Towards effective programmes for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre

BY

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At the

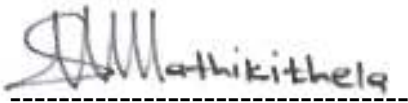## UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

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DEDICATION

This study is a special dedication to my husband, Moeketjo David, my dearest daughter Antoinette, my sons Naphtali and Romeo and my younger sister, Mapula.

DECLARATION

I *MS Mathikithela* declare that the mini-dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo for the degree of Masters in Adult Education has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution; and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

---------------------------------   27th October 2009

MS Mathikithela   **Date**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My friend Mashego Mohlala and her family Simon, Nkele, Tsheki and Rorisang for their support. You have been the pillars of my strength in times of need.

Last but not least, I would like to give honour and glory to the Almighty God, for He has been with me through thick and thin. Thanks for Your strength, guidance and wisdom.

ABSTRACT

This report describes the research carried out at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre at Seshego, which is 11 km North-West of Polokwane, the capital city of Limpopo province. The main aim of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults.

For me to achieve the outlined aim, I formulated the following research question:

- How do programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults benefit them in their everyday lives?

In an attempt to answer the above question I decided to undertake an exploratory study to get insight into programmes offered at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre.

For me to evaluate if the programmes could have beneficial impact to the target group I looked into the aims and objectives of the programmes at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. I also took into consideration the vocational training needs of adults with mental disability. The characteristics of programmes and the possibilities for improving the programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults were also considered. Chapter 1; was concluded by describing the scope of the study.

In chapter 2; I formulated the assumptions about factors that could contribute towards the provision of effective programmes. The factors are vocational training programmes, basic literacy and numeracy skills, life skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills and self-help skills. After reading relevant documents on people with mental disabilities, conducting exploratory interviews with people on the field and based on my preliminary visit to Reakgona Adult Learning Centre, I came up with other factors that could contribute towards the provision of effective programmes. They are Centre Based

Support Programmes and assessment programmes. This chapter was concluded by definition of the key concepts.

In chapter 3; I described the design of the study. The main focus of this chapter was to discuss the two tracks of data collection. The first track was about reviewing and interrogating admission policy document of Reakgona Adult Learning centre while the second track had to do with data collection. I also explained how the collected data was analysed using qualitative data analysis method. This chapter was concluded with the reflections, which is about my experiences during the research process.

Chapter 4; presented the empirical results of the study. It gave an account of the programmes, which are offered at the centre and the extent to which these programmes are of benefit to the target group. It also provided the description of the centre, vision, mission, aims and objectives, types of programmes and their characteristics. The hierarchical structure of the role players is also outlined.

The final chapter (five) presented the final conclusion based on the findings of this study. It gave the overall conclusion of what the researcher has discovered during the research process and account on programmes, which might be effective for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning centre. Recommendations for the improvement of the programmes were also outlined. This chapter was concluded with the recommendations for further study.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABET : Adult Basic Education and Training

AIDS : Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CBSP : Centre Based Support Programmes

CBST : Centre Based Support Team

CGB : Centre Governing Body

CMT : Centre Management Team

DNE : Department of National Education

DoE : Department of Education

HIV : Human Immunodeficiency Virus

LP : Limpopo Province

LTSM : Learning and Teaching Support Material

NCESS : National Committee for Education Support Services

NCSNET : National Commission on Special needs in Education and Training

NGO : Non-Governmental Organisation

RCL   : Representative Council of Learners

SMME : Small Medium and Micro Enterprise

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I will give the background of the study, which will form the starting point for the understanding of this mini-dissertation. The chapter will begin with a brief description of the nature of mental disability. I will also outline problems that people with mental disability are faced with. Policies that encompass people with disabilities in the education system will further be outlined. The aims of the study will be clearly indicated ensued by the research questions. In conclusion, there will be explanation of the scope of the study.

1.2   Mental Disability

It may not be simple to give accurate numbers of people with mental disability throughout the world but the report according to Floor and Rosen (1975:565) indicates that:

> "*People with mental disability are scatteredall over the world*".

The discussion will revolve around the nature of mental disability, problems faced by people with mental disability and policies for people with disability.

1.2.1   The nature of mental disability

Most commonly, mental disability is congenital yet it is sometimes caused by long-standing sicknesses such as catalepsy. People with mental disability have problems of epilepsy, intellect, hearing defects, extreme volubility of speech and nerve degeneration. These people vary in terms of their mental condition from mildly, moderately, severely and profoundly handicapped. The following is an outline of

various mental conditions and their capabilities as described in the Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders:

(http://www.minddisorders.com/kau-Nu/mental-retardation.html)

Mild mental retardation: This is a group of people with mental disability whose Intelligence Quotient (IQ) ranges from 50-70, and they can often acquire academic skills up to about sixth-grade level. They can become fairly self-sufficient and in some cases live independently, without community and social support. It implies that if these people can be well trained, they can be able to plan, organise and carry out certain tasks without supervision.

Moderate mental retardation: Their IQ scores range from 35-55. They can carry out work and self-care tasks with moderate supervision. They typically acquire communication skills in childhood and are able to live and function successfully within the community in a supervised environment such as home.

Severe mental retardation: Their IQ scores range from 20-34. They may master very basic self-care skills and some communication skills. Many severely retarded individuals are able to live in a sheltered environment.

Profound mental retardation: Their IQ scores are under 20. They may master very basic self-care skills with appropriate support and training. Their retardation is often caused by an accompanying neurological disorder. They need a high level of structure and supervision.

As a result of the above-mentioned conditions, mental disability has become an acceptable excuse for the complete absence of civility between people. It has become a permissible reason to treat people as insignificant. To support this statement Engelbrecht, Green and Naicker (2004:174) indicate that:

*"In many cases communities reacted to disability
with attitudes shaped by prejudice or even cruelty
and fear born out of superstition".*

1.2.2 Problems faced by people with mental disability

The target group in this study is people with mental disability particularly those with mild and moderate mental retardation. These people are faced with problems of labour exploitation, sexual abuse and social exclusion and the unfortunate part of it is that these cases are not reported. The reason behind this could be the fact that people still view the mentally disabled people as inadequate human beings who cannot think independently and who are not fit to be included in the mainstream economy and as a result they do not have respect of their human dignity. Most people seem preoccupied by social stereotypes; prejudice and cultural myth that people with mental disability are useless and that nothing could be done to change their lives for the better (Saley L, 1996: 27). This does not mean that people with mental disability cannot work or take part in social activities. It does mean that the society is not yet ready to integrate people with mental disability into the work force.

There are many centres for the skills training of people with mental disability throughout the country. Limpopo province in particular has many centres but one may wonder if these centres are really meant to provide effective training that will equip people with mental disability with skills necessary for their daily living. At times one may think that people with mental disability are relegated to the training centres in order to be kept busy.

1.2.3 Policies that encompass people with disabilities in the education system

Mentally disabled people are adequate human beings like everybody else and they should be treated equally. In the past[1], the government had no accommodation for learners with mental disability in the education system but since the inception of democracy the new constitution emphasises respect for the rights of all to education, with particular emphasis on the recognition of diversity. This implies an inclusive approach to education in the sense that all learners are entitled to appropriate education. The National Commission on Special needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) have come up with the policy of Inclusive Education (DNE: 1997) that addresses barriers that exclude disabled learners from active participation in learning. This policy gives disabled learners the right to access the curriculum, which is appropriate to their learning needs. There is also a policy of National Curriculum Statement (NCS) that adopts an inclusive approach by specifying minimum requirements for all learners. It acknowledges that all learners should be able to develop to their full potential provided they receive the necessary support. The policy (DNE: 2003) states that:

> *"The intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual needs*
> *of learners can only be addressed through the design*
> *and development of appropriate learning programmes*
> *and through the use of appropriate assessment instruments".*

Although these policies exist, no positive impact has been made to encompass people with mental disability in the education system. All the legislations have not been taken seriously and have not had the desirable impact. This could have been prompted by lack of understanding by the society in general, who still brand[2] people with mental disability instead of discovering their true potential.

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[1] In the past refers to the period before 1994 (during the apartheid era) (Parker B, 2007: 23)
[2] Brand means to give a bad name to someone (Mc Nair S, 2007: 48)

These shackles[3] of mental disablement can only be removed by delivery from promises of democracy, legislation, batho pele, ubuntu and the willingness of all South Africans to witness the true integration and freedom for all people in this country. It is therefore the intention of this study to investigate if the aims of programmes at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre adhere to the quality standards stipulated in the legislations.

1.3   Aims and objectives of the study

The main aim of the study is to critically investigate the effectiveness of programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. I also intend to gain insight into the characteristics of these Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes.

It is the objective of the study to contribute towards the integration of the mentally disabled adults into the society and workforce.

1.4   Research Questions

This study attempts to investigate the effectiveness of programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre.

The main question of the study is:

- How do programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre benefit them in their everyday lives?

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[3] Shackles means to restrict or limit someone (Ismail S, 2006)

The following are the sub-questions of this study:

- What are the aims and objectives of vocational programmes at Reakgona Adult Learning centre?
- What are the characteristics of programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning centre?
- What are vocational training needs of the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre?
- What are the possibilities of improving programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults?

1.5   Scope of the study

To answer these questions, I decided to confine my study to Reakgona Adult Learning Centre, which is located at Seshego; 11 kilometres outside Polokwane, the capital city of Limpopo province. The selection of this centre has been influenced by the fact that among the previously disadvantaged groups, Reakgona Adult Learning Centre is closer to the city where they have access to available opportunities. There are many resources, which I believe the centre managers can make use of them for effective training of adults with mental disability in the city. I have also taken into consideration the feasibility of the distance from the centre to the city. This will help me to identify if the problem lies with the skills training centres or if it is true that people with mental disability are eternally dependent on others.

Since these learners might vary in terms of their mental conditions from mildly, moderately, severely and profoundly handicapped, I will be very careful not to draw a conclusion based on exceptional cases. The conclusion drawn will not necessarily mean that all centres throughout the country are functioning more or less the same as Reakgona Adult Learning Centre but it will give a practical overview of how people with mental disability are perceived. My target group will be the mild and the moderate mentally retarded adults aged between 18 and 55 years. These age groups

are selected on the basis that they are physically matured to start their own families and that they are economically active population group.

I have decided to undertake an exploratory study in order to get insight into the effectiveness of programmes at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. The method to be used is qualitative as it describes and analyses people's individual and collective actions, beliefs, thoughts and perception (Smith and Bless, 1995:396). The data collected during the fieldwork phase will be analysed through the use of Data Matrix. Matrices enable the research planners to see at glance their coverage of the sample and of the instruments used at a particular point in time (Smith and Bless, 1975:396).

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is about the background and social problem of the study. In chapter two; I formulated the assumptions about factors that could contribute towards the provision of effective programmes. Chapter three describes the design of the study whereby the main focus is to discuss the two tracks of data collection. Chapter four presents the empirical results of the study. It gives an account of programmes, which are offered at the centre and the extent to which these programmes are of benefit to the target group.

The final chapter (five) presents the final conclusion based on the findings of this study. It gives an overall conclusion on what the researcher has discovered during the process and account on programmes, which might be effective for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre.

1.6   Conclusion

In this chapter I have established the following points.

- There is a huge number of adults with mental disability throughout the world who vary in terms of their mental conditions from mildly, moderately, severely and profoundly handicapped.

- These adults are faced with problems of labour exploitation, sexual abuse and social exclusion owing to their mental disability.

- Before 1994, South African constitution did not accommodate learners with mental disability in the education system.

- During democracy[4], policies such as Inclusive Education and National Curriculum Statements were adopted to accommodate people with disabilities in the education system yet they did not have the desirable impact.

- There are many centres for the provision of training programmes for adults with mental disability throughout Limpopo Province yet they are alleged to be ineffective.

- The importance of providing effective programmes for adults with mental disability in order to integrate them into the labour market and society.

- The mild and the moderate mentally disabled adults aged between 18 and 55 are the target group as they are physically matured to start their own families and are the economically active population group.

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. The chapter has also indicated the main research questions and sub-questions of the study.

This study intends to contribute towards the integration of the mentally disabled adults in the labour market and society. The scope of the study has also been clearly defined in this chapter.

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[4] Democracy refers to the period after 1994 whereby people have a freedom to choose a government by voting (Aitchison J, 2003:47).

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   **Introduction**

The key assumption of this study is that programmes offered to adults with mental disability at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre do not provide functional skills which will be of practical use in their daily lives. There is no one type of learning that suits all learners with mental disability but there are some strategies that learning providers can use to meet the needs of all learners. It is therefore the intention of this chapter to offer suggestions about the programmes, which could be useful for the adults with mental disability at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. As a result the critical factors of this study are addressed in the following sections.

2.2   **Vocational Training Programmes**

Vocational training is always needed to ease the transition from school to work and to empower people to gain access into the labour market. Vocational training is any education and training that enables people to identify and realise their potential, develop existing or new skills, and make informed choices about their role in workforce and life in general. Its primary function according to Phillips and McCullough (1990:27) is the promotion of the social and economic progress of society. As a result, vocational programmes should provide adults with mental disability with knowledge of current labour market situations, as well as help to restore their confidence and self-esteem, and to develop their skills.

It should as well give adults with mental disability greater control, choice and power over their personal as well as their working lives. Since people with mental disability do not have freedom of mobility due to their mental impairment, they need to be trained for vocational programmes that will be suitable for them. It is thus assumed

that adults with mental disability are not trained for vocational opportunities that are available in their communities.

In relation to the selection of vocational programmes, Rusch, Chadsy and Johnson (1991:147) state that:

> *"Since adults might vary in terms of their mental*
> *condition from mildly, moderately and severely*
> *handicap, the manager must continuously assess*
> *available community employment and analyse*
> *specific skills required for successful job performance".*

Some of the factors that could hamper the provision of effective vocational training programmes could be social stereotypes, financial constraints and the ignorance of curriculum developers. Wehman (1995:27) indicates that:

> *"In designing functional programmes, selection*
> *of vocational skills must not be based on donation*
> *of equipments to the school or on stereotypic view*
> *of what people believe mentally disabled people*
> *should do. The selection of programmes should be*
> *based on functional curriculum that reflects skills*
> *required in actual local employment situations".*

Seemingly, most people especially in our black communities do not have expertise when it comes to the development of the curriculum for the mentally disabled people; neither do they want to learn due to prejudice. As a result of this attitude people might end up giving people with mental disability vocational training programmes that will limit their chances of gaining access into the labour market. For example, teaching learners to make flowers from a plastic.

