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Community Learning in Haiti

A Case Study

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Community Learning in Haiti: A Case Study

Abstract

Life in a *bidonville* (poor urban slum) is portrayed in this study using the lens of learning. This contribution to the generally sparse literature and knowledge on communities in Haiti, discusses elements of informal and non-formal learning in this difficult context. The process of qualitative observation over the period of six months revealed many "community-based assets." These assets contributed to learning by providing spaces of calm, safety and respect, emerging from strong shared values of mutual assistance. In equal proportion, however, *mawonaj* (deceit or hiding the truth) and silence, as well as the social and cultural challenges of listening at many levels reinforced traditional hierarchies and prevented or interfered with changing mental models, making these obstacles to learning.

In the heart of this neighbourhood, the focal point of social and economic activity, a community-based development organization served as the vantage point for observation and interviews. Primary information sources included observation and interviews largely involving this organization's personnel, volunteers and the people that frequented it for many different reasons.

The unit of analysis for this study is the adult learner, observed within a community development organizational context. Using the adult learner in situe (at a community centre) as the focal point, this study attempts to gain insights on how community learning takes place. It posits that changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes which take place at an individual level - learning - which bring about transformations in the social and interpersonal context, is the basis of community development. Revealing this context, the content and how the behaviour and mental modeling are controlled at a community's epicentre, gives insights into understanding the process of how the community learns more broadly, giving value to phenomena which take place in and around it. Understanding elements of this process, community learning, can usefully inform approaches to community development intervention.

L'apprentissage communautaire en Haïti: une étude de cas

Resumé

La présente étude illustre la vie dans un bidonville situé dans la région urbaine de Port-au-Prince en Haïti, en utilisant l'angle de l'apprentissage. Cette contribution à la littérature éparse et aux connaissances limitées portant sur les communautés en Haïti, examine les éléments ayant trait à l'apprentissage formel et informel dans un contexte particulièrement difficile. Le processus de l'observation qualitative utilisée pendant une période de six mois a révélé un nombre important d'atouts à l'intérieur du centre communautaire. Ces atouts à l'apprentissage dont entre autres les aires de de calme, la sécurité et le respect mutuel reposent sur des valeurs d'entraide partagée. Toutefois, à proportion égale, ce qui est connu comme du *mawonaj* (tromperies ou camouflage de la vérité) et du silence aussi bien que les défis sociaux et culturels de l'écoute, renforci, à plusieurs niveaux, les hierarchies traditionnelles tout en interférant dans les changements des modèles mentaux, créant ainsi des obstacles à l'apprentissage.

Au coeur de ce quartier, un centre communautaire pour le développement agit comme point central des activités économiques et sociales. Ce dernier agit ainsi comme un tremplin pour l'observation et les entrevues. Les sources d'information primaire furent l'observation et les entrevues impliquant l'ensemble du personnel de cette organisation, les bénévoles et les gens qui fréquentent l'endroit pour diverses raisons.

L'adulte apprenti est l'unité d'analyse de cette étude. Il est observé dans un contexte relié au développement d'une organisation communautaire. Cette étude tente donc, en utilisant l'adulte apprenti en situation (dans un centre communautaire) comme point central, d'obtenir une meilleure façon de comprendre comment l'apprentissage communautaire prend place. L'on veut ainsi démontrer que les changements dans la connaissance, les habilités et les attitudes qui surgissent au niveau individuel (apprentissage) et qui apportent des transformations dans le contexte social et interpersonnel, constituent la base du développement communautaire. En révélant ce contexte, le contenu et comment les comportements et le modellage mental sont controlés dans l'épicentre d'une communauté, cela permet de pénétrer la façon de penser des gens dans la compréhension du processus, soit de savoir comment la communauté étendue valorise le phénomène qui prend place aux alentours. En comprenant les éléments de ce processus, l'apprentissage communautaire peut, de manière utile, renseigner sur les approches réliées à l'intervention dans le développement communautaire.

Acknowledgments

I would like to formally acknowledge the Canadian International Development Agency for financial and moral support in this effort. Hopefully this effort will serve CIDA, and the cause of international development generally, in the ongoing effort to understand poverty.

The people of the community and the health centre I studied in Haiti, more than any, deserve my thanks and acknowledgment. They taught me a different way of listening. Of all the lessons in my continuous pursuit to learn, this is the greatest.

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Finally, my family and friends were there when I needed them, both in Haiti and on my return. I could ask for nothing more.

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Chapter One
Why Communities and Learning in Haiti

> ***Development is a product of learning, not of production; learning how to use oneself and one's environment to better meet one's needs and those of others.***
>
> Russell Ackoff, ***On the Nature of Development and Planning.***

1.1 Introduction.

Communities in Haiti have been little studied and need to be better understood (Fass, 1987). A microcosm of this anaemic state (Gros, 1996), we are compelled to consider what takes place at the local level if, for no other reason, than to give us additional insights into the place and people in this poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The planned $Can. 1,200 million budget of international development assistance between 1994-1998 (Inter-American Development Bank [IADB], 1995) includes considerable intervention at the community level, further justifying this study.

Once the richest and most "glorious" of all global colonies (English, 1984), this Caribbean country roughly the size of Vancouver Island was home, in 1997, to between seven and eight million of the world's poorest people. Haitian's estimated annual per capita income of $Can. 300 is seventy times less than a Canadian's $Can. 20,800. Haiti's national budget is roughly that of a medium-sized Canadian city school-board (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 1997). Three centuries of continuous internal and external repression have left this country with virtually no social, economic or governmental infrastructure (Fass, 1988; Heinl & Heinl, 1978).

In the back streets of Haiti's capital city, Port-au-Prince, at the household, street and community level, in the squalid conditions of the rapidly growing slums, how do people live? Understanding the daily lives and complicated survival strategies of the estimated million or

more inhabitants poses a considerable challenge. Getting there alone, given the health and safety risks, presents considerable obstacles to any researcher and even more for the uninitiated *blan* or foreign powerful and dominant "upper" (Chambers, 1997, p.58).

Furthermore, no single disciplinary lens provides a clear conceptual picture of a slum. Studies of this "dynamic complexity," (Senge, 1990b, p. 365) where much is unplanned and unexpected and where obvious interventions do not produce expected outcomes, date back as much as sixty years (such as Wirth, 1938 as cited in Gugler & Gilbert, 1992) in attempts to characterize and understand this ever increasing part of urban life. No "magic bullets" have been found to improve living conditions in slums; external interventions continue to search for sustainable solutions (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements [HABITAT], 1996). From the social perspective, whereas education and, in particular, literacy and basic health have been predominant among the interventions to assist poor communities (Arrossi, et al., 1994), the process of learning more generally, which is integral to this education, has been the subject of little analysis (Rifkin, 1996; Wilson, 1996, 1997).

1.2 The Problem This Research Wishes to Address.

A learning perspective to understanding community and, reciprocally, how the life and social dimensions of a community contribute to how individual people learn in this context, provide useful supplementary angles with which to view these inextricably linked phenomena. Describing the elements of learning in the informal, non-formal and social context of the community is a needed advance in the literature and knowledge in adult learning (Clark & Wilson, 1991; Grippen, 1986; Holford, 1995). Likewise, understanding elements of the learning within communities informs community development intervention (Roberts, 1979). Knowledge

of the processes within the community context speaks to development assistance practitioners in ways which assist or may serve to prevent intended benevolence in current intervention practices from doing harm (Thomas, 1989). More important than these parallel disciplinary considerations, the information derived from such a study and the research approach itself can provide an opportunity for the people of a community to understand themselves better (McTaggart, 1991).

The growth of slums globally presents a continuing dilemma to the world community on how to reduce poverty for our fellow humans living in these most difficult conditions (HABITAT, 1996). As the global context has changed, exercises such as the UNDP *Human Development Report* (1997) reveal in terms[1] which attempt to capture the social elements of development, how people in some parts of the world are advancing. Quite logically, however, international development assistance agencies reflect their own value systems, they consider and fund progress in their own terms. As a result, agencies focus on like-minded places (Government of Canada [Canada], 1995). Paradoxically, the obstacles of poverty and survival in those places which have not found such success make them increasingly alienated from the realities of "donors." This gap may imply that the manner in which some people in the most impoverished countries act, helping themselves in their own way, is less and less understood by those who control the resources to assist.

Haiti reflects this rich-poor gap in profound terms. Since the recent return to constitutional government in 1994, with the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, until mid-1998, three consecutive Prime Ministers and their cabinets resigned after their failure to maintain

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[1] This refers to the UNDP's *Human Development Index.*

the political support to administer this country. Despite enormous financial promises on Aristide's return, by mid-1998 there was a virtual stand-still; no new loans had been signed for over a year between Haiti and their largest donors, the IADB or the European Union (M. Nicola, personal correspondence, February 2, 1998).[2]

A micro-level view of this environment, an appreciation of communities exposes how poor Haitians go about their lives in the absence of government. Such an examination may also provide insights into the future of this country, whose population sees few alternatives for their future and that of their children than to take desperate measures, like becoming "boat-people."

Like many developing countries, inner-city slums in Haiti present incredible challenges for the poor to meet their fundamental human needs of water, sanitation, nutrition and health, education and housing. Whereas the survival and advancement strategies in slums has been explored (Gilbert & Gugler, 1992; Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 1989), it is important that Haiti's unique context be examined in its own light. One of the greatest challenges, in Haiti and elsewhere, continues to be finding ways of letting the poor speak for themselves, which will be one of the issues this study attempts to address (Chambers, 1997; Wilson, 1996).

1.3 Purpose of the Study.

This study attempts to increase the understanding of poor communities in Haiti by describing how adult learning occurs in a community context. Uniting the parallel challenges of learning and community, this study builds and expands the depth and scope of literature concerning Haiti as well as learning in the context of communities. Little is available in social or community development literature on Haiti (White & Smucker, 1998). Nor have institutional

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[2]Financial Advisor, IADB, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

or community-level development organizations in Haiti, either rural or urban, been explored (White & Runge, 1995). Data base searches to match "Haiti" with "community," "organization," "development," "social"or "learning" resulted in impressively few books, journal articles or monographs in the humanities, social sciences or education. This dearth extends to exposés on either basic or adult education or other forms of informal and non-formal learning. While no shortage of literature exists on community development approaches globally, and in developing countries in particular (Arrossi, et al., 1994), it is useful to discover whether this literature applies, or if Haiti indeed "challenge(s) established conceptual boundaries" (Manigat, 1997, p.87).

The purpose of this study, then, is to describe learning in a community by articulating adult learning approaches and processes which take place in an organization which is at the community's epicentre. More specifically, learning in the community is revealed through the activities and actors of a community development organization in Port-au-Prince, and attempts to understand how these activities and actors support community development. Thus a community is described through the lens of learning, as observed in its neighbourhood-based organization.

I postulate here that a learning optic is useful to understand communities. Organizations located in communities provide multiple opportunities for people to learn; the few available facilities in poor communities further increases their relative value and multiplicity of their functions. The learning opportunities inside this microcosm of the community, as elsewhere, can be functional, creating possibilities for positive change. Conversely the context for learning may also be dysfunctional, causing change in a negative or detrimental direction or alternatively reinforcing the status quo, which is poor self-esteem and neglect.

Using qualitative methodology, described in Chapter Three, allowing the focus of this enquiry to emerge through the process of data collection, the following research questions oriented the study from its outset:

1. How can one describe adult learning in the context of a community organization and how do people within the organization describe this process? This question implies discovering the individuals who began and managed development activities i n this community, how the community organization found its community "space" and, as the organizational members expressed it, the set of circumstances permitting the organization to begin as well as adapt to changing conditions over time.

2. How do the actors in the organization understand the learning tools of this setting and how are these employed? Using a broad concept of tools, beyond a technological approach to learning, this question seeks to understand how learning tools reflect the community reality. The idea of "community-based assets" (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993) is used conceptually to see if it reflects or represents this community's reality. Here I endeavour to understand how the people in the community organization discuss their statutes, structures, spaces, human resources and politics. This question seeks to reveal or characterize learning tools in terms more akin to organizational "symbols," as in the "community narrative" including the range of language, history, geography, local concerns and story telling (Banks and Wideman, 1996; Bolman and Deal, 1992) and discover how the community discusses or uses these.

In this question I also seek an understanding of how the leadership, users and benefactors understand the community's "assets" in how they use and control them? Similarly I seek to understand how those directly involved (leaders, members, donors, users) recognize how, why or

in what direction the community has changed or is changing (from dependance-independence to interdependence or empowerment). This question also seeks to understand the implications for what learning or development in this community means for Haiti.

"Community-based assets" (Kretzman and McKnight, 1993) is one of the conceptual linchpins for this study. This approach to community development attempts to help those in a community view their own human and material resources holistically, including the more broadly recognized institutional and associational facilities as "assets," but also to include human relations and emotions as community "gifts." Assets are seen as a counterpoint to the "needs" orientation commonly taken toward development in communities (Rifkin, 1996). Cognisance of these alternative views is appropriate for the qualitative analytical approach, attempting to reveal a Haitian community's own point of view. *Learning* in this study is seen as a metaphor for development (Ackoff, 1984). Recognizing *assets* can be seen as changing mental models, a learning process, and may provide one analytical lens with which to view how a community develops from what already exists therein, from "inside out"(Wilson, 1996). A community organization and its principal actors, provide a valid vantage point for the study to observe how the adaptation and change within this organization, possibly recognizing their assets, enables learning at the community level (Hunter, 1993).

1.4 Concerning this Study and My Assumptions.

This is not a survey of community development practices in Haiti, nor a comprehensive cross-sectoral analysis of the community studied. It is also not a theoretical treatise on adult learning. This is intended to provide a series of figurative photo sessions in the life of one community. It gives an impressionistic exposé of a community, seen primarily from a

community centre and the context of adult learning of its main characters, over approximately six months. Guiding the analysis of this data, the research questions above did not lead the study down a garden path of community-based assets, but instead served as a sentinel for the research, helping to provide alternative possibilities in the process of trying to understand what was seen. This is considered a valid heuristic approach to gaining insights into informal learning as well as generally informing the practice of working to improve the condition of communities in Haiti.

Undertaking this research and learning about the challenges faced by this community, I gained enormous admiration and esteem for all the actors with whom I was fortunate enough to meet. For whatever it is worth, I wish to publicly commend their individual and collection actions as valiant and beyond simple praise, particularly under their often sorrowful circumstances. Any negative deduction or interpretation of the text that follows was never the intention of this writer. In the process of dissecting, decorticating and deconstructing, I have attempted not to lose sight of the organic, holistic and complex nature of this place and its people. Every attempt is made through this process to respect the personal and collective integrity and dignity of the people in the organization studied, as well as the other community groups who live and work together in this community. Nevertheless, my own efforts to be forthright and true to my own perspective may result in scenarios or situations being cast pejoratively, or individuals or places being painted unfavorably. Any remarks considered as aspersions were not my intention. In addition, all names of persons and places have been changed or altered. This is as agreed and corresponds to the McGill University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee guidelines and agreements made with participants.

Chapter Two
Literature Review

> ***It's the best possible time to be alive, when almost everything you thought you knew is wrong.***
>
> Tom Stoppard, *Arcadia.*[3]

Whereas the last chapter presented what this study intends to achieve, this chapter explores the literature on which it builds. As stated, no single discipline encapsulates the organic complexity of a community. The literature drawn upon here is intended to provide the colour palette, while background to the place observed provides a textured canvas on which to paint the portrait of this community. This study considers the adult learner in the social context of a community-based development organization in a poor slum. Adult learning is seen from the vantage point of an organization. Understanding this learning draws on social and organizational learning theory which adds conceptual colour to adult learning and community development literatures. Collectively these provide the corner stones on which existing ideas and empirical work concerning learning in the community context are built. These ideas come together in the idea of *community learning*. The qualitative methodological approach which mixes these literatures together is considered in Chapter Three. Considered in this chapter is the literature which directly informs this study's content and approach.

After placing the study geo-historically, this discussion of literature begins with adult learning, working around the supporting structures of social and organizational learning and community development, building to *community learning*. The conceptual approach I adopt here emanates from the complementarity between adult learning, social and organizational

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[3]As cited in Chambers, 1997, p. 102.

learning and community development, discussed below. Table 1, at the end of this chapter, provides a cross-sectional review of this literature, demonstrating the considerable possibility for cross-fertilization among these disciplines. This table also shows how the literature specifically informs an understanding of adult learning as observed in this study.

2.1 Haiti: The Context.

Countless volumes vividly describe Haiti's gruesome past to present, starting with a detailed pre-Columbian social history to independence with the *Black Jacobins* (James, 1963) or the graphic *Written in Blood* (Heinl & Heinl, 1978). Amy Wilentz's (1990) personalized, almost chatty exposé provides a portrait of the difficult period post Jean-Claude Duvalier and pre-Jean Bertrand Aristide (see Appendix A on *Background to Haiti)*. Expository writing by the Haitian political and intellectual elite (Lionet, 1992; Malval, 1996) provide additional background, from their distinct perspective, but are only peripherally relevant here. Books and articles concerning Haiti's development are more numerous in the area of political or anthropological analysis, the humanities, rural sociology and agriculture (for example Barthélemy, 1989; Brown 1994; Gros, 1997; Hoffman, 1995; Lionet, 1992; White & Runge, 1995). Even so, a search of the wide-ranging "Sociofile" database under the keyword "Haiti," between 1974 and 1997, resulted in only 220 references. Given the hemispheric challenge posed by this country, this is somewhat surprising and unfortunate. This is, however, a reflection of punctuated international development assistance efforts since the 1950's (English, 1984). In addition, Haiti's "paradoxical reality" (Manigat, 1997, p.87) of being so close to the wealth and prosperity of its American former colonizer, yet so far in its poverty and differences it appears to pose enormous challenges. I assume these challenges make it somehow less generalizable or even aberrant.

2.2 *Adult Learning.*

"Learning is the transformation of experience into knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Jarvis, 1987, p.8). Ultimately learning theory, how learning actually occurs in humans, such as through stimulus-response, conditioning and behaviourism or cognitive theories, fundamentally underscores what this study explores. Here, however, we are more concerned with issues such as self-concept and self-esteem. This study concentrates largely on the social elements of learning. It is recognized, nevertheless, that the psychological transformation processes at the individual level create knowledge through a combination of analytical reaction to stimuli or alternatively, a more synthetic approach to insights which emerge from perceiving relationships between figure and ground, as part of understanding an integrated whole (Roberts, 1979). This exploration, which applies to human beings of all ages, informs us that many processes are at work in learning. It is not within the scope of this paper, however, to explore the individual psychological level. Instead, on another plane, learning is considered at the level of the adult, located physically within a social community setting. This choice was made on the basis of finding a manageable study. Therefore, within this paper, I can only acknowledge debate concerning differences between the child and adult learner, as well as male versus female learners and different ways of knowing (Jarvis, 1987; Popkewitz, 1997). Hopefully this encourages others to explore these differences in further research.

As seen by Brundage & MacKeracher (1980), in their often cited compendium, *adult learning* "refers both to the process which individuals go through as they attempt to change or enrich their knowledge, values, skills, or strategies, and to the resulting knowledge, values, skills, strategies, and behaviours possessed by each individual"(p.5). Building on wide and varied

research, the thirty-six principles articulated around this definition serve as one of the conceptual building blocks of this study. These principles describe the "dynamic equilibrium between change and stability, structure and process, content and activity... over time within societal contexts and relationships"(p.3). Focussing on the individual learner, Brundage and MacKeracher (1980) begin with the preface that "groups, organizations and communities have a profound influence on how and what the individual learns" (p.1). It is acknowledged that learning events take place on an individual basis. This study, however, examines these individual events in the social, physical-environmental, political, emotional and cultural context of a poor community. These are viewed through a community organization. It is posited here that a symbiotic relationship exists between the individual adult learner and the general or particular social environment in which the learning is taking place, as do Brundage and MacKeracher in the case of *adult learning*, Dunn (1984) and Jarvis (1987) in the case of *social learning*, Roberts (1979) for *community development* and Weick & Westley (1996) in the context of *organizational learning*. The process of adult learning depends on and contributes to each of these others as will be described below.

Although Brundage & MacKeracher (1980) concentrate largely on the "formal" diploma or degree gaining educational setting, in the present study I direct my attention to "informal" ("acquiring and accumulating knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experience and exposure to the environment") and "non-formal" learning ("organized systemic educational activity outside the formal system") (Anderson & Lusthaus, 1982, p.2). Whereas theoretical propositions describe the learning transformation of the individual as the "process of construing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide

to action" (Mezirow, 1990, as cited in Clark & Wilson, 1991), Clark & Wilson (1991) support the idea that the *context* of this learning is of particular relevance. The *context* of learning recognizes that adult learners are surrounded by pressing physiological, social and emotional concerns or anxiety. Adults bring with them a rich baggage of experience and values all of which affect their learning. Like Jarvis (1987), the discussion here is less concerned with a detailed examination of the individual psychological process of learning "that happens in splendid isolation from the world in which the learner lives" (Jarvis, 1987, p.11). Whereas for certain schools of thought "learning" is seen to occur only as an individual phenomenon (Thomas, 1989; Mezirow, 1994, 1996), as summarized in Table 1, adult learning in the "informal" and "non-formal" contexts is mutually complementary with concepts of community development, social learning and organizational learning.

Informal and non-formal learning within communities was studied by Vella (1994) and Jayagopal (1985), focussing on literacy. Others (Rifkin, 1996; Arrossi, et al., 1994) have derived their empirical understandings from basic health education. In many of these practical exposés, as well as studies on adult learning approaches in northern countries (Turcotte, 1992; Cranton, 1996), *safety* emerges in various senses as a critical element for adult learning. At the most obvious level, physical insecurity and violence destroy the emotional well-being of people, needed for psycho-motor learning (Brundage & MacKeracher, 1980; Vella, 1994). However, safety also includes the affective element of trust to express oneself in the learning events associated with one's peers and leaders. In other words *respect*, or not being ridiculed, provides for self-esteem and acceptance of the self-concept of the individual learner (Vella, 1994). The physical, emotional, social, cultural and cosmological factors (Thomas, 1989), including the

internal and external pressures of the family or group environment of the learning, all provide recognizable *spaces* (Lipshitz, 1997) as a tool for, or deterrent to learning. The pressing issues of current life, including life saving measures, make immediacy a critical part of adult learning; opportunities are taken in hand as soon as possible. History, individual and collective past-experience integrated into self-esteem and self-concept, is a recognized help or hindrance to learning (Brundage & MacKeracher, 1980; Jarvis, 1987).

Beyond these affective physical elements, safety also involves the cognitive learning element of an environment or context which invites people to develop ideas, comfortable that they are respected intellectually, feeling at ease with their self-concept, that their self-esteem is not at risk and that there is some assurance that the experience in which they willingly embark will work for them. These elements of trust and confidence in their co-learners and "teachers," in the feasibility and flexibility of their objectives and freedom to express oneself, are all part of a positive learning environment. *Sequencing* learning events in a way which is progressive, *recognition of time* required, are also recognized to promote the safety and respect, both unspecialized learning tools needed and allowing for cognition in adult learning (Brundage & MacKeracher, 1980; Jarvis, 1987; Vella, 1994).

Seymour Sarason's *The Culture of Schools* (1971) is helpful in considering how learning can occur in a community. Showing the qualitative differences between the formal kindergarten curriculum - what teachers thought they were teaching - and what students talked about having learned, Sarason demonstrated that the informal learning which took place was considered more relevant to the students than the "intended outcomes" of the curriculum (p.75). Learning was significantly affected by the "behavioural setting" or *context* that is fixed geographically in a

changing sequence of time (Barker and Gump, 1964 as cited in Sarason, 1971; Popkewitz , 1997). Extensions or manipulations of phenomena that take place in and around this context, and the conferred meanings of these manipulations (changed mental models), are considered as important as the phenomenon itself. The application of these changed meanings to one's immediate environment, similar to Kolb's active experimentation following reflective observation and abstract conceptualization (Kolb, 1984, p. 30, as cited in Jarvis, 1987, p.18), seems an obvious place for the impact of learning to occur. This process of application of meaning, on an individual basis, provides the foundation which can be used for sharing perceptions and evaluating both the individual's and other's circumstances more broadly (Grippen, 1991; Jarvis, 1987). Sharing these meanings provides opportunities and possibly the enabling environment, both unspecialized tools, for group consensus on the meaning and utility of the phenomenon. Sharing also provides for generosity or other forms of cooperation, all part of group and social learning. Conversely, this learning tool of the behavioural setting can be dysfunctional, resulting in negative learning as well as rejection or non-consideration of learning opportunities (Bernard, 1992; Jarvis, 1985). In addition to the *context*, Sarason's above mentioned study raised qualitative questions concerning the *content* as well as who is *controlling* these learning opportunities (Jarvis, 1987, p. 186), how and why. These questions are useful in approaching the community setting.

