Libraries and Learning Services

University of Auckland Research Repository, ResearchSpace

Copyright Statement

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognize the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

General copyright and disclaimer

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the Library Thesis Consent Form and Deposit Licence.

Educating with Love: Pedagogy, Non-Government Organisations, Philosophy, Vision and Critical Educational Leadership

Cameron G. Rishworth

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education, the University of Auckland, 2016.

Abstract

This research explores the leadership practices in non-government organisations focused on the transformation of communities through implementation of programmes that seek to contribute to the development of education. Using a qualitative case study approach, a non-government organisation with an educational focus operating in a rural community in Mexico is investigated. The inquiry aims to reveal characteristics of the philosophy and vision that underpins and drives the non-government organisation. These include ways in which critical leadership practices translate this philosophy into practical actions to positively impact a rural community with regard to educational and social change. This research is significant because of the absence of current qualitative case studies on educationally based non-government organisations engaged at grassroots levels. In addition, there is a substantial lack of research regarding critical leadership within non-government organisations involved in education, as the majority of similar research focuses on critical leadership in the context of conventional schooling institutions (e.g. Johnson, 2006; Khalifa, 2010; Khalifa, 2012; Santamaría, Santamaría, Webber, & Pearson, 2014). Furthermore, there is little if any research on applied critical leadership (ACL) practices conducted within in the context of rural communities in 'developing' nations (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012).

This study approaches the research question through the lens of a theoretical framework, integrating the pedagogical philosophy of Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (1968/2012) in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and the theory of applied critical leadership (ACL) developed by Lorri J. Santamaría and Andres P. Santamaría (2012). Through these critically conscious lenses, this study reaches the conclusion that love is a vital and inseparable part of educational practices that genuinely value the gifts and experiences possessed by all people. Those educating with love seek to develop the capacity of constituents through pedagogical actions that increase learners' academic and professional opportunities in ways that benefit both individuals and communities. This is particularly significant with respect to historically marginalised communities, referred to by Freire (1968/2012) as the 'oppressed'. For these communities, the author asserts, education has the potential to provide tools that can be used to positively challenge environments of oppression and enact transformation to one's material reality, and also in terms of the social and human reality of those involved.

These dynamics and complexities are demonstrated and illustrated in the counter-story of the non-government organisation that serves as the case for this research. The philosophy and vision of the organisation was at the forefront of leaders' minds. This was coupled with awareness of an unselfish and unconditional love for those who work with the leaders and the people of the community. Those who were a part of the efforts (e.g., leaders, students, community members, families) exercised continual willingness to learn from one another, which characterised all actions taken by the organisation. In this way, the philosophy and vision of the non-government organisation was shown to be significant. This was manifested as data that recorded the ways leaders, and those with whom they shared the philosophy and vision, directly contributed to and impacted the community in real and tangible ways. This study is also significant in that it demonstrated applied critical leadership as a viable, flexible and dynamic model, theory and approach. This study revealed its value as a tool for the analysis of evidence of critical educational leadership practices extending beyond that of conventional educational institutions in urban areas in the United States and New Zealand that have previously been the focus of ACL research (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría et al., 2014).

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my family: Mum, Dad, my brother, Tim, my sister, Laura, and her husband, Jace. I love you all so much and I'm so grateful for your constant support and encouragement. Love to my Bay Area family; thank you Ken, Diane and Max for hosting me in the week prior to my stay in Mexico. I enjoyed my time with you all immensely. Much love to the rest of the family in the USA and Australia and beyond. I hope to have the opportunity to spend more time with you all in the future. Also love to my grandma, Mary, and my nana, Bette. Your love and guidance while I was growing up will be something I will forever cherish and be grateful for. Also, praise, love and gratitude to Grandpa Amoz and Granddad Evan and all my other ancestors who I never had the opportunity to meet before they passed on. Without you I would not be here and I hope to honour you in all my future endeavours.

Mucho amor y gracias a mis amigas Frida, Maria Belinda, Jarlene, Mariana, Marina y Samantha. La amistad y el apoyo que me mostraste es algo que siempre recordaré y la experiencia no habría sido lo mismo sin todos ustedes y yo espero veros a todos de nuevo en un futuro próximo. Muchas gracias y todo lo mejor para dondequiera que la vida te lleva. También muchas gracias a la familia Ordoñez por permitir que me quede en su maravillosa casa durante mi estancia en México.

And, of course, massive thanks to Professor Todd Fletcher from the University of Arizona – the opportunities you have provided me have been truly life changing and I hope to continue to collaborate and serve with you in the future.

Big thanks to my friends in Aotearoa, with a special mention to Luke Gibson, Shirin White, Sana Lavai-Motlagh, Ian Lim, Ramin Armangoo, Jeffrey Sabour, Tessa Ma'auga, Sara Stephanus, Ben Parkinson, Grace Asiata, Nour Rushdy, Faizi Misela, Louise White, Genn White and Jeevan Singaram. You all have supported me and positively influenced me in some way throughout my life and education, somewhere along the way and onwards from kindergarten to where I am now. I would also like to make a shout-out to my University of Auckland Library co-workers, especially Iresh, Anupom, Chris, Nick, Kevin, Ron, Keith, Hana and Douglas, whom I had the pleasure to work with; a job that enabled me to conduct the research overseas in the first place.

Much gratitude goes out to all the people at The University of Auckland who helped throughout my academic journey and shaped who I am today: Professor Lorri Santamaría, without your supervision and guidance, none of this would have been possible. Thank you for your constant encouragement and enthusiasm; Professor Airini (now at Thompson Rivers University, Canada); Dr. Andrés Santamaría (now at Auckland University of Technology); Lincoln Dam; Dr. Te Kawehau Hoskins; Sharona Jayavant; Dr. Mera Penehira; Professor Alison Jones; Dr. Bruce Floyd; Keir Sothcott (now at AUT); Dr. Pat Bullen; and Professor Stuart McNaughton.

Praise and gratitude to God for blessing me with the opportunity to pursue my studies and for constantly watching over and protecting my friends and family; and for the Teachings of Baha'u'llah, which continue to guide and encourage me on my path.

Table of Contents

Abstract……i

Acknowledgements……iii

Table of Contents……v

Chapter One: Introduction……...1

Chapter Two: Literature Review……9

Chapter Three: Design and Methodology……..32

Chapter Four: Findings……...42

Chapter Five: Discussion……63

Chapter Six: Conclusion……82

References……..92

Chapter One: Introduction

"Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself" (Freire, 1968/2012, p. 89). This quote by Paulo Freire (1968/2012), a world-renowned Brazilian educator and philosopher, portrays love for humanity as being inseparable from any educational action that aims to empower students to be critical of their social reality. Through education that encourages and empowers individuals to be constantly reflective and critical of the immediate social context in which they live and the wider world around them, they are emancipated to reshape their view of their position in the world and to seek positive change that promotes social justice and equity that impacts both themselves as individuals and the communities they inhabit. This liberation of people from situations of injustice is ostensibly, but not always, the reality of the mission of any non-government organisation (NGO) – also known as a non-profit organisation (NPO) – currently operating throughout the world. Therefore, NGOs and their potential to positively impact social change through education are the focus of this thesis.

Education, Transformation and Non-Government Organisations

Education is a vital and indispensible part of every human being's life. Education provides learning experiences that contribute to the advancement of an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities, which open up new opportunities and experiences as one progresses through life. However, in arguably every nation and region in the world, there are groups of people who have been historically marginalised by privileged groups, creating numerous inequalities and areas of injustice (Freire, 1968/2012). These inequalities are often manifested in educational settings, where students who have marginalised identities (i.e., those who are not members of the dominant group) are frequently underserved. Thus, for these learners, schools and other formal educational environments become a space where marginalisation takes place and prevents their progress, while privileged students continue to attain achievement and success (Freire, 1968/2012; Santamaría, Santamaría, Webber & Pearson, 2014).

However, education can also be a means of providing historically oppressed peoples with the tools to challenge and transform their positions as 'the oppressed' (Freire, 1968/2012). As illustrated in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, educators have the ability to create educational spaces characterised by dialogue between students and teachers alike, in which

everyone is conceived as both learners and educators (Freire, 1968/2012). Through such approaches to education, people are able to draw out the oppressive elements of their social reality that are held as implicit, and make them explicit. In other words, education can be a means to de-construct marginalising forces and re-construct their definitions of the world in a way that contributes to their empowerment and realisation of their full potential as human beings. This, as opposed to having limitations imposed upon them (Freire, 1968/2012), as has been the case and continues to be the case in many educational environments.

Critical leadership

In educational contexts where injustices and inequalities prevent historically marginalised people from achieving academically and attaining success in higher education, the practices of leaders have the potential to be transformative and critical in tearing down these barriers and empowering students to ascend to greater heights of success in their education (Johnson, 2006; Khalifa, 2010; Khalifa, 2012; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Through critical leadership practices that encourage leaders to recognise and place their identities of race, ethnicity, culture, sexuality, and gender at the centre of their practice, educational leaders are able to acknowledge and honour the identities of their students, especially those whose identities have been traditionally marginalised in mainstream contexts (Johnson, 2006; Khalifa, 2010; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría et al., 2014). Critical leadership in education is not only characterised by this awareness of a leader's own identity and the validation of the identities of their constituents (Khalifa, 2010) but also by a vision of transformation that works towards and leads others to enact changes that enable social justice within educational environments (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012).

Critical leaders take a "strength-based vs. deficit-based" perspective, where they are able to view the positive elements and attributes that make up their multi-faceted identities and use them to strengthen their actions as leaders (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012, p. 5). In their approach and theory of applied critical leadership (ACL), Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) identify two types of critical leaders. Firstly, those who act as critical leaders because of their own historically marginalised identities and thus are able to draw upon their experiences of injustice and oppression to challenge dominant, mainstream social structures in their educational practice; secondly, individuals from historically privileged identities who consciously choose to enact critical leadership as a means of empowering others in order to promote equality and justice for all (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). This is reflective of

Freire's (1968/2012) assertion that oppressors (those from historically privileged identities) can work to fight oppression alongside the oppressed (those from historically marginalised identities):

> The oppressor is solidary with the oppressed only when he stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labor—when he stops making pious, sentimental and individualistic gestures and risks an act of love. True solidarity is found only in the plenitude of this act of love, in its existentiality, in its praxis. To affirm that men and women are persons and as persons should be free, and yet do nothing tangible to make this affirmation a reality, is a farce. (pp. 49-50)

This suggests that anyone can be a critical leader if they deliberately choose to use their identities to take transformative educational actions that contribute to the promotion and advancement of social justice in educational contexts.

Roles of government, non-government organisations and educational programming

The decision-making and leadership of governments in many nations and regions around the world are often dominated by those that Freire (1968/2012) would designate as being members of 'the oppressor' class. Therefore, national systems that take a one-size-fits-all approach to delivering services to their citizens often neglect the specific needs of social groups that have been, and continue to be, marginalised and systemically oppressed. National education systems are one area where the localised needs of people are not met and the services provided often do not speak to their social reality (Akyeampong, 2004). The negative impacts on historically marginalised communities of national educational systems that place much regard to the specific needs of local contexts are felt even harder in so-called 'developing' countries in comparison to 'developed' countries (Akyeampong, 2004; Ahmed & French, 2006). Issues include "instances of teacher shortage and absenteeism in rural communities" (Akyeampong, 2004, p. 2) due to lack of incentives to face the challenges of working in the difficult conditions of impoverished rural communities, as well as textbook and uniform costs and the loss of labour to contribute to the family's income that prevent children from attending school. By not being responsive to the specific needs of impoverished and marginalised communities, governments fail to provide educational programmes that adapt to the social reality of the community (Akyeampong, 2004).

One rapidly growing sector that attempts to address issues of socio-economic disparity and injustice created by government systems and policies that fail to meet the specific needs of

marginalised communities is that of the non-government organisation (NGO) sector (Lewis, 2006). An extremely diverse range of organisations fit under the non-government organisation sector umbrella. NGOs range from being "international non-state actors...increasingly contributing to transnational policy" in relation to "economic, technological, and cultural change" to large multinational organisations that provide humanitarian aid to regions suffering in times of war or natural disaster (Lewis, 2006, p. 2). These include small or localised organisations focused on working with communities at the grassroots level to empower people to address a variety of developmental issues within their communities. The non-government organisation in this study fits with the latter conceptualisation of NGOs.

One of the areas where non-government organisations have been shown to provide assistance to marginalised populations is that of education (Ahmed & French, 2006; Akyeampong, 2004). Non-government organisations have the ability to offer educational programmes tailored to communities whose educational needs have not been met by the mainstream educational system of their country (Ahmed & French, 2006; Akyeampong, 2004). NGOs often have better funding than the local government educational bodies that are intended to serve the communities that NGOs work with (Akyeampong, 2004). The holistic approaches to education taken by NGOs can also go beyond that of mainstream educational systems, sometimes with better academic outcomes than those documented by traditional schools (Ahmed & French, 2006). Through education some NGOs can address social issues in particular communities, such as the empowerment of women (Ahmed & French, 2006) who are often treated unjustly, particularly in regard to access to education throughout the world.

Dearth of NGO Research Focused on Education

In conducting the literature review for this thesis, it quickly became apparent there were substantial gaps in the literature on non-government organisations involved in education. Much of the literature on NGOs focuses on economics (Backman & Smith, 2000), policy (Stone, 2000) and the relationship between NGOs and governments (Archer, 1994). Not only is there a lack of literature specific to educationally focused non-government organisations but also a lack of relevant qualitative case studies conducted with NGOs, as much of the literature consists of literature reviews and evaluations based on the overall, macro-level of organisations. Additionally, the available literature focuses on NGOs that are large, well-resourced non-government organisations implementing welfare delivery and humanitarian

aid, as opposed to smaller, grassroots organisations aimed at encouraging participation and ownership from the local people (De Berry, 1999). The lack of qualitative case studies in the literature indicates that in terms of the regular experiences and activities that are conducted by NGOs, the voices and stories of the staff, volunteers and constituents themselves are arguably a considerable element missing from NGO public, political and academic discourse. Therefore, this research study has the potential to provide insight into NGOs, not only of grassroots community-based NGOs with primary objectives centred on educational development, but also in providing a portrayal of the human element of NGOs in terms of those who carry out activities on behalf of NGOs and the local people who participate and benefit from such activities.

The literature that provided examples of NGOs with educational development as their central focus deemed relevant to informing this study, also exhibited gaps. Akyeampong (2004), as well as Ahmed and French (2006), demonstrate that even when NGOs have similar foci, the implementation of the organisations' missions vary significantly based upon the amount of resources at an NGO's disposal and the contexts in which they operate. Both educationally based NGOs in these two articles arguably had substantially more financial and human resources than that of the NGO that is the focus of this study. Furthermore, both Akyeampong (2004) and Ahmed and French's (2006) research provides reviews of the efficacy of NGOs and the implications in terms of policy, organisational management and finance with regard to NGO operations, as opposed to the qualitative case study approach of this thesis. In other words, Ahmed and French (2006) and Akyeampong (2004) look back at what NGOs have done at a distance, whereas the approach of this study is to look at the day-to-day reality of an NGO through on-the-ground observation and participation. Despite these differences, the selected work reviewed provides concrete examples of ways in which NGOs can operate in terms of implementing programmes within marginalised communities to improve educational outcomes (Ahmed & French, 2006; Akyeampong, 2004). However, because of the substantial differences in approach, there is an indication that this study features the phenomenon of NGOs involved in education from an original and unique research perspective.

Additional uncharted research areas

With regard to critical educational leadership being implemented in the context of educationally based non-government organisations, there is also scant information available.

All the literature relevant to critical educational leadership practices is drawn from studies based on conventional, mainstream schooling contexts such as early childhood schools, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions (Johnson, 2006; Khalifa, 2010; Khalifa, 2012; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría et al., 2014) and corporate contexts (Manasse, 1985; Spears, 2000/2010). Also, the relevant literature focuses on critical leadership in urbanised school environments in 'developed' countries. Therefore, critical educational leadership practices being enacted in a rural community within a country deemed 'developing' but also in the context of a non-conventional educational environment, presented in the present study is arguably uncharted research territory.

There also appears to be a dearth of information on the conceptualisation and role of the philosophy and vision of non-government organisations. Lewis (2006) and Britton (1998) provide insight relevant to this study, with regard to the approaches that NGOs can take in terms of how they inform their implementation of activities within communities. Lewis (2006) focuses on the management approaches of NGOs that are applicable to most organisations regardless of their distinctiveness in terms of the diversity present within the sector. Britton (1998) focuses on NGOs operating at the community level and how learning should be a key part of any organisation operating with good practice. However, despite these areas of relevance as related to gaining an understanding of NGO philosophy, the literature lacks specific examples of how non-government organisations formulate their philosophy and vision concerning the values that the organisation holds and seeks to translate into their actions. This provides further indication of the need for the research conducted by this study, considering real meaning and manifestation of the philosophy and vision of a NGO in terms of the daily operations carried out by the NGO. This includes the interactions between those working to implement the NGO's programmes and the organisation's constituents.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate an educationally based non-government organisation in the context of how the vision and philosophy of the organisation is translated into critical leadership actions and the ways in which these actions serve to impact the community in which the NGO is situated. It is anticipated that in better understanding these different elements of an educationally based non-government organisation, there will be more clarity about how the regular functions and activities of a NGO are influenced by the philosophy and vision, and the role that the philosophy and vision

plays in terms of guiding the practical actions taken by NGO leaders. It is envisioned that this will contribute to both the discipline of education and to discourse regarding non-government organisations, significantly those heavily involved in education. The research question of this thesis is comprised of two parts:

- In what ways does an NGO involved in education translate its philosophy or vision into critical leadership actions?
- How do these leadership actions impact the community in which the NGO works?

Rationale for Study

A significant factor for engaging this research platform is the substantial disparity in terms of qualitative case studies conducted within educationally based non-government organisations. In addition to this gap, there is also substantial justification for the approach taken by this study in the way that it addresses elements of an educationally based non-government organisation regarding the philosophy and vision of the NGO and that of critical leadership. These aspects, elements or dimensions have not been adequately covered in the literature to date. As has been touched upon earlier in this chapter, literature on NGOs, let alone those centred on educational development, indicates a significant absence of research illustrating the reality of grassroots organisations on the ground and the voices and experiences of the people who undertake the actions as part of their mission. Therefore, it is hoped that this research study will contribute a unique perspective to discourse on non-government organisations and education, demonstrating the importance of understanding NGOs in terms of the human condition and interactions involved and the impact by such an organisation's long-term vision in a community.

Part of the rationale in conducting research on the topic of non-government organisations lies in my own personal interest in community building and development, and the role that education can play in such an endeavour. Due to my own personal experiences with education, particularly my not connecting to or within mainstream schooling environments, I have always been interested in alternative, more meaningful ways of educating. These interests are especially in education that goes beyond what Freire (1968/2012) refers to as the banking model education and instead educational practice that encourages learners to build their own capacity to contribute back to their community. Upon being introduced to the ideas of Paulo Freire during my undergraduate studies, which aligned with my own perspective

toward education, I have strived to shape my work as a student and emerging scholar in a way that builds upon my own understanding of ways education can be implemented to foster the growth of people while incorporating both their development to achieving material success in life as well as in developing spiritually. This approach, in my experience, may serve to better foster and develop values that encourage altruism and service to others.

The literature that I found on non-government organisations engaging in educational development focused on NGOs in the context of financial and political issues and on management and organisational structure at the macro-level (Ahmed & French, 2006; Akyeampong, 2004) and lacked detail considering the on-the-ground operations of education. In terms of improving our understanding about NGOs and education, I felt that this neglect of the interpersonal day-to-day interactions in the operations of a NGO was another significant gap in the literature. There was also very little information on the importance of the philosophical underpinnings of NGOs in general, but specifically in relation to NGOs with an educational focus. Therefore, I deemed that this would be a key aspect to be included in the exploration of my topic of interest.

In order to investigate the phenomena of non-government organisations involved in implementing educational activities at the grassroots level and the significance of a NGO's philosophy or vision, I needed an approach to narrow the focus of this study. I elected to focus on critical leadership because it seemed like a logical introduction into gaining an understanding of how the philosophy and vision of a NGO are translated into its actions and the outcomes resulting from such actions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The theory, ideas and concepts put forward by Freire (1968/2012) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* along with L. J. Santamaría and A. P. Santamaría's (2012) theory of Applied Critical Leadership (ACL) form the theoretical framework or hybridised lens by which I will approach and analyse the research question posed. These theoretical perspectives were chosen as critical theoretical complements to my interest in expressing the importance of mind, body and spirit with regard to the type of educational phenomenon being explained and discussed in this study. I argue that academic engagement within the realm of education often fails to analyse the subject holistically and there is a tendency to dichotomise or favour these aspects when looking at education, in particular concepts pertaining to the notion of *spirit* and education. The conceptualisation of mind, body and spirit, refers to the ways in which the actual actions of human bodies affect education and the significance of the spiritual philosophy and values that guide educational effort.

Drawing upon Freire's (1968/2012) seminal contribution provides a perspective on the actions needed to effectively engage with and implement education at the grassroots, community level in a way that strives to be dialogical and with sincere intentions to transform social reality to improve the status quo. In this way, I have identified Freire's *Pedagogy* as being useful in fulfilling the analysis of education pertaining to the significance of the components of body and spirit.

Santamaría and Santamaría's (2012) theory of ACL offers a similarly useful perspective on how various aspects that comprise an educational leader's cultural background, such as race, gender and sexual orientation, affect the way they engage with their educational work. In this approach, skilled educational leaders employ critical theory by "us[ing] their unique socio-cultural position as individuals in society to enhance their teaching practice and positively contribute to classroom environments populated by culturally diverse learners" (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012, p. 7). The ACL theoretical perspective presents a lens with which to analyse how leaders can use their intellect, experiences and own sense of who they are as humans in their contribution to the educational development and leadership of their constituents.