It also appears that the mentally disabled adults are not directed to the necessary services and this will contribute towards the highest unemployment rate amongst them. As a result, a manipulative skill is necessary in this regard because it will equip them with skills required for specific job training.

Since it is alleged that these adults are viewed as inadequate human beings, it might be possible that due to social stereotypes and prejudice, people are unable to identify their vocational training needs. This will result in the provision of inefficient vocational training programmes that will jeopardise their chances of being integrated into the labour market hence they will remain being economically dependant.

When selecting vocational programmes for adults with mental disability, curriculum developers need to establish the outcomes in relation to the needs of the mentally disabled people and should give them the opportunity to be integrated into the labour market (Weinstein G and Alschuler A, 1985: 23).

The suggested vocational programmes that could be effective for adults with mental disability are welding, carpentry, motor mechanic, light current electrical engineering, switchboard, cookery, interior decoration, catering, sewing, knitting, gardening, paving, bricklaying, weaving and security training.

All these types of vocational programmes mentioned above, are available in the communities and they do not demand a high level of intellect for people with mild and the moderate mental retardation to cope with. Effective vocational training is necessary to give the mentally disabled adults the opportunity to gain access into the labour market and for them to render efficient services. It is also vital that vocational training of adults with mental disability be seen as a lifelong learning process that supports systematic acquisition of skills and attitudes for successful learning.

2.3   Basic literacy and numeracy skills

One of the educational objectives is the mastery of reading, arithmetic and writing skills (Kirk, Gallagher and Anastasiow, 1997:57). Adults with mental disability are as well required to learn some kind of literacy skills training that are appropriate to their special needs. Numeracy skills are also significant as they influence our functioning at home and work. It is assumed that the reason why people with mental disability are often victims of labour exploitation is due to their inability to read and write. Seemingly the non-handicapped people take advantage of their ignorance especially for the mere reason that they do not know the value of money. People with mental disability should be given basic literacy and numeracy skills to afford them the opportunity to read basic instructions and to count figures. To support this statement Smith DD (1998:78) indicates that:

> *"The retarded people should be proficient*
> *enough in arithmetic to handle finances and*
> *have basic understanding of the numbers and*
> *number processes used in their environment"*.

Numeracy skills will enable adults with mental disability to function as informed consumers, citizens and more competent members of the society and workforce.

Learning can also provide a first rung to re-building self-esteem and confidence, which can enable people to access further learning, employment or other services. The manifesto (DoE, 2001:10) on values, education and democracy further states that:

> *"Literacy is an important tool to understand*
> *and assert one's human rights"*.

This implies that if adults with mental disability are able to read and write, they will no longer be victims of labour exploitation because they will be able to charge prices for the services they render.

People who are labelled as mentally ill are often stigmatised and discriminated against and this can affect confidence and self-esteem, and can affect an individual's desire or ability to participate in the learning programme. Participation in the learning programme can provide a feeling of being wanted and included. Learning should therefore be seen as a way of life in order to promote the culture of learning amongst adults with mental disability. To support this view Tuckett (1991:24) states that:

> "*When lifelong learning becomes a reality, it*
> *will be possible to offer greater scope to every*
> *person, to be less ruthless and tyrannical, and*
> *to provide the needs of a greater diversity of people*".

Educators should therefore support adults with mental disability by means of creating a secure learning environment, which is characterised by a pleasant teaching climate as well as the opportunity to succeed and to attribute success to them, thus enhancing a realistic positive self -concept.

By reducing failure, increasing success and modeling appropriate behaviour, adult educators can improve the attitudes of adult learners with mental disability towards learning. This can be achieved by choosing texts that enable learners to engage critically with their world, for example texts about access to the resources in our society (health services, water, wealth, etc) and the way in which these resources are used.

Seemingly, these people are still viewed as object of pity and inadequate human beings who cannot think independently, therefore they are denied privilege to learn how to read and write owing to their intellectual disability.

To support the notion that people with mental disability should be given basic literacy and numeracy skills, Weymeyer, Agran & Hughes (1998:56) state that:

> "*Learning with the retarded initially is apt to be haphazard*
> *but once a retarded person understands what to do, learning*
> *occur at about the same rate as it does with normal people*
> *of similar mental age*".

Teaching reading to the mentally disabled adults offers dual benefits because the subtasks are the sources from which academic skills develop while mastering the subtasks gives them an opportunity to succeed and gain self confidence. For example, they can recognise and remember telephone numbers, their own ages and simple money concepts. Many opportunities should as well be provided for learners to write their names on the worksheets, homework, assignments or even artwork. As they become more confident and involved in writing, they can be expected to be more accurate in their writing.

2.4   Interpersonal skills programmes

Interpersonal skills help people to establish effective communication and relationship with others. These skills are the lubrication that allows people to move smoothly through their daily contacts and tasks. If a person lacks such skills he or she stands out in a crowd. Apparently, adults with mental disability are still viewed as in need of assistance and eternally dependant on others. Seemingly, this problem has become a norm because even families that have people with mental disability at their homes have a tendency of dumping these people at sheltered places and leave them without giving the necessary support. Engelbrecht et al (2004:27) denotes that:

> "*Disability is not an affliction from which an individual suffer, but*
> *it is something which is created by the refusal of dominant group*
> *in society to create conditions in which people with disability might*

exercise the full rights of citizenship and receive

their benefits of social participation".

The need to develop interpersonal relationships amongst adults with mental disability is to satisfy the need for inclusion, which reflects a desire for social contact. The mentally disabled adults need to be in the company of the non-disabled people to establish and maintain a feeling of mutual interest with them. This will help them to feel accepted, understood and worthwhile.

In order to prepare the mentally disabled adults for life and work in integrated settings, it is necessary to provide them with integrated vocational training that will enhance their interpersonal skills. It appears that these adults are not being integrated with their non-handicapped peers because they do not feature anywhere in the labour market or in social participation. To support this view Amado (1993:310) states that:

"People with disabilities should train and work in the

community whenever possible because this is not only to

 expose them to the community and work expectations, but

to expose future employers and co-workers to their potential

as reliable employees".

Since people with mental disability often have behavioural problem, the non-handicapped people might not freely entrust certain duties to them. These people are adequate human beings like everybody else and we should accept their uniqueness, as it occurs to enable us to discover their potentials and opportunities. Non-disabled people should learn to work with the disabled in the same environment and understand their behaviour in the context within which it occurs. By creating a positive experience of feeling valued and included, of achieving and learning important skills for life and forming friendships will have a positive impact on adults with mental disability.

Integrating the mentally disabled adults with their non-handicapped counterparts will instill self-esteem and a sense of belonging into their lives. It will also help the mentally disabled adults to learn certain attitudes and behaviours from their non-handicapped peers; for example acquisition of specific skills, production rate, the value of money and mobility.

The practice of educating learners who have disability together with their non-handicapped peers will mean creating learning communities that appreciate and respond to the diverse needs of its members. Participating in integrated learning for adults with mental disability will also promote greater social inclusion and can enhance greater understanding and tolerance of the needs of adults with mental disability by the society at large.

Through support, appreciation and recognition, the mentally disabled adults will have courage and confidence to take part in all social activities and to contribute in the labour force. Engelbrecht et al (2004:46) stresses that it is important to make people with mental disability feel that they belong to the community and can make a valuable contribution. It is therefore essential that the consciousness level of adults with mental disability be raised in order to understand the complex nature of togetherness and the world they live in.

2.5   Life skills programmes

Life skills education is designed to facilitate the practice and reinforcement of psychological skills in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way (WHO, 1999:6). It contributes to the promotion of personal and social development, the prevention of health and social problems, and the protection of human rights. People with mental disability are often victims of sexual abuse because they seem to be naturally sexually active yet they are unable to make informed decisions about their sexual behaviour. The vast majority of adults with mental disability have many

children and this contributes to poverty in their families, which at a later stage leads them to be victims of social neglect.

Apart from poverty, there is also a problem of HIV/AIDS pandemic, which could be easily spread amongst them. It appears that these people are oblivious of issues of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. These adults should also be exposed to formal training programme on sexuality and other infectious diseases. Seemingly more attention is only given to manual work and they disregard other important aspects of life such as sexuality and HIV/AIDS, career guidance, human rights and democracy, self-esteem and self-awareness.

It is alleged that the vast majority of people with mental disability are being sexually abused out of the deception of the non-handicapped people. This is due to their lack of informed decisions about their sexual behaviour. It is therefore necessary to teach them sexuality education in order to combat ignorance and increase understanding of human sexuality by providing honest information. Teaching adults with mental disability programmes such as human rights and democracy will help learners to acquire knowledge and awareness of citizenship education. This will also help them to develop a commitment to make the community a better place to live in and they will acquire skills needed to participate actively in the society. The more they take responsibility for their actions, the more the training centre can be proud of having achieved the objectives of leading their growth towards participation in social life.

It appears that these adults are not conscious about their human dignity, which could be the reason why they are unable to respond effectively to challenges in their real world. This view is supported by Birrel W and Orley J (1996:25) when they indicated that:

> *"Life skills education is aimed at facilitating*
> *the development of psychological skills that are*
> *required to deal with the demands and challenges*

of everyday life".

Encouraging and enabling adults with mental disability to access learning opportunities can instill confidence, self-esteem and self-worth.

Goleman (1995:34) also indicates that emotional literacy helps people to be able to monitor and regulate their feelings and those of others and to use feelings to guide thoughts and actions.

Career development is viewed as a total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic and chance factors that combine to shape the career of any individual over the life span (Sears, 1982:139). This implies that a career can be a process in which the roles of adults with mental disability are shaped. Teaching adults with mental disability programmes on career guidance will help them to develop a sense of the future, rather than a reactive step of waiting for the future to prescribe them. Since mental disability is sometimes caused by factors such as childhood experiences and events of life such as bereavement, it is possible that through effective training, adults with mental disability can recover. Life skills programmes can thus be important in that recovery process and in maintaining positive mental health.

It remains a basic need of the mentally disabled people to be helped through a proximal zone of self-development in order to get to the place of self-realisation in all aspects of their human being.

2.6 Communication skills programmes

Effective communication skills refer to competence in the use of language in ways that are appropriate to the situation. Communication skill is of vital importance in all aspects of human life. The way in which people communicate can either credit or discredit them. It is thus assumed that since people with mental disability have

extreme volubility of speech, it might be the reason why people are patronising them. It is therefore necessary that adults with mental disability be given effective training of communication to improve self-concept. They should be conscientised that they should use language to gain and give information, accomplish goals, support interpersonal relationships and monitor own behaviour and thinking. To support the above statement Fullan (1991: 63) indicates that:

> *"Good communication skills establish a channel that*
> *enables people with mental disability to express own*
> *personality and active participation in social situations".*

This implies that if adults with mental disability know when and how to communicate in various life situations, they will be able to make appropriate decisions and to exert some degree of influence and control over the everyday environment. For example, they will be members of social clubs in communities and as parents they will be expected to attend meetings at schools.

Communication can also serve as a vehicle to job opportunities. For people to be employed for jobs in all fields of work, they undergo interviews. Communication skill is therefore important for the development of adults with mental disability because it will enable them to express and to satisfy their need for social interaction and their need for competence in all spheres of life. It is assumed that one of the reasons why people with mental disabilities are not employed in the labour market yet they are able to perform certain jobs skillfully is because they cannot express themselves convincingly. It is important for adults with mental disability to be aware of how accurately they should perceive the context in which they are communicating. To support this view, Fullan (1991: 45) indicates that:

> *"The ability to communicate effectively depends upon*
> *establishing reciprocal interaction with others, gaining*
> *a concept of communication as a means of giving and*

receiving information and giving an indication of the
ability to understand others".

The mentally disabled people are often victims of labour exploitation because they are unable to negotiate effectively. In most of the scrapyards and electronic repair centres in townships and villages, most of the people with mental disabilities are being exploited. It is alleged that the owners of those businesses are exploiting them to make profit in their businesses whilst they pay them with food and cigarettes. Teaching adults with mental disability effective communication skills will also aid them to negotiate effectively.

Communication skill can pave a way for the advocacy of people with mental disability. There are many organisations and unions for all citizens in the country but people with mental disability are not represented in anyway. It is thus assumed that the other reason why people with mental disability are excluded in the labour market and undermined in the society is because they do not have advocacy. People with mental disability need to be trained so that they can rise up and fight for their rights. It is only the mentally disabled people who can shake the whole country if they can organise themselves and present their demands. This can only be possible if they are given effective communication skill because it is through their interactive behaviour and the manner of expression that will enable them to negotiate effectively.

Communication skill can serve as a weapon for self-defence. The vast majority of people with mental disability are victims of rape both at home and public places. It is alleged that most of their cases are going nowhere because these people are defenseless. They end up losing their cases because people put words into their mouths due to lack of communication skills. Effective training of communication will help people with mental disability to present information in a logical order. To support the above statement Locke (1985:57) indicates that:

"*The main aim of communication curriculum for people*

with mental disability is to encourage the responsiveness
to the presence of others and to establish reciprocal
interaction patterns. To build a repertoire of signals
related to needs, interests, ideas and feelings".

Since communication skill is a tool to assert people's human rights, it is therefore a prerequisite that people with mental disability be given effective training of communication for personal development. Through communication the mentally disabled adults can be able to establish, develop and maintain relationships with their non-handicapped counterparts.

2.7 Self-help skills programmes

In all aspects of human life it is necessary that all people regardless of disability should be able to take care of themselves. This component of self-help is concerned with the acquisition of skills involved in washing, grooming and dressing. For the mentally disabled adults, self-care programmes are the basic need because they need to be equipped with skills that will give them the opportunity to be accepted by others. To support this view Sears (1982:46) states that:

"People with mental disability require to learn the
basics of life in order to maintain life itself and make
it more comfortable and satisfying".