2.3 Social Learning.

This introduction to adult learning and its context has already touched on social learning, attempting to reveal how learning can be understood in the community context. Like adult learning, social learning cuts a wide swath, attempting basically to understand learning "by the

individual sharing in a range of acquired information through communication and social system participation" (Dunn, 1984, p. 171). Developing economic co-operatives in communities in Canada's maritime provinces during the Great Depression of the 1920's, Moses Coady (1967) articulated the process of engagement in people's own learning and education through their economic and social activities, which continues today (Fairbairn, et al, 1991). By contrast, the idea of externally-led planning, "blue-print" execution and evaluation was eventually seen to promote homeostasis (reinforcing views of the external intervener) and indeed discourage social learning. A "people-centred" approach gained greater acceptance in the early 1980's, largely through the work of authors such as Korten, Dunn and Friedman (1984), seen in their collective work *People Centred Development.* In parallel, original rural planning and evaluation work in East Africa by Chambers (1985) among others, and his continuing work on participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and assessments, result in a unequivocal criticism of traditional planning and execution approaches of development assistance (Chambers, 1997).[4] He promotes, instead, a socially sensitive learning method, attempting to understand better and integrate the "target" population into planning for developing countries.

Also articulated as "participatory" development, this social learning has become increasingly recognized as essential for sustainability of development efforts (Bamberger, 1991). "Participation," another learning tool, has also evolved to explain how building collective knowledge, a critical part of the process of learning and change, is important particularly in economic terms within communities (Fairbairn, et al., 1991; Korten & Kraus, 1984; Shragge

[4] Chamber's (1997) preference would be to change Participatory Rural Appraisal to Participation, Learning and Action (p. 163), like that of Evans (1997).

1993). Uphoff's (1992) combination analysis of social science and treatise on social learning, uses qualitative methodology to understand social learning and learning tools such as shared values, through his own rural development experience in Sri Lanka. Uphoff describes social learning as how "personal purposes get transformed into public parameters, at the same time that social institutions and culturally shared values co-determine individual preferences" (p. 395).

As stated above, the array of approaches as well as pedagogy which might be considered social learning is vast. Critically, "Popular Education" (Freire, 1970) and "Transformational Education" (Hall, 1995) merge in many ways with transformational learning, (see Adult Learning, above), and the popular idea of *empowerment*. For example, the process of awareness to alternate meanings (conscientisation) and the practical adaptation and application of these meanings (or praxis), as well as being considered a political, social and learning phenomenon which takes place at the community level, is understood to be both Popular Education and empowerment (Jarvis, 1987; Singh and Titi, 1995; Sandbrook & Halfani, 1993; Wilson, 1997). Empowerment is seen as a process of "local self-reliance, autonomy in decision making processes at the community (...) level, and ... allow(ing) for the maximum use of people's capabilities in using services and information, exercising foresight, experimenting and innovating, collaborating with others, and exploiting new conditions and resources" (Titi and Singh, 1995, p. 14).

Empowerment has taken on considerable baggage of abstraction, however, seen as a tool in itself for the reversal of impoverishment. In this process communities can find within and among themselves the capacity to do what they collectively decide is in their own best interests depending, as we are reminded by Chambers (1997), on who is empowered (meaning that the

powerful can become more so). This goal-oriented process of social discovery and the changing of *power relations* (Shragge, 1993), although complementary to understanding learning in particular at different social levels of the community, can also be seen as the direction, political orientation or control of learning. Understood as such, this political directedness makes both "participation" and "empowerment" clearly purposive (which might also be argued for the use of "assets"). As I will explain in the next chapter dealing with my methodology, the heuristic or qualitative approach (letting theory emerge from the observational and narrative data) undertaken here strives to avoid this sort of theoretically deductiveness or prejudgement of the community in question. Nevertheless, these concepts are clearly within the realm of ideas considered important in the motivation of social learning in the community context.

2.4 Organizations and Learning.

From describing learning in the broader social context, the focus can be somewhat narrowed by considering organizational learning and how the various adult learners at their various levels are nested figuratively within an organizational context, such as in the epicentre of social activity in a community. Understanding organizational learning in many ways mimics understanding individual learning, as pointed out by Weick & Westley (1996). Describing organizations as cultures, the figure-ground juxtaposition of order and disorder as the tension which takes place as organizations learn is seen as tacit theory of organizational learning (p. 441). These images of learning and organization are useful in placing adult learning in the organizational context of a community such as in this study.

Kiggundu (1989) notes disparagingly that "there are no organizations in Haiti; only piles of people in crowded warehouses overseen by officials who view their positions as privilege or

entitlement, not as a duty to serve" (p. 4). Despite this observation, 1990's organizational and institutional development literature provides a wide range of conceptual possibilities to understand organizations at the community level (Clegg, Hardy & Nord,1996). In this context, for example, the role of leadership (Fowler, 1997; Senge, 1990a) and in particular Fullan's (1993) "moral purpose" (p.5) as a "change force" for leaders in organizations seem particularly useful paradigms. By involving skills and deep understanding, recognizing the uncertainties of change, embracing enquiry and the personal critical and re-examining vision that follows from reflective learning, Fullan amalgamates change agentry and moral purpose at the leadership level with the "dynamic complexity" seen in organizations by Senge (1990b, p.365).

Profit oriented North American or European firms have largely been the focus of organizational learning (Dixon, 1993; Senge, 1990b). This concept described the "organization's ability to transform itself on a continuous basis in response to changing conditions" (Dixon, 1993, p.2). Bolman & Deal's (1991) "political" and "symbolic" frames to view organizations provide only a sampling of the intellectual backdrop with which to view and try and decipher and understand organizations, such as a community.

Developing country "organizations" constitutes another often employed though undifferentiated theme within the vast literature generated by development assistance organizations and donor institutions. Together with "institutional development" and more lately building or "growing" the "capacity" of local institutions (Fowler, 1997, p. 187), the attempt to understand and subsequently assist organizations has become legal tender for development assistance agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency [CIDA] (1997). Community or neighbourhood development themes are felt to be less accessible by large donor

institutions (Fowler, 1997). CIDA, for one, indicates how more work is needed to understand and work at the community level (1997, p.3).

Adult and social learning, as well as organizational learning, can be seen to share processes with *communications* (Bernard, 1992; Putnam, Philips & Chapman ,1996). Consider the basic elements of both sender and receiver of information, as well as the intermittent noise or interference between these two. In this discussion of learning and communities it is useful to remember that adults learn new social responses in dealing with an "onslaught of competitive forces" in terms of information through communications (Jayagopal, 1985, p. 168). Fuglesang (1982), in his insightful description of cross-cultural communication and indigenous learning, discusses ways of taking *context* and *content* into consideration. The ideas of the social characteristics or social or cultural "registers" in communication, help us make our way through the complex stratified nature of communications which takes place in the Haitian context (Bell, 1996; Durand, 1980; Minore, 1986). Putnam, Phillips & Chapman (1996), describe useful metaphors of communications, such as the "lens" (p. 380) or "voice" (p. 389), which are particularly useful in my own reflection on ways to describe communication for learning in community context.

2.5 Community Development.

Community development takes the adult learner who is socialized in the organizational context of a community to a different reflective plane. There is a clear relationship between community development and learning. As Roberts (1979) points out, learning is a change of behaviour and relationships which takes place in a social context. This behaviour has social effects which become part of the social process known as community development. Community

development might be seen as "individual learning that brings about, or is required for, behaviour whose effects will be a change in social relationships" (Roberts, 1979, p.65).

"Community" can be defined as a "geographically limited area of living with the essential constituents of common bond, membership in a group, the sharing of common interests and an identity, together with the acknowledgement of the rights and responsibilities of all other community members" (Chekki, 1979, p.6). Not dissimilar from social learning and the co-operative movements discussed above, there have been many and varied approaches to assisting communities. The 1960's social activism (Alinsky, 1963) experimented and articulated approaches of professional external involvement (other learning tools) in the mobilization of communities. Drawing on social militantism to assist minorities within inner-city America, Alinsky foreshadowed the importance of a process which develops conscious reflexion (or reflective learning), understanding of one's situation and linking this understanding to action (Popular Education) as articulated by Freire (1970). Alinsky and Freire's approaches both sought to shift dramatically individual mental models in a somewhat revolutionary manner, in order to have people take control of their own destiny.

Making the link to families or households, and other various social groupings (and the conceptual link of this study between organizational learning and community) communities have been a regularly accepted focus for social and economic intervention through organizations based in communities (Castells, 1983; Lackey, Burke, & Peterson, 1987). Social work, community organizing and voluntary organizing (Biddle & Biddle, 1968; Smith & Freedman, 1972) are still, in the late 1990's, engaging communities largely by providing external assistance to identify, plan, mobilize and implement people's (sometimes even expressed) development needs (Banks

& Wideman, 1995). These more traditional approaches to Community Development address these social and economic needs of people within communities through social assistance.

This same link between social intervention and community organizations has become recognized practice in developing countries. Attempting to reduce poverty by assisting people to acquire the "basic human needs" of water and sanitation, health and education and shelter is seen to require particular and substantial effort at the "micro" level of the community, through community organizations (Friedman, 1984; CIDA, 1995, 1997). This is equally true for northern and southern countries in enterprise and economic development and working with the informal sector (Shragge, 1993). "Knowledge of the local context" of local or community organizations "remains an essential key to the success of social development activities" (CIDA, 1997, p.5).

In the sphere of Community Development, Kretzman and McKnight (1993) cross over the paradigms above, by waging a political empowerment battle, confronting many of the traditions of community intervention and helping people learn in the process. Based on work almost exclusively in poor neighbourhoods of the United States (E. Earle, personal correspondence, February 25, 1998)[5], Kretzman and McKnight propose practical methods for people within communities to discover for and among themselves the existing potential to control and improve their own lives. Avoiding the more traditional "magic bullets," their approach intends to facilitate the appreciation of a wide range of institutional, associational and individual "community-based assets" (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993, p. 5). They claim communities can build on unrecognized gifts, skills and capacities. These assets can be embraced and capitalized on through attentive listening, hearing and understanding what exists

[5]Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

around them. McKnight's (1987) earlier articulation talks of community knowledge in a vaguely Freirian tone of alternate meanings, as well as Argyris and Schön's (1978) reflective "double-loop" learning: "Knowing community is not an abstract understanding. Rather, it is what we each know about all of us" (McKnight, 1987, p. 58).

Discovering their community-based assets, communities learn about themselves by providing a nurturing environment for self-esteem, respect and compassion as well as mutual understanding. These assets are the learning tools Kretzman and McKnight (1993) describe and are also the adult learning principals discussed above. Putnam (1993, p. 167), counts these civic capacities as "social capital," Chambers (1997, p. 164) as "social assets." In all cases these include personal and inter-relational skills such as trust, cooperation, and consensus building, creative wisdom, skills and culture, social creativity, tolerance, participation, mutual and self-help and social energy. As social capital or assets, wealth is considered political, cultural as well as the more accepted "material" in nature.

2.6 Community Learning.

The work of Kretzman and McKnight (1983) moves this discussion to a different level. As indicated, their non-traditional approach to community-based assets considerably overlaps disciplines and inspires a different kind of learning. Community level "learning" is recognized as a necessary and valid advancement in community development both in northern and developing countries (Wilson, 1996, 1997). In returning to the role of community organizations in urban and environmental activities in developing countries, Aina (1990), speaks of the complexity of the circumstances in which they operate to assist the poor. Phenomena at the community level can be seen as a set of "at times contradictory and at other time mutually

reinforcing, individual and collective learning experiences" (p.5). Qualitative research in this area, according to Banks and Wideman's (1996) experience, makes it possible for an outsider to observe and report on a community's social construction of knowledge, by being involved in the "experience - learning - theorizing - learning cycle" (p. 326).

Another slant to view learning in communities involves largely community-based basic health education delivery systems, mentioned in adult learning, above. Like Chambers (1985), Korten (1984) and other authors advancing social learning, Rifkin (1996) describes how "target-oriented" approaches characterize accepted practice by external interventions in communities in developing countries. The World Health Organization [WHO](1988) articulated "participatory rapid appraisals" (similar to the participatory "rural" appraisals of Chambers, 1985) which, although continually being evaluated, are increasingly used for community assessments today (Moser, 1996; Moser & Holland, 1995). Whereas community *participation* is still highly praised as cost-effective for developmental agencies (Bamberger, 1991), Rifkin sees true participation only approximated by the various current techniques of appraisal and assessment. She calls for a continued openness and inclusiveness of various methods which are used to integrate people into their own development. This "learning process" is "adapting to change as change occurs" (p.87).

Bernard (1991), also reminds us that communities are not "empty vessels" (p. 48) and can help us to understand "indigenous learning systems". This analytical and research construct considers the cultural and social values of individuals "within their particular community (with) the concepts, beliefs, structures, explanatory systems and analytical perspectives which define that community" (p. 48). Locally based associations play a particular role in the community's learning because of their connectedness to wider society. The special interpretive role of

associations, referred to by Bernard (1991) as a "middle culture," provide the community access to alternative experience. At the same time if the people in the association live in or are from the community they have a direct understanding of its knowledge processing systems, enabling community learning in an appropriate fashion.

In a two year study of student leadership and power, Vargas (1987) defined community learning as "a form of popular education which emphasizes the development of mutually supportive group relationships as integral to group learning and problem solving" (p. 2865B). Current education and learning usage uses "community learning" in increasingly abstract terms, implying both formal and non-formal (degree or diploma granting) education, advocating greater access for the community (Hassiotis, 1996; Rowland, 1996). While previously oriented to basic literacy (Mills 1996; Rutledge, 1996, Vella, 1994), the term is now used to incorporate multiple approaches to "high-performance learning communities" (Castle & Estes, 1995). Community learning has been used to refer to any learning which takes place by any particular group (Thomas, 1989). Generally, the term has been largely North American, perhaps somewhat obviously implying moving education into the community (Hemphill, 1996; Mills, 1996; Rutledge, 1996). This approach addresses a very different dilemma from that of Haiti.

Recently, "learning communities" appears differently on the horizon (Ratners, 1997; Rusaw, 1997). Exploration of people within communities engaging in reflective learning to make collective decisions, is seen to be changing power dynamics in communities in America. Electronic networks of information, through the Internet, provide additional approaches to this field of enquiry. The Civic Practices Network [CPN] (http://www.cpn.org) is an example of a "Learning Collaborative for Civil Renewal," including more than fifty affiliates, such as the

Asset-Based Community Development Institute (1998), based on the work by Kretzman & McKnight (1993). Designed to "bring schooling for active citizenship... into the information age" (CPN, http://www.cpn.org, p.2), this American interactive conference of community-oriented minds provides a possible future orientation to broadening further the concept of the learning community.

2.7 Summary

Community learning involves a phenomenological approach to helping communities find their own voice. It is a concept which inspires collective understanding and fulfilment of social, cultural, spiritual and emotional as well as material needs. This approach to learning is in concert with, but not exclusive to, understanding or using learning tools such as community-based assets. In the absence of the formal, structural, institutional context which seeks to use the community as a conduit to education (like in North America), this study examines the affective and cognitive and psycho-motor elements of adult learning which take place within a community centre (community-based organization) and by corollary attempts to understand the larger community which the people at the Centre serve and are integral to. The idea here is to reveal the process of how people in a community make relevant, confer meaning, give value to the phenomena which occur in their context and thus change their ideas and (possibly) their behaviour (Jarvis, 1987; Uphoff, 1992).

As used here, *community learning* is an evolving term, both inter and multi-disciplinary, directly linking adult, social and organizational learning with the field of community work. But community learning also incorporates history, sociology, development studies, communications, urban, environmental, health and political studies to name only a few. This textured canvass allows our visualizing the organic complexity of community.

Table 1
Contributions of Literature Reviewed to Current Study

Contribution(s)	Author / Date	Informs Study
Haiti: General Reviews		
Historical	James (1963); Heinl (1978); Hoffman (1995)	Historical context
Statistical Information	UNDP (1997); IADB (1995, 1996); CIFD (1991)	
Political	Gros (1996); Lionet (1992); Malval (1996); Wilentz (1992)	Political context
Social Anthropology	Averill (1994); Barthélemy (1989); Bell (1996); Durand (1980); Hurston (1990); Maximilien (1985); Minore (1986)	Social/cultural context
Rural Development (& learning)	English (1984)	Economic context
	White and Runge (1995)	Socio-cultural & economic
Urban Development	HABITAT (1996); Manigat (1997)	*Bidonville* context
Slums In Haiti	Fass (1987, 1988)	
Adult Learning		
Principles & Theory (individuals)	Brundage & MacKeracher (1980); Clark & Wilson (1996); Cranton (1994); Mezirow (1994, 1996); Vella (1994)	Learning context & theory
Sociology and Learning	Grippen, 1991; Jarvis (1987); Sarason (1971)	Learning context and content
Literacy	Jayagopal (1985); Vella (1994)	
& Development	Thomas (1989)	
and Community Development	Roberts (1979)	Outputs and action of learning
Social Learning		
Definitions	Dunn (1984); Friedman (1984)	
Through Co-operatives	Coady (1967); Fairbairn, et al. (1991); Shragge, 1993	Learning Content & Learning tools
Through Participation	Korten & Kraus (1984); Friedman (1984); Chambers (1985; 1994; 1997); Uphoff, 1992	
Popular Education	Freire (1970)	
Transformational Education	Hall & Sullivan (1995)	
Empowerment	Chambers (1997); Sandbrook & Halfani, 1993; Singh & Titi (1995); Wilson (1997)	

Table 1 (continued)
Summary of Literature Reviewed

Contribution(s)	Author / Date	Informs Study
Organizations		
Political and Symbolic Framing	Bolman & Deal (1992)	Control of Learning
In Developing Countries	Fowler (1997); Hage & Finsterbusch (1987); Kiggundu (1989)	Describe organizational learning in development
NGOs	Fowler (1997)	
Leadership, Learning Organizations	Senge (1990a, 1990b); Fullam (1993)	Concept of "moral purpose"
Organizational Learning	Argyris & Schön (1978); Dixon (1993)	
Community-Based	Jaglin (1993); Moser (1996)	
Community Development (CD)		
Interventions through Social Work	Biddle & Biddle (1968)	Control of Learning
Questioning External Intervention	Abbott (1996); Lenz (1988); Stein (1990)	
"Community-Based Assets"	Kretzman & McKnight (1993)	"Assets" as learning tools
Social Capital	Putnam (1993); Moser (1996)	
In Developing Countries	Gugler & Gilbert (1992); Hardoy & Satterthwaite (1989)	Slum context
Through Community Based Orgs.	Arrosi, et al. (1994)	Community learning through education
Learning	Roberts (1979); Grieshop (1984)	
Education & Participation	Smith (1995)	
Literacy through	Jayagopal (1985), Vella (1994)	
Basic Health Education	Rifkin (1996)	
Empowerment through	Wilson 1997	Understanding "inside" perspective of slums
Community Voice	Wilson 1996, Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan (1995)	
Ethnography in	Banks & Wideman (1996); Hunter (1993)	
Community Learning		
Definition	Vargas (1987)	Definitions
as Educational Extension	Hassiotis (1996); Rowland (1996); Rutledge (1996)	
Governance	Ratner (1997); Rusaw (1997)	
Indigenous learning systems	Bernard (1991)	"Middle culture"
Rural	Uphoff (1992)	
Methodology	Various authors, discussed in Chapter Three.	

Chapter Three
Methodology and Community Learning[6]

> ***A person learns best when their interests are keenest... their needs determine their interests.***
>
> Moses Coady, ***Master's of their Own Destiny.***

This chapter presents and critiques the qualitative method used in conducting this case-study. Additional literature on methods of qualitative analysis complements documentation pertaining to the research topic itself, described in the previous chapter. Here the reader is accompanied on a reflective walk through the research process, where the pitfalls and challenges of qualitative methods are exposed. Questions are raised concerning the validity of the data collected using this method. Finally, alternative research approaches are advanced to assist the reflections on community learning discussed in the following chapters.

3.1 Getting Started: Understanding the Ingredients

Inclination. Interest in community learning and "community-based assets" developed outside my own front door. In 1992, my neighbourhood in Canada risked losing a beautiful park fronting the river along which our community is situated. The municipal authorities contended that this site was needed for a plant to supply energy for the pulp and paper factory down river, to save jobs. Skeptical about this claim and fearful about losing our natural environment, I banded together with my neighbours, mounting a petition of 1,500 signatures, to "save" our park. At the

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[6]Note that only when an individual is not directly referred to in the text are quotations from interview notes followed by a citation: [Person's initials; Date]. Text or narrative cited in languages other than English are in *italic* print; when translated by this author, quotation marks and *"italic"* print are used.

same time we gave birth to a neighbourhood action committee.[7] My neighbours and I learned about each other, who among us cared to preserve the park, those willing to work together and how to organize to effect political change collectively.

Serendipitously, I heard a radio broadcast entitled *Community and its Counterfeits* (Cayley, 1990), proposing that communities look inside and listen among themselves to understanding their individual, associational and institutional assets. These "community-based assets" apparently included many of the tools, together with external resources, needed for a community's progress.

In Haiti, four years later, I was in search of another community to study. Compelled by personal interest, together with this previous experience and a thesis to complete, I found few visible cues which related to my community in Canada. In Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, *bidonville* surrounded *bidonville.*[8] The population had quadrupled in fifteen years, from about 500,000 in the early 1980's, to almost 2.5 million people in 1997. More than half of these people lived in slums (White & Smucker, 1998). Could these "communities" have "assets" and, if so, how would I go about this process of discovery in this strange context? The profusion of sights, sounds and smells presented a tremendous physical challenge to seeing or hearing anything clearly, in my way of thinking. Precisely!

Why Qualitative. Qualitative analysis lends itself to understanding and describing the complexity, interaction and organic nature of a community. It presents an alternate paradigm to

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[7] Comité des residents de vieux Val-Tétreau (Hull, Québec).

[8] The term refers to *les bidons* which are the public water stand-pipes from which, when available, people get water.

the linear and objective facts sought in positivistic, quantitative social science. Qualitative method acknowledges my predetermined ideas of community and learning. The attributes of a community in a poor developing country, physical, organizational, administrative in terms of managerial hierarchies and their mechanics, or determining how adults learn in this context, can only be partially and perhaps superficially understood by the best questionnaires. More challenging still (Chambers (1997) might say impossible) is to reveal the rarely visible social structures of neighbourhoods and communities as well as the trust, caring and humour on which these structures are based. Capturing images of profound but everyday events in text, giving others access to develop their own understanding, is assisted by the qualitative genre where listening and learning about people's subjective realities has its valid place.

Qualitative methodology assists the researcher to understand the elements of "difference" and preconceptions (true and false, conscious and unconscious), that exist from the beginning of the research process. These preconceptions change how we understand or listen in unfamiliar circumstances. The "human-as-instrument" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 26) not only requires us to recognize what motivates the researcher physically to the study site, but through what intellectual and emotional lenses he or she is viewing, before the camera of one's mind starts to record. This requires a confrontation with the laden nature of "intuition," or as Eisner (1991, p. 34) indicates, the "self" as instrument.

Background noise. My own white middle-class male upbringing and community in Canada, being an urban development professional with an international development organization having worked in a number of other developing countries and finally, in a senior position at an embassy in Haiti, brought together all varieties of what Pope (1711) would have

called "learned lumber" (*An Essay on Criticism,* as cited in Bartlett, 1968, p. 404). One had to work to not let this background noise deafen the self-as-instrument- researcher. My own world view brings with it a somewhat undifferentiated sense of community's "needs," while wrestling consciously and on the look-out for the more subtle community "assets," Kretzman and McKnight (1993) describe.

Two years already in Haiti had provided me many signals relating to status and class, this country's sociological hallmarks (Minore, 1986). I perceived that I brought prestige on my visits to communities this initial period, the donor role to this extremely poor, dependent and relatively small nation. In exchange, places and people sometimes unknowingly became part of my ongoing quest for promising projects, interlocuteurs, as well as this research. My white skin colour was also obvious in racially conscious predominantly black post-colonial Haiti. Despite best efforts to be the discrete researcher- obtaining the objectivity of the positivistic method (Seidman, 1991, p.76), my white presence invariably made a statement.