Pedagogy of the oppressed

Freire (1968/2012) argues that the individuals who make up present-day societies can be differentiated as belonging to either the class that oppresses others, termed as the oppressors, or belonging to the class that is a recipient of this oppression, the oppressed. However, the distinction is not so clear-cut, because the oppression perpetrated by the oppressors may or may not be a conscious act against the oppressed. Furthermore, those who are oppressed can at times oppress others as a result of their own experiences of oppression. Freire (1968/2012) proposes that education is the means of liberation for both the oppressed and the oppressors. His work suggests the necessity of people to overcome dehumanisation that has resulted from humankind's history of groups of people systemically oppressing others over time, in order to fully reach our potential as human beings. This conceptualisation of human history as having been that of oppression and dehumanisation implies the need for societal transformation in order to break these cycles of global societal oppression. In his scholarship, Freire clearly identifies education as essential and intrinsic to this process.

Freire argues that traditional models of education reinforce the ideology and social structures of the oppressor, and serve to maintain and reproduce the oppression of those who are not members of the dominant group. This type of education has made classrooms passive environments where the teacher narrates and the students listen, meekly memorising and regurgitating what is being told to them. This is what Freire calls the "banking" style of education, where students are seen as mere receptacles or depositories to be filled with information, as opposed to being human beings with their own knowledge and lived experiences serving as dialogic parts of a dynamic educational system (Freire, 1968/2012, p. 79). This approach to education does not encourage students to critically analyse their social reality and therefore they are not provided with the tools needed to engage in transformative actions that challenge the oppressor/oppressed dichotomy. The banking model of education serves to continue and uphold the structural inequalities and injustices that result from a society built on the dominance of groups of people over other people.

In response to the banking model of education, Freire advocates for a liberatory, "problem-posing" style of education (1968/2012, p. 79). According to Freire, dialogue is an indispensible and essential characteristic of problem-posing education. This means that rather than conceptualising the teacher as the one who has the knowledge and the students as those without knowledge, the teacher facilitates a learning environment that fosters dialogue among

all members of the classroom. The teacher also understands that as they try to help others learn, they also can learn things from the students with whom they interact. For example, "The teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express their own" (Freire, 1968/2012, p. 81). This style of education stands in stark contrast to that of banking education Here the classroom is perceived to be highly interactive and knowledge is viewed as fluid, dynamic, complex and ever increasing; whereas, banking education promotes a passive student populace where knowledge is static.

Love, and its role and significance in education, is another key concept presented in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire asserts that love for humanity is an irrevocable requirement for dialogue to exist, and that love is simultaneously the basis and the product of dialogue. Here, Freire stipulates that education, in terms of the dialogical approach to education, must come from a place of, and be based upon, love for humankind and at the same time advance this love for humanity in its very practice. The 'naming' of 'the world' is a key characteristic of dialogical education, which refers the re-conceptualisation of reality enacted by students and teachers in order to critique and better understand it. Sincere generous unconditional love for others, without paternalism or hidden agenda, is vital for the creative process of 'naming' one's social reality. In order to be transformative and empowering, not only must we change the style or method of pedagogy used in educational environments, but the nature of our engagement in the field of education also needs to be transformed. This is to suggest that the attitude and approach of teachers must be loving and empower others to love the world in a way that is transformative and future focused.

Applied critical leadership (ACL)

Santamaría and Santamaría's (2012) work featuring applied critical leadership (ACL) is based upon a theoretical framework comprised of three macro theories positioned by ACL in a way that they feed, expand and complement each other. One of those theories is that of transformative leadership (Shields, 2010). From the perspective of ACL, transformative leadership promotes the idea of leaders being able to inspire people in a specific context to transcend self-interest for the betterment of a group, organisation or institution. Transformative leaders lead by example, and by being role models they convey to those with whom they are working the expectations of being part of a group. In the context of ACL, transformative leadership incorporates the principles that guide applied critical leaders toward

realisation of socially just and equitable leadership practices that serve to improve the status quo in education.

Critical pedagogy is another key component used in applied critical leadership as a theoretical perspective (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Critical pedagogy is a theory rooted in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968/2012) and refers to the framework that guides a large number of academics and educationalists. Critical pedagogy views education as a means through which people can be liberated and empowered to transform the world around them (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Critical pedagogy draws from Freire's (1968/2012) re-conceptualisation of the learning environment, whereby learning is produced through a dialogical relationship between teachers and students in which they pull together their "collective experiences" (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012, p. 4). Applied critical leaders guided by the principles of transformative leadership employ critical pedagogy in their practices and actions, challenging the conventional, dominant practices used in most mainstream educational systems. In this way, ACL is a theory, approach and practice at the same time.

The third aspect that makes up ACL is that of critical race theory (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Critical race theory (CRT) emerged as a critical response to inequalities and injustices resulting from the institutional racism present in the socio-political structures of the United States, but it could arguably be applied to additional contexts where dominant groups with shared ideologies have marginalised historically underserved populations. CRT aims to legitimize narratives, particularly those in the fields of law and education, that challenge the institutional racism and structural racism pervasive in mainstream American society. CRT has been associated with educational leadership practices that attempt to address inequalities and injustices in education (e.g., Gooden & Dantley, 2012) and in this study it is the lens through which applied critical leaders apply the principles of transformative leadership and practise critical pedagogy (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Through the CRT lens, applied critical leadership theory involves educational leaders reflecting upon their multi-faceted identities, including their racial identity; and perceiving how they can use the various elements of their identity to uniquely contribute to educational environments in a positive way that seeks to combat inequalities and injustices.

Similarities and differences in the theoretical perspectives under consideration

Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968/2012) and Santamaría and Santamaría's (2012) applied critical leadership (ACL), share several theoretically grounded similarities in educational aims and approaches toward praxis or theory as practice. As stated earlier, Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) draw upon critical pedagogy as the practice component of ACL, a theory that has been attributed to the work of Freire. Therefore, the dialogical and problem-posing practices proposed by Freire (1968/2012) as an alternative to the 'banking' practices of mainstream education are also promoted and argued for by Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) in the practice of ACL. The conceptualisation of education as a means to freedom and empowerment are significant themes present in both Freire and Santamaría and Santamaría. The commonalities between these two theories, which together serve as a basis for the theoretical lens of this thesis; provide a consistent and empirical framework from which to view the educational practices being researched here.

Rather than serving to contradict each other, the differences between Freire (1968/2012) and Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) complement each other. Santamaría and Santamaría's (2012) theory of ACL incorporates critical race theory (CRT), transformative leadership and critical pedagogy as its theoretical framework, while Freire (1968/2012) formulates his own radical philosophy of education heavily influenced by the Marxist thought of the time of his scholarship. Thus, applied critical leadership theory is focused on how leaders can draw strength from their identities and experiential backgrounds through the perspective of CRT lens in order to positively impact learners and educational environments (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Instead, Freire's (1968/2012) perspective is arguably broader in its scope. Among other weighty subjects, he philosophises about the role that love can play in authentic education, and the radicalisation of the oppressed through education to liberate both themselves and the oppressors. Although at the core, Santamaría and Santamaría's (2012) ACL and Freire's (1968/2012) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, both propose new theories, pedagogies and practices that create a dynamic space for the empowerment of learners to challenge the dominant social structure that marginalises and oppresses; they have somewhat different foci. Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) approach this topic at the level of educational leadership within groups, institutions and organisations, providing practical examples of ways in which leaders can exercise applied critical leadership. Freire (1968/2012), on the other hand, focuses on the broader philosophical picture of humankind's purpose, human history and social reality. I argue that by using these two theories as

complementary approaches contributing to my theoretical framework, I will be able to holistically analyse my research topic with concrete examples guided by the ACL lens and also engage with the philosophical implications of the findings of his study.

Relevance of the theoretical literature considered.

The combined application of Freire's (1968/2012) work and Santamaría and Santamaría's (2012) contribution as the hybrid theoretical framework of this thesis, provides a fitting and appropriate lens with which to draw out and analyse themes related to mind, body and spirit from the case study that is the focus of this research. I argue that this holistic approach to the case study is needed to adequately describe and discuss the significance of a non-government organisation (NGO) engaged in educational activities within a community with the purpose of transforming social reality, and how educational leadership within the organisation plays a key role in this process. Using this literature as my theoretical framework will enable an analysis of all key aspects of my research question: educational philosophy, leadership, action and community impact.

By outlining and illustrating the key texts that will inform this theoretical framework, I have made apparent the lens through which all other literature contributing to the various aspects of this thesis will be viewed. The following sections on non-government organisations engaged in education, the role that philosophy plays in NGOs and critical leadership, and the impact it can have on the community, will provide an understanding of the practical elements of my study that will be analysed from the perspective of this theoretical framework.

Research on Non-Government Organisations and Education

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), also referred to as Non-Profit Organisations (NPO), are organisations that generally have a cooperative, humanitarian, community focus or objective, as opposed to commercial interests (Werker & Ahmed, 2008). With regard to this study, the focus is on NGOs specifically aimed at the enhancement of the educational environment or reality of a community. This could also be conceptualised as NGOs using educational activities as a means to positively transform the social environment or reality of a specific community.

In order to inform the NGO aspect of the study, I will be reviewing three texts identified as being useful in the discussion of NGOs that have explicit educational goals or objectives: Akyeampong's (2004) study of the "School for Life" (SFL) programme implemented by

community-based organisations and NGOs in Northern Ghana (Akyeampong, 2004); Ahmed and French's (2006) study of the BRAC NGO in Bangladesh; and Epstein's (1990) research on school and family connectedness in the United States of America (US). Although Epstein's (1990) article is not concerned with NGOs specifically, I argue that it is useful in understanding several important aspects of the educational efforts conducted by the NGO that is the focus of this thesis.

NGOs in Education: Ghana

Akyeampong (2004) suggests that non-government organisations are needed in areas such as education to serve the needs of specific populations that some governments, specifically those of the 'developing' world, have failed to adequately address. National public educational systems in developing countries such as Ghana do not take into account the unique socio-economic and cultural circumstances specific to different localities and, therefore, continue to perpetuate inequality, marginalisation and disadvantage. Akyeampong (2004) argues that because of the financial resources that NGOs can have, combined with their freedom to determine where and how to focus their efforts, they have the potential to effectively work towards the development and improvement of education specific to marginalised populations. This is a significant point, for a variety reasons. Firstly, it suggests that NGOs provide services in specific, localised contexts that are underserved by the government and therefore are a necessity in the present-day climate. It also claims so-called developing countries experience educational inequality at a level far more pronounced than developed countries. I suggest here that the extent or degree to which inequality and injustice is manifested varies from context to context. However, for the purpose of this study and my own personal perspective based upon my experience in conducting this research, the developed/developing dichotomy is overly simplistic and does not acknowledge the socio-economic, political, historical and cultural complexities of different regions and nations involved in issues of inequality and marginalisation. With regard to NGOs and education, Akyeampong (2004) demonstrates how NGOs offer an avenue for educational development and the creation of educational opportunities in communities that are otherwise neglected by their national educational systems.

NGOs in Education: Bangladesh.

Similar to Akyeampong (2004) and his evaluation of the School for Life (SFL) programme in Northern Ghana, Ahmed and French (2006) analyse BRAC, a large internationally recognised NGO in Bangladesh, with a specific focus on its Non-Formal Primary Education

(NFPE) programme. BRAC provides services and programmes that seek to improve the socio-economic conditions for people living in impoverished rural communities in Bangladesh, often with specific focuses on addressing issues of gender inequality and providing opportunities to women. This emphasis on addressing injustice and inequality with regard to gender was also present in the NGO initiatives discussed in Akyeampong (2004). Ahmed and French (2006) not only demonstrate the importance of NGOs in the context of improving the educational services of underserved, impoverished communities, but also in their ability to simultaneously focus on specific issues within communities, such as seeking to empower women by encouraging their engagement in education, and including them in the consultation process in deciding the needs of a specific community.

NGOs and the Implementation of Educational Initiatives

In Ahmed and French's (2006) discussion of BRAC and its Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) programme, they identify several key aspects in the implementation and growth of NGO initiatives. One of these is the approach of piloting new initiatives or programmes on a small-scale prior to implementing large-scale projects. This approach diminishes the impact of any negative outcomes on the constituents of NGOs, which can result from new initiatives still under development, and therefore allows organisations to fine-tune with freedom. This activity is also conducive to fostering a space for experimentation and learning. Another important element in NGO engagement in education is the involvement of NGOs in advocacy work at the national and potentially international level. In the example of BRAC engaging in advocacy activities, relationships with the government have been strengthened and have resulted in more regular instances of collaboration. It has also allowed BRAC to provide educational programmes beyond the NFPE's focus on primary education and connected BRAC with other organisations within Bangladesh and in the wider international community.

NGOs developing relationships with the communities they serve is another significant characteristic of the implementation and growth of NGO initiatives discussed in more detail below. Similarly, Ahmed and French's (2006) exploration of methods and activities essential to the implementation and enhancement of NGO educational initiatives indicate ways in which NGOs may operate systematically but also flexibly. It also demonstrates how taking into consideration piloting approaches and advocacy efforts, NGOs are able to function more efficiently and effectively.

Ghana's "School for Life" (SFL) programme, (Akyeampong, 2004), sought to support the formal educational system in the delivery of effective literacy and context-specific basic education as an avenue by which issues of underdevelopment and poverty in Northern Ghanaian communities could be addressed. To this end, the SFL programme published its own textbooks that spoke to the reality of the rural communities it worked with, making the education relevant to the students and the communities in which they lived. At the same time, it did not completely disconnect students from the national educational system. This modus operandi was similar to BRAC's NFPE programme as described in Ahmed and French (2006), which also used many of its own textbooks specifically developed for the contexts in which their constituents lived. However, BRAC conducted their educational programme in a way that allowed students to move forward in the national system where students finished their primary schooling within four years, as opposed to the five-year national standard, and then many students continued on to higher education. The NGOs discussed in both Akyeampong (2004) and Ahmed and French's (2006) contributions, both took approaches to the implementation of educational programmes that allowed children to receive education that was relevant to their social reality but also supported them in progressing through national education systems with the potential of continuing their education at higher levels. It will be interesting to also consider ways in which the NGOs interface relationally with families as part of the communities they serve.

NGOs, Education and the Importance of Relationships with Families and Communities

In his research undertaken in the US, Epstein (1990) suggests that schools and families simultaneously affect the development of children. He claims that there therefore needs be more coherence and connectedness between these two very important spheres. Through the evaluation of literature on the subject, Epstein (1990) argues that students, parents and teachers, and therefore schools and families, all stand to benefit from an overlap between family life and school life. When teachers encourage parent involvement in schools, parents feel more confident in their abilities to support children with their homework, and students tend have more positive attitudes towards their schooling and develop better homework practices. Students with parents who were engaged in their school life, demonstrated higher academic achievement across all grade levels. Along with positive benefits on students and parents, strong family connectedness with schools also resulted in positive impacts on teachers. Teachers felt more positive about their roles and towards their students, were less likely to stereotype students and families from poor or minority families, and also held higher

expectations of their students. Epstein's (1990) scholarship indicates that the involvement of families in the school life of their students has substantially beneficial consequences for all parties involved.

Arguably and directly linked to Epstein's premise, NGOs involved in education or acting as educational institutions within a community exemplify family interconnectedness in education due to their focus on serving and collaboration with communities. In these ways, NGO constituents likely have positive experiences associated with education similar to those described by Epstein (1990). One limitation of Epstein's (1990) work, that she herself identifies, is that not enough attention is given to the differences in teacher–family relationships depending on the social context; for example, the experiences of teachers working with affluent populations or dominant racial/cultural groups versus those of teachers working with the systemically underserved or otherwise impoverished minority communities.

Comparing NGO Literature Reviewed

Building on the discrepancies suggested by Epstein (1990), Ahmed and French (2006) identify developing relationships with the community an NGO is working with, as a key component of effective NGOs that may mitigate some of the cultural and socio-economic differences evident. To the same extent, NGOs need to pay attention and be aware of the needs and desires of the local people with whom they serve and collaborate. These nuances could be taken into consideration when developing and implementing activities and programmes. Ahmed and French (2006) argue that BRAC has been largely successful in providing services and programmes that meet the needs of the people it works with and serves, because it views itself as a learning organisation, "...constantly soliciting and acting on feedback, criticism, and suggestions from its members" (p. 37). An example of this is the creation of the NFPE programme, which originated in the 1980s in conversations between BRAC and requests from women living in villages, who specifically asked for alternative education programmes. The establishment of BRAC as being genuinely responsive to its constituents built trust and broke down barriers between the organisation and those it wished to help. This allowed for the implementation of initiatives that benefitted the people it served and ensured community support for its efforts. This point of NGOs paying attention to what the community wants and building trust between the organisation and the local people has several significant implications. First, the learning and development within NGOs themselves is directly linked to their interaction and involvement with the local people. Also, the creation

and implementation of new programmes in part results from consultation with the NGO's constituents, to ensure the service being provided is something that the community wants and will support.

Relevance of Research Literature Reviewed

Akyeampong (2004) offers an explanation for why NGOs are important, arguing that they have the potential to meet the educational needs of underserved communities where governments have been unable to effectively address these needs themselves. Akyeampong (2004) also presents an example of an NGO working in the field of education where there is the potential for success and sustainability of such an initiative. I maintain this is significant in the context of this thesis, as it presents a case for NGOs being relevant and useful to the educational development of communities, in particular those that are not effectively served by the formal system offered by their governments.

Ahmed and French (2006) use the well-established and internationally recognised non-government organisation BRAC as an example of how NGOs can successfully and sustainably engage in communities and implement programmes, with a particular focus on BRAC's NFPE educational programme. This is highly useful when analysing the NGO being discussed in this thesis, as these authors demonstrate the functions and impact that NGOs can have on education, along with the ways in which NGO initiatives can engage in the communities they wish to serve and collaborate with, and the considerations required when implementing these actions.

Ahmed and French (2006), and Akyeampong (2004) both centred on NGOs engaged in educational initiatives in countries often regarded by the West as developing. This is important in the context of this thesis because the NGO that is the focus this study is located in Mexico, a country also seen by the West as developing. Although Mexico, Ghana and Bangladesh, all have issues particular and unique to their socio-cultural and economic contexts, issues addressed in both Ahmed and French (2006) and Akyeampong (2004) that are also present in Mexico. I will elaborate on this in the discussion chapter below.

Although Epstein's (1990) review and discussion of family and school relationships does not focus on education in the context NGOs, I suggest that the points raised by Epstein (1990) are relevant to educationally focused NGOs in that her article reflects similar points raised in

Akyeampong (2004) and Ahmed and French (2006). Epstein (1990) demonstrates how family involvement in schools affects parents, students and teachers in a way that all parties benefit substantially. This analysis can be applied in the context of the NGO being studied, in the way that family/community engagement impacts, or may impact, all those involved in the work of the NGO.

Philosophy of Non-Government Organisations

As is evident in the previous section of this chapter, non-government organisations (NGOs) is a broad label and encompasses large-scale nationwide organisations such as BRAC (Ahmed & French, 2006) through to the regional School for Life (SFL) programme in Northern Ghana (Akyeampong, 2004) and even smaller organisations such as the NGO that is the focus of this research. Lewis (2006) states that "NGOs are usually understood to be the group of organizations engaged in development and poverty reduction work at local, national, and global levels around the world." (p. 1). The following section on the philosophy of non-government organisations will demonstrate that because of the broadness of this category, the philosophy or vision of NGOs and the way in which they operate depends largely upon their social or political context (Lewis, 2006, p. 191).

I have identified three authors that contribute ideas relevant to understanding the philosophy of non-government organisations: David Lewis' (2006) book, *The management of non-governmental development organizations*, which reviews the management of NGOs; Bruce Britton's (1998) article, *The learning NGO*, in which he argues that the 'learning organisations' model is applicable to NGOs; and Jo De Berry's (1999) paper, *Exploring the concept of community: implications for NGO management*, which explores the increasing focus of many NGOs on community-based action.

Learning as a key element of the philosophy of NGOs

Lewis (2006) proposes that there are three main approaches to NGO management: The generic view of management, which draws heavily on a business perspective of management, promoting an approach to NGO management that suggest they can simply be managed the same way as any other organisation. An adaptive view of management appreciates the merit of many of the ideas and approaches of generic management in regard to NGOs. However, it asserts that the distinctiveness of NGOs and how they vary from situation to situation require management that adapts to the complexities and unique needs of a NGO. Rather than a one-size-fits-all view of management, learning about management must be drawn from both

within the NGO field and from other sectors at the same time. The third approach is the distinctive view of management, which goes further than the adaptive view, placing an emphasis on the need for research to develop models of management that suit the unique and distinct needs of NGOs that are not present or understood in other sectors. The 'adaptive' and 'distinctive' views of NGO management both position learning as a central element as part of an NGO's philosophy, acknowledging that these organisations must be attentive to the unique realities of the populations they serve in order to properly function and be of benefit. Lewis (2006) presents learning as an element of NGO management that varies with regard to how it is engaged with and accepted as part of an NGO's philosophy.