Apart from maintaining life, achievement in any area of self-help will also maintain dignity and allow adults with mental disability to develop a positive self-concept and a sense of worth.

It is assumed that most of adults with mental disability did not receive any formal education during their childhood because they were hidden at homes due to prejudice. As a result they need to be orientated about the basics of self-care programmes. They

should be taught about tooth brushing, bathing, washing hands after toilet and before touching food, changing pads during menstrual periods, shaving under arms and even the use of roll-on. Kiernan and Jones (1982: 48) support this view by indicating that:

> *"Self-help programmes are extremely important both in terms of hygiene and because of the effect they have upon personal appearance, dignity, self-esteem and acceptability to others".*

These self-help programmes should therefore seek to encourage in adults with mental disability the maximum possible degree of independence in personal hygiene and an interest in presenting a well-groomed appearance. Mirror work can help to increase self-awareness and to encourage adults with mental disability to take interest in personal appearance and grooming.

Another aspect, which is very important for personal development is the ability to express preferences for the types of clothing and colours. This can be made to encourage adults with mental disability to make considered choices and to promote their self-awareness and positive self-concepts. For example, it will help them to achieve the degree of independence to the choice of clothes which are appropriate to special occasions or activities such as parties, swimming, and various weather conditions –summer and winter, rain or sun.

They should also be trained to keep their environment clean at all times. This can be achieved by training them to make their beds and to clean their bedrooms daily. They can as well be trained to wash the dishes and to clean the dinning hall everyday after meals.

Adults with mental disability should as well be orientated to the programmes of taking medications. Since most of them could be taking medications due to their mental health problems, they need to be conscientised about the importance of taking

medications at the right time. They should be able to follow the programme of taking medication without supervision.

Having looked at the critical factors of this study, it is of utmost important to define clearly the main concepts in this study. This will give a clear understanding about the focus of the study and the target group as concepts will be defined within the context of the study.

2.8   Definition of key concepts

2.8.1   Adult

The concept "adult" is multi-implicational since people attach different meanings to it. In my view, the term "adult" denotes a person who reached physical maturity i.e. a person who has reached the ages of economically active population group. It can also be defined in terms of intellectual maturity, whereby a person who is responsible and accountable is normally perceived as an adult. Other cultural groups perceive a person as an adult after undergoing cultural rites such as initiation school regardless of his or her age.

A person can also be regarded as an adult when he or she has a child despite his or her youth. The term "adult" can refer to a stage in the life cycle of the individual; he or she is first a child, then youth, and then an adult. It can also refer to a status; an acceptance by society that the person concerned has completed his or her novitiate and is now incorporated fully into the community. It can refer to a social subset: adults as distinct from children or it can include a set of ideas and values: adulthood (Rogers, 1996:34).

Adulthood can thus be seen as an ethical status resting upon the presumption of various moral and personal qualities (Patterson, 1979:31).

Seemingly, there is no a clear definition of the concept "adult" since people define it in terms of the context within which they find themselves. In my study the concept adult refers to all males and females between the ages 18 and 55 years i.e. those who are in the ages of economically active population group and who are physically matured to start their own families.

2.8.2 Adult Basic Education and Training

Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is the provision of education including basic literacy to a level equivalent to the General Certificate of Education, to adults who have had a little or no formal schooling.

Adult Basic Education and Training as defined by the Department of Education (DoE, 2001:5) refers to:

> *"General conceptual foundation towards lifelong and*
> *development, comprising of knowledge, skills and*
> *attitudes required for social, economic and political*
> *participation and transformation applicable to a range*
> *of contexts".*

ABET can further be defined as a force for social participation and economic development, providing an essential component of all RDP programmes (DoE, 1997: 23).

According to the principles of ABET programme, it must provide adult with the foundation for access to lifelong learning, to enable them to adapt and contribute to the process of social and economic development in a rapidly changing global order (DNE, 1997:97).

This implies that ABET has the potential to embrace all aspects of training, which enable learners to demonstrate technical and practical competencies. Adult education can facilitate participation in all aspects of life. It can help people to understand the society in which they live, give them the means to recognise and tackle the challenges of a society in which all aspects of life are changing and rescue them from processes of exclusion to which they have fallen victim (FEU,1990:23).

2.8.3 Mental disability

Mental disability is a clinically recognised condition or illness that affects a person's thought process, judgment or emotions. According to Werteimer (1997:45) mental disability includes:

> *"Cognitive, psychiatric and learning disabilities*
> *as well physical head trauma".*

Mental disability is also seen as a condition, illness or disease, which affects a person's thought process, perception of reality, emotions or judgments, which results in disturbed behaviour.
(http://www.workinfo.com/free/downloads/59.htm)

People with mental disability have difficulty in processing information. For many, the problem lies in limited memory, perception and the way they organise information and make decisions (Goleman 1995:16).

In my view, mental disability is about how we think and feel about other people. It is influenced by our experiences and our expectations as well as by cultural, social and religious beliefs. It affects our capacity to learn, to communicate and to form and sustain relationships. It also influences our ability to cope with change, transition and life events. Seeing someone `s problems as an illness that requires medical treatment

is a narrow interpretation and discourages people from thinking about other non-medical ways of supporting people with mental disability.

2.9 **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the critical factors of this study. The discussion was based on the information obtained from exploratory interviews with people on the field, preliminary visit to the centre and sources from other literature. Assumptions about factors that could contribute towards the provision of effective programmes for the mentally disabled adults were fully expatiated. Those factors were identified as vocational training programmes, basic literacy and numeracy skills, interpersonal skills, life skills, communication skills and self-help skills. Suggestions on how these programmes could be interrelated in order to yield objective results to the target group were also clearly outlined in the discussion. Definitions of the key concepts in this study were discussed in detail. In the next chapter I will discuss the methodology, which is about the design of my study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1   **Introduction**

In this chapter I will start by indicating the design of the study. The main focal point of this chapter will be to discuss the two tracks of data collection. I will explain and discuss the instruments used to collect data from different participants in various phases of data collection. There will also be a description of how the data that have been collected from different phases were analysed using qualitative data analysis method. In concluding this chapter I will discuss the reflections, which is about my experience during the research process.

3.2   **Research design**

I have decided to undertake exploratory study to get insight into the effectiveness of programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. The purpose of exploratory study according to Smith and Bless (1995:41) is to gain a broad understanding of a situation, phenomenon, community or a person. Based on the information I might get, I also intend to offer suggestions towards the possibilities for improving programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults.

This study is qualitative in nature because according to Smith (1975:396) it describes and analyse people's individual and collective actions, beliefs, thoughts and perception. This implies that more emphasis is placed on the participant's perspective and description of events, beliefs and behaviours. In contrast to quantitative research, the researcher and the participant are both involved in the research process in qualitative research, with the researcher trying to understand and interpret the participant's perspective (Miles and Huberman, 1994:47).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults and to contribute towards the improvement of these programmes at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. I will look into the aims and objectives of these programmes, characteristics of the programmes, vocational training needs and also the possibilities for improving programmes designed for adults with mental disability.

This study has two tracks of data collection namely: reviewing admission policy documents of Reakgona Adult Learning Centre and fieldwork. The fieldwork has three phases, which are introductory phase, an extensive fieldwork phase and observations. The extensive fieldwork phase has three stages of data collection.

3.3 **Data collection**

My data collection process is divided into two tracks. The first track focuses on the reviewing of admission policy documents of Reakgona adult learning centre while the second one deals with data gathered in the field using various instruments of data collection for the different phases of my data collection. The purpose of each phase will be discussed later.

3.3.1 **Reviewing and interrogating documents**

In the first track of data collection, I reviewed the documents of Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. I was given a centre admission policy document. The main purpose of reviewing the documents of Reakgona Adult Learning Centre was to look into the vision and mission of the centre, aims and objectives, types of programmes, the characteristics of programmes; available resources and the target group.

This process of interrogation of the documents of Reakgona Adult Learning Centre has increased the level of curiosity that one should seek to understand from all various points of view about the main purpose of the centre and the effectiveness of

the programmes offered. The information gained from this document orientated me about the types of programmes and the characteristics of programmes offered at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. It also provided me with a green light about what could be taking place at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre.

3.3.2 Fieldwork

Fieldwork forms the second track of data collection in this study. The track has two phases, which are introductory phase and an extensive fieldwork. The extensive fieldwork has three stages of data collection. In this phase I interviewed various role players about the effectiveness of programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre.

3.3.2.1 Introductory phase

During this phase, I made a preliminary visit to Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. I had informal interview with the Director of the centre about the need for adequate learning programmes provision and how to go about developing such programmes. Initially, I thought mentally disabled adults do not receive efficient education due to lack of effective programmes such as vocational programmes, basic literacy and numeracy, interpersonal skills, life skills, communication skills and self-help skills.

After I conducted the exploratory interviews with the Director, I then realised that there were other factors, which could also contribute towards the effectiveness of programmes. Those factors were identified as Centre Based Support Programmes (CBSP) and assessment programmes.

3.3.2.2 Extensive fieldwork phase

This phase is divided into three stages of data collection, whereby I had interview sessions with different role players at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre.

3.3.2.2.1   Stage 1: Centre Manager (Director)

In this stage of data collection I held an interview session with the centre manager of Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. The reason why I also decided to interview the centre manager is that she is the founder and the Director[5] of the centre and probably she is the one who attempts to determine direction enroute to a goal. During the interview session I used open-ended questions when talking to the centre manager because according to Smith and Bless (1995: 110) they allow for the discovery of new aspects of the problem by investigating in detail some explanations given by the respondent.

The results of this stage formed the basis for the next stage of data collection, which was an "in-depth" investigation on how do programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults benefit them in their day to day lives.

This interview session with the centre manager was fruitful because I got insight into the aims and objectives of their vocational programmes, the characteristics of programmes offered and the fate of adults learners who underwent there training.

The response from my respondent aroused my level of curiosity hence I was urged to seek more information and clarity.

3.3.2.2.2   Stage 2: three Instructors (Educators) at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre

In this stage of data collection I held interview session with three educators (addressed as Instructors) at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. I interviewed them individually using structured interviews because according to Smith (1975:111) they

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[5] Director –the centre manager of Reakgona adult learning centre. (Reakgona Policy Document, 1998)

aim at determining the frequency of certain answers and to find relationship between answers to different questions.

These three educators were selected from various programmes offered on the basis of the fact that they interact with these mentally disabled adults on daily basis, therefore are perceived as relevant sources of information.

The number of interviewees was prompted by the fact that it would increase the level of comparability of responses and as a result all interviewees were asked the same basic questions using the same wording and sequence.

My intention in this stage of data collection was to get insight into the characteristics of programmes, vocational training needs of adults with mental disability, the most effective way of using available resources, how they integrate programmes into real world, the response of the target group towards the programmes and potential areas of difficulties. The data collected in this stage enabled me to detect areas that need improvement.

3.3.2.2.3 Stage 3: Centre Governing Body

In this stage of data collection I had interviews with two members of the Centre Governing Body (CGB). I interviewed them individually at their homes because the schools were closed during our interview session and there was no common venue we could use. The CGB of this centre comprises seven members of which the centre manager forms part of it. This body was elected on the basis of professionalism regardless of the fact that the person has a child in the centre or not though two members from the parents of learners were also elected. Preference was given to professionals such as doctors, nurses, pastors and teachers because they will have influence to the donors. The two members interviewed work as a Pastor and the other one works in the clinic.

My intention in this stage of data collection was to get insight into the progress, development and the challenges in the centre. This stage has also enabled me to understand some other possibilities that one might use for the improvement of the programmes at the centre. The use of open-ended questions in this interview session was very useful because my respondents were so open that they even highlighted on issues that were never discussed in other stages of data collection.

3.3.2.3 Observations

After I have completed all stages of data collection I went back to Reakgona adult learning centre for observations. I was a non-participant observer because according to Patton I will get the opportunity to look at what is taking place in real situation rather than at second hand (1987:202). The length of my observation took only some hours because my categories of observations did not require any form of experiment. My intention was to observe the interaction setting and programme setting, for example the resources and their organization, facilitation method and curricular; interactions that were taking place either formal or non formal. The following categories were observed; infrastructure, teaching and learning material, lesson presentation and learner participation, projects and extra-curricular activities. This observation method helped me to discover things that the participants did not talk about during the interview sessions.

3.4 Data analysis

Data analysis enables the researcher to organise and bring meaning to large amounts of data. Data interpretation in qualitative study seeks to avoid linear interpretations in which certain variables are mechanistically related to each other. Data interpretation focuses on holistic illumination, understanding and extrapolation (Patton, 1987:424). In other words, it gives meaning to the raw data. Interpretation is not merely the reporting of data but provides the reader with the reasonable insights that were not obvious at first glance.

Through the information I got from reviewing the documents of Reakgona Adult Learning Centre, I could understand the kinds of programmes offered at this centre and it helped me to structure interview questions for the centre manager and educators. The data collected during the fieldwork stream was grouped into themes and analysed using the data matrix. The following is an example of the data matrix used:

3.4.1 **Data Matrix**

Variables	Centre manager	Three instructors	Two members of Centre Governing Body
Vocational training programmes			
Basic literacy and numeracy			
Interpersonal skills			
Lifeskills programmes			
Communication skills			
Self-help skills			

This is in concord with Miles and Huberman (1994:23) that matrices essentially involve the crossing of two or more dimensions or variables to see how they interact. Smith CH and Bless C (1995:348) further explains that matrices enable the research planners to see at glance their coverage of the sample and of the instruments used at a particular point in time.

3.5 **Reflections**

This section gives an outline of my experiences during the process of my research project. It provides both the main learning area and difficulties that I encountered during the process of my research.

3.5.1 **Main learning area**

I have learnt that in a research proposal one should strive to collect more information especially with regard to theoretical framework and methodology because the same information will also help during the research project. I have also noticed the link that prevails between instrument development, data collection and data analysis. During data collection one should select the instrument that will be flexible to make the work easier. Most importantly, one should learn to exercise patience if you are willing to attain your goals.

3.5.2 **Difficulties**

During my preliminary visit at the centre, things seemed very well but it turned bad when I asked for the documents of the centre. It was very difficult to access them because the centre manager indicated that most of the people were using them to ask donations for their own benefit. I was only given admission policy documents of Reakgona and the excuse was that the centre was not yet well established therefore the centre did not have documents that govern the centre except the admission policy and those for asking donations. I was also given the minutes of one CGB meeting.