Speaking Creole as a *blan* ("white/rich-foreigner") was received in a variety of ways. The language of virtually the entire population, Creole was still considered the language of the poor (Barthélemy, 1989). Recent history, particularly the 1990 election of the populist Creolophone priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide (see Appendix A, Background to Haiti), had increased the political importance of Creole in social movements and activists. Efforts to speak this language, particularly in the economically poor or social-activist context, seemed to have been received as sympathy with social struggle [AC: 8/7/96], situating me for the community I studied as a crossover between Glenn & Peshkin's "intervener" and "reformer/advocate" (1992, pp.114-115). Beyond showing basic respect, my speaking Creole facilitated the characteristic

Haitian generosity and warmth toward me from strangers. Gestures like people remaining seated beside me for extended periods, sustained polite interaction, I interpreted as acts of endorsement. Just as easily, though, these interactions could be interpreted as my being a novelty for my interlocuteurs, or a prospect for economic or social advancement. The recognition and reflection on these entry factors gives my data its own valid perspective (Chambers, 1997). Acculturation, language, education, and personal history were among many of the facets influencing my learning about learning in this Haitian community.

3.2 Gates and Bridges: Entry, Access and Consent

Finding a Place. Shortly after my arrival in Haiti, again serendipitously, a colleague brought me to the community centre (hereafter the Centre) I would eventually study. My colleague had worked extensively with the people in this health centre, pharmacy and community organization. He respected their ability and integrity and had been impressed with the involvement by the Centre's personnel in various aspects of the community's advancement. What I had heard peripherally about this particular community and its organization gave it a kind of veracity for me; there "felt" to be an honesty and confidence here, a sense of direction unfettered (or less-so) by the "internationals" which seemed to me, after two years, to lead or push all development activities in this country. My colleague's enthusiasm, knowledgeable opinion (and perhaps consent) for me to study this community clinched my decision; he would ask the community leader if this would be possible [MG:6/1/97].

My colleague's request on my behalf provided for more than simply access. Discussions with him had situated the community organization and its various personalities in my mind - and likely me in theirs. As one of my "gatekeepers" (Seidman, 1991, p. 34), the multiple

implications of my colleague's introduction began even before my physical "entry" at the door of the Centre. Ideas and descriptions I had shared with this gatekeeper and informant remained with me as the research progressed. Similarly, I reminded by the same gatekeeper that no matter what I might attempt to be seen differently by the study participants, my status and position would always be considered as a possibility to bring them additional resources. Indeed, my colleague told me later that, like him, I was considered "magic" of sorts [MG: 10/11/97].

Physically, my research involved going to the Centre (health clinic and community pharmacy), and sometimes visiting other part of the community, once or twice a week during a period of six months. The sites and when they were visited depended, to a large degree, on the particular people and activities at each location and my wanting to avoid being an imposition being at a given place and time. As well, I considered my comfort and personal security, or lack thereof.[9] Table 2, *Schedule of Observation Visits to Study Site: Advantages and Disadvantages*, summarizes these visits which resulted in more than fifty hours of interviews and observations.

[9]Physical security in Haiti, during the period of research was a considerable issue due to civil strife.

Table 2.
Schedule of Observation visits to Study Site: Advantages and Disadvantages

Time/Site	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. 08:00 - 11:00 / M-F [1] Community Centre	- Security not a problem - Users/Public very present	- Personnel busy - Feel imposing
2. 12:00 - 14:00 / M-F Centre or Community	- People eating /relaxed atmosphere - Less distractions	- Public not at Centre - Hot; people slept
3. 15:00 - 19:00 / M-F Centre or Community	- Greatest variety of activities - Many different participants; many comings and goings.	- Security risk increased - People tired
4. 08:00 - 17:00 /Weekends	- Community group meetings at Community Centre	- Few clinic personnel present

[1] Monday through Friday.

Time as well as the physical limitations such as the intense heat at noon or the mid-afternoon, the dirt and smells and sometimes basic fear of physical or health dangers of being there (in malaria and dengue fever country), particularly as it got dark, had a combined effect on the data collection. This neighbourhood was a "hot" security-risk zone (G. Larouche, personal correspondence, February 17, 1996). Being there alone, as opposed to accompanied by Haitian friends or colleagues, confirmed my interest, and possible willingness to become "involved," perhaps even more than was the case. This presence associated me with the good works of my "gatekeeper" colleague, implying I would bring the same good fortune. The data collected, therefore, appeared at times like a dialogue between allies or with a benefactor and possibly even confident; I became a *Tonton* or beneficent uncle. Becoming privy to considerable personal and group struggle, my invisible boundaries were placed where exposing their blemishes might have impeded personal or collective gain (Chambers, 1997, p.85-86).

Consenting Adults. I considered participant agreement to take part in this research not

only ethical but an important element of the mutual learning process for the participants and researcher. (Appendix B shows the English and French versions of the consent form developed and approved by the McGill University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee.) The literate informants agreed and signed a form to participate without hesitation. However for the more than seventy percent illiterate population (IADB, 1995), I discovered that such a form had other implications. Clearly conducting such research required wide direct involvement, originally expecting Centre personnel and, to the extent possible, the larger community to participate. Personal dignity required that they understand what I was doing and why; the "form" was unimportant. A tacit or even a signed understanding with the leaders, giving consent for these others, too obviously reflected a power and status dynamic that was not, in my view, legitimate consent.

What at first seemed a minor administrative process, signing a consent form, became an intellectual and logistical challenge for me to gain trust (Glesne, Corrine & Peshkin, 1992). Sharing my understandings with them, and in turn capturing their ideas became integral to this research and, I felt, critical to the community itself. I developed an alternative consent form in the attempt to share realities with my participants (see Appendix C). The assistance of my Haitian colleagues and others who had worked in Haiti for an extended period, indicated that no matter what was written on this form people would hesitate to sign it. If they did, I was told, they would not be signing it honestly. These opinions portended what the community leader would explain to me in my first interview, and what would also emerge as one of the most significant

observations of this research: *mawonaj*.[10] What Chambers (1997, p. 86) calls "deceit" of the "lowers," is in Haiti an "escape" or evasion of the truth which pervades the poverty and politics of Haiti (White and Smucker, 1998). This methodology helped me discover *mawonaj* which in turn helps articulate my understanding of the context and content of learning in this community.

On at least four consecutive visits to the Centre, I came prepared with copies of this *Akò*, or "agreement" (see Appendix C), consisting of three short simply-worded Creole sentences. This paper in hand, the same scenario played out repeatedly: cordial greetings and general discussion, lasted as long as 30 minutes, after which I would discreetly attempt to introduce the form. Explaining what it was about, ergo what I was doing ("study to understand the Centre better"), this piece of paper was politely accepted. Sometimes I was even asked for more copies. The form invariably made its way, unsigned, into individual pockets or notebooks, without interrupting the discussion. I never forced the issue. Individuals continued in our discussion, eventually leaving me perplexed and without written consent. Although our continuing conversation seemed to have indicated a willingness to participate, as well as an understanding of what this research was about, did I have consent?

Weeks later, talking with a group, I inquired if anyone had signed this consent form, waving additional copies. They seemed surprised and again asked for another form (with which I was always heavily armed). Those in attendance dutifully signed and returned them to me on the spot. Other copies came to me haphazardly or indirectly during subsequent visits.

What had happened? I had been warned there would be a reserve toward both me and the

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[10]*Maron* provides a wonderful example of the imagery of *Creole*. Literally, the colour brown, it was historically used by Haitians to refer to the escaped and hiding slave. Current usage is, literally, to deceive or hide from the truth.

form. Likely some advantage, caché or connectedness was eventually perceived in signing. In addition, almost two months of time had allowed the Centre personnel to accept my presence, or they had *time to learn* about me. At a minimum, my becoming a "regular" seemed to make this form as well as my presence relatively harmless. I was never aware if, indeed, there was obfuscation intended by people not initially signing these forms. The relationship between who signed them and why was not pursued; I felt that such a discussion committed me to a deeper connection than I was prepared for. Nevertheless, this process of "cross-cultural consent" made me think about where I stood, my posture in this environment and the question of indwelling.

Throughout my first interviews, I had the impression of looking at a cut-away of a beehive, requiring careful examination to understand what was really taking place and who was doing what. It was easy to be lost in the minutiae. My attempt was to avoid the distraction of words, listening instead to phrases and how things were being said, trying to use the equivalent of peripheral vision. I attempted to be alert to what was happening independently of the specifically words. Sometimes bombarded with so much information concerning different activities and people, it became paramount to simply let people (such as the community leader) talk, rather than constantly interrupt to clarify details. This approach allowed me to get a general sense of how those in the organization spoke about their activities, people and history.

This style of "peripheral" listening also made me feel less part of the group, sometimes not reacting to the subtleties of references. Remaining removed like this in this way, ironically, lead to one of my principal observations, concerning *listening*; writing about being left out made be conscious that there were other ways to see what was happening. This process was my own problematisation or double-loop learning (Argyris, 1978). The methodological postulates of the

qualitative paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 12) allow for these particular challenges of multiple realities: the researcher, his/her personal background, knowledge of the circumstances and the preconceptions about those being studied. A series of figurative screens and lenses tinted my observations (Putnam, Phillips & Chapman, 1996). My gatekeeper colleague, his history with the organization, how he related this to me, how he related information about me or the intentions of my study with the community, all were different screens. The qualitative method gives currency to the inter-dependance of these perceptions. They are complementary, worthy and important variables to our understanding. Relationships - causal linkages - can be discovered and are multidirectional. This research clearly evolved in this context of multi-directionality.

3.3 Dynamics of Data Collection

Table 3, below, summarizes the various data collected and used in this study. Interviews were both structured and unstructured. The more structured of these involved open-ended questioning (not presuming any specific answer) and general conversation related to the Centre, the community and whatever else was important to the individual. A significant amount of "texture" as well as clear, factual information surfaced from these.

Of the twelve one-to-one interviews conducted, five were considered relatively "intense" despite the always freewheeling discussion. The office located in the Centre (described in Chapter Four) provided the space for this serious conversation which seemed "exclusive," or at least private. Despite expressing an interest in what happened in the whole Centre (and community), it seemed the office was the logical gravitation point for meetings with me. Sometimes surrounded by two or three individuals, normally including the Leader (Aj), those in

attendance listened attentively to my questions and recounted the story of the Centre. These meetings provided for my initial impressions of a collegial organization, with shared responsibility and decision making.

Table 3
Data Sources and Content.

Sources	Data Obtained	Content
1. Individuals	Field Notes and Observations: shorthand notes transcribed into typewritten notes; organized and kept chronologically, sorted by themes using Constant Comparative Method for analysis. Handwritten notes provide fallback.	Context and Narrative: Events, conversations, phrases, as recorded in various settings : community centre office, other private spaces in the centre or "neutral" settings, such as a restaurants.
2. Groups	Field Notes and Observations: shorthand notes transcribed into typewritten field notes. Organized and sorted as above.	Context and Narrative as above, in generally more public settings around the community, at various meetings or social gatherings.
3. Field Journals	Personal notes kept in journals. Used in particular through analysis to orient other field notes and confirm emerging themes.	Subjective continuous evaluation and impressions of events on an ongoing basis during the period of research. Personal stance (bias) becomes transparent through these.
4. Gray-Data: available from Centre or other sources.	Reports, monographs, unpublished memoranda, videos of organization, community or related project activities.	Triangulates sources 1. & 2. above, from perspective of other field actors and the organization itself.
5. Academic literature.	Academic journals, books, newspaper articles, novels, magazines, music, cookbooks.	Provides theoretical and empirical grounding for study. Supports the observer's perspective and assists in the eventual analysis.

Perceptions or mental models of office-like procedures, protocol, custom or culture all required that I sit in the larger desk chair rather than in one of the smaller chairs which surrounded

the desk. It was as if I was there to talk, and they to listen, despite my attempts to explain my purpose as the contrary. Nor were they there, I discovered, to listen to each other. They were there to be taught. Notebooks were perched. The office was a didactic space, also quite "close" in the late afternoon heat.

Trying to adapt to the ambient business-like manner, I arranged many of these interviews a day or two in advance, possibly by a telephone call. Interviews progressed from individuals in the main roles of the Centre, the co-ordinators, to administrator and head nurse, and down the pecking order to nursing auxiliaries and volunteers. These were all considered "key informants" because of the depth of the interviews and the identifiable roles they played. Out discussions invariably started by being somewhat focused, although not rigid, to elicit a response. As mentioned, the privacy of the office sometimes reduced an obvious concern with being overheard, and reduced the frequent interruptions of the very active Centre. My questioning usually began by asking when they had first heard about the Centre, their own background, or what they did to earn money if volunteering their time at the Centre? These questions invariably led to gentle probing concerning views on the structure of the Centre or other issues around the Centre of importance to them (their values) and the Centre's *raison d'être*. Their descriptions usually incorporated the Centre's activities, information concerning certain key actors and other organizations, and often recounted the origins, founders and militantism (the organizations myths and symbols), particularly the first interview. (These are discussed in Chapters Four and Five). Interview-meetings generally lasted about an hour, depending on what other people had planned.

After almost a month of regular visits, trying to get the story straight and hopefully making my way back-stage (Goffman, 1959), I was sufficiently comfortable to express a preference not to

stay in the office, but instead sit in the courtyard, surrounded by the other more occasional visitors. After greeting everyone in the Centre, on my arrival, I would return to the courtyard or other public space, depending on who was there and the chances of a discussion with one of the various personalities of the Centre or community. These other places had different but equally important listening and learning going on.

Interviews (versus group discussion) held in more public spaces like the courtyard, were shorter, occasionally intense and sometimes repeated exchanges. These more-than-casual-conversations involved people various roles in the community or the Centre who were observed on more than two occasions. These included water committee leaders, health workers, and volunteers.

Essentially, I spoke with the first person who showed a minimum of inclination to speak to me, which was not always obvious. Here I entered the cultural domain of courtesy. Although less elaborate than some cultures (Fuglesang, 1982), Haitian greetings alone provided for considerable contact, involving questions concerning the person, their family, health and general prosperity. Beyond courtesy, however, achieving more diverse information-rich (versus contextual) discussion involved communication of longer duration ranging from, for example, a minimum of three contacts of five or ten minutes to multiple meetings lasting fifteen to thirty minutes each.

Like Peter Sellers, in his film, just *"Being-There"* permitted inroads beyond polite superficiality. To some extent fading into the woodwork provided space for private and semi-private interviews. When a bench was available, with an empty place for someone to sit close to me, after the first two-three months it seemed that even the slightest beckoning would be enough to entice someone to come and start to talk (Richardson, 1995; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994;

Seidman, 1991). Table 4, which follows, provides a chronological description of the research period which reveals the time it took to make the kinds of inroads I have discussed.

The Siren's Song.[11] As indicated in Chapter one, this research set out to discover how the organization was perceived by the leaders and workers (the principals). Equally and, in some ways more important, my intention was also to discover what differences existed, if any, between leaders' perceptions and those of end-users (Sarason, 1971). In executing this research, however, the leadership and principal actors of the Centre became my more immediate focus. Were they more significant informants? As time passed, with understanding and experience, an unconscious and unplanned choice was made which oriented me toward the leadership and workers of the Centre. They were logistically easier to access (in itself a challenge) and engaged in a discussion to which I could intuitively attach meaning. They also seemed genuinely interested in talking to me. Had I not been lured by these preconceived hierarchies, spending more time with the Centre users, my understanding of the community may well have changed.

On the occasions I was privy to meetings with representatives of some of these other community organizations, in comparison to those of the Centre, these others appeared limited in their capacity to articulate what they did together, albeit invariably articulating good intentions for their co-citizens. This reticence or inarticulateness may well have been due, at least in part, to my being a "donor" in a donor-dependent country. It was important for me to note in these meetings, however, that members or leaders of the Centre were always present. They were seemingly instrumental in assisting these others; the Centre was integrated into many parts of the community. For example, one of the Centre's most present worker/leaders, Cp, always had a

[11]"Sirens" are mythological mermaids who attracted sailors off-course to their ultimate demise.

Table 4
Chronology of this Research; Main Events Observed in the Life of the Community

Date	Description
May 1995	First visit to the Centre, tour of site, meet briefly with Leader (Aj), tour of community
Jan. 1997	First interview with Aj, Cp, Os and Ld. Research Notes begin. Leader's approval for Research.
Feb. 1997	Consent process begins with Centre workers and users. Weekly visits continue until June 1997. Discussions with other key informants concerning Centre and *Cite Espwa*. Events provide opportunities to meet with individuals. Organization seems active in many spheres beyond health centre and pharmacy: "Magasin communitaire", community water, sewing cooperative, linkages with sports groups and other "popular" organizations.
June 1997	A number of Centre personnel attend community animation training. First signal concerning the "crisis". Unplanned visit to Centre; Discussions with B. Subsequent discussions with MG and JR.
Nov. 1997	Return visit. Fewer activities; new activities take priority; change in power. New actors.

camera in tow, providing for a recording of the events in the lives of these other organizations, like he had done for the Centre.

Different symbols and definitions may have emerged or become more clearly articulated as their own interpretations of the community's "assets" (the generally unrecognized gifts, skills and capacities described by Kretzman & McKnight, 1993) had I spent more of the research time with end-users. My intended research plan was to use Sarason's (1971) approach. I wanted to view the different perspective of the "students" and "teachers" in the community to provide insights into informal learning versus formal education and curriculum. The realities, however, including my skills at interviewing, competence in Creole, personal lack of comfort with silence, and the obvious constraints of status, reduced my comfort with the user- group. Conversely my status seemed to increase the attraction to me from the leaders, altering my planned research

(Seidman, 1991, p.70).

In admitting these changes and personal shortcomings to myself, it was comforting to hear community leaders lamenting their own "déformation universitaire" (formal training and clear sense of direction) which they said also detached them from "the people." Better still, one local community animator recounted his difficulties "listening" and understanding his own neighbours [Cp: 10/11/97].[12] My challenges in penetrating the Centre's organizational hierarchy and contrasting this with the views of its users paralleled challenges of the organization itself, in facing their own screens. This challenge for research validity (what was I really able to access) speaks to the methodology employed. The challenge of "listening" meant that my planning, intuition and prejudgement of the context were certainly not always accurate. Listening, however, was not the only serious methodological confrontation I faced with planned versus obtained data.

Boy-talk-Girl-talk.[13] My research "strategy" was to spread-myself-around at the Centre. On arriving, I would quickly visit the whole place providing a customarily greeting of everyone within view . This prevented people later feigning hurt, asking me: "you don't like (that person) anymore?" Giving me general access, this simple courtesy also avoided my becoming "attached" or "linked" to any particular individual or group (thus becoming part of their "clan").

Nevertheless, I observed differences early-on in my (white-middle-age-male) interaction with participant males versus females. The men of the community seemed rapidly willing to

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[12]The transient context in a slum meant that people where from many parts of the country and spoke differently with different idioms and different demeanor.

[13]*Gason* which sounds like the French for "boy" is actually "man" in Creole; *Fi* , which sounds like the French "fille" or girl in French, is "woman" in Creole.

converse and discuss a wide range of topics. Camaraderie developed as my visits became more frequent. Hand-slapping and hand-holding, normal Haitian male social interaction, became a regular part of my arriving at the Centre.

I saw the women of the Centre equally often and expressly treated them with the same friendliness as their male counterparts. After the first few visits, I adopted the familiar kiss-on-the cheek with those I had spoken to regularly. Despite a kiss being almost mundane between Haitian men and women, my gesture was always met with giggles. Women maintained what, to me, was a "coy" distance, refraining from engaging in conversation. Sometimes they even retreated from where I was to their work areas, mostly into their all-female groups. Even when in a group, though always polite, the women engaged with great hesitation in conversation; one woman spoke for all. When the group included men, few women spoke, unless directly questioned. Then their responses were short. Even in a health workers' meeting, involving mostly women, it was the men who spoke, the women nodding in agreement or keeping *silent*, their kept opinions for themselves.

My own status and gender-sensitivity alarms signaled obvious differences in my ability to interact with the men versus the women. This difference also signaled distinct questions toward learning approaches. Gender specialists on Haiti, asked about these reactions, indicated that they reflected the patriarchal nature of Haitian society [IP: 11/3/97]. My acknowledgment of this dynamic brings out the clear gender bias in my narrative data. As well, this observation presents useful implications for understanding the gender implications of learning in the community, which are not specifically explored in this document.

Charismatic Interference. A parallel methodological challenge was met in the person of

the Centre "leader." His dynamism and charisma appropriated a lot of the available space for discussion in the Centre and community. He was invariably deferred to and easily took over the conversation. Although unquestionably a key informant for this research, he played a parallel role of "informal" gatekeeper, which Seidman (1991, p. 36) warns against since they keep others out. In attempting to achieve an equilibrium around this combination positive force and obstruction, I planned my visits to the Centre at different times. This only partially addressed the challenge since a significant number of activities at the Centre and in the community occurred at the end of the day, when the leader was frequently there. By the end of the research, however, an organizational crisis (described in Chapter 5) had removed him (or he had removed himself) almost entirely. This allowed the space for discussions with other individuals. When this dynamic changed, others at the Centre indicated how they had been troubled by the amount of space the "leaders" took. "They talk all the time and never listen; we don't need them anymore" one worker said [Os: 11/11/97]. Indeed, the organizational crisis resulting in part from too much charisma, had become an opportunity for others to find new spaces within the community and organization. The previously invisible became visible to them. They recognized the hierarchy and changed.

Secrets. Besides the *mawonaj* already mentioned, privacy, or perhaps secrecy, is an alternative way of looking at the male-female dynamic, as well as some other of my interactions and observations. *Silences* or long pauses which occurred during conversations were enigmatic for me to deal with, some being more unclear than others. For example one participant sought to be alone with me, away from view. Discreetly he would signal for me to join him in a more private space, ostensibly keeping other people out of viewing or hearing range. Anticipating a

"special" or "private conversation, instead it was: "I am leaving now. Will you be here tomorrow?" I would respond and wait, then there would be the normal "until tomorrow, if God wishes. Good-bye."

Other examples of these private, special, or personal arrangements included being asked what time I would next visit and, on arriving later than anticipated, was reminded that another time had been agreed. Difficulties of transport in Port-au-Prince - and Haiti generally - made punctuality almost impossible and certainly a rarity. Whether these private-moments and expectations were opening the "backstage"door and letting me into their more private reality or, alternatively, meant to develop a close or even intimate relationship or any other number of implications, I cannot be sure. They are, however, methodological and analytical variables to report with a question mark. This "private" category also included people who politely avoided contact with me. Either they were shy or just comfortable with silence, I thought.

Seidman's (1991) excellent text on interviewing (albeit read after completing the data collection), helped me to understand the implications of dealing with idiosyncrasies, particularly silence. This text offers other useful advice like sharing your own experience with those interviewed, talking less and listening more, following hunches and going with the ebb and flow. The best advice of all, human nature helps through this process and hindsight and retrospection is instructive.

3.4 Analyzing the Data: Mirrors and Windows

The "constant comparative method" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 126-149) was used to analyze and try to understand the data collected. Allowing meaning to emerge from both narrative and context seemed appropriate to characterize what the community was "learning" in

non-formal and informal ways. This technique revolves largely around the examination and comparison of words and phrases emerging from the interviews in one's native language. Denzin (1994) raises the question concerning the special challenge - the "different tellings" - of interviews in a language which is not one's own. Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan (1995) help to understand the women's voice and different tellings. Nuance, subtlety, humour and other linguistic and cultural variables are both invisible and inaudible to the non-native. Without video or audio taping, felt to be too imposing, it was difficult to capture the detail of what took place in the wider group. While in the field it is like asking a fish to describe water. Stepping back breathes additional life into the data, allowing the perspective of the whole.

Using the data collected (see Table 3), I read and re-read my field notes. Each time through I noted words and themes which were either directly spoken or noted as observer commentary, particularly those which occurred repeatedly. In this process certain words or phrases became particularly representative, striking me either direcly from my notes or in retrospect, as articulating a repeated behaviour or contextual phenomenon. Through multiple electronic searches of the field notes and repeated sorting and re-sorting of these words and themes, I was able to group phenomena which I would endeavour to describe and explain relating to adult learning in the Centre and Community.

