" and forces me to reflect twice on the daily happenings. How can I incorporate this time-consuming task more methodically into my life when I am not doing research?

- Feb. 23 - not sure the session planner is working as it is intended to . See Feb. 18th session planner. Feb. 25 Fern assures me that it will be very valuable to them even later even though they do not use to conduct the sessions.

- Feb. 21 - Anabel is a very strongly skilled parent. Should she become more involved in our program planning ? ? I spoke to my cultural interpretator.Jenny and she said that it would not be a good idea. The other mothers (ie Shelly and Remy) would wonder why they were not chosen .

- March 2. 1999 - discussing disciplining problems and solutions seems, more than any ohter topic. very invasive to me. How one brings up their children is deeply and culturally ingrained and I really dont think the mothers ever thought that there are other ways. beside their way, to bring up their children. Can encouraging them to listen and talk to their children be useful info? Do we have a right to talk to mothers about how they raise their children? Though they asked us to talk about discipline, did they really want to talk about it or change what they do?

- March 20/99 - has this program had more or equal impact on the local facilitators compared to the families? Equal evidence.

Appendix E
Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program
Session Planner

Session Title:

Date:

Objective:

Preparation: (include materials needed and who is responsible for preparing them)

- □ .
- □ .
- □ .
- □ .
- □ .
- □ .

1:30 - 2:00
Preparation

Person responsible:

□ Organize fifth floor for activities

□ Write what we will be doing today on blackboard .

□ Write joke on black board.

Attendance:
Families present: (Include names of parents and children and indicate if this is the first time the family has participated with a *)

- • .

- • .

- • .

- • .

Reasons for absences:

- .

- .

- .

2:00 - 2:40
Parent Talk

Topic -

_____

Person(s) Responsible: _____

1. Discuss joke on the blackboard.

2. Ask some parents what they enjoyed/disliked about the last session and what they learned.

- .

3. Literacy activities at home: ask some parents what activities they are doing at home that are literacy-related

- .

- .

- .

4. Lesson:

5. Explain, perhaps through demonstration, the family activity to the parents.

Evaluation:

2:00 - 2:40
Child Care

Person(s) responsible: _____
Activity and/or book to read:

.
Evaluation:

2:40 - 3:10
Family Activity

Evaluation:

3:10 - 3:30

Storytelling and Songs

1. "Hello" song and one other song (new song).

Song title: _____

2. Story title and person responsible for reading.
Story title: _____

3. Families borrow books.

4. Closing song. ("Paalam Na")

3:30 to 4:00

Reflection and Action
Evaluate your personal performance :

Fern:

Sacha:

Zedna:

Sharon:

Other volunteers:
(revised Jan. 27. 1999)

Appendix F
Participatory Action Research (P.A.R.) Principles and Process

- began in 1970's in Africa by groups fighting against colonization practices

- process which combines three activities - research, education, and action

- "Participatory research attempts to present people as researchers themselves trying to find answers to questions of their daily struggle and survival"

- "Participatory research is a way for researchers and oppressed people to join in solidarity to take collective action, both short and long term, for radical social change..."

- closely linked to social movements

- participatory research is about the right to speak and take action

- a poor person is better able to see the whole problem than someone from the outside.

- interactive: dialogue is very important

Basic Features of Participatory Research

Goals: to bring about a more just society in which no groups or classes of people suffer from deprivation of basic human needs, freedoms and dignity. It aims to help the poor who are oppressed and powerless become self-reliant, self-assertive, and self-sufficient. In this process, poor people often become more aware, more critical, more assertive, and more active both psychologically and politically.

Participatory research involves ordinary people with problems to solve forming a partnership with a researcher. This form of research puts ordinary people in charge of both knowing and doing.

The Research Process:
The Beginning:
- participatory research begins with a problem
- a researcher helps to identify this problem and must participate in the struggle of the people
- the researcher works with an organization already committed to the community (Bukas Palad)
- the researcher must know the community well personally before starting the participatory research
- the researcher must explain the purpose of the project and find key people (Edith. Fern, Sharon. and Zedna) to help her put the project into action

Initial Organizing Phase:
- people in the community take part in the research process as active members
- through community organization meetings organized by the researcher and key people, the community decides on what the problem is, how it should be studied. and what action should be taken
- for some poor people, it is very difficult to discuss what their problems are

Research Design and Methods:
- community participants decide on how information is to be collected and how
- people in the community learn how to do research (and will use this knowledge to solve other problems later)
- interviews are the most widely used for gathering information
- dialogue - is very important because it makes people come together and participate in all parts of the research
- key people help to make up and give interview and questionnaires
- facts gathered from the research can be used to organize community actions
- finding practical solutions to the problems is also a result of gathering the information
- **one purpose of participatory research is to provide a method for oppressed people to use their intelligence to be critical and creative in order to build a world without domination and exploitation.**

Source: Park.P., Brydon-Miller, M.. Hall, B. and Jackson, T. (1993) Voices of Change. Toronto: OISE Press.

Appendix G
PARENT TALKS

Business Letter Writing Activity

Cooking Activity
(note conept map on blackboard)

APPENDIX H

<u>FAMILY ACTIVITIES</u>

'Aerobics for
Health'
Activity

Storytelling using
a wordless book.

Appendix I (a)

'Word Power' as a Recruitment Method

Problems are difficult to overcome in the Bukas Palad family literacy program. We have had several ways of recruiting. We thought of encouraging mothers to share the things they had been learning and experiencing from this program. Parents that are already in the program would be successful in recruiting friends, children and neighbors.