During the second stage of my data collection I was embarrassed because the centre manager was not there and she did not inform her colleagues about my visit. I had to explain the purpose of my visit to the deputy director and this was time consuming.

He finally organised three instructors whom I could interview and this was time consuming.

Verbal interviews are discouraging because some respondents talk for a long time hence the interview session becomes boring.

The use of tape recorder during the interview session was also a problem because the respondents were not free to answer certain questions. Some of the respondents would ask me to stop the tape recorder before they could answer certain questions and it became a problem during transcribing because I might have erroneously left out other important factors.

The last stage of my data collection was also delayed because the schools were closed and I could not trace the members of the governing body since the centre manager was abroad.

3.6   Conclusion

When conducting a research, it is essential to have an appropriate design of the study. This study comprises two tracks of data collection. The first track is about the interrogation of admission policy documents of Reakgona Adult Learning Centre while the second one focuses on fieldwork. The fieldwork track has three phases, which are introductory phase, an extensive fieldwork phase and observations. All these phases were clearly outlined. The extensive fieldwork phase has three stages of data collection wherein all details were discussed. The methodology used in this study is qualitative. The data collected was planned to be analysed using the data matrix. The reflections about my experiences during the research process were also outlined.

Generally, the wealth and quality of the data gathered are strongly dependent on the skill of the interviewer and the confidence inspired in the respondents. It will

therefore be interesting to see in the next chapters if the results of the interview yielded objective information about the effectiveness of programmes at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 **Introduction**

This chapter is based on the empirical results of my study. It explains factors that could contribute towards the effectiveness of programmes for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. The results of this study provide answers to the research questions as outlined in chapter one of the study. The research questions are as follows:

The main research question of the study is:

- How do programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult earning Centre benefit them in their everyday lives?

The following are the sub-questions of the study:

- What are the aims and objectives of vocational programmes at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre?
- What are the characteristics of programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre?
- What are vocational training needs of the mentally disabled adults?
- What are the possibilities for improving programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults?

This chapter will begin with a brief description of Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. I will also outline the vision and mission of the centre. The aims and objectives of the centre as outlined in the admission policy documents of Reakgona Adult Learning Centre will be indicated. The types of programmes, the characteristics and the scope of the projects will be clearly defined. I will also describe the hierarchical structure of all the role players at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. This chapter will conclude by

giving the views of the role players regarding the programmes offered at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre.

4.2 Description of Reakgona Adult Learning Centre

Reakgona Adult Learning Centre is the centre for the mentally disabled adults, which is located at Seshego 11 km Northwest of Polokwane, the capital city of Limpopo province. Their institutional infrastructure is not yet complete; therefore they use the buildings of Beulah, the centre for the abandoned children to run their daily activities. There are 160 learners in this centre of which 51% are males and 49% are females. The centre accommodates all learners with mental disability varying from mildly, moderately, severely and profoundly disabled. Amongst these groups, only 16% are profoundly handicapped, 25% are moderately handicapped and the remaining 59% are mildly handicapped.

This centre caters for both day scholars and the boarders. The boarders are residing at a rented house at Seshego zone 4. The centre is managed by the retired couple. The wife is the Director and the husband her Deputy. There are also 14 people working there of whom only six are the members of the teaching staff and the rest work as housefathers, housemothers and security guards.

4.3 Vision, mission, aims and objectives

Reakgona Adult Learning Centre has formulated the following vision, mission, aims and objectives according to the admission policy document in order to attain their goals (Reakgona Admission Policy, 1998: 1).

4.3.1 Vision

The vision of the centre for the mentally disabled adults has been formulated as follows:

"To engage total acceptance, support, integration and promoted quality of life of people with mental disability as capable members of the community by society at large" (Reakgona Admission Policy, 1998: 1).

4.3.2 Mission

"Reakgona Adult Learning Centre exists to develop skills of adults with mental disability within the community in order to empower, build their capacity and support those who can manage in the labour market" (Reakgona Admission Policy, 1998: 1).

4.3.3 Aims

- To provide intervention capacity building, training to community based organisations, cooperation and economic development initiatives.
- To provide skills training for individual skills development, to accelerate job creation, promote corporate and SMME development.
- To establish and develop business and industrial development programmes, create jobs for the disabled and non-disabled people.

4.3.4 Objectives

The admission policy document of Reakgona Adult Learning Centre states the intentions of their programmes in relation to the mentally disabled adult as follows:

"Reakgona Adult Learning Centre hopes to minimise the problem of the mentally disabled roaming in the streets in and around Seshego. It also hopes to bring them to the position of becoming self-supportive and productive members of their society. The main objective is for these adults to cope with their disability, have confidence in their capabilities and talents, and have equal opportunity in the employment sector" (Reakgona Admission Policy, 1998: 2).

4.4   Types of programmes

The types of programmes offered at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre are indicated as health programmes, self-help and vocational programmes.

4.5   Characteristics of programmes

The programmes of Reakgona Adult Learning Centre are characterized by the following: welding, arts and craft, woodwork, printing work, gardening, sewing, knitting, computer literacy and cookery. With regard to the characteristics of programmes offered, it has been indicated in the policy document that after every six months the results of the individual skills will be reviewed and adjustments will be made if necessary(Reakgona Admission Policy, 1998:3).

4.6   Project scope

It has been stated that upon completion, learners will be gradually introduced into the employment sector by letting them work on temporary basis for interested companies and shops. Based on the skills workshop, it states that the learners will be advanced and given job opportunities to exercise their creative potentials on various skills to be transferred to the business initiative sheltered workshop. The business initiative development workshop is aimed at job creation and will provide business sector, the community and the government as and when required services such as labeling, packaging, recycling and general printing work (Reakgona Admission Policy: 4).

4.7   Hierarchical structure

Reakgona Adult Learning Centre has been established by a number of workers who are performing different tasks. Their hierarchy is as follows:

4.7.1   The Centre Governing Body

The Centre Governing Body is constituted by seven members of whom six are parent components and the Director of the centre. This body was elected on the basis of professionalism regardless of the fact that the person has a child in the centre or not. Preference was given to professionals such as Doctors, Nurses, Pastors and Teachers because they will have influence to the donors. The responsibility of the CGB is general management of the centre. They manage the funds of the centre for general repair of resources, payment of rents and remuneration of the instructors.

4.7.2   The Centre Management

Three members constitute the management team namely the Director, Deputy Director and the Administrator. The duty of the Director is recruitment and the development of programmes for the learners. The Director travels internationally to outsource information regarding programmes to be offered to adults with mental disability.

The Deputy Director is stationed at the centre to deal with everyday challenges to the visitors. The administrator is responsible for all paperwork at the centre.

4.7.3   The Teaching staff

There are only six members of the teaching staff. Their primary activity is to teach and supervise learners during extra-curricular activities.

4.7.4   Non-teaching staff

There are eight members of the non-teaching staff at the centre. These people work as security guards, housefathers, housemothers and a priest. The duties of the security

guards are to ensure safety of the learners both at learning and residential premises. The duties of the housekeepers are to ensure that the learners who are residing at the centre as boarders are well secured and taken care of. They also assist learners who cannot handle their personal finances. The priest facilitates religious education programmes to the learners and gives the sermon during prayer meetings.

4.8   Critical factors

The main aim of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of programmes designed for the mentally disabled adults at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. The six main critical factors that were assumed could contribute towards the effectiveness of programmes are vocational training programmes, basic literacy and numeracy skills, interpersonal skills, life skills, communication skills and self-help skills. After I have conducted exploratory interviews with the centre manager and other people in the field, I have realised that there are other factors that could impact positively towards the improvement of programmes for the mentally disabled adults. I then decided to investigate further on issues related to Centre Based Support Programmes and assessment programmes.

4.8.1   Vocational Training Programmes

The centre manager indicated that the aims and objectives of vocational programmes at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre are for job placement. She has indicated that these vocational programmes are characterised by welding, woodwork, cookery, needlework, sewing, gardening, art and craft, basic computer literacy and weaving. She believes that the vocational training needs of the learners with mental disability lie much with the occupational therapists because they assist them in designing programmes that they may not be dangerous to them. She further explained that:

> "*People accessing learning for the first time as adults and for*
> *the first time since experiencing mental health difficulties, will*

not necessarily know what their learning needs are".

She indicated that as for the placement of learners to the relevant training programme the principle of trial and error applies. She also stated that sometimes they resort to the mental capability and the physical built of the learner for placement. She said that for the assessment of the mastery of skills acquired they give learners projects to complete without supervision.

The instructors (educators) indicated that the aims and objectives of vocational programmes are to train learners for job placement. They mentioned that their vocational programmes are characterised by sewing, knitting, cookery, woodwork and basic computer literacy. All the instructors do not have an idea of what the vocational training needs of people with mental disability are. They just believe that all they want is sufficient equipments to keep the work going. They also mentioned that they do not have anything that guides them about the training programmes of the learners; instead they just depend on their personal opinion.

As for the placement of learners in the relevant training programme, they had different answers. It sounded ironical yet interesting to hear from one of the respondents that they give learners a freedom of choice. The other one indicated that they depend solely on psychological report. The other respondent seemed very embarrassed by the question but ended up saying:

> *"To be honest, there is no any form of assessment used and*
> *we never thought of it. We just stick to the recommendation*
> *of the parents".*

They all mentioned that they test mastery of skills acquired by giving learners practical tests.

The Centre Governing Body mentioned that the aims and objectives of vocational programmes are to provide learners with skills. They mentioned that there are only four programmes that are viable at the centre which are basic computer literacy, woodwork, cookery and needlework. They indicated that the learners should be trained to work at sheltered place under the supervision of a non-handicapped person. They also mentioned that the centre manager is planning to adopt the American style of training learners although they do not have guidance as yet. As for the vocational training needs of the learners, the CGB indicated that they are aware that every learner is different and that they have different learning needs. They do not have an exact answer of what could be done but they recommend that each learner should be given time to help them identify their vocational training needs since they might have different talents.

As for the placement of learners in the relevant training programme they mentioned that:

> *"We interview individual learners and sometimes other learners*
> *come to the centre already knowing what they want to learn"*

They indicated that in order to check mastery of skills acquired, instructors give the learners practical work and at times learners complete projects that they display for sale.

4.8.2 Basic literacy and numeracy skills

The centre manager indicated that most of their learners are able to read and write in both mother tongue and English except those who are profoundly impaired yet they are able to identify their names when written elsewhere. She showed a great concern when it comes to handling of personal finances because most of them do not know the value of money. She said that the hawkers take advantage their ignorance and rob them of their change. She indicated that teaching learners the value of money is the

area that needs serious development because they are training them to be independent and for job placement, as a result they need to be proficient in reading.

The instructors have indicated that most of their learners are able to read in both mother tongue and English but unfortunately learners are not doing basic literacy but some of them are doing basic computer literacy. They mentioned that it is their wish that the learners could be taught how to read and write but due to shortage of manpower each instructor is faced with his or her group of learners for a specific programme, which are also manual skills. One other common problem that they are complaining about is the issue of handling personal finances. They mentioned that most of the learners cannot handle their monies. One respondent sadly mentioned that:

> "*A learner was having R100 and he went to buy items worth R10.00 to the hawkers. When he came back, he did not bring the change. When the instructor asks the hawker about the learner's change, she claims that he brought only R10 so there is no change*".

The instructors mentioned that they are aware that their learners are struggling and that they need assistance but since their teachings are based on manual work there is nothing they can do. They indicated that the least they could do was to request the housekeepers to keep money for the learners who cannot handle it. They recommend that basic literacy and numeracy skills should be given in order to equip learners with reading, writing and counting skills.

The Centre Governing Body indicated that there is 50/50 situation of the learners who can read and write and who cannot. They mentioned that the learners who cannot read and write are those who were hidden at home and did not have a formal schooling at all or those who are profoundly impaired. They believe that all learners except those who are profoundly impaired have the capability to comprehend many things if well

trained. They mentioned that most of their learners are very good when it comes to money concepts and are able to manage it effectively. They recommended that learners should be given a formal training on reading and writing since they want them to be independent. The other one made a remarkable concern that:

> "*What is the use of training them to work while they do*
> *not know how to read and write? They will be exploited*
> *because they will be depending on other people. They must*
> *give them basic literacy and numeracy so that they should*
> *be able to read basic instructions and most importantly to*
> *handle their finances*".

4.8.3 Interpersonal skills

The Centre manager indicated that their learners are trained to work outside their premises with their non-handicapped counter parts. She mentioned that they usually take them to work at supermarkets, to clean houses and even to work at gardens. The Centre manager remarked that their learners are very slow as compared to their non-handicapped counterparts. She recommended that there should be enough training for their learners so that they can be free and show confidence when they work with their non-handicapped counterparts.

She mentioned that the area wherein their learners show active participation and confidence is sport although they participate against their handicapped peers. She mentioned that they show commitment in this field because they even went to the extend of competing internationally. She indicated that integrating them with other people might be useful but they still need enough training so that they can easily adapt when they meet strangers.

The instructors indicated that only learners who are doing woodwork are the ones who are orientated to work outside their premises. They mentioned that they do not

integrate them with other people but they just work with their supervisor. The other respondent mentioned that:

> "We cannot say is orientating them to work outside
> because they do not mix with other people. They will be
> fitting cupboards at other people's home. Actually, they
> will be helping their supervisor to do his job".

They mentioned that their learners are having the opportunity to meet other people during sports but they play against their handicapped counterparts. They indicated that they show confidence when they play outside and their performance is very good. One instructor remarked that integrating them with other people is very fruitful because they learn a lot from their peers. She further remarked that:

> "There are certain activities that they are restricted to do due
> to their mental capability but when they try them they perform
> very well. At times you ask yourself why these learners are denied
> the opportunity to learn certain activities because they are able. I
> think taking them out is good because they copy from their peers".

One respondent mentioned that their ladies admire the way other people are dressing and their hairstyles so when they come back they imitate them. Generally, the respondents feel that integrating learners with other people is of great benefit and they wish it could be done consistently.