Collecting and understanding the narrative of this community posed particular challenges. The cross-cultural and inter–linguistic context allowed me to capture the actual words spoken often only in snippets. Noting phrases, translating and putting them into field notes, describing the context observed, then returning to analyze this constructed and contextualized discourse, translated from Creole, often through the lens of its French equivalent into English, runs the risk

of things being "lost" in the translation (Denzin, 1994: 506). It is my mind's eye, the memory, which fills in these many blanks. Try as I did to describe the richness of the everyday experience in my typed field notes, it is distance from that setting that helps see things not recognized at the time. This is also where caution with one's imagination must be exercised. Clearly the six-month period of study, with a follow-up, adds security with the data and the process of coding its meaning.

Take the example of "spaces" of learning. Not specifically articulated by my participants, this code and its many sub codes clearly captures how people gave particular places meaning. "Open-order" was observed in the way space appeared; I noted this on a number of occasions in ways spaces were used by the organization and the people of the community (were these possibilities for chaos theory, I wondered?). Similarly I recognized the delineation and control over personal and group boundaries and places in which communication of certain kinds took place. Not from individual words, this coding emerges instead from observed context as seen through the eyes of this urban-specialist observer. It is, perhaps, "constructivist" in the way that Denzin (1994:507) described "interpretative realism." How else, though, does one understand the data? Allow another party to analyze it perhaps? Clearly others would see me in the notes as much as the community observed. The human, or self-as-instrument, has been calibrated in a certain way. It is multipurpose, both a mirror and a window. The data can only be fairly interpreted in this alternating light.

This method does allow one to challenge the data (and possibly the reader) by juggling the information, trying to explain what was seen in analytical terms, while attempting to conserve the integrity of the data. This seems indeed closer to the true process undertaken in collecting

the data while in Haiti. Mental gymnastic exercises began at the beginning and continued through to the end in constructing both what I understood (learned) and did not understand about this community and its learning.

3.5 Leaving, Returning and Learning

Listening intently or actively is, perhaps, always a challenge. The stories people related in this community from their perspectives, describing their lives and community, indirectly how they organized their survival, all presented me with a striking contrast to confront in my job as a donor in this country. Routinely people came to listen to me talk about Haiti. This research presented a delightful and important change for me: I learned something about that which I was already supposed to know, perhaps less *mawonaj*, on my part. At the same time the process of discovery while working in the glorified donor position required a special effort not to be overbearing, or even directive, if steering the discussion ever so gently.

Over the months, this community came alive for me. As they described themselves and what they did, the idea of their learning in discovering their "assets" became increasingly promising for my understanding of this community. In parallel, though, other questions developed as I saw and heard differently, starting to develop other basic understandings. Then, of course, my posting was finished. It was time for me to leave.

Among the Centre personnel there was doubt I would return. When I did return, the difficult circumstances of the organizational crisis, which began during my last month, made my reappearance at the Centre more important than it should have been. Clearly I had become one of their "assets." My role as intervener/reformer/advocate had assisted them in attempting to resolve some of the internal administrative and interpersonal problems. In my three months

absence the organization has fallen deeper into its crisis. Many sub-activities of the Centre had closed and there was a funding logjam.

At the end of my first week back the Centre nurses went on strike, sitting in the anteroom of the health centre staring into the distance. Another silence. Outside the Centre people were angry, prices had risen and the Centre was not providing them with what they had received before. People shouted at the centre, pointing fingers at me that it was the foreigners' fault prices were rising (a popular political theme in Haiti). Many of those I had previously interviewed were not available, although I was able to spend a number of hours with some of those I had previously found most helpful. Although a different time, it was nonetheless helpful for me to clarify what people thought they had lived through during my original six months data collection.

The second and final week back, a day came when I felt no more questions could be asked without starting a whole cascade of new emotions and new actors. The physical niceties of going to the Centre were also gone. It had become uncomfortable. Interviews seemed forced and somehow less relevant. Other activities and organizations were taking hold in the community, with different sets of actors and, indeed, hope for progress in some basic areas. But this was a whole new dynamic, a different research project. The time had come to stop asking questions.

When are you finished this kind of study? In my case factors converged: limitations, conclusions, a professional relationship reaching a milestone, even an organizational crisis. These collectively allowed for a kind of closure. Appropriate or not, it felt right to end.

So, finally, what did I learn about the qualitative methodology itself and, critically, what

were its limitations and what would I do differently? The learning was so personally enriching that changing anything would undermine this wealth of this experience. From a more pragmatic and scientific perspective, Table 5, *Strengths and Weaknesses of Methodological Approach* summarizes the major benefits and drawbacks of the qualitative methodological approach from my perspective.

Table 5
Strengths and Weaknesses of Methodological Approach

Approach	Strengths	Weaknesses
Gatekeepers	- hit the ground running, otherwise difficult in cross-cultural context.	- reliance and bias based on subjective evaluations; unable to fully analyse it.
Single Researcher (vs. Research Team)	- possibly increases "safety" reduces "risk" for those interviewed. Can indwell.	- might involve local, culturally appropriate tested techniques for improved communications (such as participatory appraisals).[1] - reduce "focus" on the one researcher. - outside perspective to assist focus.
Open-ended Questions	- allow themes and local "voice" to emerge.	- difficult for participants to understand meaning of research.
Group interviews	- provide "safer" environment for those who might feel threatened in one-on-one interviews.	- patriarchy; males dominate.
Emerging focus	- able to indwell better in areas where there is some knowledge.	- Gravitate to where comfortable: bias and "security" of knowledge guides orientation. Example: spending more time with leaders than users due to my perception of their "defined" position in community. Makes planning difficult. - Research milestones would be useful.
Gender differences	- good interaction with one sex.	- difficulties with the other.
Language /discourse	- "special" access for the *blan* who speaks Creole	- unable to understand subtleties - lost in the verbiage/discourse
Constant Comparative Method	- inductive; allows themes to emerge	- So many possible themes, difficulties knowing how to ground the data.

[1] See Chambers, 1985; Evans, 1997; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Moser & Holland, 1997.

Singling out one comment for discussion, hopefully it would be obvious from the above that the process of interviewing and data gathering itself evokes meaning. As Bolster (1983) indicates, there was "shared" and emerging significance from this interaction, between the participants and the researcher, which ultimately shaped their behaviour. Examples include my sharing with the leader my inability to understand, difficulties in listening, their expressing or sharing their ability to listen to each other. Beyond this sharing, there were many discoveries of personal and group idiosyncrasies through the process of physically seeking to interview and collect information.

The approach to this study often presented a two-sided coin. Whereas personal "perspective" is an integral part of the validity of this case study, my persona, language ability, personal education and training and other personal history was one of its limitations. The qualitative approach validates this context and background to the data collection and encourages its recognition in the subsequent analysis. Being somewhat socially and culturally knowledgeable as well as experientially and intuitively aware of some of the idiosyncrasies of Haiti provided distinct advantages to gaining entry and "indwelling" in this cross-cultural context, but I must also be aware of these preconceptions. The challenge of getting consent raised the question of honesty and gaining trust with the study participants. Seeking some kind of "truth" meant confronting the possibility of a lack of trust between the studier and the studied, or what individuals allow or eventually decide to give to the researcher (like their not agreeing with the consent form, or not allowing that I engage local students to use questionnaires) for many of the reasons of my persona. Likewise the gender limitations were two-sided, possibly serving to open doors with the men of the Centre while limiting the understanding of the women's perspective.

At the same time this was enlightening to Haiti's gender issues at a broader level. I believe that the people of the community learned through this research process, which was also a valuable lesson for me. At the same time, this learning could not be measured in a linear fashion, but was contextual.

In summary, then, the methodology used in this study changed my ability to understand communities in Haiti. It ensured that I confront and make plain my own perspective, then analyze the data through a analytical process clearly aware of this specific angle with which the data is viewed.. The methodology gives currency to and confronts initial perceptions, prejudices and bias and how these affect what we see and hear, and can clearly change our way of understanding the world. These values become issues for consideration at the most profound level as precursors and shadows to the quality of discovery. As part of our respective realities, one would aspire to explore and continually attempt to clarify their meanings so that Haiti - or whatever the community or case - can be shown to the world with all its colour, texture and dimensions which truly exist. The validity of the data obtained - particularly in the inter-cultural context - has also been indicated as a special challenge (Denzin, 1994). The case should be made, strongly I believe, for both the validity and importance of the outside observer undertaking this challenge. Particularly in a country like Haiti with the overwhelming presence of international assistance, it is important to recognize that little is understood by the outsider. The following chapters which further expose the data obtained, will hopefully reveal how this methodology was, indeed, successful.

Chapter Four
Study Site and State of the Community[14]

Sanctuary, clubhouse, dance-hall, hospital, theater, chemist's shop, music hall, court and council chamber in one.
Janheinz Jahn, *Muntu: An Outline of the New African Culture.*[15]

The previous chapters reveal that learning in the community, as characterized in this study, brings an understanding of the adult learner in a particular social context. This study observes adult learning from the focal point of a community development organization at a community's epicentre. The discussion of methodology in Chapter Three made it clear that the validity of the qualitative approach taken recognizes self-as-instrument, in carrying out this research, and thus the distinct personal perspective brought to these observations.

In this chapter I describe the study site by recounting visual observations made, mixed with information received through the narrative of leaders, workers and users interviewed from the community organization and its community. Beginning to address the research questions posed in Chapter One, I describe the Centre, how people there described their environment and how these reflect the possibilities for adult learning. In its reciprocal and integral relationship with its community, how the Centre was structured and functioned reflect the learning reality of the community it served.

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[14]Note that only when an individual is not directly referred to in the text are quotations from interview notes followed by a citation: [Person's initials; Date]. Text or narrative cited in languages other than English are in *italic* print; when translated by this author, quotation marks and *"italic"* print are used.

[15] Jahn (1961), as cited in Heinl & Heinl , 1978, p. 676 .

As discussed in the literature review, I start by general observations on the living conditions of the adult learner. My focus narrowed as I moved "back-stage," (Goffman, 1959) into the Centre through time. This personal process of moving through the social context, into the organization and its community development activities, increasingly reveal the place and its people in their organic complexity. *Dèyè mon genyen mon;"behind mountains there are other mountains."* Reflecting the reality observed, this Haitian proverb reflects how, over time, many community assets appeared, or were unveiled at the Centre. It was equally discovered, moving through the layers, that still more assets as well as deficits for learning and learning opportunities were obscured or hidden.

4.1 Physical Description of the Community.

My first visit to *Cite Espwa* [*Espwa*], the neighbourhood studied, was accompanying one of the many missions that came to see poverty in Haiti. This visit revealed how the context of the *bidonville* is seen by most people like myself. Figure 1: *First Impressions of a Bidonville*, gives a popular cartoonist's (Paquin, 1996) portrayal of how the Haitian *bourgeois* (middle-class and elite) readership might also be confronted by this discovery.

Driving in an air-conditioned 4x4 vehicle, off the main Port-au-Prince thoroughfare, I entered a series of winding, narrow and badly paved streets. A seemingly impassable road revealed what was once, it seems, a drainage canal. The vehicle was inches away from the open ledge which dropped fifteen feet into the sea of detritus serving as a playground for the hogs carousing its contents. Across the top of the canal I saw walls of disintegrating mud and concrete,

Figure 1: *First Impressions of a Bidonville. The caption reads: "Meningitis, flu, respiratory and intestinal problems.... where are people getting all these illnesses?" The doctor is from the MSPP: Ministry of Health and Population* (Paquin, 1995).

contiguous with houses. They were *kay-tach*, made from cardboard, I later discovered, distinguishable from the wall only by their small windows which faced us.

Looking out the window of the opposite side of the vehicle the road was chock-a-block with street-sellers. Wicker *paniers* which sat in front of women in a seemingly permanent squat, or being carried on heads, offered piles of multi-coloured merchandise: gum and candies, minuscule amounts of consumable foods, household goods and sundries of every sort. Dust covered and dressed in black rags, women charcoal sellers supplied the ubiquitous stoves. Ironically, they sat alongside what could easily have been the other remnants of Haiti's diminished forests, meager wooden poles. Elementary construction, which seemed to be everywhere, used this wood for the houses built like bird's nests, *ti-py par ti-py*, stick by stick.[16] Mounds of second-hand clothes from abroad, known as *kennedi* (reflecting the era when these donations began) or *pepé*, radios and used electronics items of every sort, *mangé kwit* - the ubiquitous fried fritters of mystery meats and plantain had venders cheek-by-jowl. Every direction, it seemed, announced *"Bank."* These *borlettes* or lotteries sold their instant riches starting at a gourde (10 cents).[17]

In every direction there appeared to be the three-square meter hovels to house the residents of *Espwa*. Young boys and men, sometimes playing cards, hovered around the entrances behind which hung pitifully sheared cloth for the scant privacy. These tiny dwelling spaces were virtually unprotected from the ever-present dust, diesel and other ominously visible fumes which arose in every direction.

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[16]*Ti-py pà ti-py, zwazo fè nich li*: stick by stick, birds make their nests. This is an oft used Haitian proverb signifying slowly and surely one achieves one's goal.

[17]The "gourde" is the official Haitian currency. The exchange is approximately 12:1 $Cdn at the time of writing.

In a *Panorama* of the community, the Centre Coordinator (Aj) described the community's "inaudible existence, unheard by the authorities of the country" (Centre, 1991, p.1).[18] This text delineated the section of the city and the "commune" it was part of, noting that the neighbourhood was "virtually unknown within the city." Blank stares invariably greeted me in Port-au-Prince when this neighbourhood was named, confirming what the community already knew. A translation of *Panorama* (by this writer) gives what "its residents" consider the conspicuous features of this community:

> ...the name of the neighbourhood may come from its old landlord, although this is impossible to confirm. It began to be squatted upon in the early 1970's. The neighbourhood ... is cut into blocks by dozens of "corridors" which are, at once, walk-ways and drainage routes for all forms of moveable "liquids". Indeed, walking these requires holding onto the sides of buildings as the corridors are both extremely steep and dangerously slippery.... [There is] only one constructed point to cross ... from the shacks to the ever-expanding edge of the ravine [on the other side of the community from the "canal"]. During the rainy season there is virtually no way for many people to get across the ravine except with the assistance of their neighbours.
>
> The neighbourhood houses between 30-50,000 persons[19] in ... three hectares of land, placing it .. . among the most densely populated slums in the city... Children are left to their own defenses ... and appear to be everywhere, unclothed except by the dust and dirt which covers them daily.... Services... include prostitution . Communal water stands exist, but there is no sewerage. The space is shared with rats and other domestically raised animals who stuff themselves on the ever present forms (all sorts) of human waste. (Centre, 1991, pp. 2-3).

Beyond the misery. A less dramatic "panorama" of the community gradually appeared to me from my visits to the community through this research. What I saw in the community and what I was led to understand through conversations and interviews with residents and the workers

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[18] "Centre" is used as the name of the community health centre and pharmacy studied to maintain anonymity.

[19] Other estimates reduce this number to 20,000-30,000 (Verdeil, 1995).

at the Centre (see Chapter Three), revealed *Cite Espwa* as a warren of economic activity. There were institutions and associations of many kinds, community-based assets in Kretzman and McKnight's (1993) framework. The range of people in this community with their collective gifts and individual capacities, revealed a complex and vibrant environment for learning. This was different than I had expected or been led to believe by my informants (or the image from the "outside" observer, in Figure 1).

Economic Activity. People in this community survived through their absolute implication in immediately remunerative and active entrepreneurial, economic activity. Annual per capita income was one of the lowest in the Port-au-Prince area. Although unrepresentative, estimates in dollars ranged from $Can. 300. and $390. annually (IADB, 1995).[20] As explained by people at the Centre, and corroborated by Fass's work (1987), most personal or family income was generated by individual production and the subsequent vending in very small amounts by the same or other individuals of the family.[21] Larger scale activity included marketing goods at a wholesale level in tiny "stores" or stands. One could observe small furniture builders, domestic stove-builders and sellers, private water-sellers, shoe-repair businesses, marketing of building supplies, small-scale industrial activities (builders, welders, car-repairs), and a variety of other small-scale (2-3 persons working together) services and enterprises. Workers and volunteers at the Centre also eventually asked for my financial support to help them in their own side-businesses of hair-

[20] These estimated salaries are equivalent or less than those exposed by Fass's (1987) empirical investigation of a neighbouring slum, one of the few detailed descriptions available of household economy.

[21] The further deterioration of Haiti's economy since 1990 resulted in 1994 incomes being thirty percent below the 1991 level (IADB, 1995).

trimming or auto-repair.

There were multiple places in *Espwa* for people to congregate to bet-on and watch *gagè*, the traditional cock-fights. Rickety tables along the alleys or small huts housed the *borlettes* or lotteries which were popular loitering areas, for men in particular. Water sellers, and *gagè*, as well as the *borlettes* were linked to Haitian family-owned businesses, I learned, which operated on a city or national basis. Besides providing employment and a place for people to gather, these "institutions" linked the community to the outside; lotteries or water sellers were the closest thing to "formal" (recognized, tax-paying) economic activity apparent in this community. Like the leaders and workers in the Centre, discussed below, these water sellers, lotteries or *gagè* may be considered to have been a "middle culture" (Bernard, 1991, p.53) giving the community access to alternative experience. The understanding by these proprietors of the community's knowledge processing systems was important for its learning.

Other economic activities related to the Centre will be discussed below.

Institutions and Community Facilities. Other than these informal "institutions," the formal institutions I was able to discover in this community were limited to Christian (Catholic and Protestant) churches and schools. Receiving no state support, these "private" establishments provided primary school education facilities for an estimated twenty percent of the school age population (A. Tremblay, personal communication, October 10, 1997). Schooling in Haiti required payment far beyond the financial capacity of most parents or god-parents. Children seemed to fill the streets but not the schools. Many of these were likely *restaveks*, orphaned or unwanted children from rural areas working in various forms of domestic slavery (Comité Inter-

Agences Femmes et Développement, Systeme des Nations Unies [CIFD],1991; Lang, 1996).

Every evening around six o'clock, and all day Sunday, the singing and preaching of the ten or more Protestant temples was audible in *Espwa*. The one Catholic church was just outside the boundaries of this informal community. One of this church's pieces of land, however, was "managed" by the Centre serving, at one point, as a play field for a local soccer club. Ninety percent Catholic, the population was estimated to be one hundred percent Voodoo (CIDA Briefing Centre, personal correspondence, January, 1994). *Houngans*, medicine-men or women-healer-Voodoo priests functioned throughout the neighbourhood, often in the rear of private lodgings, hidden from the main streets. *Espwa* had no police, postal or fire-stations, banks or other official financiers existed, nor were there libraries or other publicly funded institutions.

As described by the Centre Coordinator (Aj), until 1992 the only health centre available was blocks outside this neighbourhood. A commercial pharmacy down the street, "Le Bon Samaritan," always appeared empty when I passed. Besides these sources, pharmaceuticals for this neighbourhood and its environs were supplied by a vast informal market in and outside the community. The Centre's health services were also used by those from even less-well served communities who came to seek assistance. Although health centres existed throughout Port-au-Prince, services were always expensive and of universally poor quality.

Violence. During the course of interviews, the Centre Coordinator (Aj) used the term *"cartier pauv"* and *"bidonville"* when speaking of this community. Asked what he meant by *bidonville*, he replied, *"masses of population living in small spaces, with no water, sewers or latrines, no parks and many robberies and murder."* Besides financial poverty, physical

insecurity reigned in Port-au-Prince during this period. This community was no exception. Every two or weeks I witnessed unattended dead bodies lying beside piles of *fatra*, or garbage, within or close to the community. Startled and shocked, at first, by these scenes, observing them usually in the mornings driving in or out of the community, I was told that many corpses were "dumped" here. These murders had not occurred in *Espwa*. With time these visual obscenities became, if not commonplace, a part of the ambient noise of the place. They were not discussed. Silence.

Robbery, however, was apparently a daily unseen occurrence and of considerable preoccupation to residents. On a tiny financial scale in absolute terms, these crimes were of dramatic relative value, remembering the incomes of residents. Other common violence included rape or brutal corporal punishment, or other harmful family violence, particularly directed toward women and children. I was told by the Centre nurses that these events went largely undocumented and were not talked about, or with hesitation and indirectly at best. (This is further discussed in Chapter Five.) (CIFD,1991).

What figured overwhelmingly and pervasively, again, was the noisomeness of the place generally. Although the impact of garbage and dirt everywhere faded as I returned often to the community, this environmental impact can only be considered as a violent one (Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 1989). At the most basic level, stresses resulting from this ambiance are a considerable factor in people's ability to learn as they are physically and psychologically threatening (Ekblad, 1993).

Associations in this Community. This study attempts to understand a poor community by considering, in particular, the adult learning approaches and processes which occurred at the

Centre. The scope of services provided and its role as a social and economic development organization, made the Centre the closest facsimile this neighbourhood had to one of the "institutions" just discussed, although a private and voluntary organization. It was also an association with a special role in the learning of the community (and is further explored below). But the Centre was by no means alone.

More than twenty *organisations populaires*, grass-roots or neighbourhood "popular" organizations were active in varying degrees and various locations of the community during the period of this study. Counting them among the community's associational assets, these voluntary and non-profit organizations functioned at the community level, as did the Centre. From what I witnessed and was led to understand from discussions with the leadership of the Centre and other external interveners, however, most of these "other" community-based popular organizations were nascent at best. Many had short life spans, with activities that were highly circumscribed. These popular associations were apparently established on the basis of propinquity (by sub-sector of the neighbourhood), age (youth in particular), gender (women sellers, or "mothers club" at the health clinic), sports (soccer or other athletics) or, most often, religious affiliation. Soccer clubs, as an example, provided young males in the community a source of unity and solidarity. Membership in these was not exclusive to the community; members came and went from other communities to be on teams and participate in their events (much like neighbourhood residents). This neighbourhood, however, was "blessed" with two soccer fields giving it a substantial advantage.

Of particular significance, these neighbourhood organizations included three committees (a fourth beginning in the last month of this research) formed to manage community water fountains. In this water-less neighbourhood the importance of both the fountains and the

committees cannot be overstated. The search for free water consumed more time and energy daily, on average, particularly by females and children, than any other domestic activity (the term *bidon* or *bidonville*) (CIFD, 1991). The water sought was, in fact, only free if a leak or break could be found in a nearby residential of commercial water pipe. Otherwise a five gallon bucket of water cost as much as 4 gourdes (up to $0.40).

To change this situation, a neighbourhood water project financed externally involved the installation of water stands, where a bucket would cost about four cents. This project promoted and provided assistance for neighbourhood-based financing and management and also involved seven other *bidonvilles* of Port-au-Prince (Brailowsky, 1996; Douxchamps, 1996; Verdeil, 1995). It is useful in this more general description to foreshadow that many of the issues which eventually became significant for the learning in this community (control, power, politics, as well as technology and access) emanated in and around this water project and its personnel, these also being integral to the Centre. Vignettes in the next chapter reinforce these statements.

The water project showed how the Centre and its personnel were vital in the community. Significant to this study, learning which occurred at the Centre reflects the larger community. Personnel from the Centre were part of a network of individual and collective community animation capacities which this project utilized from the Centre, not only for this community but in other areas of Port-au-Prince. The Centre's leaders, members or workers were equally present in many of the other neighbourhood organizations mentioned above. Cp and Os, for example, two community animators who worked closely together, were invariably present or available at meetings or gathering involving other organizations. As mentioned in the last Chapter, Cp with the Centre's camera provided other groups in *Espwa* a recording of their events which, otherwise,

would have faded or significantly changed in collective memory in this mostly illiterate community.

The water project was only one of the activities that involved external resources in *Espwa*. Before providing a more detailed description of the Centre itself, however, understanding learning in the community requires seeing some of the other activities funded or run externally, all part of the Centre's organizational baggage. As Kretzman and McKnight (1993) point out, we are reminded that despite recognition of a community's own assets, external resources are often needed for the development of a community's capacities. Table 6, *External Funding and other Key Activities in the Community: 1992-1997*, provides an overview of some of these other activities.

A solid-waste project to clean-up the above mentioned "Orphan's Canal," and community generally, was one of the first externally funded initiatives involving Centre personnel. Besides being one important learning tool, the megaphones provided for community animation in this project became, in my view, one of the organizational symbols of the Centre. The labour-intensive work in the community from this project gave many temporary incomes. This project also enabled Centre personnel to learn many skills, boosting their community status.

The Centre pharmacy was stocked in basic medications by a Pan-American Health Organization project, allowing for a small revenue to be generated. A foreign volunteer / social activist, affiliated with Doctors Without Borders ("Médicin sans Frontières"), had provided medical services to the Centre which, in turn, generated other funds for self-sufficiency. This Doctor had also linked the Centre with the European Union, producing the neighbourhood water project mentioned above, besides other humanitarian assistance.