Britton (1998) also recognises the importance of learning in relation to NGO philosophy. He proposes that the 'learning organisations' model of management is a relevant and useful approach to the management and structuring of non-government organisations. According to Britton (1998) "Key principles underlying learning organisations are participation, empowerment, a willingness to embrace change and the acknowledgement of grass-roots experience. These are entirely consistent with good development practice." (p. 1). Rather than being fixed in an immobile state or confined to a formula, learning organisations are continually evolving based upon the collective learning, knowledge and experiences of the members and partners of the organisation (Britton, 1998). From this collective learning, organisational practices, systems, and policies are constantly being developed and expanded upon with more experience and learning (Britton, 1998, p. 3). Learning organisations create a learning environment where members are encouraged to be 'reflective practitioners'; meaning individuals who are able to reflect on "their practice whilst they are acting, and doing so in a way that enables them to do their jobs more thoughtfully and effectively" (Britton, 1998, p. 5).

Although the learning organisations model developed out the corporate sector, Britton (1998) believes the model can be adapted to be very relevant and useful to the managing and structuring of NGOs. If NGOs do not continue to learn, their efforts will likely be unsustainable because they cannot adapt to the changes brought about by the new challenges that constantly arise as they progress with their aims and objectives. Britton (1998) suggests NGOs need to take a 'learning approach to development' broken down into a three-phase process (p.7). The first phase involves learning to be effective, which is done by collaborating with local community members through experimentation and creativity in implementing new activities within the communities they are working in. This allows NGOs to learn what best

works for a particular community and what does not (Britton, 1998). Next, NGOs must learn to use their resources efficiently and sustainably. Britton (1998) argues that an ideal situation would be where NGOs engage the community to the point where the local people are able to sustain the activities themselves. The final phase is that of NGOs learning to expand the activities that have been proven successful and sustainable at a small scale into larger objectives. This continual cycle of learning constantly generates new experience and thus new knowledge to be implemented as an NGO progresses as a learning organisation (Britton, 1998).

In addition to Lewis (2006) and Britton (1998), De Berry's (1999) philosophy of NGOs and their involvement in community-based action, argues that NGOs need to learn about the communities they are working with in order to understand the complex dynamics that impact and influence the lives of the local people. De Berry (1999) also suggests that NGOs need to conduct their own ethnographic research amongst the communities in which they operate to get a better grasp of their social realities. This point has substantial implications for NGOs with respect to their philosophy. It follows a similar line of thinking to Britton's (1998) positioning of NGOs as learning organisations and the 'adaptive' and 'distinctive' views of NGO management as described in Lewis (2006). All state that NGO philosophy cannot remain inflexible and be simply determined outside of the reality of the community or communities with which they work.

From these three perspectives of the organisational characteristics and management systems of NGOs, it is clear that the philosophies that guide NGOs usually include some policy or collective attitude that encourages learning as a means of informing and developing their actions and structure.

Relationship between context and NGO philosophy

As previously touched on with regard to learning as an essential component of NGO philosophy, the context in which an NGO operates also impacts its philosophy. A key theme throughout Lewis (2006) is that in terms of their structure and size NGOs vary substantially. At one end of the spectrum are the very large, well-funded formal organisations with hierarchical business structures; and at the other end are small grassroots organisations with limited funding and informal structures (Lewis, 2006). This indicates that there is significant diversity in terms of the types of contexts in which NGOs work and operate and also in their scale and the number of people and communities they reach. Therefore, the philosophy or

vision that underpins NGOs varies from context to context, meaning it is determined by the historical, political and cultural dimensions of both the organisation and the context of the area in which it operates (Lewis, 2006).

However, despite the significant variation between non-government organisations, Lewis (2006) identifies three main areas where all NGOs require management: the organizational domain, which refers to the internal structure and processes of an NGO; the development activities of an NGO, such as projects, ongoing initiatives and services; and finally in the relationships NGOs have with other institutions, such as the government, community organisations and other NGOs.

Unlike Lewis (2006) who analyses NGOs across different contexts, both De Berry (1999) and Britton (1998) discuss NGOs operating in localised, community contexts as opposed to NGOs at the large-scale organisational level. De Berry (1999) argues that in order to be effective in their work within communities, NGOs need to respect and be aware that communities are not separate from the "broader historical, regional and national context in which it is situated" (De Berry, 1999, p. 15). De Berry (1999) suggests that when NGOs have a better understanding and appreciation of the complex contexts in which communities exist, they will better be able to meet the needs of the people and focus on assisting in the transformation of their social reality.

Conceptualisation of Community

De Berry (1999) points to recent literature on how NGOs are increasingly making a shift in the relationship between themselves and the communities they serve. NGOs are moving from positions of paternalistic functions of welfare and delivery and into roles of collaboration with communities, whereby NGOs take on objectives that encourage empowerment and strengthening of the community at the grassroots (De Berry, 1999). This is what De Berry (1999) calls the 'community-based action' approach.

NGOs operating with community-based action approaches, generally either support existing 'community-based organisations' (CBOs) (De Berry, 1999) or create their own CBOs. In the context of this study, the latter approach is of relevance. In communities where people have not mobilised themselves into their own formal organisations to address the issues facing their community, NGOs may play a role in helping to empower local people to form CBOs (De Berry, 1999). However, NGOs often struggle to build and sustain such efforts with the

local community, which can be the result of NGOs' conceptualisation of 'community' and 'community-based action' (De Berry, 1999). De Berry (1999) argues that NGOs need to conceptualise community as being more than the uncontested social unit in which they operate and instead understand communities as being made up of complex social dynamics, such as the systems of power and authority that govern people's lives. The fact that communities and the social relations within them are constantly changing is another aspect often neglected by NGOs (De Berry, 1999).

Lewis (2006) and Britton (1998) both discuss community as a social unit where many NGOs carry out their work; while De Berry (1999) challenges this view of community, arguing that such an approach neglects the complex social dynamics of people's lives and thus NGOs can have an adverse, rather than a positive, affect if they do not respect and acknowledge the constantly changing social reality of communities. This latter conceptualisation is most relevant to this study, as will become evident in the findings and discussion chapters of this thesis.

Relevance of philosophy literature reviewed

Lewis' (2006) demonstration of the complexity of the NGO sector indicates that the philosophy of NGOs varies significantly from organisation to organisation. The view of management adopted by an NGO is greatly influenced by the context in which it sits and the values and objectives it wishes to promote and carry out (Lewis, 2006, p. 191). This is relevant to this study in that it demonstrates the diversity of NGOs with regard to philosophy, which is a key aspect of the research question. In the analysis of the NGO that is the case study for this thesis, context and purpose arekey points that need careful consideration when discussing the organisation's philosophy or vision.

Britton's (1998) emphasis on NGOs adopting an organisational structure and system of management centred around a process of learning and implementation on new knowledge gleaned from experience, provides substantial insight into the philosophy of NGOs. A philosophical framework that encourages action based on the collective learning of members encouraged to be reflective practitioners (Britton, 1998, pp. 1-5) is highly relevant to the NGO studied in this research, as will be shown in the findings and discussion chapters of this thesis.

De Berry (1999) offers a management philosophy of NGOs that takes into consideration problematic assumptions about community. According to De Berry (1999), NGOs need to

conduct research with the communities they work with, in order to understand the complex social reality lived by the local people, which will better inform how an NGO operates within a community (p. 16-17). This consideration and awareness of a community as a dynamic and complex social space and how it can be used to influence an NGO's philosophy, is a theme that guides the analytical lens of this study.

Critical Leadership

Leadership, specifically critical leadership, is a key aspect of this research. As part of my analysis of the NGO and its role in education, I am focusing on how leadership can help translate the vision or philosophy of an NGO into action and also how these leadership actions serve to impact the community in which the NGO works. Therefore, this section of the review will focus on applied critical leadership (Santamaría, 2013; Santamaría, Santamaría, Webber & Pearson, 2014), servant leadership (Spears, 2000/2010) and visionary leadership (Manasse, 1985) to explore and acquire a sound understanding of critical leadership. I will also review several authors, Khalifa (Khalifa, 2010; Khalifa, 2012) and Johnson (2006); who provide insight and examples of how critical leaders engage in action and impact the communities with which they work and collaborate.

Collaboration, consensus-building and critical leadership

In Santamaría et al., (2014), the theory of applied critical leadership (ACL) is used in a qualitative study of leadership within an urban school in New Zealand (NZ). The study investigates the leadership practices of a Māori urban primary school and analyses them alongside the original study from which ACL was conceptualised; in which the leadership of nine educational leaders in the USA was research (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). The aim of this study is to work towards a model international school leadership (Santamaría et al., 2014). Collaboration is a key characteristic of ACL identified in the leadership practiced by the school principal studied in Santamaría et al., (2014). The school principal worked with teachers to maintain both awareness about their teaching and also to build consensus with regard to their attitudes and understanding so that it reflected the values and culture of the school (Santamaría et al., 2014). Santamaría and research associates (2014) identified that the school principal viewed this building of consensus as essential to her practice and actively utilised consensus daily as part of her role as a leader. Santamaría et al. (2014) suggest that the Māori urban school principal's use of collaboration and consensus-building in her

everyday practice was coherent with the American applied critical leaders studied in Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) and thus consistent with ACL practice.

Collaboration, partnership and willingness to learn from others are also important characteristics identified by Manasse (1985) in her discussion of visionary leadership. 'Personal vision' is a key component according to Manasse (1985). Having personal vision allows leaders to identify their strengths and weaknesses and position themselves within their organisation in a way that is beneficial to the operation and advancement of everyone involved, for example in recruitment of individuals who have strengths in areas where the leader feels they themselves are lacking (Manasse, 1985). However, this self-awareness in regard to personal ability should not be rigid, and visionary leaders understand that what is considered a strength in one context could become a weakness in another, and vice versa. In regard to personal vision, visionary leaders strive to focus on the positive in all situations, viewing changes or problems they encounter as opportunities and learning experiences. This openness to learning and recognising where the contributions of others are needed to provide strengths the leader may be lacking, arguably encourages collaboration and partnership as a part of visionary leadership.

Similar to the collaborative and consensus-building aspects of applied critical leadership as discussed in Santamaría et al. (2014), Spears (2000/2010) identifies the ability to build consensus as a key component in the practice of servant leadership. In Spears (2000/2010), the author outlines 10 characteristics that he suggests define servant leaders and are intrinsic to the practice of servant leadership. Two of these characteristics that reflect similar aspects of the type of collaboration mentioned in Santamaría et al. (2014) and Manasse (1985) are that of "persuasion" and "commitment to the growth of people" (Spears, 2000/2010, pp. 28-29). Spears (2000/2010) defines persuasion as building consensus within groups, as opposed to coercion, which is arguably a form of collaboration. I prefer to describe this leadership characteristic simply as consensus-building, rather than persuasion, which I consider somewhat problematic as it connotes a sense of superficiality in regard to unity. The consensus-building described in Santamaría et al. (2014) emphasises building consensus in a meaningful and sincere way. Commitment to the growth of people is explained by Spears (2000/2010) as nurturing the professional development of the people with whom they work, actively listening to people's ideas and suggestions, and being able to involve others in the decision-making.

Santamaría et al. (2014), Manasse (1985) and Spears (2000/2010) all maintain that collaboration is an essential component of critical leadership. Santamaría et al. (2014) in their study of the principal of a Māori urban primary school, indicate that her example of collaboration and consensus-building in her practice of leadership correlates with the theory of applied critical leadership (ACL) developed out of findings from an earlier study by Santamaría and Santamaría (2012). Manasse (1985) indicates that a part of the personal vision necessary to practise visionary leadership is collaboration with others in a way that strengthens the leadership objectives by drawing on others' diverse talents and capabilities. Although Spears (2000/2010) is approaching leadership from a business-orientated perspective, arguably the characteristics outlined in his description of servant leadership are of use in understanding critical educational leadership.

Transformative leadership and social justice

Another feature present throughout the literature on critical leadership practices, is that of transformation and social justice being essential to the vision and intended outcomes of critical leaders (Shields, 2010). Through the critical lens essential in the practice of applied critical leadership, leaders move beyond traditional Western models of leadership and strive to address social inequalities and promote social justice within their educational and community environments (Santamaría, 2013; Santamaría et al., 2014).

In Santamaría (2013), the author uses a critical race theory (CRT) methodological approach incorporating the theory of ACL to investigate the ways in which the identities of educational "leaders of color [...] affect their leadership goals, decisions and practices..." and the strategies that these leaders use in their daily practice (p. 5). This study found that leaders who reflected and drew upon their ethnic, cultural and linguistic identities within a CRT framework were able to recognise and express "positive attributes of their identities and differences" and were able to apply multicultural perspectives in numerous ways (Santamaría, 2013, p. 34). These expressions and applications of identity allowed them to promote social justice within the educational environments in which they work, such as working within the dominant structures of educational institutions to promote social justice in the context of race and gender.

Santamaría and research partners (2014) also found that the school leader that participated in the study also viewed their social justice and transformation as a key component of their leadership practice. This attitude reflects ACL practice, which is defined in study as "the

emancipatory practice of choosing to address educational issues and challenges using a critical race perspective to enact context-specific change in response to power, domination, access, and achievement imbalances, resulting in improved academic achievement for learners at every academic level..." (Santamaría et al., 2014, p. 7). This demonstrates that from an ACL lens, critical leadership must be characterised by transformative and social justice elements.

Leadership that validates, honours and builds trust with the people that leaders serve is one of the main concepts found in Khalifa (2012) that contributed to the academic achievement, improved behaviour and development of their identity in a way that was conducive to a positive view of education among the students served by the school principal. Khalifa's (2010) two-year-long qualitative ethnographic study investigates how a veteran school leader worked to ensure the validation of at-risk African American students and their families' cultural capital, and how they acted as a bridge between the community, teachers, students and their families. Khalifa (2012) builds upon the 2010 study by examining the principal's role as a community leader.

In his practice of leadership, the principal demonstrated the ability to recognise and connect with the culture of his students and the community (Khalifa, 2010). The principal worked to protect the students and their culture and ensure the educational environment was one of empowerment not marginalisation, which is often the case of many mainstream schools' attitudes towards African American students from impoverished backgrounds (Khalifa, 2010). Similar to the transformative, social justice characteristics of ACL leaders in Santamaría (2013) and Santamaría et al. (2014), Khalifa (2010) provides an example of critical leadership that places transformation at the centre of practice, striving to build social justice and challenge social inequality.

The work of Santamaría (2013), Santamaría et al. (2014) and Khalifa (2010; 2012) demonstrates that critical leadership differentiates itself from more mainstream or traditional models of leadership, in that a moral or values-based commitment is inseparable from their practice of leadership, which works toward challenging social inequalities and perpetuating social justice.

Critical leadership actions and community impact

Khalifa (2012) provides several insights into the concrete actions that critical leaders can take in their practice of educational leadership. Khalifa (2012) states that "Overall, the findings

suggest that the principal's high visibility in the community and advocacy of community-based causes led to trust, credibility, and rapport with the UAHS [the school being studied] neighborhood community." (p. 439).

The visibility of the principal and the support he showed to the local community broke down walls of distrust that parents had previously held towards the school, and instead led to the community supporting the principal and the school (Khalifa, 2012). This finding is reflected in the way in which the principal allowed parents access to the school at all times, making it an extension of the neighbourhood. This action fostered trust towards the principal and encouraged parents to become more actively involved in their children's education (Khalifa, 2012). Another action taken by the principal to build trust and a presence within the community was the requirement for teachers to personally deliver report cards to families. The principal, along with the school-community liaison, would often make regular home visits to students, strengthening the relationships between the principal, school and the community (Khalifa, 2012).

Khalifa (2012) found several positive impacts as a result of the principal being readily available to his students and their families and actively engaging in community life. Direct links were found between the principal's rapport and availability to his students and their increased academic achievement and positive attitudes toward schooling (Khalifa, 2012,). Student behaviour also improved because of their respect for the principal and they felt that they were able to stay true to their culture while striving for academic success because of the encouragement and acceptance demonstrated by the principal (Khalifa, 2012).

Johnson (2006) also provides an example of an educational leader and the impact of the actions she took as part of her practice of critical leadership. Johnson's (2006) study investigates the educational leadership of Gertrude Elise Johnson McDougald Ayer (1885-1971), the first African American woman to become a principal in New York City, and how her leadership practices were culturally responsive. Johnson (2006) used a historical case study in which she gathered data from a range of archives to create a biographical profile and understanding of Gertrude Ayer's educational leadership philosophy and practices. Based upon her review of literature concerning culturally responsive leadership, Johnson (2006) identifies several elements of culturally responsive leadership that Gertrude Ayer exemplified in her practice of educational leadership: the school leader as a public intellectual, curriculum innovator and social activist.

In addition to her role as a principal, Ayer also contributed to education academically, writing journal articles and reports, organising community forums, frequently contributing to the local newspaper, and engaging in campaign efforts for public school reform "throughout her 43-year career as an educator and community leader" (Johnson, 2006, p. 27). Ayer took specific steps to contribute to understanding and awareness about her community, as an African American woman in Harlem, highlighting and analysing socio-economic issues as well as the contributions of fellow African Americans in education, especially African American women (Johnson, 2006).

Ayer advocated for education that reflected real-life experiences and thus her students engaged in problem-solving activities, learned community gardening skills, learned math in the context of how it relates to business and finance, ran their own conferences and discussions, and learned how to utilise different forms of writing (Johnson, 2006). Ayer also encouraged Harlem locals to come into the school and share their various skills and expertise with students (Johnson, 2006). The impact of Ayer's approach to curriculum is evident, with many of students going on to find professions or pursue higher education (Johnson, 2006).

As part of her role as an educational leader, Ayer promoted intercultural education and race relations activities in Harlem (Johnson, 2006). Throughout her life, Ayer engaged in a myriad of philanthropic activities aimed at addressing issues affecting African Americans and other minorities and also issues affecting women (Johnson, 2006). Johnson's (2006) historical analysis of Ayer's culturally responsive leadership practices provides an historical example of how educational leaders can critically engage with their organisations and communities and the importance of viewing education in terms of where it is situated within the context of the wider community and social reality.

Both Khalifa (2012) and Johnson (2006) demonstrate how leaders practising critical leadership put their vision into action and how these actions can tangibly and meaningful impact the individuals and communities with which they work. In regard to the critical leadership characteristics discussed earlier in this chapter, it is clear that these leaders exhibited the adoption of collaboration, social justice and transformative leadership as a part of their practice.

Relevance of critical leadership literature considered

The literature reviewed in this section provides multiple conceptualisations and perspectives of critical leadership. The different perspectives presented in Santamaría (2013), Santamaría

(2014), Spears (2000/2010), Spears (2002) and Manasse (1985); demonstrate understandings of critical leadership that I suggest will contribute a well-informed theoretical position to analyse the critical educational leadership practiced in the NGO being studied in this thesis. Santamaría (2013), Santamaría (2014), Khalifa (2010), Khalifa (2012) and Johnson (2006) present detailed descriptions of real-life examples of how critical leadership can be practised and how these practical actions can impact the constituents and communities that these leaders serve. This evidence of critical leadership actions impacting the educational reality of communities in a positive way will serve as a means to guide my analysis of the critical leaders in this study in the context of their actions on their community and on the people with whom they collaborate.

Chapter 3: Design and Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and explain the research methods used to explore the ways in which non-government organisations (NGOs) involved in education translate their philosophy or vision into critical leadership actions and how these actions impact the community in which an NGO operates. This chapter will first provide descriptions of the setting where the research case study was located and the participants who took part in the study. I will then explain how this study was designed and why this design was used, the methods used to collect data, how this data was analysed and, finally, I will acknowledge and address any limitations this study may have.

The non-government organisation featured in this research is located in a rural community in central Mexico. For the purpose of this study, the NGO will be referred to by the pseudonym *'Esperanza Worldwide'*, Esperanza meaning 'hope', and the village in which is located will be known by the pseudonym '*Lago'*, meaning 'lake', in order to protect the anonymity of the organisation, its members, the constituents and the local communities involved with the NGO. All the participants in this study are also referred to by pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.

Setting

Esperanza is located in a rural community about a 25-minute drive from a historical urban centre and popular tourist destination in central Mexico. Esperanza is located on a flat piece of land with a panoramic view of farmland and the surrounding sierra. On a clear day, one can see the closest city in the distance. Along with the building, which serves as the focal point for the activities run by Esperanza, the grounds of the NGO consist of a large north-facing field, which includes space for a future community garden. At the beginning of the field is a gnarled old tree with branches that spread out providing plenty shade. White rocks are spaced around the base of the tree in the shape of a star. The tree holds significance in that it is used in the summer programme where the participants tie their wishes or aspirations around the branches in colourful ribbons. Along the front of the building, facing northeast, is a small basketball court and smaller fields run along the eastern and southern side.

The building itself is constructed of concrete blocks covered with stucco. The first floor exterior has been painted mustard yellow and covered with murals with learning motifs and constructive graffiti by volunteers and the local community. It is very welcoming and

colourful. The edifice is three stories high, with the third storey added recently to provide space for a larger library than the one currently on the first floor and more classroom space. The first floor is a large terra cotta-tiled space, each wall painted a different colour, with some quotes stating the vision of Esperanza written on them. On one of the walls is a professionally painted mural of three women representing their importance in the community and to education. A renowned Mexican artist contributed this focal point. There is also a kitchen on the first floor. The second floor consists of accommodation for a couple who live at Esperanza to ensure it is being looked after at night. The second floor also has two classrooms: one set up for Montessori and a smaller room that includes storage space for stationary, sports equipment, games, etc.