The CGB indicated that they often take their learners outside their premises for sports and excursions. They mentioned that during sports they only play against their handicapped peers but on excursions they mix with their non-handicapped counterparts. They mentioned that the reason why they take them out for excursions is that they want to orientate them to the real world.

They mentioned that the only challenge they are faced with is that they cannot afford to transport them freely and most of the learners are left behind because they do not afford to pay. The CGB indicated that they realised that these learners enjoy the company of their non-handicapped peers and that this boosts their self-esteem because they are able to establish friendship with them. One respondent mentioned that:

> "*Learners can as well be taken to supermarkets to label the*
> *prices of commodities but we are afraid to advise the Director*".

The Centre Governing Body recommended that the learners should be orientated to work with other people. They indicated that they can assist in hospitals to push wheel chairs, work at airport as potters and at wholesalers to pack commodities.

4.8.4 Life skills programmes

The Centre Manager mentioned that their learners are given sexuality programmes especially about HIV/AIDS, sexual relationships and rape. She indicated that their learners are also guided to make informed decision about their sexual behaviour by not sleeping around with everyone except their partners. She mentioned that their lessons are effective because their learners understand the concept of rape and what it entails. She only complained about the non-handicapped people who deceive their learners by telling that they love them but with the mission of raping. She gave an example with a learner who was robbed by one of the housefathers ` relatives. The story goes that:

> *The guy bought the lady "sephatlo"[6] and told her that he*
> *loves her. After the agreement he raped her near a dumping*
> *place but unfortunately he was seen and reported to the police.*

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[6] "Sephatlo" Pedi word that refers to a sandwich, which is made by quarter bread, atchar, slices of polony and few chips.

The lady refused that she was raped and claimed that the guy is her partner because he proposed love to her. The guy was not arrested because she set him free".

The centre manager indicated that they are trying hard to restore confidence in their uniqueness although most of their teachings are based on biblical connotations where more emphasis is on John 9 "God wants to demonstrate His power". She also indicated that they engage learners in awareness campaign where they hold the flags. She mentioned that life skills programmes have impact in their everyday lives because they arouse self-confidence and help them to think that they are useful.

The instructors mentioned that they do not have formal lessons for health programmes. Some mentioned that they create time in their lessons to guide them about sex life for example to use condoms and to report rape. They indicated that more emphasis on life skills programmes is done during the church service where their teachings are based on biblical connotations in Genesis 1:27 and Psalm 8: 4-6. They mentioned that the emphasis is on the reason why God created people differently and this will in a way help the learners to accept their uniqueness. They mentioned that much is not being done to educate learners about HIV/AIDS and other diseases. They recommended that learners should be given such programmes to avoid the spread of HIV amongst them.

The CGB indicated that their learners are taught about sexuality education although there are no such formal programmes at the centre. They said that they manage through the assistance of the nurse who comes into contact with them when bringing their medications. They mentioned that even if they do not have formal lessons but this education is effective because learners who are sexually active often go to clinic to fetch condoms.

They indicated that they don't only teach them about health issues but also crime prevention to mould their behaviour. They said that they sometimes take their

learners to the Department of Correctional Service for crime prevention campaign. The only challenge that they indicated is that they could not take all learners due to their large numbers. The CGB recommends that formal life skills programmes should be introduced to adults with mental disability in order to reinforce their positive behaviour.

4.8.5 Communication skills

The centre manager indicated that they do not have formal programmes of communication skills but the learners get training when they participate in extra-curricular activities like drama. She mentioned that most of their dramas are written in mother tongue so that people can understand the message. She indicated that even though there is no specific communication skills targeted when they take part in activities like drama, learners show a great potential of interaction patterns of communication. She mentioned that the learners respond appropriately to all communication instructions and to support this she stated that:

> *"If you can ask one learner in the woodwork programme*
> *to tell you how they go about making a coffin, he will tell*
> *you all steps fro A-Z without being confused".*

She mentioned that the learners show interest, cooperation and confidence in communication activities like drama. She mentioned that there are no major barriers to learning in this area because the learners with mild and the moderate mental retardation do not have speech problem. She indicated that the learners need only effective training to master communication skills and she has shown a great appreciation in this area of learning because it was not in their formal programmes. She indicated that they will take this programme of communication skills into consideration, as it will empower their learners to gain access into the labour market and to be integrated into the society.

The instructors also indicated that they do not have formal programmes of communication. They mentioned that they communicate with learners during their formal learning sessions. They also indicated that the learners often use mother tongue in learning yet they teach them other English concepts especially when it comes to the parts of machines. The other respondent has given an example that there are other tools, which we do not have mother tongue terminology for them like "crochet". They also indicated that the learners respond appropriately to the communication instructions and they show cooperation and confidence when they communicate.

The instructors as well indicated that they do not see any barriers to learning in this area of communication since the learners are able to speak. They mentioned that their learners are able to express themselves but teaching them communication skills will help them to be logic in their arguments. The instructors recommended that communication skills should be given as compulsory learning programme as it will help adults with mental disability to be pro-active in all spheres of life.

The Centre Governing Body also mentioned the fact that communication skill does not form part of their formal programmes. They mentioned that most of their learners are able to communicate in both English and mother tongue except those who were hidden at home due to prejudice that they did not have formal training at all. The members of the CGB are satisfied about the response of the learners to communication instructions because they respond appropriately.

They also indicated that they show interest, cooperation and confidence in communication activities because they when play drama they do it with passion. They mentioned that teaching them communication skill would be an added advantage because it will help to modify their behaviour. One member of the CGB indicated that communication skill will help them to fight for their rights because some instructors like the one for woodwork is exploiting them to pursue his personal interests. She

mentioned that the learners could not be helped because they failed to present their case well. She explained that:

> "Learners who are doing woodwork complain that the
> instructor is using them to fit wardrobes at other people's
> homes but when they pay him he does not give them even a cent".

She further indicated that if these learners can be given formal communication programmes, the CGB can suggest that there be Learner Representative Council (LRC) that will be responsible for the demands and grievances of the learners in the centre. She mentioned that having LRC at the centre could be the starting point for the advocacy of the rights of people with mental disability in the whole country.

4.8.6 Self-help programmes

The Centre manager indicated that self-help skills are one of their major programmes at the centre. She said that even if learners were given basic self-help skills during their childhood it is important to emphasise them even now. She mentioned that they teach them about hygiene, eating habits, taking medications, washing and dressing. She indicated that the learners are very cooperative and that they participate actively in the personal care. She said that the learners are well orientated and they are able to perform all personal care tasks without supervision. She stated that:

> "Learners know that they wake up at 04h30 and prepare
> themselves for the lessons without supervision".

She mentioned that since learners are not residing at the centre premises, those who are taking medications do not forget to bring them to the centre, which is a clear indication that they are willing to take the responsibility for their own personal needs. She mentioned that she is satisfied about how learners are taking personal responsibility and the centre will ensure that basic self-care skills are emphasised so

that learners can maintain a healthy and dignified lifestyle. The instructors mentioned that although self-help skills are not part of their formal programmes learners are daily orientated in this area. They mentioned that learners are given the opportunity to serve meal during eating times and to clean the dinning hall. One of the instructors has mentioned that even those who are profoundly retarded are good in this area of self-help. She further explained that:

> *"One learner who is profoundly handicapped was once*
> *orientated to clean the tables after meal. He enjoys the*
> *work and he does not want anyone to do it. If it happens*
> *that any person does it, he cries the whole day claiming*
> *that they took his job".*

They mentioned that this area of self-help is efficient because they do not experience problems with ladies during their menstrual periods. They mentioned that ladies are able to take care of themselves and they also appear good to show that they take a good care of their bodies. They believe that enough has been done to orientate learners to self-help skills so they do not think it is necessary to formalise this programme.

The Centre Governing Body is very much concerned with this area of self-help. They mentioned that most of the learners are unable to bath and they do not smell good. They indicated that self-help skills are not offered at the centre and they think that it is the area that needs serious development since most people undermine the mentally disabled adults due to scruffiness. They mentioned that tooth brushing and bathing should be emphasised particularly to the male adults because they do not display a well-groomed appearance. One member of the CGB has commented that:

> *"They must teach these learners to bath otherwise people*
> *will never be convinced that they are normal people like us.*
> *People will never stop discriminating them because even us,*

we are unable to tolerate their smell".

It is a general concern for the Centre Governing Body that self-help skills should be one of the formal programmes at the centre if they really want to achieve their aim of educating adults for independent living.

4.8.7 Centre Based Support Programme

The centre manager mentioned that they do have Centre Based Support Programmes (CBSP) at Reakgona adult learning centre. She indicated that the CBSP is constituted by the Director, a Nurse and the Priest. The function of this CBSP according to the centre manager is to support learners who have emotional and behavioural problems that could disturb their learning process. She said that this programme serve as a remedy for behaviour modification so that learners can cope with their lessons in their normal programmes. She has mentioned that they could not involve parents of the learners in this programme because they are not cooperative to the centre. She complained that they do not even attend parents meetings. She sadly mentioned that:

> *"Most of the parents are only seen when they come*
> *to fetch their children for holidays and when we re-open".*

The centre manager mentioned that the CBSP is effective and it helps many learners to cope with their learning. She indicated that there is a need for development in this programme. She mentioned that they need well-trained staff that is able to identify the needs of the learners with mental disability because those who are currently working at the centre are volunteers and most of them are not qualified.

The instructors mentioned that they know nothing about the Centre Based Support Programmes. They indicated that they only see the nurse when she brings medication to some of the learners and the responsibility of the priest at the centre is to give

sermon and religious education to the boarders. They mentioned that they are on their own to deal with the behaviour of the learners. One respondent has hopelessly said:

> *"Sometimes a learner may decide to keep quiet throughout*
> *the day and there is nothing I can do to help her. I just leave*
> *her until she decides to join other learners"*.

They also mentioned that they do not have any support to develop the learning programmes of the learners. One respondent for cookery programme stated that:

> *"I do not need any person to help me with the learning*
> *programmes of the learners. I did not go for training*
> *but I am naturally gifted. Developing learning programme*
> *is not a problem to me"*.

They also mentioned that the parents of the learners are not cooperative. They have indicated that some parents dump their learners at the centre and fetch them when the centre is closing. One instructor complained that she requests parents to assist learners with cooking over the holidays but seemingly they do not do as requested because when the centre reopens she finds that the learners have forgotten what she taught them.

They believe that Centre Based Support Programmes can be useful especially for the modification of the behaviour of learners. Other respondents have also mentioned that perhaps it could also assist them to identify the needs of their learners so that they can develop learning programmes that will be relevant.

The Centre Governing Body indicated that they were not aware that there is a Centre Based Support Programme but they only know that there is a nurse and a priest at the centre. They mentioned that the nurse brings medication and condoms for the learners and she assists ladies with contraceptives. The priest is responsible for religious

education and to give sermon. They indicated that parents of the learners are cooperative when it comes to the attendance of the meetings but the only problem is lack of payments of fees in advance. They believe that Centre Based Support Programmes will be useful at the centre because it will establish networks that cut across the learners, staff and parent interest groups and in this regard individual needs of educators in relation to supporting learners will be addressed. The Centre Governing Body recommended that Centre Based Support Programmes should be established and that more knowledgeable parents of the learners should form part of the committee in this programme. One respondent showed a great concern about the exclusion of parents in the education of their children. She argued that:

"Where parents are not given recognition, effective learning
and development are threatened".

She emphasised the importance of parent involvement as it will help the instructors to be informed about the development of children. She further stated that if parents have a stake in the education of their children, they will make sure that they also encourage and monitor the work of their children.

4.8.8 Assessment programmes

The Centre manager indicated that they do have assessment programmes at their centre. She mentioned that learners are assessed monthly by their instructors yet they sometimes call people from the Department of Labour to come and assess the projects. She said the instructors give learners projects to complete without supervision in order to check if learners have mastered the skills acquired. In order to involve parents she has mentioned that they organise a show day whereby learners display the projects completed for sale. She mentioned that parents` involvement helps a lot because admiring projects of the learners help them to gain self-confidence and to feel that they are useful to the community. She indicated that the instructors are giving feedback to the learners in the form of verbal praise for the good work done.

The Centre manager indicated that the duration of their programmes is three years although learners are not certificated, as their centre is not yet registered with the Department of Education. She mentioned that there are learners who have successfully met the requirements of their learning programmes. She indicated that they managed to produce security guards, drivers and the other one is planning to open art and craft company.

The instructors mentioned that they do assess their learners but there is no fixed programme of assessment. Some of the respondents have mentioned that in their programmes they display projects completed every Friday because they normally have visitors who come to buy. They said they do not have any form of assessment except to let the learners to complete projects without supervision. They complained that parents do not take part in the education of their children because most of them do not even bother to ask if their children are doing well.

They also mentioned that they do not give learners feedback and that they do not have records of learner performance. They indicated that there is no stipulated timeframe for their learning programmes and that the learners are not certificated. The instructors indicated that this area needs a serious development because they did not even think of keeping a record of learners` progress. They remarked that it will also encourage parents to have interest in the education of their children if they inform them about their children's performance. One respondent was so thankful and she said:

> *"You helped me a lot because from now on I am going to*
> *design portfolios for my learners where I will keep*
> *the records of their performance".*

The instructors indicated that even if their learners are not certificated, they have learners who left the centre to go and work as security guards, drivers and carpenters.

The Centre Governing Body indicated that there are no formal assessment programmes at the centre. They mentioned that learners are able to complete projects without supervision but there are no people who credit them for that. They indicated that they were always complaining about the fact that learners should be certificated in order to give them the opportunity to gain access in the labour market. One respondent has further explained that:

> "*We even made our learners to play the drama titled*
> *(Re ya kae?) meaning where are we going, which is*
> *about the learners `lament of not receiving certificates.*
> *We invited people from the Department of Education but*
> *they did not honour our invitation".*

The CGB mentioned that parents are not involved in the learning programmes of the learners except when they discuss issues related to the increase of funds. They mentioned that they do not even issue end of the year progress reports of the learners. They indicated that the duration of their programmes is not stipulated. They mentioned that they only see progress in learners who are doing woodwork, cookery and needlework. One respondent mentioned that:

> "*These learners are going nowhere. Reakgona is their destination.*"

The other respondent mentioned that they managed to produce security guards, dressmakers and carpenters. He mentioned that the other one is a driver at Grace and Hope centre while the other one is working at "Lady D" boutique as dress designer.