Table 6:
External Funding and other Key Activities in the Community: 1992-1997

	1992-94: Post *Coup d'état*: Intnl. Embargo of Haiti	**Oct 94-1995: Constitutional Gov't (Aristide) Returns**	**Dec 1995-1996: Préval Gov't Elected**	**1997, Jan-Aug: (Research Period)**
Physical Projects	- Start Centre; Rent space, move into Centre (get furniture, paint and so forth.)	- Garbage Proj. (CHF) - bridge (FCIL) - wholesale store	- Sewing co-op. - 1st water fountain - street clean-up - new soccer field (not completed)	- New Centre (Canada + EU: $200 K). - 2 additional water fountains.
Organizational Events	- Members' personal contributions - Statutes signed; recognized (94) - Pharmaceuticals from WHO/PAHO - Volunteer Doctor (national and international)	- Community Animation (megaphones) for clean-up and health Centre - Community-store opens - sports/soccer club - club-des mères	- Micro-credit - Community Water Committees (GRET) Direct CAMEP payment - Brick-project (proposal accepted) - Popular Orgs. mtg. regularly.	- Weekly popular organization and water meetings (at SOLAM) - Crisis: accounting, leadership, control - Health Centre staff mtgs. - External Intervention for conflict resolution **(External Funds Frozen, Aug. 97)**
External Funding (micro-projects)[22]	WHO/PAHO (drugs); CRESFED (local NGO)	USAID (CHF); EU (Assodlo); Canada (FCIL); Belgium (micro-credit)	Eur.Union (GRET, Assodlo); Canada (FCIL); Belgium, other	Eur.Union (GRET, Assodlo); Canada (FCIL+ other); Belgium, other.

Abbreviations:

Assodlo:	Haitian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), funded by US, Canada and others.
CAMEP:	Metropolitan Water Authority (Port-au-Prince)
CHF:	Co-operative Housing Foundation (US-Funded NGO)
CRESFED:	Local Haitian Social-Services NGO (S.Castor/G.P.Charles)
EU:	European Union (Official International Development Agency of European Parliament)
FCIL:	Fond canadien pour les initiatives locaux: Canadian small project fund.
GRET:	Groupe de Recherches et d'Échanges Technologiques., French NGO
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development (Official Aid Agency of the US).
WHO/PAHO:	World Health Organization/Pan-American Health Organization

[22] All projects under $US 50,000. In the case of Canada (FCIL), under $Cdn 15,000 except New Community Centre (total over $200,000).

A local initiatives fund from the Canadian Embassy (*Fond Canadien pour les initiatives locaux*) financed a number of activities including the construction of a bridge across the dangerous Orphan's Canal, medications for the pharmacy and the community whole-sale store. Contributions from Canada were also made to the new health centre, pharmacy and training centre (the New Centre), including Canadian Armed Forces excavation of the site and engineering and labour costs through a Canadian NGO (CECI). The European Union provided this project with significant construction materials. Also, as noted in Table 6, Belgian and Irish NGOs provided other resources to the Centre.

These various resources for this community, largely attributable to the Centre and its ostensible "success." External donors recognized the Centre's role as the principal health provider, but also as a local development organization. In this later role Centre personnel had what was apparently needed to attract and maintain support from external donors. They knew how to present the "basic needs" of water, sanitation, health care and education. They showed donors the integration and acceptance of the Centre in the community, verifiable by talking to people in the street. They were able to provide financial accounts, records that could be audited externally. They articulated developmentally sound but simply understood project proposals and what the Centre wanted to achieve (in writing!). Finally, they were enthusiastic, convincing, friendly and, seemingly, had democratic leadership. As described in Chapter Three, I was convinced from my first visit that this organization, its leaders, workers and other community members appeared promising. Their success (demonstrated by Table 6) speaks for itself. My own process of discovery, however, moved beyond this healthy

complexion of the Centre and community seen on first viewing, to a more realistic, troubled and enigmatic pallor.

4.2 The Health Centre and Pharmacy

History and People. Having shown the importance of the Centre in the community, I will now focus on the place and people, as seen inside their walls. Aj, the Coordinator, told me that the Centre began in mid-1991 during the "de-facto"period in Haiti (see Appendix A, Background to Haiti). Insecurity during this period was such that the needy and sick lived, more than ever, in fear of seeking the assistance. Aj said that as basic an act as the overt expression of illness might have been perceived or used for retribution against the sick individual or their family. Places that people withdrew for succor associated them politically, which could mean violence or death.

Supported by descriptions by other founding members and workers, Aj, the Coordinator and charismatic leader, told how the Centre started with a group of militants who had left *PUCH*, the Haitian Communist Party. Disenchanted with the party's centralist nature, he and a small group decided to leave the Party to work together at the community-level. They wanted to make a difference, which they did not think they could within the *PUCH*. To be able "to function in their own parishes, not necessarily in the big church," was what they sought. I thought this quite revealing to hear in only my second interview.

Aj and other founding members lived in or on the border of this community, although during this research two of the principals had moved to more affluent neighbourhoods. As they were known in this neighbourhood, Aj said their efforts to help people would start here. Their motivation was simply to realize improvements in basic health for the people in *Espwa*. Of the

founding signatories for the Centre, most made small financial contributions for its existence. They had, what Fullan (1993) called "moral purpose." (p.5)

Eleven out of eighteen signatories had "professions." Referred to later, by one of the Centre volunteers as *"the universitaires"*[Os: 2/7/97], some of these individuals had secondary education or beyond. In the statutes of the Centre, signed in 1994 (Jean-Baptiste, legal documents, 1994) the members included a topographer-economist, a medical doctor, a linguist, a *gestionaire* (manager), a number of school teachers, an engineer and an accountant. Non-professional signatories included a mechanic, a mason, an electrician, a secretary and a *Tiketine* (domestic worker).

As described by Aj, Cp, Os, Ld and others in various interviews at the beginning of the research, and articulated later by Arl as *ede moun nan misèr*, the founders shared a common sentiment to *"assist people living in misery"*. (This will be discussed further in Chapter Five). During the course of this study, however, different understandings within the organization emerged which were indicative of both its operations and its communications, both the ability and willingness to listen both internally and within its community. Individual and collective linkages to the rest of this neighbourhood also varied. Although the founders had perhaps begun together, they had since diverged.[23] Table 7, *Main Characters By Order of Appearance*, characterizes the key organizational and major study informants, some already been mentioned above. The Centre employed an administrator, a pharmacist, a head nurse, five nursing auxiliaries and a laboratory technician. Originally I thought these employees had been there

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[23] No written empirical evidence proves that the Centre worked, produced and involved its community in a significant fashion from 1993 until 1997. This is all taken on the basis of interviews with principal informants. This durability, however, in whatever form is significant for Haiti.

since the beginning of the Centre, learning later that many were there only a year.

Centre activities within the community, included a community wholesale food store, a micro-credit facility, a sewing cooperative, the beginnings of a brick-factory and the New Centre, mentioned previously. The Centre volunteers and workers were also involved in these other extra-Centre and other community enterprises and associations.

Table 7
Main Characters By Order of Appearance

Character	Description
Aj: The Leader	Founder and unequivocal leader of the Centre. Ambitious, militant with clear perceptions of people's behaviour and needs: "people needed to be busy." Discourse of participation, was centrist and controlling.
Cp: The Calm	Omnipresent at the Centre, living nearby. Stalwart of the community. Recorded events with the Centre's camera. Pioneer community animator, helped people calmly. In Aj's inner-circle.
Ab: The Doctor	*Blan*, Creolophone, French doctor, worked in other hot-spots, linked to social movements. "Everything is political." Credo: "confidence, willingness and exemplary... Reflexion."
Arl: Mas-ti-pèp	Administrator, clever, educated, non-imposing, apolitical, frail. Man of the little people. Articulated the Centre's values: *"ede moun nan misèr."*
Os: Energy:	Community water animation team. Energetic volunteer. CP side-kick.
Cle: The Sage	Pharmacist, gentle, kind, shy, always there.
B: The Disturbed	Originally Aj's right-arm, once a volunteer and militant, became a bureaucrat. Insecure, befuddled, politically ambitious, angry at his rejection by Aj.
Prt: Left Behind	Always at the Centre. Original animator, frail and sick. Suspicious of voodoo.
StH: Gentle Healer	Nursing Auxiliary. Gentle, kind, sleepy-eyed, gained people's trust.
LD: The Brother	Aj's younger brother. Critical of Aj's actions and domination.

The Open Door. The Centre's physical characteristics openly exposed its many possibilities; it made donors feel good. Repeatedly touring the Centre, I became increasingly aware of the environmental context of community learning. In my notes I reflected on the "noisome" slum seen, smelled and heard on first entering this *bidonville*, on the way to the Centre and the sensory overload which initially inhibited my ability to easily detect notable community sites or landmarks. This changed on entering the Centre.

A comparatively clear demarcation from its outside environment, the Centre's metal black garage-size gate-wall, typical of store-fronts in Port-au-Prince, shut-out the street. In the middle of this garage-wall was a room-size door which, unlike other ubiquitously closed doors, almost always remained open. Invariably, upon entering, visitors were greeted warmly. Stepping down, across a narrow concrete curb and through the entrance, was an escape from the flurry of activity outside. There was a sort of calm. This figure-ground juxtaposition from the outside environment (Weick & Westley, 1996) made the Centre different. Figure 2, *The Health Centre and Pharmacy* represents this place diagrammatically. The Centre's Coordinator, Aj, remembered my previous brief visit, two years after being first introduced. I would later see him greet representatives of other agencies similarly, establishing a rapid personal relationship usually mutually sought. Our process of casual reacquaintance revolved around references to my colleague ("gatekeeper- informant") from the Embassy. My colleague was one of the Centre and community's principal benefactors. (INSERT FIGURE 2)

The relatively uncluttered courtyard, again, atypical of environments in Haitian urban slums, was the first space I entered. Like the Centre generally, the standard seven to eight foot concrete walls provided privacy as well as security, similar to the houses or businesses which

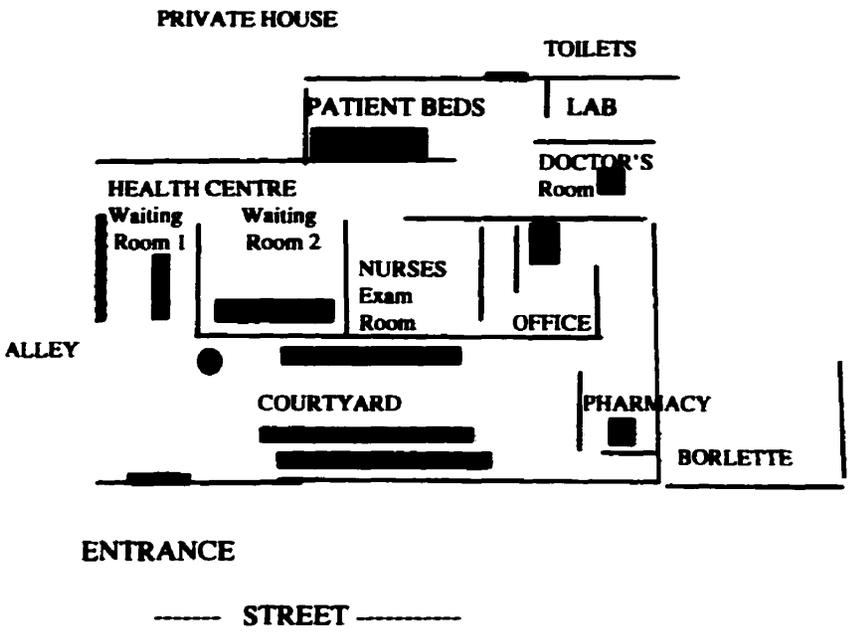

FIGURE 2. *The Health Centre and Pharmacy*

surrounded it. People lounged on the rickety green wooden benches lining the walls, waiting for their friends or family in the health centre. The benches served in the evenings as school benches. In this desert-like neighbourhood, a large tree in the yard providing shade over the corrugated metal roof of the centre. These characteristics provided a secure learning space. The courtyard changed, chameleon-like, throughout the day. During the morning health clinic people sat, often by the hour, waiting for their family and friends. Within hearing and viewing range of the health centre waiting area, people in the courtyard heard the male nurse's auxiliary, StH, call blood pressures and baby's weights to the inner waiting room. After noon, following the Doctor's clinic when the courtyard became quite hot, and until around 3:00 p.m., fewer people visited. The courtyard then became a place for rest or casual discussion. People dropped in to *fè youn ti koze*, sit and have a chat. When the health centre closed, after 4:00

p.m., more formalized learning began with the adult literacy classes, *open* to all. The already illegibly used black-boards on the courtyard walls and benches comprised the school-room infrastructure, the teachers being community high school students. Adults of all ages appeared comfortable in these classes, likely a delightful change with their herculean efforts to make their few daily gourdes. The instructors recited sounds associated with the written symbol-letters and led songs about the alphabet with basic vocabulary. These were usually bible songs, the first and only book people had access to. These classes ended when the tiny kerosene tin-can wicks were lit against the darkness of the Caribbean neighbourhood's night.

The pharmacy of the Centre was diagonally across the courtyard. It was a small dark room with shelves of bottles and jars of all sizes of medical supplies, many with foreign labels. At a desk, facing people as they entered was the pharmacist, Cle. She smiled shyly and gently at me as I saw her do with her clients. Aj explained how most of these supplies were from an external donor, another connection to the outside.

Visitors would be led through the pharmacy into the office, another dusky room with a desk and chairs. A glass shuttered window barely lit the room, but conveniently opened onto the courtyard permitting us to view who or what was coming and going on in the courtyard. Surprising to me, there was a telephone on the desk which worked. Its accessibility to the community signalled to me more efficiency and modernity, different than many other organizations. Sharing was also part of the organization's caché or symbolic allure and part of its learning context. Behind the desk, a green drape partially concealing another smaller desk behind. This rear area was used by Arl for the more restricted-access of the Centre, such as counting money, accounting, the micro-credit project, payroll and payment for medications.

Many of the tools of learning and "trophies" of the organization filled the office. On bulletin boards, cluttered with photos of various and sundry visitors and workers, I recognized Ministers, Ambassadors and representatives of International Organizations (like me). These graphically told the Centre's story. Lined atop of one of the filing cabinets were the all-important megaphones, used for community animation. A rag-tag map, mimicking the community itself, hung on one wall. I later discovered this was the only existing representation of this "unknown slum." This map had been the work of the Assistant Coordinator of the Centre (B).

The office had *"seriousness"* about it [Grp:15/3/97]. It served for the Centre's private exchanges and discussions with important visitors. This is where accounting and managerial functions were performed. For example, the office sheltered the altercation between Aj and B, from the rest of the Centre (a milestones in the Centre's crisis). By contrast it was a place for a serious kind of knowledge and a formal place for learning.

The health centre (starting on the middle left of Figure 2) was divided into six complementary spaces, providing basic health services to this community. Walking through it one first encountered the large outer waiting room where people congregated waiting to have their written records updated further inside. It was here that StH, the nursing auxiliary, gently weighed babies, took blood pressures and in his soft and pleasant manner asked patients general health questions as a first health screening. Never disrespectful, this information was nonetheless publicly announced to another nursing assistance in the second room, who recorded it on the person's medical record. These "records" never exceeding a single page that I saw. The outer room was also where the "club des mères" met with the nurses once a week,

to talk about basic child care. Patients watched and listened attentively and learned about medical procedures in a safe and calm environment.

The inner health centre waiting room was where more detailed personal information was taken, again gently and respectfully, by a nursing assistant sitting at a desk. This prepared people for either a nursing examination, laboratory test, the doctor on the days of his clinic, or possibly all of these. I saw every kind of illness presented. A young man with multiple gun-shots, for example, happened to be present while other Canadian visitors arrived for a visit(the surgery had been conducted elsewhere). There was the entire gamut of childhood or maternal illnesses,[24] with the scariest-looking dermatological diseases apparently the most common. Three mornings a week, the Doctor's clinics packed these rooms with people of every description. Friends and family filled the benches in the courtyard, others waited in the street in front of the Centre. As confirmed with a number of users with whom I chatted, the Centre was known well beyond *Espwa* through word-of-mouth. It filled a wide and critical niche.

The Centre's Organization. The Centre had official state and communal recognition (located in one of four communes in Port-au-Prince), as a *"non-profit socio-community organization."* By statute it was headquartered in Port-au-Prince, but with the possibility of acting nationally to *"improve the conditions of life of the poorest people... in collaboration with organizations sharing this same vocation"* (Jean-Baptiste, legal documents, 1994, p.1). Its vocation was health, nutrition, and *"socio-community development,"* to undertake *"concrete*

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[24]Haiti has among the world's highest infant and maternal childbirth mortality rates (CIFD, 1991).

activities," mobilizing both national and international human and financial resources willing to cooperate. The Centre could receive contributions from its members, sell publications, and seek support or donations from external institutions or individuals for specific projects which, officially, the Centre "approved".

Who made up "the Centre"? Composed of founding members, professional and technical as well as support personnel (listed in that order), it ostensibly had a "general assembly," the ultimate statutory deciding body, which was to meet annually or in extraordinary session. This assembly was to modify its statutes or internal regulations by a two thirds majority vote. An *"internal counsel"* guiding the organization, was to be identified by the general assembly and be composed of founding members and professional personnel. Finally, an administrator was to be responsible for managing all the goods of the Centre and was also a member of this internal counsel (Jean-Baptiste, legal document, 1994).

In reality neither "internal regulations" nor "counsel" existed. From what I was able to gather, since its inception the Centre was run by Aj, the Centre's Leader calling himself Coordinator, working closely with an Assistant Coordinator, B. Together since its inception, they had set up and ensured the efficient operations of all the elements internal and external of the Centre. The Centre's operations were spread throughout the community in a network of good works involving the community. The New Centre, for example, was under constructed just down the street from the existing Centre, eventually to house all existing activities in one improved site. This new space would emphasize community animation and training and, according to Aj, "further integrate the community" into the Centre.

Overseeing the day-to-day activities of the health centre and pharmacy was Arl, the

Administrator. He was assisted by a seemingly endless series of volunteers and old "members," as well as the paid health centre personnel. After my first four months of this research I realized that with a more or less dictatorial structure in place, the Centre ran smoothly. With the exception of the water projects which had their own separate administrations, the other satellite activities of the Centre had community-based personnel as individuals responsible for these activities. I realized over time that most of these other activities were essentially shoe-string operations, with financial control centralized and managed closely by Aj. B assisted particularly with the health centre, pharmacy and micro-credit activities. *Control* of the Centre and its activities rested firmly in the hands of Aj, his signature was literally and figuratively the organization's authority. B was a rubber-stamp.

Time revealed the reality of my original preconception (wish?) that the Centre was a horizontally-managed, community-consensus based organization. Although it integrated many different actors into the activities, they were not involved in the decision making. Chapter Three already discusses how I started with many assumed ideals. This was true, however, not only of this writer, but by many of the funders from the other agencies listed on Table 6, above. The realities of control in the Centre were eventually seen by me and others as one of forces causing a virtual earthquake at this epicentre, eventually pulling the organization apart. By the end of my research, it was indeed unclear whether the Centre would survive. Its crisis was, in part, due to the inability of many players to listen or hear each other. This challenge as well as other important revelations like *mawonaj*, all reveal implications for community learning, discussed in the next Chapter.

4.3 Unraveling the Cloth of the Community.

Like the chameleon spaces within it, I saw this community and its Centre change in my mind's eye over time. When I started this research, this community and the Centre were part of an undifferentiated part of the noisome mass of dinge; they wore an aegis of richly woven "assets." They were a seemingly participatory and well-integrated organization. Lifting and unraveling layers of this intricately woven cloth, I confronted different perceptions. An understanding of the organization's own written documentation differed from the actions of its main actors. Then new, different , powerful actors appeared to change the scenario yet again.

Behind mountains there were other mountains. By the end of this research the Centre's structure and functioning appeared dictatorial (beneficent, albeit) and less participatory. Although resulting in many positive benefits for the community, the question remains whether the actions of the Centre reflected the expressed will of its community, or indeed the community's inability to express themselves coherently. The implications for learning in the community were, I submit, seen in this context of the Centre, with an unreliable and changing content, and with the issue of control and how this impacts on the community's learning looming large.

This above description of *Espwa* and the Centre provides a textured cloth into which many elements of adult learning can be woven. However the research questions posed at the outset asked how the *people in the community* describe their learning and the learning tools of this setting, the "inside"-out reality. As an outside observer, with my own preconceptions and ideas of assets, I mentally constructed ways of describing the many opportunities taken advantage of, or spaces for learning in this environment. This was clearly my language and my

advantage of, or spaces for learning in this environment. This was clearly my language and my understanding.

The learning language of this community, as I heard it, spoke through action. The Centre's primordial role in the life of this community and its citizenry, over a relatively important period of time, can be thought of as a mirror on the community, reflecting the way people of this community viewed themselves. Thus how the organization was structured and functioned provided a glimpse at learning processes in the Centre and elsewhere in the community. More importantly, in both the social and community development learning fashion, people shaped the organization as much as was the converse. The organization needed people to be there for its survival.

The Centre provided many different learning spaces. These learning tools provided calm and security. People of the Centre articulated this understanding in their actions. Their wide implication into the community spoke of their understanding of its assets. Their seeking other assets from their neighbours and associates outside the community also demonstrated their understanding of these learning tools. These multi-functional learning opportunities were seized upon, not only for survival, but for advancement. But there was also the dysfunctional use of these tools. The *control* that disallowed freedom and mutual trust for learning.

The description in this chapter, including revealing some of its assets and liabilities, foreshadows a more detailed unraveling of how the community can be seen to learn through its community organization, enticing the reader into the next Chapter.

Chapter Five
Analyzing Community Learning

"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles."[25]

5.1 Introduction

As I began to show in the last chapter, a community-based development organization in Haiti provides a compelling site to understand a community, by considering the adult learning approaches and processes which take place there. I have discussed how this question is particularly relevant in Haiti, where few institutional learning opportunities are available for the advancement of its struggling people. I then posited that the larger community can be observed through its community development organization, the Centre, as the community's primary health focus, economic development agency and in some ways social forum. The description of the last Chapter worked through some of the layers of my own understanding and perceptions that, with time, discovered a different organization than the one initially perceived. The "instrument" of "self" had to be continuously recalibrated. My first impressions of an oasis or Elysian field in this noisome dinge eventually gave way to the troubled Haitian reality of domination and, even albeit beneficent, dictatorship. Community-based individual and associational assets, although clearly present, with time lost their glow. *Deyè mon genyen mon*; behind mountains there were indeed other mountains.

In this chapter I address if and how the activities and actions of the Centre *made*

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[25] Matthew 9:17.

relevant, conferred meaning, gave value to phenomena which occurred in this community context resulting in this community changing their ideas and behaviour (Uphoff, 1992). The critical assumption for this *community learning* being that the Centre was, indeed, integral to its community. Here I attempt to explain the learning approaches and processes which takes place at the Centre, deducing reasonably, I feel, that these processes and approaches to learning reflect community learning, my larger purpose.

My approach to understanding learning in the community is circumscribed by learning principles for adults, conceptually grounding our inductions on work by Brundage and MacKeracher (1980, pp. 97-116) and Vella (1994, pp. 4-22). Focusing on informal learning, I examine here how the observations made of this community reflect certain of these principles. Finally, in this chapter and the next, I reflect on some of the community's tools or assets, and consider what their presence, with or without their recognition as such, says about the community, its learning and approaches to understanding "community-based assets."

To address the research questions posed concerning the "tools" used by the community for learning, I begin with the learning *context* of the Centre. My grappling with the context evolves in part from Sarason's (1971) consideration of the behavioural setting of schools. The setting of the Centre in this slum neighbourhood, as I described in the last chapter, had an enduring effect on my observations, despite its changing nature. In particular, the context lends itself to discussion of the clear demonstration I saw of *respect, safety, calm* and the various *spaces* of learning, all unspecialized learning tools. Also considered is how *hiding* shrouds this context and delimits this learning.

Hiding lead me to explore the less obvious *content* of learning. This concerned many of the aspects of the Centre which were less accessible. At the same time, *content* is my way of characterizing learning tools such as the *values* of the Centre, and exposing what appear to be *symbols* for the learning of the organization. As with context, I return to the issues of *listening*, *silences*, and *mawonaj* or obscuring the truth, displaying some of the challenges and difficulties of accessing this content.