The grounds of Esperanza are located close to the beginning of Lago and along the road that connects Lago with a way into the city and other rural communities, where some of the constituents also come from. The natural environment in which Lago is located could be described as 'high desert', however it was very green because I was there for data collection during the rainy season. Lago is mostly residential, with houses lining the dirt road that runs through the community. There are two small general stores operated out of locals' houses and a primary school and pre-school, where many of the children who attend Esperanza come from. Many of the families in Lago are very large and many of the people in the town are related to one other. This is significant in terms of the sense of community already present in Lago that arguably has contributed to sustaining Esperanza's efforts over time. According to some of those working at Esperanza, about 30 years ago the people of Lago used to farm the fertile banks of the large lake around which Lago and the neighbouring communities are located. However, because of the state damming of the lake, the community was forced to move their homes up away from the land, which no longer belonged to them. Thus, the rocky land they currently use for farming, is much more difficult to farm.

Participants

After expressing my wish to study NGOs involved in education, I was put into contact with an American professor of education who also founded and serves as director of Esperanza. We discussed the possibility of my conducting research at Esperanza and finalised the details when the director visited New Zealand as a part of his academic work. This is what set me on the path to conducting research in Mexico and therefore identifying the first research participant.

Initially I intended to conduct interviews and observations with the director of Esperanza, the co-ordinator of Esperanza, and potentially one or two other 'leaders' within the organisation. Before arriving in Mexico and observing Esperanza's weekly activities in person, I had made assumptions about the structure of the NGO's leadership, which had influenced my research design. However, upon observing Esperanza on the ground I realised that the style of leadership within the NGO was less formalised than expected and I would therefore have to frame my approach differently.

Fortunately, upon interviewing the founder and director of Esperanza, I was encouraged to interview the co-ordinator of Esperanza, who lived in Lago, and also a volunteer and colleague of the director who had been coming to Esperanza regularly, a former student of the director who was involved in implementing a Montessori programme at the NGO, a board member of Esperanza who also ran a health-based NGO in another a part of Mexico that has a partnership with Esperanza, and two of the parents whose children attended Esperanza and had been involved in the programme themselves. Therefore, based upon my conversations with the director of Esperanza, I was pointed in the direction of whose participation to seek, to get a more well-rounded and complete picture of the organisation.

Stephen, Founder and Director

The founder and director of Esperanza Worldwide is a European American who developed a connection with Mexico in the course of attending university there and later accompanying students there as a part of programme run by Stephen through his university in the US from 1986 to the present day. Inspired by Mexico and his interactions with Mexican people over the years, and by a colleague and friend who ran a development organisation in Chile, Stephen wanted to do something more concrete within a community, rather than simply coming and going when he brought students down in the summer.

When visiting a former student and her family who had moved to Lago, Stephen came across the property where Esperanza is now built (at the time the building on the property was in ruins and abandoned). He thought that this could be a place to start something with the local community and have his students participate in running supportive activities to supplement the education taking place in Lago. With the help of his former student, they drew upon contacts within the community and the idea developed organically from there.

Initially the property was rented in 2008, but later purchased, and in June 2009 Esperanza, with just one storey at first, was formally opened. An inauguration ceremony was held, which

was attended by 450 people from various organisations in Mexico and around the world, such as the United States, China, Hong Kong, Europe and other parts of Latin America. The global aspect of Esperanza Worldwide is an important point that will be elaborated on in later chapters.

Esperanza is registered as a non-profit organisation in the USA, and has a board of 10 members, a number of whom are Mexican American. Stephen works closely with Rosa, who was involved with Esperanza from the outset and is local to Lago.

Rosa, Co-ordinator

Rosa is in her late twenties and is the onsite co-ordinator of Esperanza Worldwide. She was born and raised in Lago, and a great many of the local people there are part of her extended family. Rosa was involved with Esperanza from the beginning, participating in workshops and volunteering at the library. Eventually she developed a relationship with several of the people involved with Esperanza and, through a foundation that Stephen was working with, was employed as co-ordinator of the organisation. She has been in that role for five years.

As part of her role as co-ordinator, she takes care of the day-to-day maintenance of Esperanza's facilities and also organises events and gatherings between Esperanza and the community. Rosa is also involved in some the educational activities of Esperanza, running regular basic computer classes and also currently training to be a Montessori teacher for the younger children.

Andrew, Volunteer

Andrew is European American and is a university colleague of Stephen's. He has volunteered at Esperanza for the past four years, this year spending about two and half months there. Andrew's volunteering with Esperanza has consisted of helping to plan and organise the intensive summer school programme held at Esperanza every year and doing whatever jobs need to be done.

Felipe, Montessori Teacher

Felipe is Mexican who grew up and lived in another part of Mexico, but has lived in the United States for many years. He was a postgraduate student of Stephen and is an experienced Montessori teacher. He was invited by Stephen to implement a Montessori programme at Esperanza last year for the summer school programme for preschool-aged

children. Felipe was here again this year to do more work with the program and also worked with Rosa in teaching her the Montessori method.

Olivia, Affiliate Partner and Board Member

Olivia is from a European American background and is a qualified architect and medical doctor. She designed the building of Esperanza and is a board member of the organisation. Olivia is the executive director of another NGO focusing on health development in relationship to education with a clinic operating in a remote area in northern Mexico and acting as a healthcare hub for nearby communities. The partnership between Olivia's organisation and Esperanza is an international one. Esperanza is registered as a non-profit NGO in the USA and Olivia's organisation is legally recognised in Mexico.

Parents

I interviewed two mothers, both of whom have children attending Esperanza and have themselves attended workshops offered for adults in the community.

Research Design

The research design of this study is based on my theoretical perspective, drawing from the critical work of Freire (1968/2012) and Santamaría and Santamaría's (2012) applied critical leadership summarised in the literature review. In the search for empirical literature on NGOs, educational leadership, and the roles of NGOs in education, I was unable to find any authors who had approached the subject with the consideration for the educational aspect I sought to examine. Due to the arguable uniqueness of this study, I needed to use methods that would allow me to learn from my data and make sense of the complexity of what was being investigated. Based on the theoretical frames and previous research considered, a qualitative case study approach (based on work underpinning my theoretical perspective) was ultimately used. This also took into account the research questions posed.

In the end, I decided a qualitative approach would be most appropriate because it allows for complexities where findings cannot necessarily be anticipated beforehand, which is what I anticipated for my work (Richards & Morse, 2013). I also opted for qualitative methods because I wanted the data to reflect the experiences and interpretations of the individuals participating in the study rather than my own assumptions (Richards & Morse, 2013).

To explore the phenomena of NGOs involved in education, in relation to their philosophy, leadership and impact on the community, a case study approach was deemed an appropriate

approach to frame the research. According to Richards and Morse (2013), case studies differ from other qualitative research methods in that the methods or methodology used are often determined by the context in which the case study is situated, as opposed to the methodological framework defining the research's focus. This is true in the context of this study where, after conducting data collection, I revisited the literature review and then decided which theoretical framework would best provide a means to answer the question being posed. Upon arriving at the site of Esperanza, it also became apparent that the most natural and ethical way to conduct observations in this context would be to adopt a position closer to being a "complete participant" as opposed to being a "complete observer" as described in Richards and Morse (2013). However, it would be inaccurate to say that I was a complete participant, due to my lack of proficiency in the local language (Spanish) and also my limited understanding of the local culture. This is a point that will be covered more in depth in the limitations section at the end of this chapter.

Case study was also an appropriate approach for this study as it is regularly used in fields such as sociology, education, psychology and business; education being the relevant field in the context of this research. According to Yin (2003) "The case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries" (p. 2). Arguably this idea of retaining the holistic and meaningful characteristics of a phenomena being researched, in particular that of organisational and managerial processes, is very relevant in the study of an educationally focused NGO and fits with my reasoning for using a qualitative methodology as already stated above.

Data Collection

Case studies tend to employ multiple methods of data collection (Yin, 2003). In the case study of Esperanza, I primarily used semi-structured interviews and participant observation to gather data, along with analysis of documentation available publicly, namely the website of Esperanza and the mission statement of the organisation provided to me by the director. The use of multiple data-collection techniques allows for the triangulation of data during the analysis phase of research, providing a clearer, coherent picture of the phenomena of interest (Yin, 2003).

Interviews

As mentioned earlier in the section on participants, as part of his role in this study, the director of Esperanza was asked to point me towards others working with the organisation that would provide further insight and understanding in answering the questions posed by this study. The interviews conducted with Stephen, Rosa, Andrew, Felipe and Olivia provided perspectives on the philosophy of Esperanza, the leadership within the organisation and also the impact on the community; while the interviews with the two parents centred around how they perceived the vision of Esperanza and how they viewed the impact of the organisation on their community.

Prior to conducting research, a set of indicative questions was created to guide the semi-structured interviews. These were modified somewhat upon my initial observation and participation with Esperanza. The use of the semi-structured interview method allowed for a degree of flexibility during the process and I was able to ask questions that were responsive to the answers given by participants. This produced data that reflected the different perspectives and gave each participants personalised voice to the research.

Rosa and both parents gave their interviews in Spanish and therefore interpreters were used to translate back and forth between the participants and myself as the researcher. Although I suggest that this approach adequately overcame the language barrier, there is a degree to which this was a limitation for this study, which will be discussed in detail at the end of this chapter.

Participants were asked to allow for up to an hour of their time for the interviews, however the length varied from participant to participant and each interview was recorded.

Observation

As mentioned previously in the research design section, my implementation of participant observation was skewed more towards being a “complete participant” as opposed to being a “complete observer” (Richards & Morse, 2013, p. 55). For a period of over one and a half months I visited the site Esperanza three to four times a week, usually from around 9.30am until 6.30pm, taking notes by journaling reflectively at the end of each day. Daily activities were run after school from around 4pm to 6.30pm for the local children. As part of my participation, I would assist volunteers with several of these regular activities, including

physical education and reading to the younger children in Spanish. In addition to participating in the afterschool programme for the children, I would also provide whatever help I could at the site of Esperanza prior to the commencement of their afternoon programme. This included helping to paint some of the newly renovated third floor, planting grass seed, and general tidying and helping to assist in preparing for the afternoon activities. As a researcher, I felt that this approach to participant observation was one that helped remove, at least to a degree, the researcher-participant barrier and also from a personal preference, I was able to at least provide some degree of service to the organisation as opposed to being a removed, passive observer. As I also stated previously, and a point that will be elaborated on in the limitations section, because of my position as an outsider, not fluent in the local language or familiar with the local culture, I could never be considered as a "complete participant". I suggest that this implementation of participant observation built trust between me as the researcher and the research participants and constituents of Esperanza, and provided full access to the site, which provides visual and experiential data that cannot be obtained from other sources such as interviews and document analysis.

As previously mentioned, 'observational notes' were taken regularly, but never while the actual activities of Esperanza were carried out. The reason for taking notes in this way was to ensure that as a participant at the organisation I was able to actively engage in the activities and with those involved with Esperanza without the distraction and potential barrier of constantly carrying around a notebook. The notes consist of descriptions of the observed functions and activities within Esperanza and Lago, and also my reflections as a researcher on what implications these have in regard to the purpose of this study. In addition to the observations of Esperanza, I also attended and observed a conference put together by Stephen, to which school administrators and teachers from around the state in which Lago is situated, were invited. This provided insight into a way in which Esperanza connected with the regional, national and even international educational community, as the speakers were from around Mexico and also overseas.

Engaging in participant observation as a research method for this study allowed for concrete understanding of how Esperanza engaged in its educational activities, such as the function of leadership within the organisation and community, the nature of the educational activities and relationships between participants, and other characteristics of the social and educational environment of Esperanza. Observation provides the opportunity to see the activities in progress and identify non-verbal interactions and other forms of evidence unique to this

method. Conducting observations provided visual evidence to validate the data collected from the interviews with individual participants.

Supporting documents

A consideration of publicly available documentation is another method I used in conducting this study. The interviews and observations form the bulk of the study in terms of where data is sourced, however the analysis of the mission statement, sent to me by Stephen, and the website of Esperanza provided a third source of data that contributed to answering the question posed by this study. The document consideration was particularly useful in gaining an understanding of Esperanza Worldwide's vision and also in matching what was being said about the vision and goals of the organisation in the interviews and what was being presented to the public.

Analysis

Data from interviews, observations and documents were analysed using thematic coding (Gibbs, 2007). Coding was carried out by hand. The coding process was guided by Creswell's (2014) approach, in which the researcher first reads through all their interview transcriptions, observational notes and documents while simultaneously making notes of ideas that come to light as one reads. After going through this process for every piece of data, I listed all the topics that emerged from my reflective reading, clustering together related topics, arranging them with regard to their importance and uniqueness. Using this list of topics, which were abbreviated into codes, I went through the data again, writing the codes next to related bits of text; looking for any new emergent categories and codes. Eventually I narrowed down the list of categories by merging related topics together and under these categories assembled the data that belonged to each category. In my approach to coding I used a "combination of emerging and predetermined codes" (Creswell, 2014, p. 199), to ensure coherence with the research questions.

The interpretation of the themes and descriptions that had emerged from the coded data drew upon elements of the 'critical communicative methodology' also known as the communicative methodology of research (CMR) (Morley & Valentino, 2013). The critical communicative methodology (CCM) is a research methodology that grew out of the work of Jesús 'Pato' Gómez and his work with Roma people in Spain (Morley & Valentino, 2013). Gómez believed that groups of people that are marginalised and oppressed were able to transform their social reality through dialogue and critical analysis, in collaborative research

with academics (Morley & Valentino, 2013). Although during the phases leading up to conducting the research at Esperanza and the actual research itself, I did not adopt a CCM approach, I contend that the analytical approach of CCM with its Freirian dialogic approach, is relevant to this study and works well as a complement to its theoretical framework. In CCM "data analysis is orientated toward identifying two dimensions: exclusionary and transformative" (Gómez, Elboj & Capllonch, 2013, p. 191). In interpretation of the data gleaned about Esperanza, the CCM approach was used to identify the transformative and exclusionary dimensions within the themes and descriptions that emerged during the coding process. The entire analysis effort was scaffolded by a more senior researcher familiar with every aspect of the inquiry site in Mexico, fluent in Spanish, and knowledgeable of the theoretical frames and analyses performed for the study. This involvement served to increase the validity of the analysis and results.

Limitations

My lack of competence in the local language and culture is a notable limitation in this research study. Because I did not fluently understand or speak Spanish, I had to conduct interviews with Spanish-speaking participants through interpreters. Although I was able to understand what was being said because of these interpreters, these interviews did not flow as well as the interviews I conducted with English-speaking participants, and I was less adept at formulating new questions based on what was being said to me and therefore these interviews followed a more structured format.

Also, because of my limited Spanish and understanding of the local culture in Lago, I was not able to fully engage as a participant at Esperanza. Although I felt warmly accepted by everyone involved with Esperanza, I was unable to fully converse with the local people and also limited in my understanding of the verbal and non-verbal interactions going on around me.

Chapter 4: Findings

Outside the facilities of Esperanza Worldwide in Lago.

Summary of Participants involved in the Study	
Stephen	Founder and President of Esperanza Worldwide. An American university professor who studied in Mexico and led a summer study abroad programme there for over 30 years as a part of his work with the university.
Rosa	Co-ordinator of Esperanza Worldwide in Lago. Has lived in Lago her whole life.
Olivia	Executive director of an NGO based in Northern Mexico with a focus on healthcare affiliated with Esperanza Worldwide. Member of the Board of Esperanza Worldwide. She was also the architect of the building of Esperanza and is a medical doctor.
Andrew	Colleague and friend of Stephen at the university in the USA. Has volunteered at Esperanza for the past 4 years and also helps lead a university summer programme that offers the bulk of the workshops held at the annual Esperanza summer school in Lago.
Felipe	Montessori teacher. Born in Mexico but has lived in the USA for many years. Former university student of Stephen.
Parents	Two local mothers living in Lago who had attended workshops at Esperanza Worldwide and had children who regularly attended activities there.

This study investigated a non-government organisation explicitly involved in the development of a community through education, in the context of the following questions: In what ways does an NGO involved in education translate its philosophy or vision into critical

leadership actions? How do these leadership actions impact the community in which the NGO works?

This chapter is organised into five sections, each pertaining to key themes gleaned from the research data based on data analysis. As was stated in the research design and methodology section, qualitative data was gathered through the use of semi-structured interviews, participant observation and the analysis of public documentation. The data gathered will be presented and referred to under each of the five themes that make up this chapter.

Continual Willingness to Learn

Entrance to the grounds and facilities of Esperanza Worldwide in Lago.

After thorough review of the interviews, observational and public document data gathered from Esperanza Worldwide, a continual willingness to learn and an openness to organic evolution and development can be seen pervading every aspect of the organisation. The adoption of an organisational philosophy characterised Esperanza from its founding, and is core to the vision of Esperanza. This was expressed in the actions of the leaders and volunteers that I observed during my participation within the organisation. This philosophy also allows Stephen, as the NGO's president, to seize upon any opportunities that present themselves and was conducive to collaborating with and learning from others.

Founding the organisation

Esperanza, which was founded in 2008, grew out of Stephen's close affinity with Mexico. This relationship included his having attended university in Mexico where he obtained his

first undergraduate degree. It also included over 30 years of bringing students there from the university where he teaches in the USA as part of an overseas summer study programme:

> So what inspired me was the fact I had been coming for all these years and felt like Mexico had enriched my life a lot so I was inspired to, rather than just coming down and being here in a programme and just having my students participating just coming and going, I decided that how about starting something in a community or something which was more concrete. It wasn't sort of abstract.

The opportunity to do something 'more concrete' presented itself when Stephen was visiting one his former students, a frequent participant in his summer programme, who had settled in Lago. During this visit, Stephen came across the property where the facilities of Esperanza are now built:

> ...I liked the location and the view and I said, you know this property is perfect, it would be kind of an interesting place to, you know, to do something. I wasn't sure if it was professional or personal at the time but then it kind of developed into ... a great place to start something where students could come and we could start doing some activities.

Stephen decided to rent the property and after a year purchased it. Through his former student, Stephen started making contacts within the community, including Rosa the co-ordinator of Esperanza, and the students that he accompanied annually from the USA began to run activities with the community of Lago. This organic development that characterised the founding and development of Esperanza from an idea into a present-day, visible fixture within the community; can be found within the vision and philosophy that guides the NGO and is reflected in the implementation of its activities, especially in the recruiting of the volunteers that carry out the organisation's day-to-day activities.

Vision & Action

The vision and philosophy of Esperanza Worldwide reflects the willingness to learn and approach opportunities organically. This is demonstrated in the outline of the organisation's vision on its website:

> Esperanza Worldwide as a Centre of learning will seek to cultivate and develop the limitless potentialities latent in human consciousness and will pursue as a major goal the participation of all peoples in generating and applying knowledge.

One of the 'Five Operating Foundational Principles' upon which Esperanza is based is that of the 'Independent Investigation of Reality:

> Every effort will be made to create conditions amenable to the meaningful investigation of the world around us and to see unbiased and objective solutions to our challenges, while fostering the understanding that human happiness and the establishment of peace, justice and unity are the ultimate goals of this process.

These two quotes from the Esperanza Worldwide's website demonstrate learning as central to the organisation's activities and purpose. This concept was reflected numerous times in the actions of Stephen, Rosa and the volunteers, and the activities they oversaw and facilitated. Stephen would continually reflect with the five university volunteers about how they felt about the classes that they were running, and encourage continual reflection about experiences. I observed that this encouraged the volunteers to learn from challenges and readily make necessary changes to the implementation of their activities to better meet the needs of the children.

The approach to the Esperanza's goals and objectives as a constant learning process was also reflected by interview participants when explaining the vision of Esperanza. In his understanding of his relationship to the cultural context of Lago and the need to work towards increased community engagement in the direction of Esperanza, Stephen acknowledged that although he is very familiar with Mexico and had been working and visiting the country for many years, he is still in some ways an outsider. He explained that based on his knowledge and experience, understanding the cultural context and dynamics of a community such as Lago takes time. Olivia, the executive director of an affiliated NGO, also described the learning process as being a key component of Esperanza and her NGO's vision:

> ...we are in a process of learning. You have to re-feed your experiences into analysis and kind of regroup and figure out 'ok this is a real challenge'. We've got children where 6 year olds have alcoholism issues, so how do we deal with that and how do we create kind of a safety net for the community so it can progress positively? ... So where I would like to see this go and, as I said, I think we are going to find some surprises along our path...is that each one of these communities where we develop our gardens or our education centres, that it creates an empowerment for the youth and that they can then reproduce the same workshops in other areas.

Stephen and Rosa's own engagement with Esperanza on the ground is also conducive to being open to learning and organic developments. Prior to the regular everyday classes that run after school 4pm-6.30pm, Stephen and Rosa – particularly Rosa, as she lives in Lago and is the organisation's full-time co-ordinator – were usually on site from around 9am each morning attending to the cleaning and maintenance of the building and grounds. This hands-on approach meant that they were always available and visible to the community and able to respond to any developments and potential visitors to the site. For example, Stephen was able

to address any issues with the renovations that were ongoing during the month and a half that I was present at Esperanza. Rosa and Stephen were also able to provide assistance, if needed, to the volunteers in their preparations for their afternoon classes.

Collaboration: building and drawing upon relationships

The organic approach and continual willingness to learn adopted by Esperanza transformed Stephen's initial vision into the concrete, functioning community service that it is today. This is also an important theme visible in the way in which Stephen, Rosa and other organisation affiliates build and develop relationships with other people. This way of working was also seen in affiliated organisations serving to maintain and enhance the function of Esperanza within Lago and the wider community.

Along with inspiration for the founding of Esperanza coming from Stephen's close personal connection to Mexico and his desire to give back, the vision of Esperanza is also drawn from a close colleague. This influential individual ran a community centre for Mapuche people in Chile, which Stephen visited in 2008. Another important influence is Stephen's consultation with the board of Esperanza to:

> ...get their ideas about where we should be moving, what other things we could be doing.