4.8.9   Inception of the Centre and their programmes

The Centre manager indicated that the centre was established in 1998. She has mentioned that the centre was initially attached to Grace and Hope but now it

functions as a non-governmental organisation. She indicated that the centre has enrolled 160 learners. She mentioned that there are eight instructors at the centre and she is satisfied with this number because they are able to carry out the workload. She also mentioned that there is Centre Governing Body that is constituted by seven members of which six members are parents` component and one member is the Centre manager herself. She described the responsibility of the centre governing body as general management duty like for example payments of the rents, remunerating instructors, maintenance of the whole centre and developing the learning programmes. The centre is delighted with the way the CGB is operating but she showed a great concern about families   of the learners who are not supportive to the centre management.

The centre indicated that the centre has three major aims, which are the continuation of skills training, training for job placement and training for independent living. In order to achieve their aims and objectives she indicated that they offer the vocational programmes, health programmes and self-help programmes.

She listed the characteristics of their programmes as needlework, woodwork, catering, gardening, building and brick making, beads making, cane work, basic computer literacy and welding. She indicated that the centre governing body and the centre management team are the ones responsible for designing the programmes of the centre through the assistance of Occupational Therapist.

The centre manager indicated that they do have local partnership with the officials from the Department of Labour who play a role in training the instructors. She also mentioned that she travels as far as the United Kingdom to outsource information about programmes that should be given to adults with mental disability.

The instructors mentioned that the centre was established in 1998 and also the fact that it was initially attached to Grace and Hope. They mentioned that the centre has 160 learners with a total of 85 males and 75 females. They mentioned that the age of

learners attending at Reakgona adult learning centre ranges from 19 years upwards. They mentioned that they have all mental retardation groups but predominantly the mild and the moderate groups. They indicated that there are only six instructors, which this number according to their perception is too limited due to the mental conditions of their learners. Surprisingly, some instructors do not know the responsibility of the centre governing body. One of the respondents answered that:

> *"I don't know their responsibility. I only see them when*
> *they attend parent meetings"*

It is only one instructor who knows their responsibilities and he even mentioned that his wife is a member of the CGB. He outlined their responsibilities as general governance of the centre, ensuring that parents pay school fees and paying instructors salaries. All the respondents complained about lack of cooperation on the side of the parents. One respondent mentioned that:

> *"They dump their children here and when we call*
> *them to the centre they do not respond. They only*
> *come when they fetch them for holidays".*

The respondents had different views regarding the aims and objectives of the centre. The other one indicated that the main aim is for job placement and independent living. Others indicated that they aim to build sheltered houses so that the learners can marry each other.

> *"The main aim is to have a school camp, build RDP*
> *houses and most importantly that the learners should*
> *marry each other and have supporters to take of them".*

The instructors mentioned that the types of programmes offered are based on manual skills training. They mentioned that there is no curriculum developed and that there is

nothing that guides them about their daily routine. As instructors they have to think and plan what they can teach the learners in various programmes. They also mentioned that there are no local partnerships. As the instructors they have to face the daily challenges of the learners without any support.

The Centre Governing Body also mentioned that the centre was established in 1998 and the fact that it was initially attached to Grace and hope. The respondents were not sure of the learners at the time of interview but they estimated around more or less 150. They indicated that they admit learners from 18 years upwards and amongst them are predominantly the mild and the moderate groups. They mentioned that there are fourteen people working, as volunteers at the centre and amongst them are only six instructors.

The respondents indicated that seven members of whom six members are parents` component and the centre manager constitute the centre governing body. They mentioned that this body was elected on the basis of professionalism regardless of the fact that a person has a child at the centre or not.

> *"They were electing people such as Doctors, Nurses,*
> *Pastors and Teachers. Actually they want people who*
> *will be able to recruit donors to finance the centre. Like*
> *myself, I do not have the child but I was elected on the basis*
> *of Pastoralship"*.

The centre governing body mentioned that their responsibility is general management of the centre particularly finance. They indicated that they ensure that workers are paid, repair damaged resources and buy new ones.

They mentioned that they work cooperatively with the centre management team and they hold meetings quarterly. They indicated that the worst challenge that they are faced with is shortage of funds and parents are not paying accordingly.

They mentioned that they do not have a say in as far as the programmes of the centre is concerned. They indicated that the centre manager is the one responsible to determine the programmes to be offered but she always gives them report if there are new developments. They mentioned that the types of programmes offered are for the development of manual skills. They indicated that these programmes are characterised by woodwork, needlework, cookery and basic computer skills. They indicated that they initially had others like gardening, welding, bricklaying and cane work while the centre was still attached to Grace and Hope but they are no more in existence.

The CGB mentioned that it is their wish that the learners can be given programmes that will lead them to be active members of the society and workforce. They also recommended that parents should play active in role in designing programmes for the learners. They also mentioned that there are no local partnerships.

4.9 Observations

As part of my data collection I had to do observations at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre to check interaction setting and programme setting that are taking place. The categories for observation were as follows: infrastructure, teaching, and learning material, class attendance, and lesson presentation and learner participation and learners projects.

4.9.1 Infrastructure

Reakgona Adult Learning Centre does not have its own institutional infrastructure. They are using the building of children shelter (Beulah) to run their daily activities. The building is very spacious because it is able to accommodate all the learners in various programmes. There is also administrative block for the management team, a very spacious dinning hall for learners and kitchen for learners who are doing

cookery as well a very big workshop for learners who are doing woodwork. The centre is well covered with regard to the infrastructure and their daily activities can run smoothly without any disturbances.

4.9.2 Teaching and learning material

The instructors have indicated that there is a shortage of learning material at the centre. I have also noticed that there is a huge shortage because in a classroom of 19 learners there are only 4 computers for learners who are doing basic computer literacy. Learners have to share those computers while they are faced with a challenge of being slow in learning.

There is no stationery or written manuals that the instructors and learners use during teaching and learning situation. Learners who are profoundly impaired are supplied by their instructor with pieces of blank papers and crayons to do their daily activities. Those who are doing cookery are also sharing one stove, which is also outdated because it uses gas instead of electricity. The stove is very slow and the door of the kitchen should always be kept closed to prevent air from getting inside. There are enough sewing machines for learners who are doing needlework and these machines are still in a very good working condition. Those who are doing woodwork are working in groups and they share only two machines.

4.9.3 Class attendance

Class attendance for learners is generally good. Learners observe the instruction of the bell during and after breaks. They are able to remain in the classroom until they are officially released.

4.9.4 Lesson presentation and learner participation

Learners who are doing woodwork, needlework and cookery respond positively to the instruction of the instructors. The instructors do not write information on the chalkboard instead the information is transmitted verbally but the learners are able to comprehend. They are very accurate in measurements and they know all parts of the machine they use in English.

Only learners who are doing basic computer literacy do not have direction because the instructor is unable to create a conducive learning atmosphere. There is no Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) to assist them instead; learners are copying letters from the flyers of the Department of Water Affairs that is pasted on the wall. Learners are unable to read what they are writing but they are just playing with the computer.

4.9.5 Learners projects

Learners` projects were displayed in their classrooms. Although projects that were displayed were the ones that the learners completed in my absence, it is convincing that most of the learners especially those of woodwork and needlework can complete projects without supervision. Those who are doing woodwork have made small round tables, wall unit, coffin, chairs, coffee tables, bench and many more. They were able to tell all the steps taken when making those projects. In the needlework programme the learners have also made very nice children's clothes and doilies and they could as well explain how they went about making them.

Only learners who are doing cookery are the ones who were given a project to complete in my presence. They could follow the instructions without supervision and they were as well able to tell me the ingredients and the measurements as well as the reason why they use some of the ingredients. They baked delicious cakes and biscuits that no one could believe that they were baked by people whom we branded them

"disabled" while they are doing better than us. Their work is so incredible and it really shows that they have mastered what they were taught.

4.9.6   Extra-curricular activities

I did not witness the learners taking part in sports activities but I was only shown the playing ground where they practice. I was informed that the sports codes, which are viable at the centre, are soccer and gymnastics.

4.10   Conclusion

This chapter presented the empirical results of my study. It explained the views of the role players regarding the programmes offered at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. The results of this study provided answers to the research questions as outlined in chapter one of the study. Apart from that, I was also able to establish the following factors. That:

- The centre is run by the retired couple.
- The mission of the centre is to develop skills for adults with mental disability in order to empower those who can manage in the labour market.
- The centre has three major aims, which are continuation of skills training, training for job placement and training for independent living.
- The objective is that adults with mental disability should have confidence in their capabilities and talents, and have equal opportunity in the employment sector.
- There are 14 people working at the centre performing different tasks.

Through the information obtained from the various role players, I was able to identify what exists and what is missing in the centre. As a result, I managed to identify areas that need development in order to provide effective programmes that will enable adults with mental disability to achieve and progress from one learning opportunity to another or into employment. The conclusion about the effectiveness of programmes

offered at Reakgona adult learning centre and recommendations for the improvement of those programmes will be discussed in chapter five of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 **Introduction**

The answers to the research question of this study were given in chapter four. Through the data that I have collected in all spheres of this study, it is explicit that there are problems in the training centres of adults with mental disability particularly at Reakgona Adult Learning Centre. One may conclude that these adult learners are indeed not given effective programmes that will equip them with skills necessary for their daily living.

I made assumption about factors that the centre might be overlooking, which could contribute towards the effectiveness of their programmes. Those factors were initially identified as vocational programmes, basic literacy and numeracy, interpersonal skills, life skills programmes, communication skills and self-help skills. After reading documents on people with mental disability, conducting exploratory interviews with people on the field and the centre manager of Reakgona adult learning centre, I identified other factors that could contribute towards effective programmes for adults with mental disability. I therefore made further investigations on factors such as centre based support programmes and assessment programmes.

5.2 **Conclusion from the study**

5.2.1 **Vocational programmes**

Vocational programmes are those programmes that equip people with skills they need for a particular job or profession. There are plentiful vocational programmes that give people the opportunity to gain access into the labour market but not all of them are suitable for adults with mental disability. According to my respondents, the aims and objectives of vocational programmes at Reakgona adult learning centre are for job

placement. Unfortunately, the needs analysis of the vocational training needs of adults with mental disability is not done because the centre management relies on what the Occupational therapist believes what adults with mental disability should be taught. This would mean that the mentally disabled adults are given vocational programmes based on the assumptions of what other people believe they should be taught and not what their actual vocational training needs are. Consideration is not given to how this might affect the learning needs of adults with mental disability. This could lead to the provision of vocational programmes that do not reflect the skills required in the actual local employment situation. There is also no prescribed criterion for the placement of learners in the relevant training programme. Learners are being placed randomly and the respondents feel that some of the learners are being misplaced because they are struggling to cope in those fields of learning. The mastery of skills acquired is tested through individual projects with no supervision.

5.2.2   Basic literacy and numeracy skills

Literacy and numeracy skills are regarded as the fuel to make life viable. These skills are needed for adults with mental disability not only to survive but also to experience well-rounded, independent and reasonable successful lives. A basic literacy and numeracy skill at Reakgona adult learning centre is not compulsory to all learners. Only a few groups of learners have the opportunity to basic computer literacy. Learners who have the opportunity to basic computer literacy are not given enough training on reading and writing skills but more emphasis is on how to operate the computer. Since reading and writing skills are not taught, this simply means that literacy is not given at the centre. It is a general feeling that most of the learners are unable to handle their personal finances and this is due to the fact that they cannot read, write and count figures. This problem supports the notion that literacy is not given. Since the aims of the programmes at Reakgona adult learning centre are to train learners for job placement and independent living, it is therefore necessary that they should be taught how to read, write and count figures. Unlike the non-handicapped people, who are taught the rules and generalisation of spelling in the

writing skills, the mentally disabled adults can be taught the basic knowledge of phoenics. Adult learners can as well be engaged in the analysis of real life issues because reality based learning motivates learners to think constructively in order to generate potential and effective solutions. For example, when teaching the learners numeracy, they can use the fundamental operation of changing a coin into an equivalent sum by using other coins, making purchases, making change, recording the amount of a purchase, or calculating the amount of money to be returned. This will serve as a learning process in numeracy but concurrently, it equips learners with skills necessary for their everyday lives.

Adults may as well wish to access learning for a variety of reasons- as a stepping stone to access work and to acquire qualifications. As a result, the centre management should apply a sensitive and supportive interpretation of measures such as attendance and attainment so that they do not act as barriers to setting up provision or disadvantage individual learners. For example; there are learners whom they mentioned that they left the centre to go and work as security guards and drivers. These occupations demand knowledge of literacy and numeracy because as a driver you have to go through a learner's licence, which requires knowledge of reading and writing skills. Security work requires basic literacy and numeracy skills because a person may be hired at a company whereby as the security you are required to control the outgoing stock. Literacy and numeracy skills are interdependent therefore they should be seen as a prerequisite for fundamental development of adult learners with mental disability to give them the opportunity to access work and to participate in social activities.

All the respondents have shown great concern about this problem and have indicated that it is imperative that learners should be granted the opportunity to basic literacy and numeracy skills but due to shortage of manpower[7] and time constraints it is not possible.

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[7] Manpower refers to a number of people available for work (Dept of Labour, 2004-2005)

5.2.3 Interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills refer to the ability to work in and with groups or the ability to interact with other people. These skills presuppose attitudes that regard it as beneficial to individuals, teams and organisations to participate in a transparent way rather than to generate solutions in isolation. Integration of learners with other people at Reakgona adult learning centre is only done during sports activities and most of the learners are not participating, which means that most of them are only confined to the centre. Those who participate have the opportunity to explore internationally.

Learners should be given the opportunity to work in teams to develop collaboration and co-operative behaviour. In order to achieve this, learners can be given the opportunity to cater food for the government officials during meetings and workshops. They can also be orientated to work in hospitals to assist people who are working in the kitchen to prepare meals for the patients. Contrary to this, learners at Reakgona adult learning centre are not given the opportunity to work outside their premises with their non-handicapped counterparts.