As this research reached its end, and on my return, there was a crisis in the Centre. The interplay between the various actors and groups, their legitimacy, play for authority and attempted imposition of their will over others raised, for me, the issue of *control* over this context and content of community learning is also discussed, in particular how *external resources* and *power* emerged as issues in the community.

5.2 Context of Learning.

The *context* in which extensions or manipulations of phenomena take place, and the meanings these mental actions confer, are as important as the phenomena themselves (Bernard, 1992). The application of these new meanings to one's immediate environment, the "behavioural setting" of the community (Sarason from Barker & Gump, 1964), seems an obvious place for this learning to take place, or to determine the extent to which people participate in this behavioural setting to learn.

Understanding the process of how a community sees, extends or manipulates its phenomena, perhaps through the recognition or use of its own assets, can be seen as a process of alteration in mental models or learning. Recognition of these learning opportunities and

assisting in providing an enabling environment for them to occur is seen as a "learning" approach to community development as we discussed in Chapter Two. At the most obvious level, insecurity contributes negatively to the physical and emotional well-being of people needed for learning (Brundage & MacKeracher, 1980). *Safety* in learning, however, goes beyond this physiological stress to include the more affective elements of trust in one's peers and leaders (or teachers) to expres oneself through in learning events. *Respect*, such as not being ridiculed, assures self-esteem and acceptance of the self-concept of the individual learner. Trust and confidence in one's co-learners encourages freedom of expression in a non-judgmental environment. Sequencing learning events in a way which is progressive is also recognized to promote safety for learning. The pressing issues of current life, indeed sometimes life saving measures, make immediacy a critical part of adult learning; opportunities are taken in hand as soon as possible. Individual history and collective past-experience integrated into self-esteem and self-concept, is also a recognized help or hindrance to learning.

Collectively, the physical, emotional, social, cultural context, internal and external pressures, all act on the ability of adults to learn. Shared meanings on these parts of the collective learning environment provide the opportunities or possibly the enabling environment for consensus on the utility of the phenomenon. This group learning can also provide for generosity or other forms of cooperation. Conversely, we are reminded that the behavioural setting can just as easily provide for a dysfunctional or negative learning opportunities (Bernard, 1991).

Safety and Respect. As already described, the Centre was a physically safe haven; it

was a place where people came for succor. Its personnel demonstrated how they recognized and accepted personal or collective histories and current human needs. Mothers came with their children to the clinic. Beyond their immediate needs, it seemed that neighbourhood men came to the centre simply to pass the time. The nurses and the pharmacist, themselves, talked about feeling safer here than they did at their homes. Workers and health centre users spent the necessary time together to understand their immediate reasons for being here, but also tried to understand each others' circumstances. It was a physically safe place for people to learn.

People sat by the hour in the courtyard or the clinic, listening and watching StH and the other nursing assistants call out medical information, the nurses talked to the *mother's club.* People moved through the sequencing of the clinic, being assessed for the necessity of other services. Later in the day other people came for the adult literacy classes, in numbers overflowing the rickety courtyard benches. The nurses spoke of how particular civil turbulence brought more people to the Centre; they felt safe here.

Sitting in the courtyard with Cle, the pharmacist, observing the health clinic from a distance and casually conversing, a mentally handicapped women, called simply *"fou" (crazy-person),* swept quickly in then out of the Centre. Unobtrusive, this woman sometimes lay on one of the benches, semi-sleeping; she was not unlike the many friends or relatives waiting for patients or just passing the time in security. Opening one eye, she peaked at the passer-by, raising her hand in an instant plea. She mumbled. People listening briefly then walked on, treating her with respect, and sometimes with caring, though she never received money that I

saw. Cle said, simply, *"she has troubles... When you have a gourde, you give her a gourde*[26]*."* The gourde, however, was little compared with the compassion and gentle caring she received in the Centre. Back in the street, among her neighbours, she was ridiculed and abused as a vagrant. Within the walls of the Centre she had dignity. People from outside witnessed this difference.

Listening and Language. Cp personified how the Centre respected the time people needed in this community to listen and learn. He recognized people's expressed needs and took the time to understand their motives. He was not alone in this. StH, the nursing assistant, or Cle patiently let people in the community express their pharmaceutical needs. Sometimes, however, these efforts were thwarted by the difficult context of the community as I learned while walking with Cp.

Loud discussion in Haiti signalled ambiguously festive occasions or quarrels. Cp and I came upon such noise which appeared to be an argument in the street directly outside the Centre. I observed Cp's attempts to listen to his own neighbours. He was known by all and, conversely, he appreciated their particular circumstances and understood their experiences and collective history; their obstacles were also his. The dispute we witnessed was between two property owners, both pregnant women, concerning the location of a community water fountain: neither wanted it too near their properties (NIMBY[27] Haitian style). Neighbourhood boys sat and watched from the high concrete walls, women and children listened from

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[26] One gourde equals eight cents Canadian.

[27] NIMBY: Not In My Back Yard.

doorways of surrounding houses, friends, relatives or other various hangers-on loitered. Cp watched and listened attentively, trying his best to catch the subtleties of the dispute, not saying anything.

After about ten minutes, the two women parted, the dispute unresolved. Cp then explained to me how nine hours had already gone into this discussion at the community level, with no decision. With an exasperated smile, he said *"Pa kone tende moun sa'a yo... "I don't know how to listen to my neighbours... It's like they all speak different languages. They come from different places in the country and what they say could mean different things... like 'I will steal something' or even that they want to kill you and you might not know it.*" On another occasion he described the body-width alleys that separated the tiny ten foot square houses: "*Iran/Iraq,*" he said, his reference to this other world so far away seeming comically strange.

Perhaps the most basic element in human communication (Fuglesang, 1982), listening, even if not understanding, provided the respect and safety needed for adults to learn here in *Espwa*. Like the atmosphere inside the Centre itself, the personnel listened as part of how they functioned. These were some of the unrecognized individual and institutional assets, and they provided the context for learning. Indeed, as we will see below, all Centre leadership and workers seemed not to understand this importance to the same degree.

Respecting and sharing "language" creates the myth of equality; this is one of the learning myths imbedded here like in any society (Thomas, 1989). Although seemingly trite that learning depends on communication, like the act of listening, sharing of language at the Centre communicated dignity, the intellectual safety and respect needed to communicate.

Creole was the institutional language of the Centre and its community, even though French and English represented external power. Although sometimes stumbling in my own Creole, the Centre personnel gently and unspokenly insisted that this was the only language used here, waiting patiently for me to reformulate or repeat what I had tried to say. Sadly, I witnessed few examples in two and half years in Haiti when this basic respect and recognition was shown to other communities (or Haitian organizations), particularly by foreigners. But, though not directly spoken about, the Centre personnel demanded this respect, Creole was this community's language.

During the Centre's organizational crisis (described below), the linkage between respect and language became even more striking. In meetings which involved the Centre workers, people from the community and foreigners, the founding members (the *universitaires*, as they were called) spoke French, perhaps to impress the foreigners. All others in attendance consistently used Creole. This disrespect was never witnessed among the many other volunteers, workers or leaders of the Centre, some of whom clearly could also speak French and who had many opportunities to diminish their co-workers or community members.

Calm in a Storm. As previously mentioned, the atmosphere in the Centre was distinct, there was calm. The other *spaces* in this centre, the courtyard, the nurses anteroom or the office, were also striking in that there was order and relative quiet, enabling people to see the world differently. Aj once had defined a *bidonville* as a mass of population living in a small place, with no water, latrines or park-spaces, and frequent robberies and murders. Not a park, the Centre was a field of calm, a gift to the community, an "asset." Other militants spoke of the

"quiet, consistent resistance" of the Centre's origins against the military during the Coup. *"Slowly, patiently and quietly"* it had won the battle for this space; he and his *"comrades"* kept coming back and eventually the military left them alone. This set the tone, it seemed to me, for the actions of the organization.

After a particularly difficult period of civil distress (riots, burning of tires, smashing cars), I had asked the Centre nurses how people reacted to the ongoing violence. Visibly uncomfortable, they giggled looking nervously around and then at each other to see who, if anyone, would reply. In a shy way they told me how more people came to the Centre during these difficult times, often to simply sit there quietly. Like the nurses themselves, I noted, people from the community did not talk specifically about the violence in their lives, but found solace at the Centre.

Besides this respect, the manner in which people treated each other here included "professionalism" and caring that the health workers valued and spoke about. These were elements of this space of calm. They provided the physiological opportunity, the choice, the enabling environment to learn. That something special was happening here could be seen in the adults arriving for the literacy classes in the evenings. They had a kind of reverence for the Centre, some wearing their Sunday hats, quietly awaiting their volunteer teacher.

While the Centre was a quiet orderly place inside, while a foot outside the metal door on the street one re-entered the cacophony of people, traffic and the frenetic commerce of survival. One day a woman yelled from the street, pointing at the nurses in the Centre, in complaint about the price of a bandage for a young boy's head, which had trebled in price (the

nurses, I was later told, were running their own informal dispensary and raising prices), but this angry woman did not enter. In the same way it was right beside the outside wall of the Centre where the women argued about the water fountain; neither they nor their argument came inside. The physical altercation in the Centre's office between Aj and B in the office, one of the milestones of the organizational crisis, was contained by a certain sanctity inside the Centre. As StH the nursing auxiliary put it, *"calmly we will go far."*

While I saw this calm and order as an asset for community learning, it could be seen differently as an ironical attribution of Aj's controlling dictatorial orientation, his control. Either way this order provided for sequencing of learning events in the Centre in a way users were able to grasp and build on them, such as the way the health centre was physically organized for people to follow a process. Similarly, organizing events in the community provided order: planning, preparing and executing activities within the community water committees and other activities outside the Centre, all involving the Centre personnel, demonstrated this sequencing and how it allowed for learning.

Hiding. As I described above, the characteristics of the Centre provided more physical safety and security than many of the homes of those concerned, particularly during times of civil strife. It was also a place of refuge for the mentally and physically ill. But I also discovered by the nurses' reaction to my questions about violence, that people found refuge and relative safety in many different ways, or *hid* here at the Centre. We recall here an important element of the *context* of learning, discussed briefly in Chapter Three, the cultural phenomenon of *mawonaj.* Formerly hiding from slave-owners, *mawonaj* signified verbal obfuscation or

obscuring the truth. It was also the traditional peasant practice of maintaining a low profile and avoiding being noticed (White & Smucker, 1998), or a lack of absence of confidence in others, whoever they are (M. Josué, personal correspondence, 10/3/98). With a mischievous knowing smile when I originally asked about interviewing people in the community, Aj had told me: *"no problem, but... (expect)... a lot of mawonaj."* He was saying not to believe on face value what people told me in this community's context. *Mawonaj* created a shield of protection or avoidance of the real context. People lacked the trust and confidence to express themselves freely. This important cultural phenomenon presents difficulties for learning. People felt threatened and had developed these tools to deal with the situation, although inadvertently perhaps reinforcing the *status quo*. Thus, although the Centre appears to have had the relative assets of safety, respect and calm as part of the context of learning, it is also true that by *obscuring the truth* or *mawonaj*, the *content* of learning was also delimited in these spaces of calm. It is this content I will discuss next.

5.3 Content of Learning.

I have attempted, to this point, to show how the learning context of the Centre had functional elements, as well as dysfunctional or delimiting elements for learning in this community. This section will move to extend this discovery to a different plane. After a certain period of research, the Centre activities, actions and "voices" as I heard them, seemed to me to reflect and respect the needs and values of *Espwa*. The Centre used as the community's mirror. Here I address the research question concerning how the tools of the community organization were employed and what this means for adult learning in the community, in other

words whether the learning was appropriate or functional for this community.

Mawonaj, comedy and silence. As explained above, *Mawonaj* or *"hiding from the truth"* was part of both the context of *Espwa*, this community, and Haiti itself. People created false stories to protect themselves from injury or, alternatively, to increase opportunities for personal gain. This phenomenon posed a challenge not only for the content of what people learned, but how this content could be understood, particularly by an outsider, as discussed in Chapter Three. In Haiti, inside this neighbourhood and at the Centre, people created a difficult verbal and sometimes silent shield. Like Goffman's (1959) "Front"-stage (p. 22), Haitian proverbs remind us that beyond the mountains you see there are other mountains, ironically used in multiple contexts with different meanings.[28] Indeed, the internationally known Haitian art form known as "marvellous-" or "magical-realism" speaks to the creation of this same artificially or mystical constructed reality, showing many fabulous layers of a human community nested inside the branches of a tree.

This research as well as my other work in Haiti repeatedly reinforced this impression of people "creating" stories. Alternatively, as in the context of calm, situations were often such that people avoided talking at all; seeming to simply "shut-down" or become *silent*. A perhaps different category of hiding or avoidance was observed in the Centre personnel I saw every visit who consistently appeared to avoid eye contact with me. I was reminded repeatedly of the importance of different understandings or passing through different lenses, valuing these

[28] Besides signifying the many layers of understanding, or deceptions, it is also used to mean that there will be revenge (coming from behind the mountain) for a certain act.

variances with respect to their individual contexts (Putnum, et al., 1996). Nevertheless, the different meanings of these actions were unclear; people were foregoing the opportunity for shared understanding in this process of ostensible self-protection. This reflection of dysfunctional learning became profoundly important to understanding the community organization and its role in community and for community learning.

Regardless of personal or cultural foibles or honest virtuous intent, I witnessed significant *Mawonaj* in Aj's world. At the outset it had been difficult to understand what he was telling me, perhaps too much information, I thought. Eventually telling him how confusing the content his descriptions had been for me (about what was happening in the community or who was who), I received only a nod. Aj neither confirmed nor denied tacitly intending to obscure his description of what was taking place. I was left with *silence* and a blank stare. Agreement or consent, in my culture, I thought. Reticence to communicate what he felt or thought (in particular about the "crisis" in the Centre). Not always carefully constructed, retrospectively these deceptions were nevertheless a screen of obfuscation through which the Centre could only be viewed from the outside.

It was unclear, even his closest friends and colleagues agreed, whether Aj knew what he wanted for the Centre or community. He pretended to be a simple *ti-pèp*, one of the *"little people"* that he had warned me would lie, only the consequences of his *mawonaj* were grave. By the end of the research period, he had resigned and was largely estranged from the Centre. Despite many external efforts to reconcile his role with the different factions of the Centre, it did not appear possible to get beyond this obfuscation or hiding; confidence appeared to be all

but lost with the truth.

Mawonaj was experienced on a number of levels in the community. B, the Assistant Coordinator, told me many things that I found later to be false. He was, it seemed, somewhat confused, but also protecting his personal interest (thought by Aj to be personal gain and power). Smiles from B and others felt sometimes tell-tale, though likely unfair to assume broadly. What first appeared to be altruism and dedication by the newly formed neighbourhood water committees disappeared when money and control became more apparent. The nurses were found to be running a parallel pharmacy, charging twice for injections. There was a epidemic of chronic deception.

At the same time *mawonaj* was, indeed, protection. Haiti's reality was life threatening. This was a learned strategy of survival. In the same manner as play-acting, people possibly used *mawonaj*, I assume, to communicate like comedy or silence. While discussing the difficulties of communicating with people in the community, Aj recounted how he had played *le comedien* (the comedian) for the community.[29] Convincing community members and other *organisations populaires* (neighbourhood organizations) about what he considered were significant issues, he had placed a tire around his neck using the macabre symbolism of *Père Labrun* (popular lynching using burning tires). He would then speak about working together, the Centre, community water or other activity. A sure way of getting attention; symbolic and dramatic. The content of this act, however, may well have been lost through this technique of

[29]Although not referring to Graham Greene's (1966) novel of this title, which caricatured the Duvalier era in Haiti, I often felt there was tremendous verisimilitude in this title.

control over people's attention. Ensuring that learning content is convincing does not include a macabre death option.

Although not always as dramatic, there was other play-acting to deliver learning content, which I witnessed in the Centre. Cultural accommodations for dealing with difficult issues, play-acting and particularly humour were devices commonly practiced. Animators *played the fool* in order to get their points across; their speeches making people laugh. They recounted how people howled at them hilariously at their initial mumblings through their megaphones, which I could easily imagine. Eventually, however, these tools allowed them to transmit messages about health, garbage or the Centre. They had understood their context and used the organizations tools to transmit content.

Silence was also a common register of communication. As described earlier (Chapter Three, Methodology), the myriad of meanings from consent to contempt, included also the precarious silence of rage between two people in Haiti. Deference and diffidence were also represented by silence as were individual and collective fear, as revealed in the discussion with the nurses about violence. Silences among or between many users of the Centre, at times seemed simply healthy, restful and calming. For the people sitting in silence sometimes for hours, silence seemed to allow for reflection; it respected their needs. *Mawonaj, comedy* and *silence* are all culturally loaded. They all have their own codes or registers, represent collectively ways of learning, but also distort and raise many questions about content.

Spaces for Learning. The Centre was physically described in the last Chapter. Its physical boundaries, the spaces they circumscribe, the use and the control over these spaces all

served many separate learning functions (recall Figure 2 in Chapter Four, *The Health Centre and Pharmacy*). Users were shown the meaning or at least the technical purposes of the internal Centre spaces. The office was a formal, kind of didactic place, as were the examination rooms, laboratory and doctor's office. Accounting, management, technical and clerical activities of organization and all the possibilities of what can and does happen in a place in an office were demonstrated. As such, it was held it in certain reverence.

Looking more closely at the content of the office, moreover, we can possibly see how the community might have learned its myths, its symbols and reinforced its values. On each return visit, I increasingly observed the various "trophies" and technologies of the organization like the photo-cluttered bulletin boards, the megaphones, the community map, or the filing cabinets, themselves filled to overflowing with the Centre's paper-trail. The content obviously painted a picture of the Centre's community solidarity; residents were represented in the photos and activities represented here. The office also represented action and efficiency, with its telephone and manual typewriter, showing the purposiveness of the Centre's leadership as well as how the community might see them. Certainly, the office represented how the leadership wished the Centre and community to be seen by foreign donors.

Others spaces, such as the courtyard, the pharmacy, the health centre waiting rooms and other parts of the health centre, or the many outer reaches of the Centre (like the roof of the sewing cooperative, and *magasin communitaire* also used for community meetings), all had formal and informal wide ranging learning activities. These were technical, production oriented, as well as social spaces. These variously promoted different individual and group

exchanges of sets of information, appropriate and meaningful, allowing for interpersonal confrontation, observation of the health centre and pharmacy and the myriad of comings and goings in the Centre.

Megaphones. As indicated previously, one of the Centre's first projects was a community solid-waste (garbage) clean-up project (see Table 6, Chapter 4). Mounted with the personnel of the Centre to mobilize the neighbourhood, this project created revenue through the labour intensive work of clearing and cleaning the Orphan's Canal and other piles of *fatra* (garbage) which made the tiny neighbourhood passages inaccessible. Using megaphones for community animation, Prt and Cp were the first to promenade through the neighbourhood, gaining attention, recognition and informing people about what the project was planning to do.

Above, I characterized the playfulness and laughter-filled descriptions of these early attempts at community animation. Aj said community people thought they were crazy (*fou*): "nothing worked" here, he had been told. Resulting from no continuity in previous community activities there was no faith in their actions. Despite *"not knowing what to say,"* Cp explained how he and others started by mumbling, at first, and eventually with practice became "expert" animators. Indeed, by the end of this research I witnessed Cp and others from the Centre teaching water committees from other communities these skills.

The megaphone and animation that went with it, like the role of *comedy* as described above, had obvious success and had taken on special meaning. Not only had they learned by doing with their own communities, they had become teachers of others. Megaphones in hand, people were led in songs, composed by the animators, that spoke of their joint struggle (see

Appendix D, *Chant*, for an example). These songs and the megaphones created spaces for learning. People came together in joint purpose (sometimes with gentle humourous persuasion) in ways which made them comfortable and were socially risk free.

These techniques were also used in the adult literacy classes as well as the training and information sessions for community water committees. Meetings often started with a prayer, the oldest woman in the crowd used her moral authority to have people *"lower their heads!"* Animators then lead people singing, simply, about organization and helping themselves. At such meetings, like the one in preparation for an official opening of the community water fountains, the megaphone sat on the table, like a judge's mallet or possibly a religious icon on an altar. The presence of the megaphone trumpetted that the whole community was involved. It gave symbolic meaning to the information shared. From the first animation activities, considered *fou,* the megaphone had evolved to being a content-full icon and tool of community organization.

Like a School. Vt was soft spoken. A founding member of the Centre, he visited the Centre about once a week since he lived in the neighbourhood. One of the original militants to start the Centre, with Aj his name figured on the legal papers of the organization (Jean-Baptiste, personal correspondence, 1994). Looking around him at the courtyard, pharmacy and health clinic, he nodded his head. For him it was *"a school."* It seemed cliché to me how easily Vt tossed off this expression, sitting as we were on the benches for the evening adult literacy classes. This was too obvious. Perhaps it was in my explaining my attempt to understand how this community learns, or perhaps using the word "learning" in my

Créole/French terminology *(apprentisage communitaire)* that made him take up his use of "school." This term nevertheless was used repeatedly and resonated broadly for Vt and others at the Centre.

Vt's "school" image was heavily value laden in a positive sense, as it was for Haitians generally (Barthélemy, 1989). Things happened in and around the Centre, he said. Workers and the community all learned so much here. The community's needs were addressed with adult literacy classes and the "mother's club"at the Centre. Nurses educated people in early child health and distributed folic acid and other vitamins during their home visits. Vt's "school-like" nature of the Centre also considered the animation in the community, reinforcing his image. The Centre was respected and, perhaps had the discipline and order that went with this school image, like its welcoming open door and open literacy classes.

Things Written. Appropriately, at the "school" of the Centre, there were many direct and indirect references made to the importance of writing and literacy. Haiti's overall literacy rate was between thirty to forty percent (IADB, 1995). The second time we met, Aj presented me with a text he had compiled on book-keeping for community organizations.[30] Despite his ability to express himself in writing, Aj was not boastful. He did, however, place considerable value on the ability for people within the organization to write. A status-symbol, particularly for women (Barthélemy, 1989; Comité Inter-Agences Femmes et Développement, 1991), the importance of writing was reinforced in various ways. On at least three separate occasions Aj smiled broadly recounting how Cp could barely write when they had started working together

[30]This text is not cited here, respecting the agreed upon anonymity for subjects.

and how, in changing this, Cp's self-confidence had improved (although he had been pushed). Aj was not alone doing this pushing. One of the important external benefactors to the Centre said to me, expressing the anecdotal nature of the Centre to the larger picture of development in Haiti, *"if you do not write you do not exist"* [JR: 3/13/6]. This emphasis on writing is also not surprising given the values of this principal partner/funder of the Centre, being a research organization. Clearly, these outside influences placed still further emphasis on the written word.

Despite its importance, however, writing also had ambiguous symbolism in this oral culture. Written in a legalistic French, bearing an official seal, the statutes of the Centre seemed irrelevant when they appeared for discussion at a meeting during the organisational crisis. Curious, I thought, that after six months of visits these papers had not surfaced previously or been discussed with me. They were also unknown to other individuals intimately involved with the Centre. More *mawonaj?* Although handled with respect by the community members and Centre workers at the meeting, these formal papers were systematically ignored once glanced at. Attempts by other external interveners to focus the discussion with Centre workers and community members around these statutes were unsuccessful. By contrast, the *universitaires* and external interveners (like me) thought these written documents could be used to resolve the problems. The "insiders" of the community and the Centre, for the most part, neither learned nor recognized themselves on paper.

Helping Values. Health, reading, writing, and water were some of the important themes for people that emerged in my discussions in the Centre and its community. ***Ede moun***

nan misèr ("helping people in misery") was how Arl, the Centre's day-to-day administrator, expressed the Centre's values. His wide-brimmed straw-hat, worn by street cart-pushers known as *zombies*, demonstrated his empathy for the poor and disenfranchised. He shared many of their problems and was always kind and respectful to Centre users and other workers. One of Arl's university friends, a member of one of the "clans" making up the Centre personnel and volunteers, had initially brought him here. Fun loving, almost always good humoured even buffoonish at most times (more *comedy*), Arl became serious under the pressure of the many concurrent activities at the Centre, or when counting money. Arl's ability to write and administrative skills were a recognized asset. Hired oOriginally as the financial administrator of centre, although never formally designated as such, he also made an effort to manage the Centre, like presiding over health staff meetings. It was clear, however, that Aj and B were the titular leaders as they firmly controlled the Centre's finances.