This organic, consultative approach is seen as a key part of his leadership philosophy:

> ...leading from behind in the sense of trying to get everybody involved ... making their contribution. So it's not just seen as something that I'm responsible for but that everybody is engaged in and participating in.

In this way, Esperanza is seen as a collective responsibility to all those involved and associated with the organisation. Because of this acknowledgement of the importance of being open to the organic nature of development and willingness to continually learn, there is the implication of being able to readily adapt and evolve to meet the needs of the community.

Stephen continues to draw upon the existing relationships that he has, such as those germane to his university in the USA. In addition, he also works to build new relationships, creating a network of potential resources that may benefit Esperanza. An example of this is in the sourcing of volunteers, who, along with Rosa, are the predominant conductors of Esperanza's activities. Many of the volunteers that come to help out at Esperanza are students, colleagues and associates from the university that he works for in the USA; such as the five students, a former student and one of his colleagues from the university that were helping out there while

I was conducting my research. As well these volunteers, I also observed a family that had heard about Esperanza and were staying in the area, and that had come to visit and offer their voluntary contribution to the organization.

I observed a consultation between Stephen, Rosa and the five university students in which the students were queried with regard to their interests and what they may provide to the organisation in terms of afternoon or the afterschool programme activities they would be willing to facilitate. They were also asked if there was any other help they might like to provide to the organisation. This approach gave agency to the volunteers, in terms of being able to contribute in a way that they found interesting, as opposed to assigning them roles to carry out for the organisation. Stephen and Rosa also asked if I would be eager to help out with classes and any jobs that needed to be done around the centre during the day. This approach demonstrated an ability to organically draw upon whatever resources the organisation has on hand, in a way that is empowering to volunteers.

Another organic development in the context of collaboration and building beneficial relationships is that of Esperanza's recent affiliate partnership with an NGO that primarily operates in a remote area in northern Mexico, working the local indigenous Guarijío people. The NGO's mission statement from their website is:

> [The NGO] works with vulnerable communities at risk of social exclusion and loss of bio-cultural knowledge by valuing existing assets and enhancing both community and individual access to education, health care, resilience, dignity, and human potential. We place special emphasis on infant, child, maternal, elderly, migrant, and indigenous populations. We work in co-partnership with communities to address chronic and infectious disease promoting prevention, nutrition, and emotional well-being. Through a cultural and gender sensitive approach, we contribute to sustainable local economic resources by promoting virtues and leadership within a dynamic model that includes existing efforts in the region and internationally for the improvement of rural integrative public health and education.

The executive director of this NGO and medical doctor, Olivia, was the architect who designed the building of Esperanza and continues to offer support in that capacity with regard to any developments with the building of Esperanza in addition to the partnership between her NGO and Esperanza. This partnership evolved organically because of Olivia's existing association with Stephen. The similarity of vision between the two organisations means that they are able to draw upon each other's organisational, material and practical strengths, working together to impact the local communities.

Capacity Building

View of the sierra and surrounding area from the facilities of Esperanza Worldwide in Lago.

Capacity building is another key aspect present in the findings of this research and closely related to the learning philosophy of Esperanza Worldwide. Capacity building is part of the vision and objectives of the NGO and also a part of its philosophy in which both those carrying out activities and the participants grow simultaneously in their talents, skills and understanding.

More on vision

Building the capacity of individuals and the community is a key element of the vision and philosophy of Esperanza. According to the publicly available information on Esperanza's website, its vision statement states that the organisation is "...dedicated to empowering and improving the quality of life of individuals, families and communities through education." This vision is further reflected in the following excerpt also from the website:

> Esperanza is guided by the thinking that education is a lifelong process designed to help people develop the knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills necessary to earn a livelihood and to contribute confidently and constructively to shaping communities that reflect principles of justice, equity, and unity.

These excerpts are significant in several ways. First, they demonstrate how education is viewed as being able to impact more than what goes on in a classroom; it can also develop

individuals in a way that in turn improves the community. With regard to capacity building, education is viewed as the process through which capacity is built. It is also important to note here that education is seen as going beyond simply increasing one's academic knowledge and skills; it also pertains to values and principles such as justice, equity and unity.

In conducting interviews, capacity building frequently came up alongside increasing or improving the opportunities of young people in Lago as a part of the vision of Esperanza. During my interview with Rosa about her understanding of Esperanza's vision, she made the following comment:

> [on Esperanza] ...a space where you can get together, many communities ... with an educational purpose ... and develop their talents, capacities but also, well, opportunities to have a better life ... have the opportunity to get some knowledge, that will afterwards give them some jobs, some work...

Therefore, it is evident that Esperanza's vision of capacity building is not only aimed at promoting values within the community but also integrating this valued-based education with practical skills and knowledge that increase the job and career opportunities for the NGO's constituents. In my interview with Andrew, a friend and colleague of Stephen's and regular volunteer for the past four years, this concept of opportunity and capacity building was also mentioned:

> ...I see it [Esperanza] as a community development sort of project, an attempt to leverage opportunities, to create leadership in the community, to build some awareness and community consciousness ... a sort of community hub that helps build community, empowers the residents to take responsibility for their village and for where it's going to go and particularly focusing on children and their future and opportunities they have.

Staff & volunteers

This principle of capacity building within the community to foster an environment where people are empowered to serve and contribute to their community was implemented from Esperanza's outset. Rosa, 28, has lived in Lago her whole life and has worked for five years as the co-ordinator of Esperanza. As such, she has been involved with the organisation since it was inaugurated in 2009. After developing a friendship with some of Stephen's university students during a summer programme run by Stephen, Rosa connected to the vision of Esperanza and offered to volunteer at the library that they had opened:

> ...I offered to be in charge, to open the library once or twice a week, but after that, the kids ... kept on asking for more time, they wanted it to be open more times, so I started to open the library all week...

Stephen then met with leaders of a foundation in the area to collaborate on the provision of resources. Rosa was subsequently hired by the foundation to work as a community promoter with Esperanza in Lago. She then stayed on to work for Esperanza after that partnership ended. In her role as co-ordinator living in the Lago community, Rosa co-ordinates all the activities that go on throughout the year at Esperanza. These include supporting and assisting those who come to run workshops and classes, cleaning and maintaining the facilities, including the grounds, and teaching and facilitating some of the classes and activities herself. Courses comprise weekly computer classes for children, literacy and basic English. Throughout the interviews with the research participants, and in my own observations during my time at Esperanza, it was evident that Rosa, in her role as co-ordinator and as a local, was a key player to Esperanza as an organisation. Rosa is related to most of the people in the small community of Lago and it was clear in my observations at Esperanza and in walking with her around Lago, that she is familiar with everyone and the everyday reality of the community.

The story of Rosa's gradual evolution from participant to co-ordinator of Esperanza is an example of how the organisation strives to build capacity and agency with the people of Lago. Rosa continues to develop her skills and the degree to which she can contribute to Lago, training with a former student of Stephen's in the Montessori method so that she can run a Montessori class for children under five throughout the year without needing to rely on outside volunteers, as has been done in the past.

Volunteerism and service learning

Another example of capacity building in action was the way in which the five volunteers, who had come to Mexico as part of Stephen's summer programme, were engaged in service to Esperanza. The five volunteers were all of Mexican descent. Four had mostly grown up in areas of northern Mexico, while the other was Mexican American. Each student was fluent in Spanish. Therefore, because of their familiarity with the culture and language of the area, they were able to engage with relative ease with the locals. This was in comparison to a complete outsider, not versed in the language or local culture, such as myself. As part of the summer programme run by Stephen, the students visited various educational institutions in the local area, several urban primary schools, an institution for differently abled children, the preschool and primary school in Lago, and Esperanza. After the initial week of visits, the students were to decide where and how they wanted to offer their service projects, and each student decided to set aside time every week to teach or facilitate classes at Esperanza.

As was stated in the preceding section, Stephen fostered an attitude of constant reflection among the volunteering university students in a way that allowed them to overcome challenges and feel empowered in doing so. In addition to this reflective approach, which encouraged the students to continually build their capacity as teachers and leaders, classes were held once a week, which I participated in and observed. These classes covered a wide variety subjects that often had practical implications for the students' experiences while engaging in education in Mexico, such as the importance of striving to become culturally competent in new environments, bilingualism, identity, and the purpose of one's life in terms of work, education and service. Topics also included inequalities in education and working with differently abled children. These classes provided practical skills or new ways of thinking about their experiences and often sparked discussion that led to new understandings among the group, and built the capacity of these students volunteering at Esperanza and elsewhere to innovate and improve in their roles as teachers and leaders.

Community

An essential part of Esperanza Worldwide's vision in terms of capacity building is that of capacity building within the community. As has been presented earlier in this chapter, Esperanza strives to engage with Lago and neighbouring communities, empowering constituents through education that speaks not only to the academic schooling aspects of people's lives but also in promoting social justice and building skills and abilities that lead to greater opportunities. The fruits of Esperanza's capacity-building efforts within the community have already begun to show in a number of ways. Rosa provided some examples:

> ...before [Esperanza] it was not common to have many generations of young people getting together, right? It was not common, they either left for the United States or they married very young. And now we are talking about, precisely like from eight years here, since eight years ago, there are more young people studying at university and high school, for example. Before, very few people finished high school and almost nobody studied a degree. And now I have seen more young people studying a degree or graduating high school ... I see like more kids, older kids that are interested in reading. Then another thing that I also see, that is very important, is that it is a great opportunity for the communities to be a little more together, because there have been some rivalries, some disagreements, for example. And now you see them together here.

Here, it is very clear to see the value of having the co-ordinator of Esperanza Worldwide being someone who grew up in the community and who has their finger on the pulse of the developments within Lago. This example exhibits capacity building in several ways. Firstly, young people who have been involved in Esperanza in the past are experiencing increased

academic achievement, which opens up doors that were previously unavailable. Secondly, based upon this evidence, Esperanza has had a positive impact on the unity within the community, which reflects the aspiration to not only contribute to the community at a academic or material level, but also to contribute positively to the community's social reality.

The parents of children who regularly attended activities run by Esperanza and had participated in workshops themselves, recognised Esperanza's goal to build capacity within the community and had also noticed positive changes as a result of this vision. One mother expressed that her children, who had previously struggled with literacy, had shown substantial improvement at school, which she attributed to their participation at Esperanza. She also noticed that her children were more motivated, confident and able to express themselves better, whereas before their involvement with the organisation they been shy and had difficulty in making themselves understood.

Intergenerational, intercultural involvement and participation

Another example of Esperanza building capacity can be seen in the results of a workshop run last year by a high school graduate who had volunteered from the United States during her gap year before starting at Harvard University this year. The workshop was aimed at increasing the confidence and enjoyment of children in reading and writing. The workshop resulted in a book entitled *Nuestra Vision* (*Our Vision*), which collected the children's anecdotes about their lives and creative writing about nature. The children who contributed to the book illustrated each story. Towards the last half of my time with Esperanza, the woman who had facilitated the workshop returned and arranged a ceremony at Esperanza where she presented copies of the book and certificates to the children who had participated in the workshop and contributed their work. Parents from Lago attended the event and visitors from outside the community as well. The book was also presented at a state-wide conference for educators organised by Stephen and Esperanza Worldwide. This workshop and the follow-up to the project is an example of how Esperanza provides a space for volunteers to apply their skills, interests and talents to activities that creatively work to build the capacity of participants. In this case, not only was capacity built in terms of improving literacy and encouraging reading and writing, but space was also created for the community to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of the workshop participants, which further builds confidence and the desire to continue striving for excellence.

With Esperanza's recent partnership with Olivia's NGO, there is potential for the building of capacity within the community around expanding the educational focus of the organisation by providing education related to health, nutrition and wellbeing. Olivia's explanation of her NGO's philosophy and vision indicates an approach that goes beyond treating health issues and actually seeks to build the capacity of communities to maintain and live healthy lives:

> Healthcare so often has the cloak of pathology and illness and it should have the cloak of empowered vitality, and that comes from both the development of knowledge and spiritual consciousness of that.

In the area in which Olivia's NGO operates, the indigenous people who participate learn from elders who teach knowledge that is gradually being lost, such as traditional nutritional knowledge and cultivating food. Therefore, the partnership with Esperanza opens more doors to what can be offered in Lago.

Consistency and Sustainability

The road that runs through Lago, leading from the local preschool and primary school toward the grounds and facilities of Esperanza Worldwide.

The relationship between the consistency in workshops, classes and activities offered by Esperanza, as well as sustainability in the context of outside volunteers and the level of community engagement and involvement in the function and operation of Esperanza, is another notable theme drawn from the findings of this study. The findings here are primarily derived from interviews with support from observational data.

Consistency of classes and activities

Because school in Mexico tends to run from morning to midday/early afternoon, which was the case for the preschool and primary school in Lago, Esperanza runs classes for children every weekday from 4pm-6.30pm. The goal is to support children's formal schooling and also add the element of values education that they generally would not receive during regular schooling hours. During my time with Esperanza, these were the classes that I observed and also participated in as one of the *maestros* (teachers), along with the five volunteers from Stephen's university in the USA.

As previously mentioned, the class content was based on the skills and expertise of the volunteers. Alternating between their projects at the other educational institutions throughout

the week, English classes were run twice a week, sports and nutrition classes, in which I was involved, were also held bi-weekly. Once a week one of the students ran a class, which I also supported, in which she would use her skills as a ventriloquist to read a different story to the children. She would then facilitate a discussion about the values and messages of the story. In addition to these classes run by the American university students, Rosa would facilitate computer science classes. There was also a Montessori class run for children under five once a week. This was taught by the visiting Montessori teacher, Felipe, accompanied by Rosa who, based on her interest, was learning how to teach. The children who attended classes facilitated by the university students and the computer classes taught by Rosa, were divided into two groups, the 5-8 year olds and the 9-14 year olds. Along with these regular classes, the library is also available and Rosa often arranged ancillary activities related to reading and literacy.

What quickly became apparent to me during my observation and participation at Esperanza was that the majority of the children would show up to Esperanza punctually, usually early, of their own volition and with great enthusiasm. Some parents accompanied their children, especially the younger ones, to Esperanza and were clearly welcome to stay while their children attended classes, which they often did. This consistency of attendance by the same children, out of an evident desire to take part in the services offered by Esperanza, struck me as highly significant and, I would argue, points to clear evidence of the accessibility and ownership of Esperanza by the community, as well as sustainability in the context of consistent community engagement.

The 4.30pm-6pm schedule runs throughout the year, and Esperanza has classes and activities available for the children in the community, run either by Rosa or volunteers. This reliance on volunteers, who according to my interview with Rosa tend to stay on for one to two months, is worth noting in regard to the level of consistency and coherence of the classes and activities offered by the organisation. However, because of Rosa's year-round presence at Esperanza and understanding of the needs of the community, she is able consult with volunteers, and oversee and support the classes and activities being run by volunteers so that what is offered is of interest and value to participants. Stephen also mentioned that there are plans to run regular programmes related to early childhood education for young mothers with children under three years of age.

In addition to these regular afterschool classes in which I observed and participated, I was able to glean from interviews information about the other activities and services offered by Esperanza on a less consistent or more temporary basis. Workshops are sometimes run in collaboration with other organisations or government programmes. Stephen gave an example of a course offered by a local cultural organisation:

> ...I think it was a four-week course on computer literacy just this past year. I think 25 people attended that. It was primarily directed at women because often women don't have opportunities to learn computer literacy skills.

Another example of this kind of activity was run by a photographer as part of a university project, in which they taught a class at Esperanza. The photographer developed this into an exhibition, which was presented at a popular location in the nearby city. Other classes, such as Zumba and yoga, are sometimes run at Esperanza.

Summer school

The annual summer school run by Esperanza is an interesting feature of the organisation's service to the community of Lago and perhaps a glimpse into the future potential of what the organisation can do for Lago and its neighbouring communities year round. Due to time constraints, I was unable to observe the summer school myself, which took place a week after my departure. However, I was able to gather substantial data on the programme through interviews. When asked about the difference between the routine programme run throughout the year and the summer school programme, Olivia explained:

> We have both a very planned curricular schedule and a very spontaneous organic development of the workshops ... During the year there are constant cultural workshops and classes going on here, but the summer school ... is like an intensive. So there are lots of resources of international collaboration with young people who have all kinds of different skills and capabilities in education ...We had classes in art, movement, music, science, moral leadership and the virtues, and then swimming classes too.

Volunteers sourced by Stephen from a variety of backgrounds facilitate the workshops that are run during the summer school. The bulk of the volunteers are students from another summer study programme in Mexico run through his university. This year there were around 24 students according to Andrew, who was involved with that programme. The students that are a part of Stephen's summer program are also involved in the summer school programme. Olivia stated that for the summer programme being run this year, two public health specialists were coming to run workshops and continue baseline assessment programmes that had been

run the previous year. This diversity of volunteers, many coming from outside Mexico, exposes the community of Lago to people that such a community would not usually have access to. The university students volunteering at Esperanza also enjoy the opportunity to gain valuable experience through their service.

In addition to bringing more human resources and activities into the community during summer school than is currently possible for the rest of the year's weekly schedule, Esperanza's summer school programme also allows the NGO to reach more people. The summer school is aimed at those aged 2-18, whereas the age groups during the rest of year tend to range from children aged 3-4 to early adolescents aged 14-15. The summer school also extends beyond Lago, with an attendance of over 200 participants from Lago and neighbouring villages, significantly larger in size than the 30-40 children that participate throughout the year. The activities are tailored to meet the needs of the different age groups and, in addition to the workshops already mentioned, sexual education workshops are also held during the summer school. Based on my observations and informal conversations, these are very much in need in Lago and the surrounding communities.

Through the regular implementation of the summer school programme, Esperanza has arguably demonstrated a responsiveness to the community, in their desire for the programme to continue and for it to be run longer. This is an example of how Esperanza has become a part of the community, being seen as an accessible and dependable resource through this yearly service in which all members of the community have access to human resources and opportunities that would not be readily available for a rural community such as Lago.

Volunteers & sustainability

Drawing upon volunteers to implement the organisation's activities is a method that has been employed by Esperanza from its foundation to its present day. The individuals who come to volunteer at Esperanza come from diverse backgrounds, from around Mexico, the USA and beyond. According to Stephen, people often contact him through the university or hear about the organisation through some mutual association and offer to provide service in some way. Therefore, there does not seem to be an issue of not having enough people to support the organisation. However, what does raise questions about sustainability and consistency is the fluid, temporary nature of this type of voluntary structure and the varying lengths of time that people can commit to Esperanza.

Felipe, a former student of Stephen's and a Montessori teacher in the USA, came to Esperanza last year to create a Montessori classroom and ran it during the summer school. He returned this year to develop it further and train Rosa in the philosophy. During our interview, he shared the following opinion:

> They [the community] still see us like people who come and bring things, and I feel uncomfortable with that position. To put me in that position to bring the knowledge, to bring this and I am trying to say, you have the knowledge too. There is a vast knowledge in here, in this area ... that we need to tap into and the expectation of, OK I am going to send my kids over there and not have any responsibility – that is the disconnection.

Andrew shared similar feelings about Esperanza's current position in the community, suggesting that the organisation has certainly become a part of Lago and neighbouring communities, in terms of being seen as an accessible provider of community services; however, the next step is to engage the people from the community in sharing their knowledge and being more involved in the running of Esperanza:

> So that's [more community involvement] a piece that needs to be done yet ... but I think certainly parents come for the early childhood work that Felipe does, they come here for classes. So I think there is an appreciation for the opportunities it provides for their children and so I think that is the impacts I see ... There is in part a feeling of, where is the community ownership of this? And what is the long-term impact?

Throughout my interview with Stephen, he expressed a long-term vision of Esperanza's development within the community and acknowledged that processes such as capacity building and working towards positive, meaningful, sustainable change take a long time. As a part of this long-term commitment to Esperanza's work within Lago and the wider local community, Stephen recognised to importance of having locals have ownership of the organisation and its actions:

> ...what I'm trying to do now is get more local people to contribute, because you'd have more sustainability that way, because you can't always rely on people from outside to come ... I think one thing that we could do, and probably need to do, is form a committee; well, form an advisory group from the community of families whose kids regularly participate at [Esperanza] ... so that they can meet and we can meet with them ... who would then give us some input about what we are doing, the kinds of activities that might be changed or additional things that they see as important.

This indicates that Stephen, as the president and founder of Esperanza Worldwide, is clearly aware of the concerns raised in the interviews about volunteering, consistency and sustainability. As Andrew suggested, Stephen views greater community ownership as a vital

next step in the organisation's development. As will be elaborated on in the following section, Stephen does not, however, wish to completely move away from the inter-regional and international aspects of Esperanza, which is a key part of the organisation's vision.

Relationship to the Local, Regional, and Global

A view of the closest urban centre to Lago in which many of the volunteers working with the NGO stay.

Although in terms of Esperanza Worldwide's present activities, the primary focus is on Lago and the local area surrounding it, there is also an international element (as indicated by the organisation's name) that has already been touched on throughout this chapter and is significant to the organisation's development thus far and to its future. Due to Stephen's involvement in the international educational community as a professor and expert in the field of education, there was international involvement in Esperanza from the outset. In mid 2009, when the organisation was formally inaugurated and opened, of the 450 people that attended, a number were from outside of Mexico, people coming from China, Hong Kong, USA, other parts of Central America and Europe.

Involvement in wider educational discourse

During our interview, Andrew mentioned that the first time he came down to work with Stephen they attended a conference together in Guadalajara, a large city in central Mexico. At the conference, presentations were given on community development centres in New York, Canada and Mexico, and he had a sense that Stephen is keyed into this broader global movement of community development:

> Yeah, my understanding is that he [Stephen] does keep very close touch [with the global educational community] because I always see him and he's off somewhere. You know he has got some conference in New Zealand and some conference in Cuba. He's all over the place. I think he does keep in touch with a wider world community of people that do work like this.