Members of the Centre Governing Body seem to have good ideas on how to engage learners in interpersonal relations but have mentioned that since it is outside their scope of work they are unable to advise the centre manager. They suggested that learners can be trained to work in supermarkets to label price tags of commodities. This could be another form of social configuration because they will be working with people of different cultures, race and gender and will in turn help them to learn certain skills from them.

Excursions can also assist learners with mental disability to develop good human relations. Although they have highlighted the challenge of financial constraints, the centre management can organise local trips that will accommodate all learners such as

visits to Coca Cola Company, brick factory, wood factories, scrapyards, panel beaters, show grounds, dairy companies, bakery and museums.

5.2.4 Life skills

Life skills are the personal and social skills required for us to think and behave competently and confidently in dealing with ourselves, relating to others and taking effective decisions. This programme should be seen as a process that entails sequences of effective choices. Unfortunately, there are no formal lessons on life skills programme at Reakgona adult learning centre. Some of the instructors mentioned that they only allocate some minutes to orientate learners about health issues such as HIV/AIDS because they realised that it is very important but this does not guarantee that the lessons can be effective because there are no assessment tools to check if the learners have really internalised what they were taught.

It is the recommendation of the CGB that the learners should be given compulsory formal lessons about life skills. Teaching them life skills will help them to make informed decisions about other issues in their real life situation while at the same time will serve as an integral part of their recovery journey for those who were affected mentally due to social life events such as bereavement and abuse.

Generally, learners receive lessons on life skills during the church service and this is only for the benefit of those who are residing at the hostels because it is conducted in the evenings. Their teachings are only based on biblical connotations on Genesis 1:27. The emphasis is on the reason why God created people differently and it is a general feeling of all the role players at the centre that it helps the learners to accept their uniqueness. Day scholars are at a disadvantage and this would mean that they would never have the opportunity to learn about life skills. Other important aspects such as human rights and democracy, career guidance, safety and promotion of health status are disregarded. This could be the reason why adult learners with mental disability are unable to make informed decisions about different choices in their lives.

For example; adults with mental disability become victims of sexual abuse out of deception. Problems of this nature can only be addressed through effective training on life skills programmes whereby different aspects such as sexuality and others mentioned above are emphasised. It is the recommendation of the Centre Governing Body that formal lessons on life skills programme should be given at the centre as it will help with the modification of the learners' behaviour. The idea of engaging the learners in awareness campaign is not convincing as some of the respondents who are interacting with the learners on daily basis are not aware of it. Nevertheless, the idea is very constructive and could yield positive results if they put it into practise. Like the Centre Governing Body has mentioned, they can take the learners to correctional services for crime awareness campaign. Different campaigns such as the wearing of ribbons to support people living with HIV/AIDS, Cancer, abuse against women and children will conscientise them about the realities of life.

5.2.5 Communication skills

Communication skills are useful to facilitate interpersonal interactions, and to communicate with organisations in an official manner. A communication skill is one of the most important programmes that adults with mental disability should acquire. Unfortunately, there are no formal programmes on communication skills at Reakgona adult learning centre. It was indicated that the learners are orientated to this communication learning opportunity when they play drama. Although this could be effective as the learners are practically engaged in public communication activities continuous training is necessary. All learners should acquire communication skills. This can be achieved through formal lessons as all learners will have the opportunity to participate. Banking on the fact that learners will be exposed to communication skills during drama will be inefficient as it is not performed on daily basis. It would also mean that learners who do not take part in drama are denied the opportunity to acquire communication skills.

It is the recommendation of the Centre Governing Body that learners should be given programmes on communication skills as they are often victims of robbery and abuse. It was indicated that learners are able to see that they are being exploited but due to lack of communication skills they are unable to present their cases convincingly. It is the wish of the Centre Governing Body that the learners should be given effective communication training that allow them an opportunity to establish Representative of Learners Council (RCL) at the centre. All the respondents have recommended that programmes on communication skills should be formalised in order to equip learners with effective communication skills that will give them the opportunity to assert their human rights.

5.2.6 Self-help skills

There are contrasting views with regard to self-help skills at Reakgona adult learning centre. There are no formal programmes of self-help skills at the centre for the mentally disabled adults but the centre manager and the instructors are satisfied about how learners are able to take care of themselves as they informally teach them. It was indicated that learners who have health conditions that require medications on routine basis such as tablets for epilepsy are able to administer the medication themselves.

Contrary to this view the Centre Governing Body are not happy about this because they say learners are not well groomed. The CGB recommends that self-help skills should be formalised with particular emphasis on bathing and tooth brushing while the instructors and the Centre manager believe that enough has been done therefore there is no need to formalise the programme.

Although members of the governing body do not spend enough time with the learners at the centre, they might have noticed some elements of scruffiness that make them to insist that they should be given self-help programmes. The instructors might as well be right because they are the ones who work with these learners on daily basis. The most important thing is that learners should ultimately be able to present a well-

groomed appearance that qualifies them to be integrated into the society and the labour market.

5.2.7 Centre Based Support Programmes

Centre Based Support Programmes are those programmes that are aimed at identifying barriers to education that must be addressed as soon as they emerge and referred appropriately when necessary. This programme will benefit both the learners and the instructors because it is aimed at addressing the challenges arising from teaching and learning. Seemingly, the Centre Based Support Programme is in place but the role players at the centre are not aware of it. Its functions are limited because it only deals with the emotional and behavioural problems of the learners. The members who constitute the committee in this programme are few because it is formed by the Centre manager, Nurse and Pastor. The committee should be formed by members of the CGB, Instructor representatives, the Centre manager and centre assessment team. Other members such as psychologists, social workers and welfare representatives can also form part of the team for the purpose of referral. In my view this programme is not effective because people whom it was supposed to service lack knowledge of its existence. It is a general feeling of all the respondents that the programme should continue and that its functions should be clearly outlined to all the role players at the centre. The functions of its committee should be:

- To support learners in areas such as emotional, behavioural and contextual barriers including HIV/AIDS.
- To identify the learning needs of the learners.
- To organise teaching and learning material.
- To assist in how to develop learning programmes.
- To develop assessment plan and to ensure implementation thereof.
- To address the challenges of the instructors during teaching and learning process.

5.2.8 **Assessment programmes**

Assessment programmes provide all the role players in the learning programme with the objective results regarding their performance. It should serve as a first rung to re-building self-esteem of the learners with mental disability and should provide the opportunity to proceed into the employment sector. Forms of assessment can be formative, which is done continuously by the instructors. The instructors should have an assessment plan that reflects the assessment standards, tools and learning outcomes for each cycle. These assessment programmes need to be monitored and controlled to ensure that they yield objective results about the performance of the learners. There can be as well summative assessment that is conducted by the external assessors. This form of assessment should aim at promoting the learners to proceed to another level of training or into employment sector. Unfortunately, assessment programmes at Reakgona adult learning centre are informal because the Instructors assess the learners at their own time.

Most of the instructors are assessing the learners on weekly basis. There are as well no guidelines for assessment but seemingly all the instructors have similar opinion on common ways of assessing because they all give learners projects to complete without supervision. In my view, their assessment programmes could be effective if they were well planned because the learners are being continuously assessed which is in concord with their aim of training learners for continuous skills development. The only disadvantage with this programme is that there are no strategies employed to harmonise the skills acquired with the benefits of real life situation because the learners are not credited if they performed well. There are as well no other forms of incentives to motivate the learners let alone progress report as evidence for learners' performance. There are also no records of learners' performance in the instructors' portfolios. This on its own is a signal that the programmes offered at the centre are not aimed at providing functional skills that will give them the opportunity to be integrated into the society and employment sector.

The duration of the learning programme is not stipulated yet the centre manager has indicated that it is three years. According to the information gathered from the centre governing body and the instructors the learners are learning at their own pace and leave the centre when they decide to. It was indicated that there are learners who left the centre to go and work as security guards, drivers, dress makers and carpenters without being certificated.

5.2.9 Inception of the centre and planning of programmes

Based on the information obtained from the centre manager and the admission policy document of Reakgona adult learning centre, the types of programmes offered are vocational programmes, health programmes and self-help programmes. Through the information obtained from the Centre Governing Body and the Instructors, the types of programmes offered are vocational whereby emphasis is on manual skills training. The characteristics of programmes offered are woodwork, cookery, needlework and basic computer literacy. These characteristics of programmes offered are only vocationally orientated whereby manual skills is emphasised. This implies that the programmes are narrowed and they do not provide a range of educational options that will equip learners with skills necessary for their daily living to meet the demands of the society and the labour market.

There is no common vision for the aims of the programmes as some of the instructors are oblivious of the aims of the centre. This implies that the role players are not working towards a common goal otherwise there would be a guideline that gives them a direction. It is also clear that the centre management, CGB and instructors do not plan together for the benefit of the learners because some Instructors do not even know the role of CGB at the centre. It is also questionable as to whether the parents of the learners are not co-operative or less involved because they cannot just interfere if not invited. One may conclude that there is communication breakdown at Reakgona adult learning centre and as a result the role players will not achieve a common goal.

Lack of team work will ultimately affect the provision of effective training programmes.

5.2.10 Teaching and learning material

During my observation phase at the centre I noticed that there is a huge shortage of learning material and resources. There is completely no stationery or written manuals that the instructors and learners can use during teaching and learning process. This is a clear indication that the learners are not given reading and writing skills. Even those who are doing computer do not have other learning material except sharing four computers while they are 19 in number. Taking into account that these adult learners are intellectually disabled, this problem of shortage of learning material and sharing of other resources support the notion that the learners are not given effective programmes that will be functional in their everyday lives. If the centre management is unable to provide the role players with stationery due to insufficient funds, it is advisable to request parents to buy at the beginning of the year. There is no way in which teaching and learning can be effective while the role players are not writing anything.

5.2.11 Lesson presentation and learner participation

In other programmes such as woodwork, cookery and needlework, presentation of the lesson is clear although they do not have stationery to write. Learners are participating well and they show understanding because they are able to explain what was taught. The only problem that I have noticed is in the computer programme because the instructor is unable to present the lesson in such a way that even a non-handicapped person can understand. The learning environment is dull and boring because only the flyers of the Department of Water affairs are hanging on the wall. Learners are not assisted in anyway to understand what they are doing on the computer. They just enjoy pressing the buttons on the computer without understanding.

5.3   Recommendations

5.3.1   Planning of the programmes

Since there is no curriculum designed for the mentally disabled adults at National level, the centre management should develop their own curriculum at the centre. The centre management should join forces with the parents of the learners to identify the learning needs of these adults with mental disability in order to develop programmes that will be considered to be more essential in all aspects of their lives. The provision of programmes setup for adults with mental disability should adhere to the quality standards as set by the skills development programmes of the Department of Labour.

5.3.2   Vocational Training Programme

The centre management of Reakgona adult learning centre should identify the vocational training needs of the learners in order to provide suitable vocational programmes. In identifying vocational programmes, the centre management can establish partnerships with parents of the learners, interested community members, mental health services and local learning and skills providers such as the Department of Labour to assist them in the process of developing functional vocational programmes that will give the learners the opportunity to proceed into the employment sector.

5.3.3   Basic literacy and numeracy

The mentally disabled adults should be given basic literacy and numeracy skills to enable them to unlock all the opportunities of life.

5.3.4 Interpersonal skills

For the adults with mental disability to gain interpersonal skills, they should be given the opportunity to work in various social configurations and settings.

5.3.5 Life skills programmes

Life skills programmes should be compulsory to all adults with mental disability and should be allocated enough time to assist in modifying the behaviour of learners and to help them to make informed decisions about other issues in their real life situation.

5.3.6 Communication skills

For adults with mental disability to arrive at a better understanding of communication and to develop skills that allow more effective participation in the communication process, they should be taught of a wide range of non- verbal signs and verbal communication processes that can be conveyed and received at a particular time.

5.3.7 Self-help skills

Self help programmes should also form part of their formal programmes because it will play a developmental role in grooming the learners. This component of self help skills should focus on hygiene, dressing, bathing and washing own clothes, nutritional value and healthy living. Learners should also be taught to administer their own medications.

5.3.8 Centre Based Support Programmes

Since there is Centre Based Support Team (CBST) at Reakgona adult learning centre, the centre management should restructure its members and clearly define their responsibilities to all the role players. The team should strive to find the right balance

between supporting learners with mental disability in a safe and welcoming environment and in enabling them to reach their full potential. This can be achieved by exploring motivations and interests, promoting their talents, creating awareness of values and rewarding responsible behaviour and desensitising them from the evaluation of others.

5.3.9 Assessment programmes

The centre management should plan formal assessment programmes that are aimed at improving the skills of the learners and to give them the opportunity to gain access into the labour market. There should also be a clear time frame for the learning programmes at the centre that allow learners to proceed to another level of training or into the employment sector. Learners should be accredited by the assessors from the Department of Labour.

5.3.10 Teaching and learning material

Teaching and learning material is compulsory in any learning environment hence should be made available to enable effective teaching and learning at the centre for the mentally disabled adults.

5.3.11 Lesson presentation and learner participation

The participation of the learners is always influenced by the presentation of the lesson by the instructor. Instructors should use a variety of methods when presenting their lessons to ensure that learners understand. Support materials such as pictures and charts pasted on the wall will also enhance teaching and learning hence it is recommended to be used consistently.

5.4 Recommendations for further studies

I have learnt that adults with mental disability have great potentials on manual skills that can make them to qualify as professional carpenters, dress makers, chefs and electricians. Surprisingly, these people do not feature anywhere in the labour market especially in the main stream economy. I therefore recommend that further investigations be made on problems that impede skilled adults with mental disability to be integrated into the labour market.

One other challenging issue that I have realised as I was going through the research process is lack of records for learners' performance and educators plan of work. This raised questions on how do these educators manage to carry out their work successfully without any evidence of their planning or record of learners performance. I feel it is appropriate to make investigations on the problems that adult educators are faced with in the centres for adults with mental disability.

Education of the learners should be the responsibility of all stakeholders including parents of the learners. As I was going through the research project at Reakgona adult learning centre, I have learnt that parents are less involved in the education of their children. It came to my mind as a challenge because one could ask oneself if these parents are not given the opportunity to participate or are they reluctant due to prejudice or ignorance. I therefore feel the urge that further investigations be made on problems that impede parents of the learners to take part in the education of their children in the centres for the mentally disabled people.