Sitting on a courtyard bench in the late afternoon, before the literacy classes began, we discussed the Centre, his work and the challenges it faced. When I asked why he had come to work here, his manner changed. He lost his silly mocking smile, suddenly becoming quite serious. *Pou ede moun nan miser, "to help people who are living in misery,"* he said confidently. After repeated this phrase slowly there were silent stares between us for a few seconds. Since I had to leave almost at the same moment to attend a community meeting with his colleagues, the conversation ended. But Arl watched after me. It seemed he wanted to ensure that what he had said registered its special importance.

I learned many things from his sort of sly, off-handed way. Between the lines, he

seemed to be saying "I am a simple poor person working in a slum," and then, sometimes with a special twinkle in his twinkle in his eye, he spoke volumes. Arl articulated and represented what I understood as one of the values of the organization. Quietly and calmly he went about helping people in misery.

Suggesting this theme to other workers, as well as Aj and B, *pou ede moun nan misèr,* it was acknowledged quietly, like a mantra. Like Vt and the use of the word "school" for the Centre, I wondered if I had made it visible or given it to them, or was it theirs all along. Regardless, it became theirs and captured for me what sometimes seemed obvious. Arl, though, had known it was important for me to hear it.

Content of Crisis. In contrast with the calm of the Centre, its organizational crisis of power and control altered my perception of what had previously been seen in this community and the Centre network through the first four months of the research. The *"quiet resistance"* of the founding members which, in some minds, permitted the Centre's development, appeared to also represent their resistance to change the *status quo.* This conflict of values from those outside versus those inside the Centre, revealed how different adult learners, founders, leaders and workers, dealt with change. The organizational crisis also showed different capacities and willingness to listen to the community. Table 8, *Crisis Event Summary*, lists the main events which lead to a rupture within the organization.

The circumstances of this crisis and the roles of individual characters would lend themselves well to a small novel in their richness. Ironically it was this crisis which opened up to my viewing a whole new "mountain range" of the organization and its Community.

Personalities, values, groups and their hierarchies within the Centre and the community showed many real possibilities and problems which assisted learning or made it dysfunctional.

Table 8
Crisis Event Summary: June - August 1997

Date	Description
June 1997	Canadian Minister officially opens New Centre. Centre Assistant Coordinator (B) indicates there are financial and control issues within Centre. Coordinator (Aj) blames problems on B. Open conflict and altercation at the Centre between Aj and B.
July 1997	Previously un-seen founders (*universitaires)* emerge to defend B, accusing Aj of dictatorial approach. Meeting outside community (at Canadian Embassy) verbally pits *Universitaires* versus Aj and ignore Centre workers and volunteers, snubbing long-time residents. Aj unofficially resigns provoking letter from Centre workers indicated strong support for Aj.
Aug. 1997	Large Meeting at Canadian Embassy brings together founding members, workers, volunteers, neighbourhood groups (see Fig. 3) together with external conciliator. Divisions obvious in many areas; decision to meet again in smaller group. External funds frozen from to Centre on basis that "Administration" unrepresentative of community. Small group (founding members) meet with conciliator agreeing to second meeting (which does not take place). Research period ends.

Recounting the elements of this crisis as simply as possible, my intention is to try to explain the levels of understanding in the Centre and in this community. Aj, the Leader, had broken away (or was hiding) from his and the Centre's connectedness to its original founders. He personally engaged the Centre's resources in a variety of activities and had systematically excluded many of the Centre founders (*universitaires).* Instead, Aj's new "clan" of animators and workers who were actively engaged in the community water projects, had become increasingly influential in the neighbourhood. They held a caché of success and had branched out into other community activities.

B, the assistant Coordinator, had drifted apart from his former close collaboration with Aj, associating instead with the *universitaires.* As financial co-signatory for the Centre, he claimed that he had been systematically excluded from activities of the Centre (the New Centre, the Brick Cooperative, among others). Their increasingly dysfunctional relationship came to a head over a financial disagreement. Despite their complete absence from the community, the *universitaires* then stepped in, insisted on "statutory" decisional authority and supportive of B, to which Aj refused to cede.

Aj's denunciation of B's incompetence, mostly about B's confusion and bad financial management, resulted in a physical altercation (B crossed the line by using Aj's mother's name in vain). This scuffle led to a veritable *blokus,* ("traffic jam"), Aj no longer co-signing B's cheques and vice-versa, for the activities of the Centre (salaries, supplies, and so forth, were affected).

The financing and control over the New Centre became an important parallel problem. Aj's credibility and work with external donor representatives, like me and the organization I represented, had unquestionably been the impetus behind the construction of this New Centre. Aj's inner-circle, community members (supportive of Aj) and the now powerful local water committees (the GRET-Aj team) were very supportive of this part of Aj's activity. The *universitaires* and B believed the New centre to be simply an extension of their authority. It appeared, in this sense at least, the crisis was a grab for money and control by the *universitaires.* In turn, they attributed the Centre to unreasonable control by Aj. I believe there was a further human element in B's seeming need for inclusion in Aj's clan.

Thus a combination of status, hierarchy as well as administration and organizational governance, the Centre's crisis revealed how the community had opportunities to learn to negotiate around the different value systems. The crisis made these more obvious and open than had been possible to observed previously. Despite *mawonaj,* obfuscation, hiding, stories changing on all sides and blatant misrepresentations, these were finally openly challenged, ironically, by what seemed at times to be equal and opposite prevarications.

Levels of Listening. Besides control of the organization, the different approaches between the *universitaires*, the Centre leadership, workers and community people (not to forget the external complicating factors like my own presence) became obvious not only in their taking different sides during the crisis, but in their use of language. At a meeting my Embassy colleague had arranged to bring the main parties together (See Figure 3, below), awaiting the arrival of the *universitaires*, Os, a community animators, comically described how the *universitaires* had not only rarely visited the community. Worse, according to Os, they held their noses whenever they came. In the ensuing meeting, the *universitaires* proved his point. They were the only ones to speak in French; all others spoke Creole. Furthermore, when a longstanding community resident spoke very personally about his forty years in the community and how the Centre and Aj in particular had been such a help to the community, one of the *universitaires* looked at me and my colleague and his "clan" and laughed condescendingly. Later still , B informed the meeting that the "salaried" workers at the Centre in particular had no say in its governance, the community people were not even mentioned. To give a sense of the levels of communication and possibly mis-communications, I attempt in Figure 3 (*Who's*

Listening to Whom?) to characterize and list the various clans who participated in the crisis meetings. Even a cursory glance at these subgroups provides exposes their different backgrounds and orientations. The male-female dynamic, discussed in Chapter Three, adds a further factor of the non-representation by the women of the community.

This crisis situation revealed to me how Centre personnel, volunteers and workers, and community residents and leaders learned and re-learned the condescension of hierarchies and control. Eventually Os and others from the Centre had come to the realization that even Aj took too much space, and they needed neither Aj nor B for the Centre: *"de kòk kalite pa ka rete nan menm lakou" (two fighting cocks can't stay in the same courtyard).* Indeed, this was a lesson in empowerment for them, and a restatement of the struggle and importance of resistance and militancy within their own ranks and at other levels. It provided them the opportunity to change their mental models.

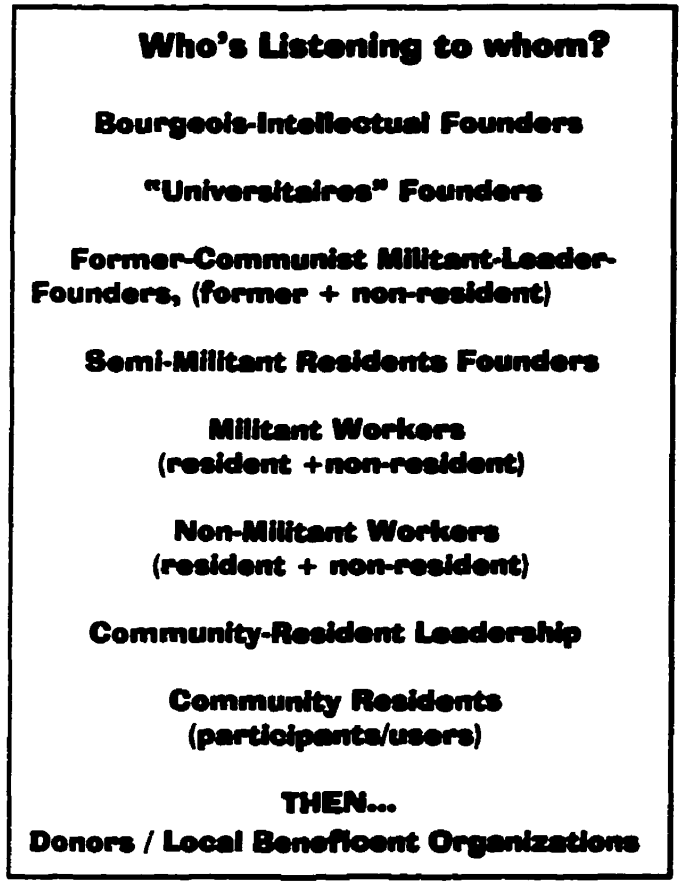

Figure 3. *Who's Listening to Whom?*

The workers and people of the community were able to learn through this experience about the process of understanding and dealing with conflict. The Centre had shown them this before, but

perhaps never so clearly. The various "depositions" at the meetings to resolve the crisis vividly revealed the game of cat and mouse between the various interested parties. The environment and the events allowed the witnesses to measure the validity of their personalized constructions of the various actors and the organization, and confront these. As already mentioned, this process allowed Centre personnel to be able to manage without Aj or B, or at least realize it was not these individuals exclusively who made the Centre function or do what was necessary for their community.

So typical of Haiti's long suffering history (White & Smucker, 1998), this conflict brought home the contrasts in learning approaches and processes between the society at large with the Centre. The *universitaires* arrived at the "New" Centre one night deciding unilaterally to solder it shut. They had heard about a training course Aj was mounting with community animators. Just in time, Cp arrived as the neighbourhood prepared to lynch these intruders for their action against important community property. Cp spoke to his neighbours and stopped the mayhem which could easily have occurred (the *universitaires* were apparently armed). Could the "calm" learned in the Centre provide a space for "unlearning" the traditional violent and immediate retribution, Haiti's sad legacy? The contrast was profound in some ways. In others the Centre reflected the larger society, such as the issue of control.

5.4 Control of Learning.

A leitmotiv, *control* seems to have been an illusory goal for many in Haiti's past. The vignette of the crisis in the Centre leads logically into this discussion which emerged, sequentially, in the last part of the research. From having seen the context and content of the

Centre change and reveal different forms, through which people seemed to learn, we move to yet another plane questioning essentially who controlled this learning. Less tangibly figure-ground, more symbolic and subtle, control of learning in the community involved challenges of leadership, the roles of various of the players external and internal to the organization and the community, who participates in their own learning and how.

Leadership? To begin, the Leader's value system seemed to play a considerable role in the way the organization functioned. Motivated by what he saw as important, albeit for the people in need, Aj was not an enabler. He admitted not giving the community or his colleagues the time and space needed to develop their own understandings, or to guide their own actions. The Centre and its principal workers and volunteers depended (too much, in his opinion) on his direction, rather than being independent or inter-dependent learners. He believed in immediacy, keeping people busy, in order and he acted with a certain rigidity. The Duvalierist traditions of the *bambouche, bouillon and baton* (the drum for dancing, soup for food and then the stick!) characterized his approach.[31] His father had been a Duvalierist military leader and his own family traditions placed discipline in high esteem. People from those days, he felt, had much to offer and should be brought back into meaningful roles as they understood people and how to get things done.

Aj's controlling attitude was parallelled with what appeared to be real benevolence and his desire to help people in misery. His attitude unfortunately created a difficult environment

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[31]I credit knowledge of the expression of *Bambouche, Bouillon et Baton*, as many others, to my chauffeur ("Bovè"). He often referred to the three B's as being the way that people in Haiti understood. I often used these expressions in my questioning to find resonance which, in this case, was complete.

for others to find respect for their ideas and other values, to direct their own learning. On my return to Haiti when we spoke, he recognized openly the difficulties his own purposiveness had caused. By this time he was no longer working with the Centre, resulting from the ongoing crisis. In the presence of two of his closest collaborators, still associated with the Centre, I asked Aj how he found he had listened to people in the community. He smiled, shrugged his shoulders and made a sort of laughing admission, that he had this *déformation universitaire*, *"trained, but not to listen,"* a "handicap" resulting from his university-trained world-view. Listening to people in the community was a particular challenge, he said. His own training and experience (a communist militant who took refuge during the coup d'état, for a time, in Brazil learning the techniques of popular education with Paulo Freire) created strong conviction and a clear understanding in his mind on how to make things work in the community, although listening was a problem. Like playing *the comedian*, with the neck-lacing, his style of leadership demonstrated a great deal of control.

There were many such examples of this particular contradiction within Aj and his role in the community. Although he professed to wanting the community to take charge of itself, his actions made this far from obvious. He lead every meeting and discussion. While discussing training institutions with another community animator, Ed, when Aj arrived and summarily dismissed what Ed had said. Ed was silent throughout Aj's diatribe of examples of the personnel who had come out of these places and how they were deficient. Only after he left did Ed continue to give his own impressions. (Ironically, I learned later of Aj's proposal to start his own community-based animation centre.)

Even some of his closest collaborators indicated the difficulties confronted by communicating within *Espwa,* like Cp the community animator who found it a challenge to listen to people he saw and heard everyday. But whereas Cp recognized this as a challenge and learned through this process, for Aj it was different. Others thought Aj's ego was in control, not his mind. Os, one of his colleagues, expressed two things: the capacity of the Centre to go on and the importance for people that worked there to listen. Aj had spoken in front of his colleagues about this characteristic of his leadership of not listening. They nodded approvingly to his admission. His style had, eventually, been rejected by the community. The people at the Centre, and the community, may have learned about and rejected this control.

Externalities. It would be impossible to overlook the many manifestations and influences of external financing and agendas which variously tried to control, took or perhaps lost control over the Centre, and thus influenced the content and context of learning there. The issue of writing has been mentioned. The involvement of some of the founding members (the *universitaires*) in the old and New Centre, the involvement of many of the externally funded projects, such as the neighbourhood water project, indeed, my own involvement as a researcher, but also a representative of a donor agency. This would be another study in itself.

Other more subtle issues of external control included language, like the condescending use of French by the former members in meetings with the unilingual Creolophone workers and community members. Issues of *efficiency* and *effectiveness* were raised, for example at staff meetings. Whereas the nursing staff spoke of the importance of *caring* and *time* to take care of people, who were often there for no specific purpose. Nonetheless the agenda which was

promoted by the Centre administration (Aj, and to some extent B) to ensure for "the success" of the organization, demanded *"seriousness, punctuality and professionalism"* [Group: 19/3/97]. Although not conflictual in nature, there was a clear difference in the imposed agenda from the "uppers" (Aj and B) to the community and the Centre (Chambers, 1997).

Recalling again the argument between the two women over the location of their community water fountain, a foreign engineer responsible for these installations, arrived, approached and listened briefly, seemingly trying to understand through the clamour. Cp discreetly told him the problem while the engineer looked at me to share his frustrations (the camaraderie of *les blan*, I thought). The engineer then indicated to Cp that if the location was not decided today or tomorrow the fountain would go into another community. This sword of Damocles did not provide a solution, but changed the learning from Cp's consultative process to that of external power over this local agenda. Like Aj's tires, the agenda was controlled.

Control through Symbolism. My observations and the narrative of people from this community showed many "secular myths, rituals, ceremonies and sagas" (Bolman & Deal, p.244). Knowingly or unknowingly these may have influenced the community structure and the way they changed and advanced in their own terms. Equally and in the opposite direction these symbols might be attributed to developmental regression. The content of particular actions, repeated references to certain things in certain ways by individuals or groups, so-called community traditions, expressed understandings or ways of being are all open to interpretation and together describe symbolic tools. These were how people in this community saw in their minds' eye, and learned or perhaps controlled through their attachments to these

symbols.

Steeped in its history and culture of religiosity, particularly Voodoo, it is enticing in Haiti to jump on an anthropological bandwagon. The symbolic possibilities of narrative and observations are more complex than the facile interpretations and voodoo attributions. Nevertheless, in a myriad of ways, people's actions spoke to the power and control of cultural and cosmic attributes. The tree in the middle of the Centre courtyard, for example, could easily be seen as the *poto-mitan* or central pillar of a voodoo temple. Similarly, there was a story of how a prominent Centre personality, Prt, fallen ill believed himself to have been delivered a curse by someone in another "clan" of the Centre. The sick man (denying he had AIDS) would do anything to avoid contact with the other's hand in fear. I also heard stories of how the community itself started having "troubles" and "problems" only after a certain odd individual in the community had died. The community was rich in mysticism and countless popular myths, requiring however a different focus for their discovery. Megaphones from the Centre, for example, may have started to develop some of this symbolic value for learning.

However, the *control* over the content and the process of learning which seemed to evolve out of symbolic value in the Centre is important to note. As I have mentioned, *militancy, resistance groups* and, to a certain extent, *paying one's dues* were all issues raised by Aj and repeated by many long-standing volunteers of the Centre. This issue recurred repeatedly, emanating from the militant-originators. Their *cellule, clans*, a resistance-group idea, seemed to carry special value and push forward many of the personnel (also cause for the eventual Centre divide). *Paying of one's dues* was recognized (in particular by the

universitaires) by a financial contribution or giving desks, chairs or other related equipment which had been needed at a given time in order for the Centre to get off the ground or, possibly, having been there from the beginning. Salaried workers did not have this status. The issue here is possibly one of control over inclusion and exclusion, related also to the issue of language and mutual respect mentioned above. This sadly resembled God-given rights, patriarchy, observed in general in Haiti. In contrast, but again like Haiti's matrifocal day to day activities, the workers and community members, particularly women, did not assert control over their own environment.

Summary. Drawing on a wide range of observational data to discuss the elements of learning in the Centre and its community, this Chapter started by discussing the *context* of learning, the elements of respect, safety, calm as well as the spaces for learning, demonstrating this enabling environment and these tools and opportunities for adult learning to occur. People were able to learn as a result of these assets of the Centre. Consciously or unconsciously, a propitious context of learning was understood and used. Similarly, through the actions of people, symbols of the organization, articulated values, external resources and through crisis we were able to observe a wide sampling of the *content* of learning in the community. Here again were assets, but we also observed the reality of reinforced dysfunctionality or negative learning, reinforced stereotypes and socially demoralizing behaviors. Finally, we revealed insights into how this context and content was controlled in a manner that also provided learning, but was no means always profitable for the community.

Chapter Six
Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Research

Freedom and constraint are two aspects of the same necessity which is to be what one is and no other.
A. St.Exupéry, *La Citadelle.*[32]

6.1 Introduction

In the 1930's, developing what has come to be known as "the Holy Grail" of Immunotherapy, William Cooney discovered that the human immune system could generate its own protective response through the injection of foreign substances. A recent review of two books on the subject (Frank, 1997) indicates how this discovery was the first of a series of subsequent searches for "magic bullets" in cancer and other medical research. But though this discovery resulted in immense progress, it also led to "trajectories of hype, followed by disappointments and backlash... The immune system does not like lone gunmen" (p. C-2). Another simile from the same article, more to my preference, speaks to the reality of listening to people's stories in a slum in Haiti: "the composition has always been rich, but we are just acquiring the ears to hear its full complexities."

Claiming to understand or be able to "hear" all the complexities of communities defies any one discipline and most certainly goes beyond a single qualitative study in a single *bidonville.* Learning, nevertheless, provides one set of possible filters for what is otherwise undifferentiated noise. To push our musical metaphor still further: this study observed and listened, noted, then applied filters; it attempted to separate the harmonic from the discordant.

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[32] As cited in Bartlett, 1968, p. 1048a.

Not only in the listening and hearing, but in the often stark contrasts I discovered many of the realities of this community. It is these contrasts which will assist me to summarize the findings in this study.

Listening intently or actively is, perhaps, always a challenge. The stories I heard from people in the Centre related to me this community's perspectives. The listening process of their describing their lives and, often indirectly, how they organized their survival presented me with a striking contrast to confront while in my job in this country. A large part of my reason for being in Haiti involved ironically people listening to me. With this research I was finally learning something about that which I was already supposed to know, perhaps less an impersonator. This process of discovery, while working in a glorified position of donor, required special effort not to be overbearing, or even directive, steering the discussion but just a little.

Over the months, this community came alive for me. As they described themselves and what they did, the idea of their learning through their "assets" gained some possibilities for meaning. In parallel, though, I saw and heard differently, starting to develop my own basic understandings of the different, hidden realities. Then, of course, my posting was finished; it was time to leave. At the end I realized that I had become one of their "assets." My role as intervener/reformer/advocate had assisted them in attempting to resolve some of the internal administrative and interpersonal problems.

6.2 *Summary Responses to Research Questions*

Assets and Liabilities. Learners in the Centre used many approaches and processes to make relevant, confer meaning and give value to the phenomena which occurred there, both for themselves and for those in this community, *Espwa*. Consciously or unconsciously, in different or new ideas or behaviour, people changed, adults learned, the community learned.

Figuratively and literally, the tree in the Centre shaded people from the heat and bearing down of the Haitian sun. This figure and ground relationship between the Centre and its community allowed the people of the community to escape, temporarily, their misery but more importantly to see differently. It provided the learning tools of space and calm, respect and safety for people to acknowledge and make relevant its many opportunities for personal and group advancement. It was a propitious context for learning.

As a stockhouse for the community of individual, associational and institutional assets, the Centre provided a place which availed the learning tools of hope. It provided possibilities to view other worlds in which there are choices, ways of being that involved cooperation and collectivity, a social conscience. Helping people become physically healthier, it opened possibilities of changing mental models, to learn through the tools of caring. Humour as well as seriousness exposed people to the values of the Centre, as and when they were relevant and appropriate for them. Family health, community and group organization, administration and accountability, literacy and health education were all apart of "helping people in misery" in a caring way. Each of these areas contains their own subset of learning opportunities which this enabling environment provided for.

People within the community evolved here, in the "school" it was. People in misery were helped, and learned, as did those who did the helping. If *learning organizations* (Senge, 1990) are made up of persons that learn from the organization's diversity, certainly this Centre was that. Like the leader he was, for Aj seeing needed assistance was not a sign of weakness, it was a sign of vitality. Many of these assets, the learning tools of the Centre were, indeed, recognized. Perhaps not verbalized as such, but the positive outlook and dynamism of workers in the face of problems, that were so vast and seemingly insurmountable, spoke volumes. They indeed recognized and used their individual and associational assets. Using these tools they were building their community from the "inside-out"(Kretzman & McKnight, 1993; Wilson, 1996). But people spoke also of their needs. After all, it was these needs that donors and beneficent organizations wanted to hear about and address (Rifkin, 1986).

Beyond the misery, the Centre also reflected many of the cultural and sociological aspects of Haiti, the deficits which are dysfunctional in many ways for effective learning (White & Smucker, 1998). This was a place of status and dominating hierarchies, showing the continuing patriachy imposed by culture where men are coddled as masters over their domain, reinforced by corporal violence against women and children. There was the petulance of frustration with adjusting to new and ever changing foreign systems of accountability, transparency and participatory governance and the confrontation with "have" versus "have-not" and the constant attraction of power and control. This *control* over learning, negative albeit, was another way the community used its learning tools.

6.3 What Can be Drawn from This Work

Spaces to Hide. Whereas at first I perceived the Centre as open, or at least certainly more risk-free than its ambient environment, this openness was in contrast with how *mawonaj* protected or helped individuals and their families or clans. Hiding hindered learning. Many kinds of *silences* showed these spaces not to be risk-free. However, as a *blan*, the limits of my observer status do not negate these two important elements of observation (hiding and silence), but I do hesitate on any universal or shared understanding of their content.

This *mawonaj,* sadly became an icon for much of what took place in *Espwa* and the Centre. Beyond obscuring the truth, when everyone is concealing their individual realities, their values, their personal and collective histories, it is difficult for these be respected, endorsed and be integrated into the learning of the community. *Mawonaj* worked on many levels in the community and within the Centre. Some of these strategies may have been effective in the short term, like Aj's story above, but fell apart in the long run. Many variations of truth and play-acting existed. One had to listen peripherally. The question remains for me whether as a result of this *mawonaj*, were people in the community able functionally to decipher the important realities, or were they frozen-out not only of information, but of decision making over their own learning? This is particularly poignant for women who often did not speak at all.

My own confusion and difficulty understanding the various realities, albeit from a different angle, may possibly have been equally true for these others within the community. Despite being told, in advance, that lies would be told or that stories would be intentionally or

unintentionally contrived, I was never certain about what was being relayed or what "kind" of truth it might be.