In interviewing Stephen himself, he expressed an understanding of education in a global context. For example, he mentioned the UN millennium goal for gender equality, which includes gender equality in education, something that Esperanza strives to promote and includes as part of its vision. Stephen also explained that Esperanza's vision is not only to

work locally but also to be involved regionally, nationally and internationally. During my time at Esperanza, I had the opportunity to observe an example of what this might look like. Stephen had arranged a two-day conference in which experts in education from Mexico, the USA and other parts of the Americas gave lectures and workshops to over 2000 teachers, school administrators and leaders from within the state in which Lago is located.

The theme of the conference was '*Educación sin Distinción'* (Education without Distinction) and the lectures and workshops covered a wide variety of subjects pertaining to making education more inclusive, so that the educational needs of all students are being met and no one is left behind. The conference was hosted by the state's *secretaría de educación* and Esperanza Worldwide, and therefore Stephen acted as the conference's facilitator. On the second day of the conference, the state governor gave a brief speech and was in attendance. This day was particularly significant with regard to Esperanza's involvement. In his lecture to the conference participants, Stephen spoke about Esperanza, its work in Lago and its vision, which was met with enthusiasm by the conference participants. A group of children representing Esperanza accompanied by Rosa – one of the American university student volunteers and the woman who had implemented the Nuestra Vision project – sang a song composed as the theme song of Esperanza and some of the children also read stories that they had contributed to the book.

The example of this conference provides insight into how Stephen is able to combine his position as an academic with his work with Esperanza. The conference brought together educators from across the state at a time of significant national educational policy reform, and through his professional connections, Stephen was able to gather educational experts from across the country and beyond while also adding his own expertise as a veteran in education and involving Esperanza in that discourse. What is perhaps most significant in regard to Esperanza, is that conference provided a platform to promote the organisation and its vision at the state level, with the potential of building relationships and support for the organisation.

Local, regional, national and international in the context of vision and function

Esperanza's involvement at the regional, national and international level is also an aspect that Stephen includes in the organisation's vision for the future:

> ...we are not only working locally but regionally, countrywide, as well as internationally because in the future the vision is to offer courses and practicums and workshops to practising professionals. So we would have people come to Esperanza, we would offer a course on ... certain educational practice or whatever it might be. So

> as things begin to develop, as we have more capability, more resources; we want to start coordinating other things, which Esperanza can be kind of a training site but also going to be a place where research is happening as well in the outside community.

This component of extending beyond Esperanza's vision and activity in Lago, speaks to the element of collaboration and networking that has been an important feature of the organisation's operation in regard to sourcing people to act as volunteers, partnering and collaborating with non-government and government organisations, and also seeking funding to keep Esperanza running.

As mentioned previously, many of the people who volunteer at Esperanza come from diverse backgrounds from all over Mexico, the USA and other countries. Stephen acknowledges the need to increase the engagement of locals in the running and implementation of the organisation's activities, however he also believes that having inter-regional and international involvement in Esperanza is of benefit to the NGO's constituents. While interviewing Stephen, Rosa and Andrew, and observing and participating with the American university student volunteers, there was a sense that having diversity in the people that come to volunteer at the organisation exposes the constituents to people they would not otherwise have the opportunity to meet and interact with. Also, through locals interacting with the American university students that come to serve at Esperanza, for example, many of whom are of often of Mexican backgrounds, they feel encouraged to seek higher education. At the same time, their often glorified views of the United States as a land of opportunity are deconstructed by these volunteers who have firsthand experience of the struggles faced by Mexicans in the USA.

Coherence with the Vision

Coherence of vision refers to the unity of understanding across all the individuals involved in Esperanza, whether they are those facilitating the workshops or participants of these programmes. Overall through observations and interviews, evidence suggests a unity of vision between the full-time leadership of Esperanza Worldwide and a connection to the vision by those that come to participate at the organisation.

Overlooking the lake and surrounding area in which Lago is situated.

However, there were some areas where there was a lack of clarity by some participants with regard to the wider, long-term vision of the organisation.

Building and maintaining a coherent vision among the leadership and volunteers

The way in which coherence is built between the vision promoted by Esperanza Worldwide and those that participate in putting that vision into action was something that came up in several interviews and during my time observing and participating. In my interview with Felipe, he expressed a certain lack of clarity in terms of his understanding of the vision of Stephen, as the NGO president. Felipe expressed that there was a lack of sharing by Stephen with regard to the overall long-term vision of Esperanza and, therefore, Felipe felt a disconnection with his setting up of a Montessori classroom and its wider implications for the organisation:

> "You see Stephen has the idea, he has a concept but he is not sharing the concept."

This is significant in that Felipe expressed uncertainty about wanting to return in future to continue his work with Montessori as a result of not knowing exactly where the vision of Esperanza is headed. However, he would continue to be in email and phone contact with Rosa with regard to her running of the Montessori programme.

Rosa, Olivia and Stephen, on other hand, demonstrated coherence in terms of their understanding of Esperanza Worldwide' vision. This unity of vision between those involved with the organisation is arguably an area where coherency is most vital. These three leaders, in their respective interviews, explained the vision both in terms of its conceptual components and its practical implications, in ways that were consistent with one another, and thus demonstrated a unified sense of purpose.

Stephen described his approach to maintaining coherence between those who volunteer at Esperanza and the vision:

> ...anybody that comes to [Esperanza], we try to explain so they know the philosophy of [Esperanza] ... we usually let them know the vision of Esperanza and the purpose and the kinds of programmes we are offering ... we talk to them and let them know some of the possibilities and we show them the philosophy and the vision and talk about that. And once they get to Esperanza, you can almost sense it in that way. But that's an important question. I think it is just first of all letting people know what Esperanza is, what our vision is, what our goal is, what some of our activities are and the fact, you know, it is 'science with love' [*ciencia con amor*, the NGO's motto]. Everything we do has to be imbued with love. It has to be cloaked in that because

> that's what gets to the heart and that's what affects change and that is what has the impact and developing a respect and a rapport with the community and with the individuals.

During my time participating and observing at Esperanza Worldwide, I observed the American university student volunteers connect with this vision in this way and experienced this organic assimilation into the culture of Esperanza myself. Much of the content of the weekly classes run for the American university student volunteers and I, especially those facilitated by Olivia, were characterised by deep personal reflection. These classes involved frequent discussion about our own life's purpose and what it means to be of service to others. In addition to these unique classes, being and acting within the loving environment created at Esperanza as a participant was also significant in connecting to the organisation's vision. As a part of this connectedness I felt personal responsibility to the NGO's constituents and a desire to uphold and contribute to the atmosphere of love within the learning environment. I also observed this in the university students volunteering there. Despite various challenges they faced in their work as teachers and leaders, the love fostered within them for the people of Lago ensured their commitment to conducting themselves in a way that was consistent with Esperanza's philosophy and vision.

Maintaining and building coherence of vision with the community

Weaving Esperanza in with the life of the community is a constant and gradual learning process, and several of the steps that the organisation intends to take in this regard have already been mentioned. These include, forming a committee of people in Lago to improve communication between Esperanza and the community to better respond to their wants and needs. However, there are several ways in which Esperanza already connects its vision with the community. First and foremost is having Rosa living within Lago and also having annual town meetings with the community. According to Stephen, the town meetings are an opportunity to share what Esperanza has been doing and what its vision is, and to get input from the community about what they would like to see from Esperanza.

In interviewing the two mothers of children that attend Esperanza, it was clear that vision of Esperanza was evident to the community of Lago. Both mothers expressed that the NGO was here to support the formal learning of their children in school but also to provide a space where they are able develop their talents and skills.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter is organised into two sections: (1) translation of the philosophy and vision of Esperanza Worldwide into critical leadership actions, and (2) the impact of critical leadership actions on the community. These headings are taken from the research questions investigated by this thesis:

- In what ways does an NGO involved in education translate its philosophy or vision into critical leadership actions?
- How do these leadership actions impact the community in which the NGO works?

Translation of Philosophy and Vision into Critical Leadership Actions

This section discusses the leaders' vision, the learning environment and dialogue, coupled with aspects of love for humanity that are core to vision. Also included here is collaboration, learning, suitability to local contexts, and future visioning.

Vision, environment and dialogue. The philosophy and vision of Esperanza Worldwide is at the centre of everything the organisation implements and seeks to do in the future. As was presented in the findings chapter, the interview participants frequently referred back to the philosophical underpinnings and vision of Esperanza. In the data gleaned from my observations and participation, it is clear that the vision permeated the environment provided by Stephen, Rosa and the many friends and colleagues that regularly give their time to the organisation. In other words, for anyone interacting within Esperanza it would become readily apparent that the organisation was guided by a sense of purpose and vision. If this was not with a full grasp of what that vision was, at least it was with an awareness that the leaders of the organisation were operating in the context of implementing a long-term, sustainable community hub as opposed to a short-term project with limited focus.

This was evident in the interviews with participants such as Andrew and Felipe and in the observations of the university student volunteers in the weekly preparation, conducting and reflection of their classes. The reflective nature of Stephen's conversations with the university student volunteers demonstrates a style of informing practice arguably in line with Freire's (1968/2012) dialogical approach to pedagogy. Rather than authoritatively imposing the philosophy and vision of Esperanza on the volunteers from the commencement of their participation with the organisation, by facilitating dialogue with volunteers, Stephen

gradually helped build their capacity as teachers and leaders, in a sense implementing what Freire (1968/2012) referred to as the 'naming' of 'the world' (p. 89), by allowing volunteers to interact with and reflect upon their practice while continually building upon it.

This is also consistent with Britton's (1998) contention that good practice for NGOs would be to operate as learning organisations. The concept of NGO members being 'reflective practitioners' presented by Britton (1998) can certainly be applied in the context of Esperanza where the approach means those working within the organisation are learning while doing. In retrospect, I would assert that this is a key component of the leadership actions undertaken by Stephen and Rosa with regard to the environment they are in the process of creating at Esperanza. These leadership actions encourage and impact their own practice as well as the leadership practices of those who provide support to the organisation in their adherence to and participation in the philosophy and vision of Esperanza Worldwide. In the practice of applied critical leadership (ACL), leaders are encouraged to enact their leadership reflexively in terms of tapping positive attributes of their identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, class and culture) when involved in educational leadership activities (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). As was noted in the findings, the American university students volunteering at Esperanza during my time there were from Mexican backgrounds, and most had grown up predominantly in Mexico. This identity capital enabled these students to broker language and cultural aspects of their identities to connect with and empower the people from Lago with whom they interacted (Khalifa, 2010).

For example, a pair of these volunteers recognised that many of the children had glamorised life in the USA (Lago being in a state from which a large number of Mexican immigrants travel to the USA). Realising this, these students decided to work with some of the children at their local primary school to try and analyse and deconstruct false perceptions. Not only did these actions reflect elements of ACL (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012) but also that of "problem-posing" education as proposed by Freire (1968/2012, pp. 79-86). Freire argues "They [educators] must abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relations with the world" (p. 79). This way of working show volunteers using lived experiences of shared race and culture to enter into problem-posing discussions with Esperanza's constituents. The students engaged in this way with the intention of contributing to the community's empowerment regarding how they viewed and perceived the local context within which they lived as well as their understanding of their relationship to the wider world. It further resonated with the importance of being able

to use one's own culture to validate the culture and lived reality of others, as exemplified in Khalifa's (2010) study of community-based leadership. This reveals that through Esperanza's dialogical engagement with those who work with the organisation, dissemination of the philosophy and vision can result in innovative actions that would perhaps not be encouraged or realised in top-down approaches to building organisational coherence of vision. Furthermore, this way of working and leading provides an example of the value of bringing people of diverse lived experiences into the community to interact and engage the constituents of Esperanza.

Because of the significant talent, skill and background diversity of the individuals who come to volunteer at Esperanza, it would be difficult to conclusively evaluate the pedagogical philosophy of the classes and workshops conducted and facilitated by instructors in the NGO. For example, the weekly storytelling class conducted by one of the American university students certainly had dialogical elements in which the children were encouraged to analyse their reality in regard to the themes they had understood from the story (Freire, 1968/2012). Similarly, and perhaps even more so, the way in which Felipe practised the Montessori Method encouraged student autonomy in their explorations within the classroom.

However, the English language classes and physical education classes run by the other volunteers followed more closely the pedagogical conventions of mainstream school classrooms. This is not to say the latter classes are better or worse, as it was clear in my observations that the children who participated in them thoroughly enjoyed them. The care and time the children took to present their English homework, many going beyond the task requirements, is a clear indicator of this enthusiasm and appreciation for their teachers, especially as this was homework in addition to their own school work (Khalifa, 2010). Notable also here is the fact that very few participants neglected to do their homework, even those who outwardly exhibited some rebellious attitudes. Either approach to education could incorporate the vision of Esperanza with regard to providing opportunities to enhance one's knowledge, talents and skills. These observations and reflections demonstrate that Esperanza does not have a definitive or fundamental pedagogical framework around the actual teaching practices carried out in workshops and classes.

Love for humanity. An underlying theme found throughout this study is the link between love and education that is rooted within the philosophy and vision that drives Esperanza Worldwide. Love in this context means love for humanity, in the sense of wanting

the best for everyone in terms of their wellbeing, and the development of their spiritual and material capacity. This is exemplified clearly by Stephen in his interview: "...science with love. Everything we do has to be imbued with love." This resonates with the perspective conveyed in the quote by Paulo Freire (1968/2000) that began this thesis, "Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people [...] Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself" (Freire, 1968/2012, p. 89). Freire expands on the intrinsic inseparability of love from genuine, conscious building, liberating dialogue:

> Founding itself upon love, humility and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence. It would be a contradiction in terms if dialogue—loving, humble, and full of faith—did not produce this climate of mutual trust, which leads the dialoguers into ever closer partnership in the naming of the world. (Freire, 1968/2012, p. 91)

From this perspective of education being dialogical and therefore unable to be practiced without a genuine love for other people regardless of their multi-faceted backgrounds, the endorsement of love as a part of Esperanza Worldwide's philosophical and visionary framework has several important implications.

The founding of Esperanza arose from Stephen's aspiration to contribute to the transformation and empowerment of Lago and the surrounding communities. I suggest that this further illustrates the significance of love to the vision and philosophy of Esperanza. This element of love has several important implications. Firstly, a sincere love for other human beings tenably supports educational actions that come from a place of humility as opposed to being paternalistic. This is epitomised in the outline of Esperanza's vision on its website:

> Esperanza Worldwide as a Centre of learning will seek to cultivate and develop the limitless potentialities latent in human consciousness and will pursue as a major goal the participation of all peoples in generating and applying knowledge.

Most significant here is the implication of the universal participation of everyone from the community, and that together everyone is working to learn and collectively generate knowledge. With regard to the leadership actions within Esperanza, this can be seen in the way Rosa and Stephen encourage all the children from within the community to participate in their regular afternoon classes, striving to create a welcoming environment open to everyone. Rosa and Stephen draw upon all available resources to provide services that reach as many people in the community, such as the recent introduction of Montessori classes to cater to previously underserved children under five; the frequent workshops for adults in the

community; and the potential starting of a class for mothers with children under the age of three. This collective approach to community development reflects the trend identified in De Berry (1999) in which NGOs adopt "community-based action" methodologies that aim toward empowering communities at the grassroots level, as opposed to the paternalistic "welfare and delivery" functions traditionally associated with NGOs (pp. 1-2). This also resonates with the attitudes and practices of applied critical leadership, particularly that of leaders wanting to "...honour all members of their constituencies" (Santamaría et al., 2014, p. 13). Here, love as a critical aspect of Esperanza's philosophy is expressed in the view of learning as a universal right and also a collective process in which everyone's knowledge is valued. This sentiment and way of operation drives Rosa and Stephen to continually exert effort to provide programmes that involve everyone in the process of building the community's collective capacity and expanding the opportunities for the children and youth that are a community's future.

Love as core to vision. As stated previously in the way that the vision of Esperanza is embodied in practice, love as a core component of this vision in itself can be viewed as a leadership action. Through Rosa, Stephen and Olivia's recognition of love as being integral to their personal actions within Esperanza and the community, and in the implementation of the organisation's objectives, this attitude was recognisably impactful on the constituents and volunteers. This is exemplified in the commitment instilled in supporters such as Andrew and Felipe who had returned over the years to contribute their time, energy and livelihoods to Esperanza, and in the American university students who quickly demonstrated clear commitment to the children that attended their classes. The effect of the loving environment created at Esperanza was also reflected in the constituents who attended the programmes, in their enthusiasm and continual participation. This demonstrates that the love enacted by the leaders within Esperanza, as a part of its vision and philosophy, fosters commitment to the objectives and goals of the organisation on the part of all participants, volunteers and constituents alike. This plausibly exhibits how the vision of love that underpins the leadership actions of Esperanza contributes to the sustainability of their initiative. This is indicative of the ideas concerning critical leadership and non-government organisations involved in education, as outlined in the literature review chapter. The enthusiasm and commitment from constituents demonstrates that Esperanza has a positive community relationship identified by Epstein (1990) as being very significant in academic achievement and student confidence. This also relates to Ahmed and French's (2006) work on BRAC, which found that positive

relationships between NGOs and communities contribute substantially to the sustainability of initiatives. This is significant because it shows that love for humanity as a philosophical precept of Esperanza shapes the attitudes of leaders who, in their expression of love, inspire and encourage commitment and enthusiasm from all those who associate with the organisation.

Collaboration and learning. The elements of love and dialogue expressed in the philosophy and vision of Esperanza Worldwide link closely to another key element that translates into the leadership actions of those who head the organisation. This core aspect is that of collaboration. In this study's findings, collaboration was shown to have played a vital role in the formulation of Esperanza's vision and its subsequent founding. Collaboration has also been presented in the findings as being a continual feature of Esperanza's approach to learning, in the sourcing of volunteers and external support and in its approach to engaging within the community.

Presented in the findings chapter, Stephen's willingness to collaborate with and learn from others was essential to the building of Esperanza to where it is now, seven years later. Stephen drew inspiration from his friend and colleague who operated a similar community hub in Chile, and also connected with the people of Lago in his initial explorations of initiating something in Lago. Esperanza continues to practise collaboration, with Rosa having connected to the vision of the organisation and who, throughout her role as co-ordinator, has supported those that have come to the organisation to offer their services. Stephen draws upon his position and relationships within his university to provide American university students with the opportunity to engage in Lago, which in turn provides the local people an opportunity to learn from resources provided by these students. Therefore, by weaving together the various spheres he is involved in, Stephen facilitates a unique space for learning and collaboration that creates opportunities for those providing their skills and talents to run activities for the community and learn through action; while the community has the opportunity to access resources that would otherwise not be at their disposal (Johnson, 2006).

The leaders of Esperanza Worldwide acknowledged the importance of needing to improve the level collaboration with constituents in terms of the operation of the organisation within Lago. This is another example that shows how collaboration as a part of the organisation's vision is significant in translating vision into action. Early on in Esperanza's development, Rosa was brought on by Stephen as the co-ordinator of Esperanza after she demonstrated an

interest in contributing to the implementation of the initiative. This relates to Manasse (1985) and her description of 'personal vision' in the context of the practice of visionary leadership. Manasse (1985) presents the idea that having a personal vision is necessary to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and therefore make decisions as to who to bring into their vision to augment and expand their initiative's capabilities. This can be seen in the interview conducted with Stephen during which he acknowledged his position as an outsider despite his close connection to the culture and environment of Mexico:

> ...I am not from Mexico. I am very familiar with Mexico; I have been coming here for many years. But trying to understand the dynamics of a community and how you can work with them, providing what we are trying to provide.

Thus, in order for Esperanza to connect with the people of Lago and effectively gain an understanding of the local culture and reality, it was necessary to have Rosa as the local liaison. This concept of bringing on people to assist in augmenting Esperanza's objectives can also be seen in the collaboration with other organisations to run activities, and in Stephen's willingness to consult the friends and colleagues that come to help at Esperanza. Furthermore, the partnership with Olivia's health-focused NGO also demonstrates strengthening the organisation's capacity to deliver programmes to constituents. This form of collaboration is in line with the example of BRAC, which was found to frequently collaborate with individuals local to the communities within which they aimed to provide programmes and also with other government and non-government organisations (Ahmed & French, 2006). This was shown to relate to the sustainability of the NGO's activities and also in better addressing the needs of the communities in which they operated.

This willingness to collaborate with individuals is a common theme throughout the literature on critical leadership included in the literature review chapter of this thesis. In Santamaría et al. (2014), collaboration is presented as a key characteristic of applied critical leadership. Research findings revealed that school principals practised collaboration. The leader would accompany teachers with the intention of building consensus and connecting everyone to the values and culture of the school. This practice of collaboration is significant in the context of Esperanza, in that the practice of leadership within the NGO has already been demonstrated in earlier sections of this chapter to work toward building consensus among those serving with the organisation with regard to connecting these people to the philosophy and vision.

Suitability to local context. Another noteworthy point from the findings of this study is the suitability of Esperanza. Suitability in this context refers to how Esperanza connects to the community and conducts itself in a way that is appropriate to the culture and needs of Lago. Based upon interview evidence, the establishment of Esperanza as a physical hub that provides community growth is suited to this context. This is evidenced in Olivia's NGO in northern Mexico acting as a community hub for the local indigenous people and, to a lesser extent, in the example of the community centre in Chile from which Stephen drew inspiration to found Esperanza. Although, this latter point is somewhat dubious, as Chile has a completely different socio-cultural context than Mexico. However, most telling in the interview evidence is Andrew's answer:

> A lot of these [community hubs] exist from understanding in Mexico largely because the kids do half-day double sessions in schools. So there's always this half day where the kids aren't at school and so even in Guadalajara and lots of places, there are these community centres that evolved so that you'd have a place for kids to go and you'd get supplementary opportunities to read, to interact and to learn art and music and stuff.