By sharing methods, the mothers in the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program will be spread through word power and it will be like a chain of people who can truly help us recruit.

by 'Zedna'

(Note: I typed all local facilitator's recruitment paragraphs [with the exception of Fern's - see next page] because these paragraphs became part of our manual. In the process, I corrected some English usage and spelling mistakes.)

recruitment —— —— 'Fern'

Before we started our family Literacy program. We prepared a list of a mother who can joint to our program.

We started to visit them to their own house at first its not so easy to invite the people because most of them are not open, they don't want to accept they are illiterate, So constant follow-up we develops a rapoor w/ them. I played w/ their children to become familiar wi them I listened to their problem and tried to console them.

When I felt that we have a strong unity already I started to tell them the program. I also bring some picture and activity and I show to them.
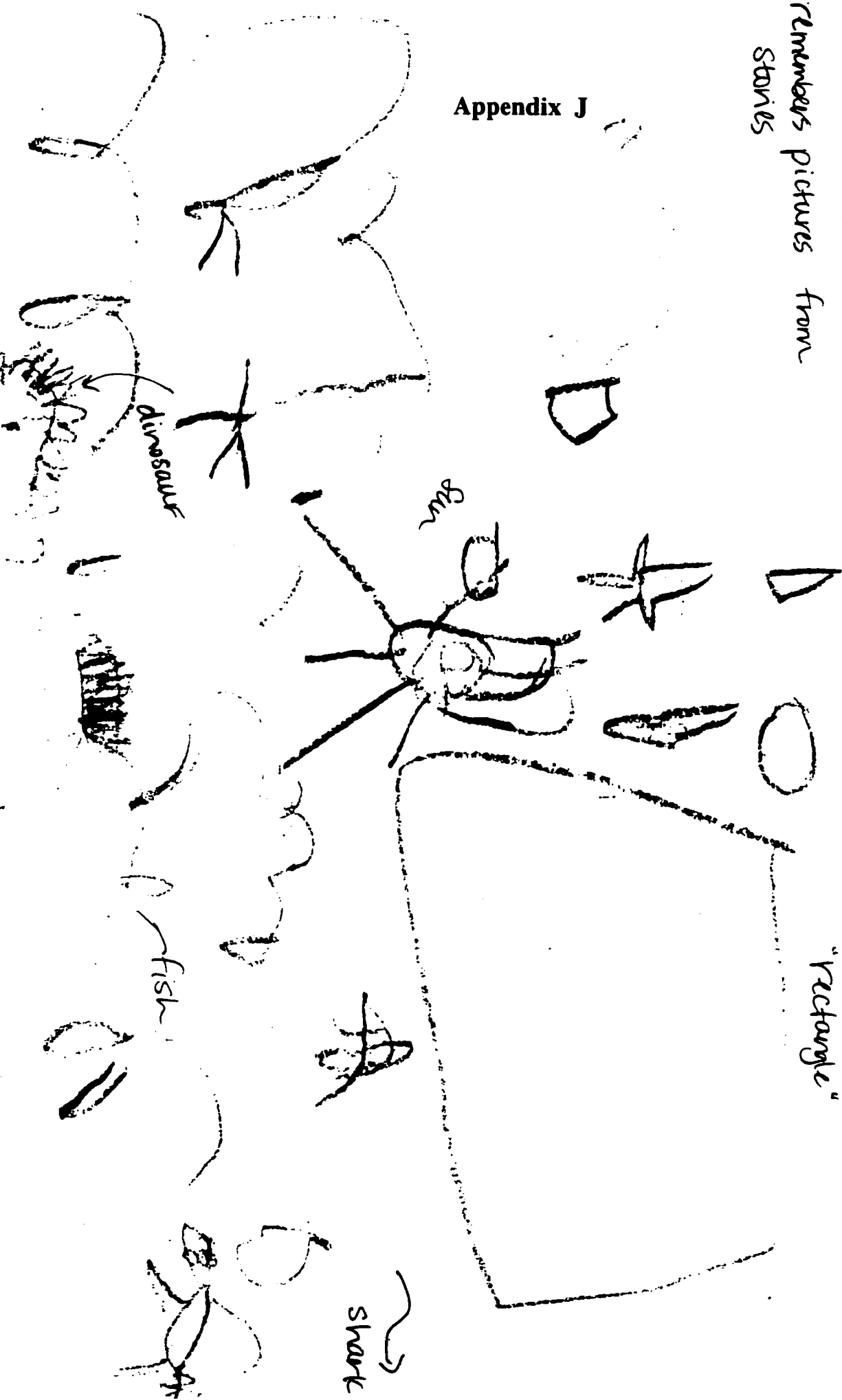
Building unity is also one way of recruitment.
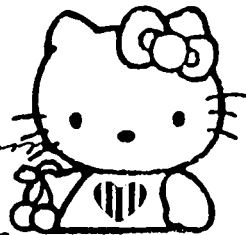
Name: _Annabelle's sun_　　　　Date: _3/16/99_

What do you like the most about the Bukas Palad Family Literacy Program?

Appendix J

remembers pictures from
stories

"rectangle"

sun

dinosaur

fish

shark

Appendix K

May 6/99
Bukas Palad
Literecy Program

Dear Teach Shasa and T. Fern

I'm sorry if not to attend our class for today, because I have an assignment in our work group to give the things to all my kasamahan and the sign pare of my kasamahan I submit to the office in Pasay city hall.

I want to sleep for 30 minutes because I'm tired. I'm very sorry. I miss you all my classmates and my teacher. May be next week I'll be there okey?

Love you all,

'Wendy'