While there was considerable hidden content, the spaces for learning in the context of the Centre opened up possibilities that appeared to be not readily available elsewhere in the community. This distinctness came through in observing its openness as a place and, in general, the relative openness of the workers and volunteers of the Centre. Yes much was hidden, but *grosso modo*, what happened her was different, or at least seemed to me, in a way that was unique perhaps for Haiti. The significance of space for learning can not be underestimated.

Issues of Control. The most complex observed element to wrestle with were the issues of authority, control and domination which emerged particularly through the Centre's crisis. The leadership of the Centre leaving one "political" arena, gained legitimate authority in the community at first glance through their altruistic work. Developing a health centre and pharmacy, they managed various economic development projects, mounted a literacy programme, provided for community water, built a new community Centre and so forth. Through this, they preached their apolitical nature to the community participants. Intentionally or through acculturation, the Centre leadership created *control* by co-opting this altruism and basic shared values into their discourse. Providing for needs, they used the learning tools of the Centre, its workers and community to control politically, using the cause of "apolitical" as their forum. This was a brilliant popular strategy for action over the short-term. Some also learned through its failures that without the inability to *listen* this strategy was fatally flawed.

Donors or other clans, like the *universitaires*, invariably had their own self-serving agendas masked in ostensible altruism. Like a virus, these agendas would make their way in, attempting to attempt to take hold and claim success as their own. Like the body's immune response, unable to live with this domination, the existing community system attempts to overcome this domination through self-destructive measures, in the process destroying their own assets. Having achieved a certain success, the Centre and its community found itself constantly confronting new hills to dominate pushing seemingly huge boulders ever upward. Only, unlike Sisyphus,[33] community learning reduces the weight of this figurative boulder, perhaps making it more manageable with each new effort. That's the learning! The force behind each of these successive turns was the *moral purpose.*

Efforts by those of the Centre to break-away from their political-cultural environment, attempting to be officially apolitical, was in the end, a political act. Leaving the Communist party, becoming health-care militants, withstanding the military junta, avoiding direct implication with other political parties but indeed becoming their own power elite in a social organization, nigh on a movement, placed Aj and his followers in a significant political position. Compared with former President Aristide's rallying the Haitian masses with eloquent Creole demagoguery, or the Mayor of Port-au-Prince's popular balladeering vehement defiance of the political hegemony, the politics of the Centre were sometimes but not always much more subtle. Aj used Creole, and a tire around his head in an his dramatic political act, recognizing

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[33]In Greek myth, Sisyphus was eternally condemned to roll a huge stone up a hill and when almost reaching the summit,the stone would be returned to the plain to begin again. ***Bullfinch's Mythology.*** (1979). (Compiled by Bryan Holme). New York: Viking.

and integrating popular culture to find a way into people's homes. The symbols of health and literacy were part of this movement. Economic opportunity through participation was a part of the Centre's political platform.

Listening. The Centre leadership learned the importance and difficulties of listening in the community context. When effective listening brought to a microcosm of the community the recognition of the reality of power and decisional association with, for example, property. Listening clearly was a part of the importance of the physical space involved. These recognitions are the beginnings of community governance (Paproski, 1993). Although "activity" provided a sort of opium, for how long? "Success" in the absence of listening to their own community was, in some ways one of the organization's failings.

Invariably, it seemed, financial or other success in Haiti were discovered and became an irresistible conquest for a wide range of interested parties. The Centre was not an island; it was a somewhat peaceful valley surrounding by many mountains, looming domination. For Aj, it was the former members, the *universitaires*, and the various donors; for B is was Aj and, it seems political party influences. There were other players, more complex still, and the control these others exerted over the *masse* and *vox populaires* was difficult to assess.

Hope and the Human Spirit. Making sense of crisis, learning and oportunities for advancement lost in a desperate situation, these are all challenges for the rich-white-male outsider to understand. Much of what I observed, sadly, made all too much sense in the Haitian context. *Bondye Bon, "the Good Lord will take care of us,"* was resignation to fate. In a *bidonville* the possibilities for substantial change appear to any observer as limited. Seeing

things fall apart, people continuing to live in misery in the face of ego and hierarchical struggles of the slightly better off, was the rule rather than the exception historically in Haiti, or in this neighbourhood, or its Centre.

On the other hand, paradoxically in this seemingly hopeless situation, no opportunity was lost to advance, particularly for women and their children. Watching adults attend literacy classes in the evenings after their daily drudgery revealed to me that any light, even from that tiniest *"ballen"* candles of *espwa,* hope, shone brilliantly in the gloom that was largely their lives. People in the Centre worked caringly for others who were in misery. The leadership, with all their faults, appeared without blemish. They promoted learning opportunities in what was relative abundance.

6.4 Possibilities for Further Research : Constraints and Opportunities

Distinct Similitudes. Haiti lends itself to allegory. Nevertheless the literature explored in Chapter Two provided ways of understanding how adults here learn. Clearly searching for a way of understanding the Centre challenges conceptual boundaries (Manigat, 1996) but does not defy them. As raised throughout the last five chapters, concepts and ideas of the various literatures provide multiple insights into learning in this community. Again, however, there are no "magic bullets" to understanding. The Centre studied seemed, at first, distinct from most other organizations visited in my two and a half years in Haiti. But here, like elsewhere, money, favours, and gifts were part of my connection to the workers and community members. They knew only too well the dramatic difference in our material resources. They had what Fullam (1993) describes as *moral purpose.* The leaders and workers had faith in what they

were doing, acknowledged and shared values and a certain vision. The learning process was "fraught with tension and conflict, but converge(d) at the point of shared concerns" (Welton, 1993, p.156). There were significant personal and institutional breakthroughs, including in the long run recognizing that the Centre no longer needed their originator, leader, coordintor or assistance coordintor. In itself, this represented a great stride - a change - when observed over a significant period, by individuals who did not have many advantages. They had become empowered through a learning process, almost accidentally.

Observing the circumstances under which this learning occurs, in a larger sense, perhaps allows a glimpse of an indigenous model of development for Haiti. I believe this revealing process of observation and analysis would yield equal results with similar research elsewhere. It is for others, however, to take this possibly anecdotal information further to consider the community level and prognisticate whether this learning (functional or dysfunctional) is representative of a larger phenomenon at other group or institutional levels. The standardized, accepted and approved values by members of this Centre and community may have conformed to a set of behavioural norms, standardized by role and status, particularly by the more powerful and influential members of their group (Brundage and MacKeracher, 1980). These other norms and standards could well serve to be articulated in either further qualitative or quantitative study, beyond the sociology of stratification which exists (Minore, 1986).

Team and mixed approach. As discussed in Chapter Three, my personal experience in Haiti was wide-ranging. A sixth sense, beyond rational thought, tells me that an experienced

native Haitian ethnographer would have seen things differently, though feedback from experienced Haitians concur certainly with the ideas expressed concerning *mawonaj* (M. Josué, personal correspondence, February 25, 1998). Despite these other perceptions, the foreign observer like me provides a critical eye to relay how the larger external forces are at play in a country like Haiti.

Team approaches to this kind of study appear to me advantageous for perspective as well as workload. Iterative studies on the same community, over a longer period would obviously provide further insight by considering the evolution of an institutional over time, in comparison with other local development organizations, possibly characterizing that which is truly local, versus of more national cultural character.

Loops of Intrigue. The *mawonaj*, the hiding, the lying, the silences all beg so many questions. My effort was fitting their hidden stories into my paradigm. There were many complex webs I skirted but could not venture into for my own fears, including the implication of not being able to return to the Centre. My approach therefore was not to take sides in power struggles, and to attempt to suggest options without trying to direct actions, particularly given that these people were so used to taking orders or given direction. Their eyes sometimes stared through mine, however, as if wondering what I was looking for that they could provide, possibly ensuring a longer term or closer connection with me. These were the loops of intrigue, a game of cat and mouse, the researcher and the researched.

It is at this level where, invariably, there is great insecurity or difficulty in this research. There remains always a question in the researchers mind, when returning to write notes

systematically, of what real knowledge one can have of these others. The Self-as-instrument, remains endlessly in reflection. Sometimes as figure, sometimes as ground, but there invariably is the self. The most intense effort is to remember those singular fleeting moments when, disappearing into the woodwork, a sort of sap might have been drawn that was more theirs than mine.

A case study like this shows, in many way, the limits to our understanding. Learning approaches and processes, as a way of understanding adults and their community, is posited here to be as useful a paradigm as any. Clearly additional research would be useful to further articulate this community through its learning.

For example, an approach to community-based assets, in a more systematic way, could be useful to consider the challenge of looking at learning using participatory action research (McTaggart, 1991). It might well involve those directly concerned in defining and then finding their own assets. In the same and parallel fashion, more systematic consideration of social communications would be helpful in understanding the discourse of the community. Although this study touched on the dynamic and scenario of a place, such as this *bidonville*, analyzing their discourse to better understand and characterize the strata in communications involved, might allow people to deal effectively with the possibilities for equality and equity. The paradox, again, is that so much in Haiti is unspoken.

6.5 Closing Remarks

The complexity and inter-woven nature of human interaction naturally defies what always appears to be a reduction. Nevertheless one's human instinct about inter-personal honesty and integrity may be the best indicator that one of the veils has been lifted from this organization and the people of this community by seeing them through this filter of learning.

Some of the realities of Haiti are glaring, others almost invisible. The Centre and its neighbourhood represented and lived with this harshness, but it also demonstrated the possibilities of common advancement. In ironic parallel, Haitian politicians and elite struggled with many of these same lessons, making even less progress. As Gros (1996) reminds us, when there is no cushion, no place to go in the struggle for life versus death, people do not have the luxury to consider other possible approaches. At the same time, when standing on the edge of a precipice, a step backward is progress. Considering a learning approach and understanding learning processes, or an indigenous learning system, takes more effort in reflection than would be easily conceded. The consequences of not considering any such opportunity for Haiti's advancement, however, seem dire indeed.

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Appendix A

Background to Haiti

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. This once "pearl of the Caribbean" roughly the size of Vancouver Island is home, in 1997, to between seven and eight million people. With an estimated annual per capita income of $Can. 300 (compared with $20,800 in Canada), Haiti's national budget is roughly that of a medium-sized Canadian city school-board (UNDP, 1997). After almost three centuries of continuous internal and external repression this country has virtually no social, economic or governmental infrastructure.

In Haiti, "power" means to know or be somehow connected to someone rich. In these terms, the powerful have always been few. A few years after the fall of the Duvalier family, who devastated the country between 1958 and 1986, Haiti elected an internationally recognized "democratic" government in late 1990. This "fair and free" election brought power to a Roman Catholic priest, liberation theologist and political grass-roots social activist, Jean Bertrand Aristide. With Aristide as their Presidential candidate, the political party *Lavalas*, literally "landslide," claimed 90% of the votes cast by some 85% of Haitian eligible voters. *Lavalas* was an amalgamation of a number of older political parties including FNCD and Panmpra whose roots are in the Haitian Communist Party which fell apart on the demise of Jean-Claude Duvalier. This election made Aristide the hemisphere's most popularly-elected President.

Popularity was insufficient, however, to prevent a dramatic *coup d'état* in September 1991, ousting Aristide and resulting in three more cruel years of military dictatorship.A coup d'état ousting President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on September 30, 1991, resulted in a "de-facto" military-thug led dictatorship under General Raoul Cédras resulting in an international embargo of Haiti. During this period Haiti, Port-au-Prince in particular fell into (or returned to) a period of anarchy, leaving people to fend for themselves, although it would be false to imply that any services from the state existed previous to the Coup d'état.

Only exhaustive international negotiations with the Haitian military, backed by a force of 26,000 US and UN multinational troops, returned Aristide to Haiti as President in October 1994. He was to complete this final year of his original five-year mandate and allow for an unprecedented second consecutive democratic national election in December 1995.

Aristide's first Prime Minister (from 1990-91), René Garcia Préval became the second President in Haitian history to gain the office. This event marked the beginning of the country's first experience with a departing elected President (Aristide) left both alive and in the country.[34] Despite garnering 70% of the popular vote however, this 1995 election drew only 30% of voters to the polls. Préval's revamped version of *Lavalas* presented an assortment of

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[34] Ertha Pascale Trouillot, still alive and in Haiti, was appointed provisional President from April 1990 to the oversee the elections which elected Aristide, finally appointed in December 1990.

differing ideologies elected under the banner *Bo tab là.* ("around the table"), resulting in considerable disarray, if not complete chaos within the *Lavalasians.* This parliamentary and governmental bedlam has continued has resulted in a virtual administrative stalemate, which continues to the writing of this paper.

Aristide's triumphant return to Haiti in 1994, and Préval's subsequent election, was met with financial pledges from the international donor community for assistance approximating one billion US dollars. These external aid funds, with their concomitant constraints, were publicly engaged to reconstruct and rehabilitate this "democratic" Haiti (CIDA, 1995). But despite this level of external funding and its potential development boon, the country continues in an ever worsening economic, political and social morass. At the time of this writing (March 1998), there remains no approved Prime Minister or Cabinet of Ministers in Haiti since the Government of Prime Minister Rony Smarth resigned in June 1997. Between 1994 and 1997 individual incomes fell, the GDP was further reduced, the environment was ever more degraded and agricultural production declined. In two and one-half years, three appointed governments (Prime Ministers their respective Cabinets) have come and gone.

The combination of Ministerial inexperience, incompetence, confrontation by a squabbling parliament, Aristide as *eminence grise*, an intransigent international community and angry popular organizations have all variously received blame for the failure of any government in Haiti between 1994 and 1997. The detractors rarely mention the previous two hundred years. If the local media is any indication, Haitians generally think Aristide, Préval and the largesse of "international community" have achieved little. The provision of basic human needs remained in late 1997 at a pathetically low level by all international standards.[35]

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[35] UNDP, 1997. Ironically, ninety kilometers away, Cuba has the highest health and education standard in the hemisphere.

Appendix B:
Ethical Approval Form (English and French Versions)[1]

How a community centre teaches the community

CONSENT TO RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED BY PETER PAPROSKI

This form is intended to ensure the ethical acceptability and consent. This consent is sought of principal participants for research to be conducted on the Community Health Centre known as

in the neighbourhood of Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

NATURE OF THE RESEARCH: Using as the focus, the research is intended to understand how a community centre is a vehicle of learning, particularly in a very poor community. provides services, houses specific activities and provides various attractions for people in the community, as well as benefactor organizations. This research examines the multi-faceted activity involving the service providers, the community centre organizers and leaders as well as the end service-users (the neighbourhood and beyond). Equally, the centre's financial benefactors (Non-Governmental Organizations, local governments, and International Donors) are involved in fascinating web of informal and non-formal learning.

INFORMED CONSENT: The leadership of the Community Centre will be asked to read and sign this form (in French or Creole), ensuring their understanding of the research and their consent. Other individuals involved in personal interviews may also be asked to read and sign this consent form, if considered pertinent and personal.

In terms of the Community Centre end-user, the proposed research requires their publicly expressed impressions. It does not involve, in any way, deception or ask people to disclose personal information. For this reason, and since the signing of a consent form would disrupt the anecdotal nature of this public observation, they are not asked to sign any form or release.

BENEFITS ENVISAGED: This research will:

- assist the community organization fully to appreciate their own activities, and possibly to capitalize on this understanding to enhance their work.
- provide donor and other aid organizations with both a deeper understanding of community development work.

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[1] Respecting agreement with participants, the name of the Centre and community studied is not revealed.

Appendix B (continued)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH, p. 2

- supplement both community development and learning literature, adding an interdisciplinary perspective.

INCONVENIENCE INVOLVED: The presence of a foreign white researcher in a very poor black neighbourhood can not be discounted or ignored either by workers or users of the centre. This "inconvenience" is mitigated, however, by a positive cultural and economically-based "caché" provided by the same foreign presence. The researcher provides both added interest and credibility to the centre for the neighbourhood citizens. The researcher must exercise continual care, attention and courtesy to minimize this "presence", possibly by becoming as "regular" a fixture as possible.

TASKS TO BE PERFORMED: AT : The researcher will undertake regular visits to the Centre (weekly or bi-weekly) over the period of two-three months. During these visits, the researcher will generally observe the activities of the centre, engaging in "casual" conversation with the staff, leaders and visitors. The manner of questioning will be conducted in the constant attempt to be as innocuous as possible, as not to disturb ongoing centre activities.

Discussions will include:

- WITH STAFF AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP: how long worked with, general knowledge about, personal background and education related to working at .

- WITH END USERS: knowledge about , how learned about, used for what, general impressions about it.

- WITH BENEFACTOR ORGANIZATIONS: The questions involving International donors, non-governmental and research organizations will include: knowledge of , orientation to funding, personal and/or institutional views on functioning.

RIGHTS OF THE SUBJECT(S): As indicated above, this form will be signed by persons whose personal views and personal background is included in the research. No confidential information will be included in the research. No coercion of any kind is involved in seeking or obtaining information. All persons involved in personal (one-on-one or group) interviews will be informed that the information from the interview will be used in research.

Appendix B (continued)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH, p. 3

NOTE: THERE ARE NO RISKS TO PERSONAL PRIVACY OR DECEPTION INVOLVED IN UNDERTAKING THIS RESEARCH.

INSTITUTION SOLICITING CONSENT: Consent is sought by **Mr. Peter Paproski, First Secretary (Development), Canadian Embassy, Haiti** conducting thesis research under the supervision of **Department of Educational Studies, The Faculty of Education, McGill University, Montreal (Québec) Canada.**

I, the undersigned, fully consent to participate in the research described above.

NAME:

TITLE:

SIGNATURE:

Appendix B (continued)

ACCORD

RECHERCHE DE CONSENTEMENT DE LA PART DES PARTICIPANTS A CE QUE CETTE RECHERCHE SOIT CONDUITE PAR PETER PAPROSKI

TITRE: : APPRENTISSAGE ET COMMUNAUTE

(NOTE: CE DOCUMENT EST AUSSI DISPONIBLE EN EN ANGLAIS)

Ce document cherche à s'assurer de l'acceptabilité au point de vue éthique d'une telle recherche impliquant des êtres humains et du consentement des participants. Ce consentement est requis des principaux participants à cette recherche qui sera conduite autour du centre de santé communautaire connu sous le nom de à un quartier populaire de Port-au-Prince.

Nature de la recherche

Utilisant comme point focal, la recherche veut démontrer de quelle façon un centre communautaire peut être un moyen d'apprentissage, et cela, surtout à l'intérieur d'une communauté pauvre. Elle examinera les activités du centre impliquant les fournisseurs de services et l'animation du centre communautaire en tenant compte des vues des utilisateurs de services ce qui signifie les membres dans les environs et au delà. Egalement, cette étude examinera l'apprentissage des différentes organisations tant nationale qu'internationale qui ont contribué financièrement.

Informations pertinentes pour le consentement éclairé

La signature de ce formulaire de consentement veut s'assurer, d'une part, que la recherche est bien comprise par les participants clé et, d'autre part, par les dirigeants du centre. Ces derniers seront aussi informés que:

1) des notes sont prises devant aboutir la recherche;
2) les noms des personnes impliquées ne seront pas divulgés dans cette recherche;
3) les citations ne seront pas attribuées aux individus;
4) la recherche tentera d'être bénéfique à ;

D'autres individus impliqués dans des entrevues peuvent aussi être amenés à lire et à signer ce formulaire de consentement pour s'assurer de leur bonne compréhension. Les leaders du centre communautaire doivent lire et signer ce formulaire.

Appendix B (continued)

* avec les usagers: connaissance de , comment acquérir cette connaissance, l'utilité du centre et les impressions générale à son sujet;

* avec les organismes charitables: les questions impliquant les donateurs internationaux, les organismes non-gouvernementaux et les organismes de recherche incluant: la connaissance de , la distribution des fonds, les opinions personnelles ou collectivités sur le mode de fonctionnement à .

Droits des participants

Comme mentionné précédemment, ce présent document sera signé par toutes personnes dont le point de vue personnel et les antécédents propres font partie de la recherche. De plus, aucune information confidentielle n'y figurera. Les personnes interviewées seront avisées que l'information recueillie servira à une recherche. Seuls les noms des principaux intervenants figuront et les citations ne seront attribuées qu'àpres l'obtention d'une autorisation express de l'interviewer. Aucune contrainte ne sera exercée pour tenter d'obtenir une information. Remarque qu'il ny a aucun risque en participant à cette étude, de voir votre vie public étalé au grand jour ou d'être déçu.

Institutions sollicitant le consentement

Le consentement recherché par ce document est sollicité dans le cadre de sa thèse réalisée par M. Peter Paproski, Premier secrétaire au développement près l'Ambassade du Canada, Haïti, sous la supervision du Département de l'Enseignement Supérieur, Faculté d'Education de l'Université McGill, Montréal, Canada.

Je soussigné, consens à participer, de plein gré, à la recherche présentée ci devant:

NAME:

TITRE:

SIGNATURE:

Appendix C:
Ethical Approval Form (Creole Version)

I UNDERSTAND THAT:	M KONPRANN KE
1) PETER PAPROSKI IS EXAMINING AS PART OF RESEARCH IN EDUCATION (AS A CENTRE of LEARNING)	1) PITÈ PAPWÒSKI AP ETIDYE POU'L KONPRANN BYEN.
2) THIS RESEARCH IS INTENDED TO BE BENEFICIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF .	2) ETID SA A AP CHACHE POU L FÈ MACHE POU PI DEVAN.
3) I WILL NOT BE NAMED OR QUOTED IN THIS RESEARCH.	3) YO P AP SITE NON MWEN NAN ETID SA A.

X: _____

SIGNATU: _____

JOU:_____

CHANT: Community Organization Songs in Creole

1.

AN NOU TRAVAY POU REBATI PEYI NOU
AK SA KI VLE, NOU KAPAB AVANSE
LOUVRI JE NOU, FÈ RESPEKTE DWA NOU
AVAN LONTAN, LAMIZÈ PATI NOU

NOU PAP TANN MOUN KAP VINN FÈBÈL PWOMÈS
SE METE MEN POU DEVLOPE PEYI NOU
AK SA NOU GENYEN, SA KI VLE EDE NOU
LEVE KANPE POU KWAPE LAMIZÈ

ANN RASAMBLE NAN ÒGANIZASYON
NANMEN NAN MEN, NOU KA REZOUD PWOBLÈM YO
JODI YA SE DLO, DEMIN SE YOUN LÒT
KONSA KONSA, LAMIZÈ AP KABA

2.

DLO SE LAVI O (BIS)
SI NOU BEZWEN LAVI
FÒK NOU GEN DLO
SI POU NOU GENYEN DLO
FÒK NOU PEYE DLO

DLO SE LA SANTE O (BIS)
SI NOU BEZWEN SANTE
FOK NOU GEN DLO
SI POU NOU GENYEN DLO
FOK NOU KENBE LI PRÒP

SI POU N GENYEN DLO
FÒK PA GENYEN PIKAJ

SI POU N GENYEN DLO
FÒK GEN BON JESYON

SI POU N GENYEN DLO
FÒK BAY PÈP LA RAPÒ.

1.

COME WORK TOGETHER TO REBUILD OUR COUNTRY. LIKE THIS WE CAN ACHIEVE WHAT WE WANT. TO WORK IS GOOD FOR US, WE'LL GAIN RESPECT, BEFORE LONG, MISERY WILL LEAVE US

WE CAN NOT DEAL WITH PEOPLE WHO COME AND MAKE PRETTY PROMISES. IT IS WITH OUR OWN HANDS THAT WE WILL DEVELOP. IT IS THIS WHICH GIVES TO US WHAT WE NEED TO HELP US. ARISE TOGETHER TO QUASH MISERY.

BY ORGANIZING, HAND IN HAND WE CAN SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS. TODAY IT IS WATER, TOMORROW SOMETHING MORE. LIKE THIS WE CAN REDUCE OUR MISERY.

2.

WATER IS LIFE
IF WE NEED LIFE
WE NEED WATER
FOR US TO GET WATER
WE HAVE TO PAY

WATER IS HEALTH
IF WE NEED HEALTH
WE NEED WATER
TO KEEP HEALTHY WATER
WE HAVE TO KEEP IT CLEAN

FOR US TO HAVE WATER
WE MUST NOT STEAL (PINCH) WATER

FOR US TO HAVE WATER
WE NEED GOOD MANAGEMENT

FOR US TO HAVE WATER
WE NEED A SPACE TO TALK (SHARE)