There are some indications that the roles of the Centre Governing Body are not clearly outlined at the centre. Their functions seem to be limited to the financial management of the centre. This warrants a need for in-depth investigations on the roles of governing bodies at the centre for the mentally disabled adults.

5.5 **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the conclusion based on the findings of this study. Through the information gathered from my respondents I have discovered the following. That:

- Adult learners with mental disability are not intellectually disabled to an extend that they can be holistically dependent on other people, taking into consideration the fact that some learners managed to proceed into employment sector after training at Reakgona adult learning centre.
- All factors that were assumed could contribute towards the effectiveness of programmes for the mentally disabled adults are indeed necessary and they need a serious development in this centre.

Recommendations for the improvement of programmes at the centre were also discussed. Other factors that need further investigations regarding centres for the mentally disabled people were also given attention.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview questions for a meeting with the Centre Manager of Reakgona adult learning centre.

Inception of the centre and planning of programmes (these questions were also used to interview the Instructors and members of the Centre Governing Body)

1. When did this centre start?

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2. How many adult learners do you have?

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3. Out of the number given, how many are males and how many are females?

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    …………………………………………………………………………………………

4. What is their age range?

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    …………………………………………………………………………………………

5. How many adult educators do you have?

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    …………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Who governs your centre?

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7. How is your governing body structured?

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8. What is the responsibility of the governing body?

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9. What are the aims and objectives of your centre?

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10. What types of programmes are you offering?

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11. What are the characteristics of the programmes?

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12. Do you have a curriculum from the Department of Education?

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13. If no, who is responsible for developing the curriculum at your centre?

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14. Do you work cooperatively with the parents of the learners?

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15. What challenges are you faced with regarding programmes at your centre?

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Vocational training programmes

1. What are the aims and objectives of your vocational programmes?

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2. What are the vocational training needs of the adults with mental disability?

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3. What guides you when designing vocational programmes for the mentally disabled adults?

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4. What assessment criterion do you use for the placement of the learners in the relevant vocational programme?

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5. How do you test mastery of skills acquired?

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Basic literacy and numeracy skills programmes

1. Do you offer literacy and numeracy skills programme?

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2. Are your learners able to read and write?

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3. If yes, in which language?

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4. If no, what do you think might be the problem and what are your plans to overcome the problem?

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5. Since most of your learners are boarders, are they able to handle their personal finances?

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6. Which area do you think needs more development in this programme?

Interpersonal skills programmes

1. Do you often orientate your learners to work outside their premises?

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2. If yes, to which places do you normally take them?

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3. Are they working together with their non-handicapped counterparts?

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4. How do they relate with them? (are they free and happy or do they show some sense of inferiority and uneasiness?)

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5. Do you think that integrating them with other people benefit them? Motivate.

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6. What are the possibilities for improvement in this area?

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Life skills programmes

1. Do you have life skills education at your centre?

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2. Which skills are you teaching in this programme?

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3. How do you guide them to make informed decisions about their sexual life?

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4. How do you restore confidence in their uniqueness?

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5. Do you engage them in awareness campaigns?

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6. What impact do you think life skills programme has in their everyday lives?

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Communication skills

1. Do you have formal programmes of communication skills?

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2. In which language do you teach?

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3. Which skills of communication do you teach?

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4. Do learners respond appropriately to simple communication instructions?

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5. Do they show interest, co-operation and confidence in communication activities?

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6. What are the major barriers to learning in this area?

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7. Which area do you think needs serious improvement?

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8. What are your strategies for improvement in this area?

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    …………………………………………………………………………………………

Self help skills

1. Do you teach learners self-help skills?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Do they tolerate, co-operate or actively participate in self-care activities? Motivate.

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Are learners capable of taking responsibility for own personal needs? Motivate.

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Are they willing to take responsibility for own personal needs?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Which area do you think it needs further development?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

Centre Based Support Programmes

1. Do you have Centre Based Support Team?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

2. How is it structured?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

3. What is their function at the centre?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Do you also involve parents of the learners?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

5. What is the role of parents in this team?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Do you have local partnerships?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………….

7. What do you think needs to be improved in this area?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

Assessment programmes

1. Do you have formal assessment programmes?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………….

2. When do you assess learners?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Who is assessing the learners?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

4. How do you assess the learners?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

5. What is the duration of your programmes?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Do you have learners who have successfully met the requirements of your programmes?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

7. If yes, do you know of any learner who has secured job after completion of training at your centre? Explain.

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

8. How do you give learners feedback?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

9. Do you think there is any need for improvement in this programme? Motivate.

……………………………………………………………………………………………

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APPENDIX 2: Interview questions for the Instructors of Reakgona adult learning centre.

Planning of programmes

1.   What types of programmes are you offering?

2.   What are their characteristics?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

3.   Who is determining the types of programmes that should be offered?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

Vocational training programmes

1. What types of vocational programmes are you offering?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

2. What are the aims and objectives of these vocational programmes?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

3. What do you think are vocational training needs of adults with mental disability?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Which criterion do you use for the placement of learners in the relevant vocational training programme?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………..

5. How do you test mastery of skills acquired?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

Basic literacy and numeracy skills programme

1. Do you have formal lessons for basic literacy and numeracy skills?
2. Are your learners able to read and write?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

3. If yes, in which language can they read and write?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………....

4. If no, what do you think might be the problem and what are your plans to overcome them?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Are they able to handle their personal finances?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

6. How do you guide them to manage their funds responsibly?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

7. Which area do you think needs development?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

Interpersonal Skills

1. Do you orientate your learners to work outside their premises?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

2. If yes, to which places do you take them?

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Are they working together with their non-handicapped counterparts?

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4. How do they relate with them? Explain.

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

5. How is their level of performance as compared to their non-handicapped peers?

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Do you think that integrating them with other people is of benefit to them? Motivate?

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

Life skills programme

1. Do you have formal life skills programme in the centre?

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Which skills do you teach during life skills programme?

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

3. I have learnt that your learners are sexually active. How do you guide them to make informed and responsible decision about their sexual behaviour?

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…………………………………………………………………………………………

4. How do you restore confidence in their uniqueness?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Do you engage them in awareness campaign? Motivate.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. What impact do you think life skills programme has in their daily lives?

7. Which area do you think still needs serious development and why?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Communication skills

1. I have learnt that there are no formal programmes of communication skills in your centre. How do you train your learners for effective communication?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Which communication skills are you targeting?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Are your learners responding appropriately to simple communication instructions?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Do they show interest, co-operation and confidence in communication activities that you engage them?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

5. What are the major barriers to learning in this area?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. What do you think can be done to improve their communication skills?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

Assessment programmes

1. I have learnt that you have assessment programmes in the centre. When do you assess your learners?

…………………………………………………………………………………

2. Do you have assessment guideline?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………..

3. If no, how do you assess your learners?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

4. What is the duration of your programmes?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………..

5. How do you give learners feed back?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………..

6. Do you have records of learners' performance?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

7. How do you involve parents in the training of their children?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

8. Do you have learners who have successfully met the requirements of your programmes?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………..

9. If yes, do you know of any who has secured job? Explain.

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

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Centre Based Assessment Programmes

1. I have learnt that there is a Centre Based Assessment Programme at the centre. What is it aimed at?

2. Do you have a committee in this programme?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

3. How is it structured?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

4. What is the function of the Centre Based Support Team?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

5. How does the CBST support the learners?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Do you have curriculum advisors at your centre?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………..

7. Who helps you to develop the learning programmes?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

8. I have learnt that the priest and the nurse also form part of this committee. What is their role?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

Self-help skills

1.   Do you teach the learners self-help skills?

………………………………………………………………………………………

2.   Which skills do you teach?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

3.   Do they tolerate, co-operate or actively participate in the self-help activities?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

4.   Do you think this programme is useful for the learners? Motivate.

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

5.   What is the major barrier to learning in this area?

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………………………………………………………………………………………

6.   What are your suggestions for improvement in this area?

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APPENDIX 3: Interview questions for the members of the Centre Governing Body.

Programmes

1.   What are the aims and objectives of your programmes?

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………………………………………………………………………………………

2.   What types of programmes are you are offering?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

3.   What are the characteristics of your programmes?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

4.   Who is responsible for developing programmes at your centre?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

5.   Which role do you play in the development of programmes at the centre?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

Vocational programmes

1.   What are the aims and objectives of vocational programmes?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

2.   What are the vocational training needs of adults with mental disability?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

3.   What types of vocational programmes are you offering?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

4.   What guides you when designing vocational programmes for the mentally
        disabled adults?

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…………………………………………………………………………………………...

5.   What assessment method does the centre employ to place the learners in the
        relevant training programme?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

6.   How do educators ensure that the learners have mastered the skills acquired?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

7.   Do you have any suggestion for the improvement of vocational programmes
      at the centre?

Basic literacy and numeracy skills

1.   I have learnt that your learners are not given basic literacy and numeracy
      skills. What is your view about this?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

2.   Are the learners able to read and write?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………….

3.   Are the learners able to handle their personal finances?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

4.   Do you think it is necessary to teach the learners reading and writing skills?
      Motivate.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………..

5.   What is your recommendation in this area?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Interpersonal skills

1.   I heard that you sometimes take learners to work outside their premises. To
      which places do you often take them?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

2.   Do you have any motive for taking them out? Explain?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

3.   Are you integrating them with their non-handicapped counterparts?

4.   How do they relate with them?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

5.   Do you think that integrating them with their non-handicapped counterparts is useful to them? Motivate.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

6.   What do you think can be done to improve this programme?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

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Life skills programme

1.   I have learnt that here are no formal lessons of life skills programme. How are your learners orientated about life skills?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

2.   Are you not experiencing problems of rape and public sexual intercourse amongst your learners?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

3.   How do you restore confidence in their uniqueness?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

4.   Do you engage them in awareness campaign?

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5.   Do you think life skills programmes can have positive impact on the learners?

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6.   What do you recommend that learners should be taught during life skills?

Communication skills

1.   Since there are no programmes on communication skills at the centre, how are
        your learners trained for effective communication?

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2.   Do you have Representative of Learners Council at your centre?

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3.   If no, how do you communicate with the learners to address their needs?

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4.   Do you think communication programme is necessary at the centre? Motivate.

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5.   What are the major barriers to learning in this programme?

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6.   What is your recommendation in this area?

Self-help programmes

1.   Are your learners given training of self care skills?

2.   Do they present a well groomed appearance?

3.   Do you think there is a need for development in this area?

4.   What is your recommendation in this area?

Centre Based Support Programmes

1.   I have learnt that you have CBST at your centre. What is it aimed at?

………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………

2.   I heard that this committee is led by the priest and a nurse. What is their role?

………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………

3.   Do you have local partnerships?

………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………

4.   Who are they?

………………………………………………………………………………………

5.   What is your role in this programme?

………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………

6.   What are your suggestions for the improvement in this programme?

………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………

Assessment programmes

1. Since there are no formal assessment programmes at your centre, how are your learners assessed?

2. How do you ensure that the parents are informed about the performance of the learners?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

3. What is the duration of your training programmes?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Do you have learners who have successfully completed your training?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

5. How do you certify that the learners have indeed met the requirements of your training?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

6. What are your suggestions for the improvement in this programme?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

7. Do you think there are any barriers for improvement in this area?

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Appendix 4: this is an example of data matrix used in this research, based on the interview questions for the centre manager, three instructors and the centre governing body of Reakgona adult learning centre.

Variables	Centre manager	Instructors	Centre Governing Body
General information about the centre	• 1998 • 160 learners • 18 years • Mild, moderate, severe and profound • 6 Instructors	• 1998 • 160 learners • 19 years • Mild, moderate, severe, profound • 6 Instructors	• 1998 • 160 learners • 18 years • Mild, moderate, severe and profound • 6 instructors and 8 volunteers who work as housefathers, housemothers and security guards.
Centre aims and objectives	• Continuation of skills • Training for job placement • Training for independent living	• Encourage learners to marry each other • Build shelters for the learners	• For job placement and independent living.
CGB functions	• General maintenance of the centre	• No idea	• Management of funds. E.g. repair resources,

			payments of rent, remuneration of Instructors.
Types of programmes	• Self-help • Vocational • Health	• Vocational only	• Vocational only
Characteristics	• Sewing, needlework, gardening, basic computer literacy, beadwork, woodwork, welding, brickwork and catering	• Needlework, computer literacy, woodwork, welding, beadwork, catering	• Needle work, woodwork, computer literacy and catering
Aims of vocational programmes	• For job placement	• For job placement	• For job placement
Assessment for learner placement	• Trial and error • Physical built of the learner	• Learners choice	• Parents recommendations • Learners choice
Vocational training needs	• Recommendation by occupational therapist	• No idea	• No idea
Basic literacy and numeracy	• All learners	• Not available	• Not available
Reading and writing skills	• Most of the learners	• Some of the learners	• Most of the learners

Handling of personal finances	• Needs development	• Needs development	• Very good
Recommendations on literacy and numeracy	• Needs development	• Should be formalised	• Should be formalised
Interpersonal skills	• Well integrated	• Needs development	• Needs development
Effectiveness of integration	• Needs development	• Can be effective /needs development	• Can be effective needs development
Suggestions on integration	• Needs effective training	• Should be allowed to take part in all sporting activities without restriction	• Work in supermarkets to label prices of items.
Life skills	• Well developed	• Informal/ not given	• Informal/not given
Recommendations on life skills	• Needs development	• Should be formal	• Should be formal
Communication skills	• Not given	• Not given	• Not given
Recommendations on communication skills	• Should be formal	• Should be formal	• Should be formal
Self-help skills	• Given informally	• Given informally	• Not given
Recommendations	• Should be continuous	• Satisfied	• Should be formal • Emphasis on

			bathing and tooth brushing
CBSP	• In place	• Not aware	• Not aware
Recommendations on CBSP	• Needs development	• Be introduced	• Be introduced
Assessment programmes	• Formal	• Informal	• Informal
Control and monitoring	• Done	• Not done	• Not done
Recommendations on assessment programmes	• Needs development	• Needs development	• Needs development