In this regard, Esperanza would certainly appear to be appropriate to the social context in terms of being a familiar model implemented in other parts of Mexico and thus be seen as accessible to the community. In De Berry's (1999) discussion of NGOs operating as 'community based organisations', he argues that NGOs need to understand and take into account that a community is not removed from the "broader historical, regional and national context in which it is situated" (p. 15). This understanding and awareness allows NGOs to be more effective in meeting the needs of the local community and in their ability to contribute to the transformation of social reality (De Berry, 1999). Arguably, the findings of this study allude to Esperanza being an example of this awareness, in that the community readily and continually utilises the community centre as a resource to learn new skills and ideas. This is no doubt bolstered by Rosa's presence within Lago and her close relationship with the community.

The suitability of Esperanza can also be viewed in terms of the socio-economic context of Lago. The rural area in which Lago and its neighbouring communities are situated could certainly be described as low income. Even though the closest major urban centre to the community was only a 20-minute drive away (or 30-60 minutes on the bus), many of the children who attended Esperanza had never or very seldom been to the city. The situation of

the community could be described as basic – for example, there was also no internet in the area – however, I would not go as far as to describe the community as impoverished. It is important to note De Berry's (1999) contention that the unique social reality of a community is important to take into account along with the fact they are ever-changing and fluid. However, I suggest that the context in which Esperanza operates along with the NGO's purpose and vision draws similarities with NGO initiatives such as BRAC (Ahmed & French, 2006) and School for Life (Akyeampong, 2004) which target underserved communities in developing countries, specifically in terms of the reasoning or justification for the existence of these organisations.

Akyeampong (2004) maintains that the national schooling systems of developing countries that take a one-size approach to education fail to address the needs of all students, especially those living in remote, low socio-economic areas. Akyeampong (2004) states, "Unlike the situation in many advanced countries where the socio-economic environment infrastructure for equitable delivery of education programmes is much more even, for many countries in the developing world especially in Africa, there can be very uneven conditions especially in rural areas." (p. 2). As is demonstrated in the literature review, authors such as Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) and Khalifa (2010), identify that even in 'developed' countries significant inequalities in education are ever-present. Therefore Akyeampong's (2004) statement is all the more powerful. Both Akyeampong (2004) and Ahmed and French (2006) present examples of NGOs involved in implementing educational initiatives in 'developing countries', Ghana and Bangladesh respectively, as a means to address the educational needs of communities underserved by their governments. This bears similarities with the context of Esperanza in regard to the NGO's intentions and the social reality of the community.

Both the School for Life (SFL) programme presented in Akyeampong (2004) and the Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) programme initiated by BRAC discussed in Ahmed and French (2006) are implemented as full alternatives to formal government schools, while Esperanza currently operates in a way that supports and augments the children's formal schooling. However, Esperanza, like SFL and NFPE, as evidenced in the statements from its website and the interviews and observational data, seeks to provide opportunities that go beyond what is being offered in formal schooling. Also, with respect to operating as a complete alternative to the formal schooling in Lago, both Stephen and Rosa expressed the desire for Esperanza to eventually operate more consistently, potentially even as some form of a school guided by the vision and philosophy of the NGO. Stephen's awareness of the

need to educate females also reflects an approach suited to the context of Lago. This concept is also common to SFL (Akyeampong, 2004) and NFPE (Ahmed & French, 2006), which both identified the importance of addressing inequalities in education with regard to under representation of females in education.

Therefore, although Mexico fares substantially better on various international measures of development when compared with Ghana and Bangladesh, there are some similarities between the educational issues that Esperanza is trying to address and those exemplified in the literature on NGOs operating in developing countries.

Future visioning. A clear consideration that came up in the interviews with respect to the organisation's immediate future vision was the need to further develop the level of community engagement, in terms of promoting increased community ownership of Esperanza. As presented in the findings chapter, forming a committee or team within the community from local constituents, was another immediate consideration that would enable the organisation to make decisions better informed by the community's wants and needs. Community ownership also relates to Esperanza's endeavour to build capacity of people within the community, and Stephen acknowledged that even though the organisation had been operating for a number of years, they were still very much at the learning stages in terms of understanding how to develop community ownership. As the organisation continues to operate, others may organically arise from within the community, such as Rosa at the beginning of the NGO's founding, to contribute their skills and talents to the realisation of Esperanza's vision and goals.

In addition to the recognised importance of further community engagement in the running of Esperanza, the need for more funding to provide extra services and potentially bring on more permanent personnel is a significant issue now and in the future.. Stephen explained this in talking about providing a more consistent, regular programme:

> In terms of getting a programme that is consistent, that is year round, that is ongoing, because really more than anything it's about funds ... our budget is quite limited really. And so we [the board] kind of operate on that assumption, yes we can offer some classes if Rosa requests funds we will try to come up with them to help her.

The financial factor of NGOs is a key component in Akyeampong's (2004) conclusion of his study of the School for Life (SFL) initiative implemented in low socio-economic areas in Northern Ghana. Akyeampong (2004) suggested that based upon his findings, in order to

sustain NGO community-based educational initiatives, NGOs often do not have the financial means to continue their efforts without collaboration with local government. Therefore, Akyeampong (2004) argues for "NGO planning arrangements to take into serious account a framework for collaboration with local government that would eventually shift the burden of financial sustainability to local government, who in my view if seriously challenged, can rise up to the responsibility." (p. 10-11). Conceivably this has significant implications in analysing the context of Esperanza.

Stephen identified seeking out avenues for funding as one of his responsibilities as a part of his role as the NGO's president. He stated that he holds fundraisers, usually twice a year, which usually raise $US1500-$2000 each. In addition to these fundraising initiatives, there are both regular and random contributions from donors. For example, one individual contributes $60 per month with their company providing matching funds. Otherwise, Stephen pays for costs personally. The building of relationships that is a key part of the collaborative approach taken by Esperanza opens up the organisation to more potential donors. For example, public exposure such as the state-wide conference hosted by Stephen and Esperanza, provides opportunities to generate interest in the organisation and not only does it open more avenues for collaboration around sourcing volunteers and workshops, but perhaps with those that want to contribute to the organisation financially.

As briefly mentioned in the preceding section, both Stephen and Rosa expressed the vision that Esperanza Worldwide would eventually become more formalised and ideally operate on a more consistent basis, with the possibility of eventually forming a school. Stephen stated that there was potential to have early childhood classes for parents in the mornings and also run the afternoon after-school programme earlier in the afternoon. There is also a future goal to set up a health and wellbeing clinic as a part of Esperanza's partnership with Olivia's NGO. These future goals that are ever present when conversing with any of the leaders of Esperanza, relate the NGO's philosophy of continual learning, growth and development and building capacity as an organisation, to more effectively meet the needs of people of Lago and the neighbouring communities, and increase the level of positive impact on their constituents.

In addition to having a vision of needing to operate at a more structured and consistent level at the local context, as president and founder of the organisation, Stephen had a clear vision of the organisation's direction in terms of developing its functions at regional, national and

international levels. He would like to hold national and international conferences and workshops at Esperanza to which he would invite educational students and professionals. This would give these people the opportunity to learn about education in a rural context. He believes there is potential for Esperanza to also act as a research centre for university students to use as part of the practical elements of their studies and for professional development.

Stephen recognised that the process of community building and development is a gradual one, and due to the organisation's modest budget, such a development would have to take into account the financial considerations to provide funding for more permanent staff and the construction of more facilities to accommodate all the activities and services they wish to offer.

The incorporation of a vision of the future into Rosa and Stephen's leadership philosophy is echoed in the literature on the outlining of servant leadership in Spears (2000/2010) and visionary leadership in Manasse (1985). Spears (2000/2010) identifies "conceptualization" as one of the 10 indispensible characteristics of servant leadership, stating "The ability to look at a problem or an organization from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities." (p. 28). In this way, servant leaders dream ambitiously and formulate long-term goals for their organisation (Spears, 2000/2010). From this perspective the critical leadership of Stephen and Rosa clearly incorporates an element of conceptualisation in their continual awareness of the future. Manasse's (1985) depiction of visionary leadership is even more emphatic with regard to the importance of taking into account the future as a part of leadership practice. Having a vision of the future is portrayed as vital to practising visionary leadership and, according to Manasse (1985), recent studies indicate that having a vision for the future may be the most important element of effective visionary leadership.

Impact of Critical Leadership Actions on the Community

In this part of the discussion, academic achievement, community environment and opportunity are considered. These aspects are examined, in relation to the practise of critical leadership within Esperanza Worldwide.

Academic achievement. The academic achievement of the children who have been involved in the activities Esperanza has provided to the community of Lago is one area where

there has been substantial positive development. This is exhibited throughout the interviews with research participants. As was demonstrated in the section on capacity building in the findings chapter of this thesis, Rosa (as someone having grown up and lived entirely in Lago) had seen clear differences between the community situation eight years ago and where it is today. Part of the impact she identified is that of the changes in educational attainment. Where previously, according to Rosa, many people did not complete high school and "almost nobody studied a degree"; she has observed an improvement of young people's literacy, and an increase in the number of people finishing high school and going on to study at university level.

This is a concrete indicator of Esperanza's positive transformative impact on the educational reality of the community. Further study would be needed to make more accurate links to the programmes offered by the NGO and their relationship to this marked improvement in academic achievement among past participants in the activities of the organisation. However, I suggest that the vision and philosophy highlighted earlier in this chapter that influences the actions of the leaders and implementers of activities on behalf of Esperanza, has played a key role in this development of higher educational achievement by the younger community members of Lago.

As illustrated in this chapter, the leadership actions enacted by Rosa and Stephen stem from a constant awareness and understanding of the philosophical underpinnings and vision that guides Esperanza Worldwide. In the context of developing literacy and academic achievement, having an attitude that permeates the educational space, which views learning as positive and a lifelong process coupled with the acknowledgement that everyone has potential, talent and skill, would arguably contribute to the participants of this kind of educational environment having a positive attitude towards striving for success in education. The effect of educational leaders having this kind of transformative attitude towards their roles, as I argue is the case with Esperanza, is exemplified in the studies of Khalifa (2010), Khalifa (2012) and Johnson (2006).

In Khalifa (2010), the school leader, a principal, was shown to validate the cultural capital of his students, who were from backgrounds typically marginalised and overlooked in mainstream American schools. The principal would validate the cultural capital of his students by ensuring they felt comfortable to express their language and culture. Education was student centred and students were made to feel that they had their own knowledge and

intelligence, and were capable of achieving success (Khalifa, 2010). The acknowledgement that every student has value, impacted students in that they recognised that they had cultural capital and therefore felt that were capable to learn and be "smart" (Khalifa, 2010, p. 642). This is similar to the environment I have described at Esperanza, in which the values of Esperanza's vision that characterise the practice of leadership and pedagogy within the organisation, result in an approach to learning that empowers participants to want to learn and develop their talents and skills.

In Johnson (2006), the culturally responsive leadership of the African American educational leader Gertrude Elise McDougald Ayer (1885-1971) is chronicled and analysed. In her practice of educational leadership in Harlem, Ayer advocated for and implemented education that was relevant to and informed by the real-life experiences of students (Johnson, 2006). Similarly, the findings depicted in Khalifa (2010), by acknowledging the unique reality of her students, empowered them within their classroom and they were able to see the value of education in its relationship to their own lives as opposed to something disconnected and irrelevant. Many of Ayer's students went on to enter professions or pursue higher education (Johnson, 2006).

Based upon these two examples of actions taken by educational leaders and their subsequent positive impact on the students with whom they worked, it could be inferred that the leadership actions enacted and promoted by Rosa and Stephen guided the philosophy of Esperanza. They resemble elements of leadership described in the literature with their leadership playing a significant role in the positive transformation of academic achievement in Lago. These leadership actions and their impact on academic achievement reflect the features of transformative leadership that are essential to the practice of applied critical leadership (ACL) (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). These scholars state, "transformational leadership can lead to educational change. To this end transformational leadership has a moral imperative wherein leaders destroy old ways of life to make way for a new way of life, while articulating vision and values to keep empowered followers on a unified path" (p. 3). In the context of Esperanza, this refers to the way in which Rosa and Stephen build a unified vision with those who volunteer at the organisation, through their conversations and in leading by example. This, in turn, leads to the volunteers striving to conduct their classes and interactions with NGO constituents in a way that is empowering and honours participants as human beings (Santamaría et al., 2014). With reference to mainstream oppressive structures within society, such as mainstream educational systems that marginalise and under serve

certain groups of people, in other words 'dehumanise' people, Freire (1968/2012) makes the following statement: "Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a *distortion* of the vocation of becoming more fully human." (p. 44). Through a lens that accepts Freire's statement as true, Esperanza can be seen as seeking to 'humanise' its constituents and thus contribute to individuals' recognition of their vocation to become "more fully human". Humanness in the terms of Freire's pedagogical philosophy connotes someone who is liberated and actively subverts oppression. This is reflected in the way Esperanza promotes education that values everyone as being capable of learning and possessing their own unique gifts that can be developed to positively contribute to society.

Community environment. In interviews Rosa also commented that since the organisation's activity in Lago, the way the community members interact with each other has changed. Before Esperanza, there was little interaction across the different generations living within Lago with rivalries and disagreements between people in the community. Based upon Rosa's reflection of her community's transformation, Esperanza has served to unify the community by providing a hub that seeks to empower and transform, acknowledging the potential of Lago to grow as a community. Through the implementation of educational initiatives, and more recently the potential to expand those initiatives with Esperanza's partnership to Olivia's NGO, the organisation has arguably provided something positive that clearly connects with the local people.

To understand exactly how Esperanza has improved the unity among the people living in Lago would require further study, which would have to include in-depth interviews with the inhabitants of the community. However, there are several inferences that could be made about the actions taken by Rosa and Stephen in their roles within Esperanza Worldwide and the impact that this had on the community in terms of building more unity.

One such action that stands out is the annual summer school arranged by Rosa and Stephen, which has become a regular fixture in the community, responded to with substantial enthusiasm by parents and children alike. In the interviews, the summer school was frequently brought up as a notable and consistent development and feature of Esperanza Worldwide's engagement in the community. Not only does the two weeks provide the community unique access to human resources from a variety of experiential backgrounds, the summer school also provides the people that come to serve as human resources a unique

opportunity to interact with a rural community in Mexico. It also provides a space for the community of Lago and its neighbours, especially the children and youth but also the parents that attend, to interact closely with one another and therefore, it stands to reason, the opportunity to build stronger bonds with one another.

This opportunity to build unity can also be observed in the regular activities that are run throughout the year by Esperanza. The educational space at Esperanza is an atmosphere much less formal and rigid than that of a regular school environment and thus is characterised as being conducive to more equal participation between students and teachers. There is also a sense of openness that encourages everyone to participate and allows parents to feel they can be present during their children's class time.

Similarities can be drawn between the educational environment of Esperanza, which is distinguished by an environment of flexibility and openness conducive to participation and involvement, and that of the actions taken in the leadership initiatives of the principal studied in Khalifa (2012). Khalifa (2012) found the principal who was the focus of his study, "created structures and processes that embraced, and even merged, the home and school environments" and as a part of his role as school principal, he advocated for "community concerns—as opposed to only educational goals" (p. 440). Similar to Rosa and Stephen's approach to Esperanza in which parents are allowed access to the site at all times, the principal in Khalifa's (2012) study fostered overlap between his school and the community, making sure that the school was a community space where parents felt comfortable to enter anytime they wished. This allowed for parents to engage in continual conversations with the principal and school staff about their children and also allowed for the principal to learn about what was going on in the community.

This is similar to what I observed at Esperanza. Benefitting from the fact that Rosa is related to many of the parents and children that participate at the NGO, she would engage parents who were present in dialogue. I also observed Stephen exhibit a familiarity with the community; when he was working on the grounds, he would talk to children and their parents and sometimes even participate during the sports. This, to an extent, reflects the conclusions drawn by Khalifa (2012) in which he states, "...it clearly demonstrates that for some communities, school leaders must earn credibility, trust and establish rapport; for urban African American, and other marginalised areas, these are *earned in the community* and not *granted* from within school walls" (p. 459). Although Esperanza exists in a rural context

quite different to that of the school principal who participated in Khalifa's (2012) study, I suggest that the establishing of elements such as trust and rapport is very applicable to Esperanza and is conceivably part of how the organisation has become a unifying fixture within the community. I suggest that Rosa's own wish to assist with the organisation since its inauguration and Stephen's recognition of Rosa's contribution by giving her the opportunity to act as the organisation's local co-ordinator, played a substantial role in building trust and rapport between Esperanza and the community.

Opportunity. Another key impact of the critical leadership practised within Esperanza Worldwide that is evident in the findings of this study is that of the increase of opportunities for the people of Lago. This impact relates to the rise in academic achievement and the strengthening of unity within the community already touched upon in this section; however it also goes beyond that. Opportunity was a word that came up in almost every interview conducted as part of this research, and it relates closely to the aims of the NGO as demonstrated in people's explanations of the vision and philosophy of Esperanza and in the documents outlining the vision and mission the organisation is working towards.

Again, Rosa, with her close relationship to the context in which Esperanza is situated, provided unique insight into the impact that the initiative has had on the community. Rosa expressed that before Esperanza's eight-year involvement in Lago and the surrounding area, more people either left for the United States or married very young. And instead, as previously stated, many more young people are now graduating from high school and choosing to go to university. In addition to the workshops and classes conducted by Esperanza empowering constituents to expand their horizons and seek higher educational attainment and also acting as a hub around which the community can unify, the organisation has also provided the community the opportunity to meet, interact and learn with people that they would otherwise not have exposure to. In interviewing Andrew, he voiced his understanding that the American students who participated during the summer school were also able to learn from their interactions with the community. However, in Andrew's opinion, the biggest outcome of the summer school is that participants have the opportunity to expand their consciousness of what they aspire to by interacting with people who are often of Mexican backgrounds themselves, who have finished high school and have gone on to study at higher levels.

In addition to increased educational opportunities as a result of Stephen's drawing upon his various contacts, such as the university, to collaborate with Esperanza, the partnership with Olivia's NGO also increases the opportunities of the local community with regard to learning how to take charge of their own health and wellbeing. In the past, through other collaborations, other projects related to healthcare had been initiated through Esperanza. For example, a few years ago, a team of audiologists were brought in from an American university and tested 450 people in the community and a follow-up was done in collaboration with a local government agency to provide service and support to children and families impacted.

This increase in the variety of opportunities related to improving the social reality of the community through education and health is another concrete impact that the leadership actions guided by Esperanza's philosophical and visionary framework have on the community. This concept of Esperanza working to create or open up more opportunities for its constituency relates to several elements of the vision that are expressed in critical leadership actions. As discussed earlier, the vision of Esperanza seeks to provide services that do not create reliance upon the organisation but instead empower people to understand and explore the concept that they themselves have potential and capacity to learn and apply knowledge to benefit their own lives as individuals and also to benefit their community.

This connects to Freire (1968/2012) when he states, "Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion." (p. 47). What is meant by this is that when education genuinely and truly seeks to benefit people, the actions of those engaged in this educational process should encourage awareness within whom they work with. This awareness should bring about the understanding that the keys to one's freedom or to one's advancement and growth as human beings is not contingent on a reliance upon the skills and talents of other people but instead through the development of their own potential.

This perspective of education engendering freedom is also viewed as indispensible by Santamaría and Santamaría's (2012) delineation of ACL. According to Santamaría and Santamaría (2012), "Applied critical leadership is the emancipatory practice of choosing to address educational issues and challenges using a critical race perspective to enact context-specific change in response to power, domination, access, and achievement imbalances, resulting in improved academic achievement for learners..." (p. 7). Stephen continually

engaged in conversations with volunteers about the importance of striving to be competent in the culture and language of the local people, especially in the context of education. In informal conversations throughout my time conducting research and also in the classes he conducted with the American university students volunteering at Esperanza, Stephen would often facilitate discussions about cultural competency and how this is important in educating for social justice and challenging marginalisation. Therefore Stephen's practise of leadership, shares aspects with a critical race theory (CRT) approach to educational leadership in which race, culture and language are at the forefront of leader's practice. Stephen as a critical educational leader also demonstrates coherence with the transformative and critical pedagogical dimensions of applied critical leadership (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). The leadership style of Rosa and Stephen also reflect aspects of a CRT lens in the way in which Esperanza's local context in terms of the educational and health needs of the community are a constant consideration. As well, the isolated, rural character of Lago, which in the recent past, according to informal conversations with Stephen, Rosa and Andrew, had experienced injustice when the community was forced from the fertile land by the lake's banks to land far less suitable for farming due to a dam being constructed on the lake and the corporation taking control of the community's traditional land, marginalising the community. In this way Esperanza's efforts in light of such injustice can be seen as seeking to provide opportunity, restoring social justice to those who in the past have been disempowered.

These perspectives that present education as an emancipatory endeavour, are reflected in the actions taken by Rosa and Stephen, as Rosa stated in her interview:

> ...[Esperanza] is to be ... a centre or a space, a space where you can get together, many communities ... with an educational purpose, right? And develop their talents, capacities...

What is significant here is that Esperanza is characterised as a space created and provided to facilitate similar emancipatory educational process. In this regard, Esperanza steers away from being paternalistic or inadvertently creating a situation where there is sense of dependence on the NGO. What is also encouraging is that the humble posture of learning that is intrinsic to the philosophy of Esperanza means that the organisation seeks to continually learn how to better conduct its activities and effectively build capacity. This is most evident in the interviews with Stephen and Olivia who both acknowledge not only the importance but the necessity of having the community engaged in the organisation at every level, not just in a participatory capacity.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis used a theoretical framework that integrated the philosophy of Paulo Freire's (1968/2012) pedagogy and the theory of applied critical leadership (ACL), conceptualised by Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) as a hybrid theoretical lens with which to analyse critical educational leadership within the context of a non-government organisation focused on educational development. Through this lens, I was able to illustrate how the leaders of Esperanza Worldwide practised leadership that was informed by a philosophy and vision that placed love at its centre.

This love for humanity as the driving force spurred the implementation of educational actions that have undeniably had a positive impact on the community of Lago and also several neighbouring communities. Most notably, since the founding of Esperanza Worldwide eight years ago, the community in which it is situated has experienced significant improvement in academic achievement, unity among people within the community, and access to opportunities that would not have been available to Esperanza's constituents prior to the organisation's involvement.

Through the implementation of the integrative theoretical framework (Freire, 1968/2012; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012) as part of the analysis of the data collected in this study, I have also demonstrated the significance of practising non-traditional leadership in the context of an educationally focused non-governmental organisation (NGO). The leaders that were the focus of this study practised leadership that went beyond simple generic models of management (Lewis, 2006), which typically fail to recognise the complexities of the fluid and ever-changing local contexts in which they work (De Berry, 1999). Instead, the leaders of Esperanza practised leadership that was characterised by unselfish unconditional love for their constituents and the myriad diverse people that give their support to the NGO, creating a professional educational space for genuine dialogue and collaboration (Santamaría et al., 2014). The space created by leaders of Esperanza Worldwide also reflects a holistic approach to education that incorporates practices that address development not only in terms of intellectual or academic achievement but also in the spiritual wellbeing of everyone involved in the organisation. In other words, the philosophy and actions of Esperanza incorporate the elements of mind, body and spirit as described earlier in this thesis.

Through the dialogical practice of leadership involving interactions among leaders, community members, and all stakeholders involved; the vision and philosophy of that vision

was transferred to those enacting activities within the organisation. Those individuals in turn felt empowered to strive to emulate these practices in their interactions with participants at the NGO. In this exponential and dynamic manner, the educational space created by Esperanza can be described as transformative and authentically addresses issues of social justice at the centre and in the surrounding community (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría, et al., 2014). In the discussion of this study's findings I argued that it was the altruistic elements that characterised the environment of Esperanza that ultimately led to the impact on the community that the NGO has had thus far.

Transformative and exclusionary elements. Based upon the findings and discussion chapters of this thesis, I would suggest that from a critical methodology of research (CMR) (Gómez et al., 2013) perspective, the critical leadership actions that have led to several positive impacts on the community of Lago demonstrate elements that make up the socio-educational environment of Esperanza Worldwide and could comfortably be described as transformative.

The main indication of any exclusionary elements present in the organisation's practice is the concern that the community is not given enough opportunity to contribute their own knowledge to the activities of Esperanza as perceived by some research participants. However, in my interviews with Stephen as the NGO president, Rosa as the co-ordinator and Olivia, an Esperanza board member and executive director of an NGO partnered with Esperanza, it was clear that their philosophy and vision as leaders incorporated transformative elements that over time will increasingly draw upon the knowledge existent within the community, and the activities of Esperanza will serve to provide the local people with more opportunities to apply their knowledge and experience. Therefore, I would argue that the perception of a lack of community ownership does not constitute an exclusionary element, but currently is an area where the NGO has recognised it needs more learning and effort towards fully collaborating with the local people.

Based upon my analysis of Esperanza's philosophy and vision, I would argue that the immediate and long-term future vision reflects the following statement by Freire (1968/2012):

> True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity...True generosity lies in striving so that these hands—whether of individuals or entire peoples—need to be extended less and less in supplication, so

> that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world. (p. 45)

This conveys the idea that education as an emancipatory practice (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012) should result in the empowerment of people, especially those who are marginalised and treated unjustly in society, who are enabled to challenge and navigate the barriers of social injustice and inequality through the application of their own talents, skills and capacities. I suggest that the vision and philosophy that guides the leadership actions carried out by Rosa and Stephen in their roles as leaders is conducive to the empowerment of their constituents. The leadership enacted within Esperanza seeks to enable people to take charge of their own spiritual and material destinies which influences their future decision-making, whether it be in attaining a professional career or higher education. Through Esperanza participants' are encouraged to seek out vocations that not only benefit their own lives but also serve others. Therefore as constituents grow and progress in their lives they continue emulate the philosophy and vision of Esperanza.

Implications

In this section, implications for Esperanza Worldwide, pedagogical leadership, philosophy and vision of NGOs are presented. It ends with implications for qualitative research featuring NGOs as a point of focus.

Implications for Esperanza Worldwide. As a researcher, I have been continually reflecting about what can be learned from this study in terms of contributing back to those who participated in the research, in the spirit of love and reciprocity. Regarding the implications for the leadership practice implemented in Esperanza, I would suggest that perhaps the most significant outcome of this study is in gaining an understanding of how the philosophy and vision, which is adopted by the leaders of the organisation, becomes implicit in their actions and interactions with constituents, volunteers and visitors. These influence the behaviours and attitudes of those who contribute workshops, activities, and similar contributions to the NGO. Although both Rosa and Stephen seemed to be quite conscious of their vision and philosophy, perhaps this study can serve as an informal evaluative form of positive feedback on how they conduct themselves within their organisation.

Of equal significance however, I would suggest the research questions, which are the focus of this preliminary study, could lead to further investigation in this and similar sites on a transnational research agenda. In order to understand how philosophy and vision of an

educationally focused non-government organisation relates to critical leadership practices and their impact on the community of focus, further qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches could be useful to validate and build upon the findings and conclusions provided by this case study. This could have potential benefits to both Esperanza and in contributing to this area of educationally focused NGOs of which I found significant gaps in my search for supporting literature, particularly in trying to find other case studies of a similar nature. Such follow-up studies could focus on obtaining more detailed findings regarding the perspectives of parents and also on the children and youth that attend the workshops and activities at Esperanza. To also build upon this preliminary research (a study spanning a month and half), longitudinal studies would be useful to paint a more comprehensive picture of the annual functions and developments of Esperanza over time. Furthermore, I would suggest the research involve a researcher fluent in Spanish and perhaps also familiar with Mexican culture. This would enable the researcher(s) to be more responsive and open-ended when conducting interviews and also provide better understandings of non-verbal language and observational data. Finally, I would also suggest that a methodology conducted in the framework of the critical communicative methodology (CCM) also known as the critical methodology of research (CMR) (Gómez et al., 2013), would be appropriate and beneficial to any further study with Esperanza.

I also propose this study presents an opportunity for more in-depth and focused studies that could expand upon the critical leadership elements of this study but also for future-focused generative and transformational educational research that extends beyond this scope. Esperanza and its ongoing developments within Lago and beyond could also lend itself to research in other disciplines, such as development studies, public health and a variety of other trans-disciplinary fields. Further research would also be well aligned with the future vision of Esperanza Worldwide as is evident in the interview data.

In a series of reciprocal interactions, all the findings of this study will be presented to the research participants with the hopes that they will find some benefit in the findings. I also intend to continue my association with the research participants of this study and my involvement with the organisation. Whether that is in the capacity of conducting future research or being involved in some other way, remains to be seen.

Pedagogical leadership implications

In addition to the specific implications this study has for Esperanza Worldwide, I contend that there are potential implications that can be drawn from this study with regard to pedagogy, especially in the context of critical leadership.

The inclusion of love for other human beings as a key aspect of someone's practice as an educator and/or educational leader is highly significant. Paulo Freire is widely regarded as the founder of critical pedagogy and as such is substantially referenced by many present-day academics who are themselves widely referenced. However, in reading the work of authors who extensively refer to Freire's theories and ideas, I have very rarely come across reference to his linking of love with pedagogy (Freire, 1968/2012). This is surprising as Freire (1968/2012) explicitly indicates that dialogue is necessary for any humanising approach to education and that true dialogue cannot exist without a genuine love for the world and for humanity.

Therefore, I reason that the critical leadership practice examined by this study clearly demonstrates that one cannot ignore the inseparability of love regarding education that is intended to promote social justice and empower others, when engaging with this subject. Through my experience conducting research at Esperanza, in the interviews and in my 'observation through participation' I was able to simultaneously experience first-hand the effect that love coupled with educational leadership has on those with whom leaders interact; in this case the local people from the community participating in the programmes offered by Esperanza and the volunteers assisting in the delivery of those programmes. As has been presented and discussed in this thesis, when a leader fosters an educational and social space through their love for those around them, in terms of clearly exhibiting that they genuinely hold the best interests of everyone at heart and therefore desire everyone to succeed as human beings, the result is an environment of empowerment and optimism. This attitude also encourages others to emulate these same qualities, which I observed being expressed in words and actions by those working with the organisation and in the behaviour and attitudes of the local participants.

This research study also indicates that the theory of applied critical leadership (ACL) is nimble, global, and dynamic, as it was used dynamically and flexibly in the analysis of phenomena regarding educational leadership outside the context of traditional school environments (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría et al., 2014). Although Esperanza

Worldwide as a non-government organisation operating largely at the grassroots level within a rural Mexican community, and differs significantly from the urban schooling contexts studied in the Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) and Santamaría et al. (2014), this study identified several instances where the educational leaders who participated in this study exhibited practices that resembled similar approaches to leadership as those studied in the ACL literature reviewed and referenced in this thesis. Stephen would often reflect, in both casual conversation and in the actual class component of the American university summer programme, on the importance of familiarising oneself and striving to be competent in the local culture and language. Cultural immersion was considered as essential to being effective educators able to interact with students in a way that challenges issues of marginalisation and injustice. This approach to education is arguably in line with the three of the major components of ACL: critical race theory (CRT), transformative leadership and critical pedagogy (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012).

Stephen's philosophy of "leading from behind" to ensure everyone feels comfortable to contribute could also be argued to be construed as coherent with the practice of ACL. This could be seen as a way of building consensus and fostering collaboration between all the individuals working with Esperanza. This, coupled with the way in which coherence of vision among everyone participating within the organisation, shares similarities with the Māori urban school leader whose leadership was the focus of Santamaría et al. (2014), which was concluded to be consistent with applied critical leadership. For example, this excerpt from the findings of Santamaría et al. (2014) shares a very similar style of leadership as that discussed in this thesis: "Kerehi [the principal] motivates teachers at Wānanga Whānau [her school] to make the necessary changes through high expectations, a shared sense of purpose, and a collective belief in their common ability to make a difference for every child." (p. 11). Stephen and Rosa's approaches to leadership within Esperanza Worldwide were not hierarchical or authoritarian. Instead, volunteers felt that they were able to contribute their own knowledge and experience in consultation, knowing that it would be valued and honoured. Based upon the evidence illustrated and discussed throughout this thesis, I would contend that the leadership of Esperanza Worldwide could be conceived as a form of ACL leadership practice.

Implications for the philosophy and vision of non-government organisations

The findings of this study have several implications with regard to the philosophy and vision of non-government organisations, specifically those involved in contributing to the improvement of the social and educational reality of a community. First of all, this study demonstrated the significance of an NGO having a clear and transparent vision and philosophy. This was exhibited in the interviews with research participants, informal conversations with leaders, and their actions in that it would be very unlikely for anyone interacting with Esperanza Worldwide for a few days to not come away with some broad understanding of the organisation's philosophy towards community building and their vision for how these developments are to be carried out. This was reflected in the coherence between research participants when asked to describe their understanding of Esperanza's vision and philosophy, with only a few minor instances of a lack of clarity.

This study also demonstrates the importance of having a clear philosophy and vision that is readily and actively adopted by leaders and implemented in their practice. Not only did this allow for the organic dissemination of the vision to those providing service to the organisation but also as discussed earlier in the positive impacts that the NGO has had on the community. The way in which the philosophy and vision is given a place of central importance within Esperanza means that the leadership actions carried out by the NGO's leaders, and in turn the actions of those operating within the organisation and adopting the vision, are carried out with a constant awareness and consideration of being in accord with the organisation's mission. The positive impacts on the community, such as increased academic achievement and attainment, increased sense of unity within the community and increased access to social and academic opportunities, which have resulted from these actions, constantly guided and enacted as a part of this vision. These illustrate a significant link to the NGO's philosophy and vision. Therefore, having a clear and transparent philosophy and vision should be a key consideration of any NGO wishing to have a unified atmosphere within their organisations and in having the positive impacts on the community intended by a NGO's objectives.

Implications for conducting qualitative research in NGO contexts

I also propose that learning can be gleaned from this thesis in terms of conducting qualitative data collection in the non-government organisation context. As was stated in the design and methodology chapter, the approach to gathering the observational data used to inform this

thesis was more in line with what Richards and Morse (2013) refer to as being a "complete participant" than a "complete observer" (p. 55). I characterise the way in which I collected as 'observation through participation' or 'learning through participation'.

During my time on site at Esperanza Worldwide, I strived to make myself as available as possible in terms of assisting in the day-to-day preparations of the organisation before the commencement of the afterschool programme in the afternoon and during the afternoon classes. I also took the opportunity offered to me to be involved in assisting the American university students who were conducting many of the weekly classes during my time there.

In addition to my personal preference to be of some service to the organisation, I also felt this would be the least intrusive method of gathering observational data and fit the ordinary flow of Esperanza's standard mode of operating. In this way I was available to be involved in the organisation as a 'regular outsider' as the community was used to having people from overseas come to Esperanza, without having undue attention placed upon my presence as a researcher. I was viewed as just another one of the *maestros* (teachers) by the children and parents participating with Esperanza. Therefore, during the month and a half of my involvement I was able to feel a part of the organisation as a volunteer as opposed to an outsider looking in. Discussed in the limitations section of the design and methodology chapter was my lack of competency in Spanish and in the local culture. Especially with regard to language, I would have been able to even more comfortably weave into the organisation's environment and this would have also improved the data gleaned from both interviews and observations.

I suggest that the approach of 'learning through participation' in the context of non-government organisations, which are often characterised by environments that allow for people to assist in some capacity, whether it be in the form of helping with the daily tasks of maintaining and cleaning the facilities or in assisting with the actual delivery of services, is beneficial to researchers for several reasons. Firstly, by providing assistance to an NGO, the researcher could be viewed as at least attempting to alleviate the burden of being hosted by the organisation, and this perhaps is an appropriate show of gratitude to research participants for their involvement in your research. Secondly, when you strives to merge with the nominal activities of an organisation, you are arguably able to collect observational data in a way that minimises you affect on the regular routine of an organisation by becoming a part of it, rather than being removed, which could be argued is actually more intrusive. Finally, I would

suggest that in terms of a researcher's personal research experience, being actively involved in providing service to other people enriches the experience and makes your time in the field more worthwhile and interesting.

When taking this approach to observation, however, there are several considerations that should be taken into account to ensure the standards and requirements of the investigation have been met. Primarily, one should be aware of staying disciplined in recording their observation data. Depending of the schedule of an NGO, there may likely be instances where the researcher has time to record observations without affecting their participation within the organisation's routine. However, a large part of data recording will likely be at the end of the day. Therefore, the researcher must stay disciplined in their recording of observational data and be taking mental notes throughout the day to be recorded as soon their work within the NGO is finished for the day.

I propose this approach to observational data collection, as a part of qualitative research is applicable to NGO settings that reflect similar grassroots characteristics of Esperanza or offer some opportunity where the researcher can contribute some form of service. I maintain this approach is both an ethical approach to qualitative research and also one that is conducive to providing accurate and reliable observational data, even more so when the researcher has a firm grasp of the local language and culture of the local context in which the NGO of interest is operating.

Possibilities for Future Research

In addition to the potential research opportunities specific to Esperanza Worldwide, this qualitative case study on an educational-focused NGO also points to future research in this topic area in general. Already mentioned in this thesis, a significant aspect of this study's rationale is the substantial gap in the literature regarding NGOs with specific and intentional focuses on education. As illustrated in Lewis (2006), non-government organisations as a sector in society are extremely diverse in that NGOs as a term is used to describe organisations that range from international entities with multi-million dollar budgets such as BRAC (Ahmed & French, 2006), with complex organisational structures that mirror that of corporations, to smaller grassroots organisations such as those described in De Berry (1999) and Esperanza Worldwide. Therefore, due to this diversity, general studies regarding NGOs are not sufficient to inform those who want to engage in or better understand NGOs with long-term strategies in the context of assisting in educational development within a

community or communities. And so, I suggest that there needs to be further qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods studies on educationally based NGOs similar to Esperanza, to better understand what role they can play in the field of education and to generate learning to assist those undertaking such initiatives.

Final Remarks

This research thesis set out to investigate how a non-government organisation with a focus on education translated its philosophy and vision into critical leadership actions and how these actions had thus far impacted the community where these actions take place. Through a theoretical framework combining the pedagogical philosophy of Paulo Freire (1968/2012) and the theory of applied critical leadership (ACL) (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012); this thesis illustrated how a philosophy and vision that incorporates a willingness to learn a culture of collaboration, collective capacity building and the perspective that all actions should be characterised by a love for humanity, produces actions that can transform the community in a number of significant ways. Since the founding of the NGO eight years ago, the inhabitants of the community in which it operates have experienced substantial positive changes to their social reality, including a significant rise in the number of people graduating high school and going on to study at university, a more unified community environment, and access to human resources and learning opportunities that were not previously available to the community.

Based upon the data collected and analysed in this study, the critical leadership actions that led to these developments within the community could be conceptualised as reflecting the practice of applied critical leadership (ACL) as outlined in Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) with a love for humanity reflecting the sentiments expressed by Paulo Freire (1968/2012) regarding education that truly liberates and fosters dialogue producing actions that lead to the positive transformation of people's social reality in a way that promotes justice and equality. Not only is it significant that this study demonstrates the applicability of ACL to educational contexts outside of mainstream schooling contexts, but also that it can be applied in the context of education in a rural community within a 'developing' nation. Therefore, I suggest that the most significant finding of this research is that it illustrates the importance of having a vision and philosophy founded on principles of love as a means to enact transformation through education.

References

Ahmed, S. & French, M. (2006). Scaling up: the BRAC experience. *BRAC university journal, 3*(2). 35-40.

Akyeampong, A. K. (2004). Aid for self help effort? A sustainable alternative route to basic education in Northern Ghana. *Journal of International Co-operation in Education*, *7*(1), 41-52.

Archer, D. (1994). The changing roles of non-governmental organizations in the field of education (in the context of changing relationships with the state). *International journal of educational development, 14*(3). 223-232. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com

Backman, E. V. & Smith, S. R. (2000). Healthy organizations, unhealthy communities? *Nonprofit management and leadership, 10*(4). 355-374. doi: 10.1002/nml.10402

Britton, B. (1998). *The learning NGO*. Oxford: INTRAC.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.

De Berry, J. (1999). *Exploring the concept of community: implications for NGO management*. Centre for Civil Society, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Epstein, J. L. (1990). School and family connections: Theory, research, and implications for integrating sociologies of education and family. *Marriage & Family Review*, *15*(1-2), 99-126.

Freire, P. (1968/2012). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, USA: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc.

Gibbs, G. (2007). Analysing Qualitative Data, part of the Qualitative Research Kit, ed. U. Flick.

Gómez, Aitor, Carmen Elboj, and Marta Capllonch. "Beyond Action Research: The Communicative Methodology of Research." *International Review of Qualitative Research* 6.2 (2013): 183-197.

Gooden, M. A., & Dantley, M. (2012). Centering race in a framework for leadership preparation. *Journal of research on leadership education*, 1942775112455266.

Johnson, L. (2006). "Making her community a better place to live": Culturally responsive urban school leadership in historical context. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *5*(1), 19-36.

Khalifa, M. (2010). Validating social and cultural capital of hyperghettoized at-risk students. *Education and Urban Society*, *42*(5), 620-646.

Khalifa, M. (2012). A re-new-ed paradigm in successful urban school leadership principal as community leader. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *48*(3), 424-467.

Lewis, D. (2006). *The management of non-governmental development organizations*. Routledge.

Manasse, A. L. (1985). Vision and Leadership: Paying Attention to Intention. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 150-173.

Morley, G., & Valentino, C. P. (2013). Jesús "Pato" Gómez. In *A Critical Pedagogy of Resistance* (pp. 65-68). SensePublishers.

Richards, L., & Morse, J. M. (2013). *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Santamaría, L. J. & Santamaría, A. P. (2012). *Applied critical leadership in education: choosing change*. New York, USA: Routledge.

Santamaría, L. J. (2013). Critical Change for the Greater Good Multicultural Perceptions in Educational Leadership Toward Social Justice and Equity. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 0013161X13505287.

Santamaría, L. J., Santamaría, A. P., Webber, M., & Pearson, H. (2014). Indigenous Urban School Leadership: A Critical Cross-Cultural Comparative Analysis of Educational Leaders in New Zealand and the United States. *Comparative and International Education/Éducation Comparée et Internationale*,*43*(1), 5.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558-589.

Spears, L. C. (2000/2010). Character and Servant Leadership: Ten Characteristics of Effective, Caring Leaders.

Stone, D. (2000). Non-governmental policy transfer: The Strategies of independent policy institutes. *Governance: An international journal of policy and administration, 13*(1). 45-62. doi: 10.1111/0952-1895.00123

Werker, E., & Ahmed, F. Z. (2008). What do nongovernmental organizations do? *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *22*(2), 73-92.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.