Training Parent Volunteers As Effective Allies In Youth Empowerment Programs

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TRAINING PARENT VOLUNTEERS AS EFFECTIVE ALLIES IN YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

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PIM 70

A Course-Linked Capstone Paper in Training Of Trainers: Ethics in Intercultural Training Design
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Intercultural Service, Leadership and Management at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont

May 2012
Advisor: Ryland White
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# Table of contents

ABSTRACT  

1 INTRODUCTION  
1.1 The road to SIT  
1.2 Influence of SIT Coursework  
1.3 Developing as a trainer at SIT: Theory into Practice  
1.4 Development as a trainer at my RPP  

2 TRAINING THE TRAINER: SELF AWARENESS AND ETHICS  
2.1 Existing competencies  
2.2 Ethics and power  

3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND  
3.1 Adult roles in youth empowerment programs  
3.1.1 Model 1: Youth-adult partnerships  
3.1.2 Model 2: Parent training and education programs  

4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS  
4.1 Adult learning  
4.2 Experiential learning  
4.3 Unfreezing, Changing, Refreezing  
4.4 Competency-based training  
4.5 Training in other cultures  

5 TRAINING DESIGN ANALYSIS  
5.1 Background and context  
5.2 Participants  
5.3 Needs assessment  
5.4 Workshop goals and objectives  
5.5 Creating an effective learning environment  
5.6 Sequencing and structural interventions  

6 EVALUATION  

7 REFLECTIONS  
7.1 Strengths and challenges related to training curriculum and delivery  
7.2 Relationship between curriculum design and trainer competencies  

8 LESSONS LEARNED  
8.1 Evolving understanding of multiculturalism  
8.2 The hybrid  

9 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE APPLICATIONS  

10 CONCLUSION  

APPENDIX A – BIBLIOGRAPHY  
APPENDIX B – SUPPLEMENTARY LITERATURE REVIEW  
APPENDIX C – INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM  
APPENDIX D – OUTLINE OF TRAINING  
APPENDIX E – MODEL FOR CONTEXT-SPECIFIC TRAINING  
APPENDIX F – OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITY SUMMARIES  
APPENDIX G – EVALUATION FORM  
APPENDIX H – PRE-AND-POST TEST  
APPENDIX J – MYTHS AND REALITIES OF ADOLESCENCE
ABSTRACT

Empowering adolescent girls is an effective and sustainable way to break the cycle of poverty and initiate a process of worldwide change. It is also extremely challenging, given the traditional perceptions of adolescents as reckless, carefree, incapable of assuming responsibility and unaware of their own needs for success and positive development. While organizations can provide many of the resources that adolescent girls need, the lack of parental support can be detrimental to both the overall development of the adolescent girl, her access to services, her mobility in society and the choices she will have in her future. In order to create a space for parental support of their adolescent daughters as part of youth empowerment programs, I designed a three-part parent training program for The Mariposa DR Foundation and implemented the first training in January 2011. This program drew on existing studies of parent training and education, and followed an assets-based approach through the curriculum. The following capstone paper details the pre-planning, design and delivery of the first training and includes an analysis of observations and feedback from participants. The conceptual framework grounds this training in theories of adult learning, experiential learning, adapting trainings for different cultures, while the literature review provides a guide to understanding conceptual definitions of adolescence and empowerment as they exist today, as well as an analysis of different models of adult involvement in youth programs. I end this paper by reflecting on my experiences and growth as a trainer, and integrate this with an evolving understanding of multiculturalism and social justice as it relates to my training work.
1 INTRODUCTION

An adolescent girl stands at the threshold of adulthood. In the developing world, this is probably the most crucial moment in her life. According to The Girl Effect, an international movement launched in 2009 at the World Economic Forum focusing on raising awareness about the potential of girls to break the cycle of poverty, a girl will invest 90% of her future income in her family, compared to 35% for a boy. Yet 250 million adolescent girls live in poverty and are more likely than boys to be uneducated, married at a young age, and exposed to HIV/AIDS. When you improve a girl's life through education, health, safety, and opportunity, these changes have a positive ripple effect. As an educated mother, an active, productive citizen and a prepared employee, she is the most influential force in her community to break the cycle of poverty. (Girl Effect, 2010).

Organizations all over the world have taken on this challenge of working with adolescent girls to break the cycle of poverty based on theories of empowerment and have made remarkable progress in their work. However, there are always barriers in trying to change harmful, long-established attitudes and practices that are detrimental to young girls, as well as entrenched social influences that affect their lives. One of the more crucial influences in the lives of young girls are adult figures in the community, especially their parents. A majority of the decisions in an adolescent girl's life are taken by her parents, and she is influenced and affected by events occurring at home, including decisions to limit her participation in society.

Non-profit, non-governmental and state-supported organizations working in the field of girls empowerment cannot afford to ignore the complex social dynamics that affect a young girl's journey from adolescence to adulthood, including the influence of parents and other adults on the choices she is provided as well as the community's perspective of the role of girls in society. While there has been sufficient research conducted on empowerment strategies, curriculums and program design for adolescent girls, there is a lack of knowledge about the role of parents in girls'
empowerment programs and how they can support both the institution providing these social services as well as their daughters in this process. Central to the idea of empowerment is the concept of power. From a social justice standpoint, it is impossible to provide empowerment as an end-goal, or a finished product. Additionally, it is also impossible to separate young girls from their familial settings and the power dynamics that occur within that context. As a result, parents must be recruited as allies and supporters of their daughter's empowerment and must be included in programming efforts in order to truly achieve the goals that empowerment programs set out to accomplish.

The inspiration for this paper comes from coursework in my Training of Trainers (TOT): Ethics in Intercultural Training Design class at SIT Graduate Institute and will explore my motivations for designing trainings to work with parents of the girls currently enrolled in our program. Existing parent training and education programs work from an asset-deficient framework, where the youth has already been involved in negative/inappropriate behavior, and parent training is seen as one possible intervention method. By approaching it from a Training of Trainers theoretical framework, it is my goal to examine the growth in my trainer competencies while initiating a capacity-building process for parents so that they may serve as future volunteers with The Mariposa DR Foundation and be directly involved with empowerment and leadership programs.

1.1 The road to SIT

My earliest experiences with training took place as a peer counselor at The Mahindra United World College of India, a high school that followed an international, globally-focused curriculum, with students from more than seventy different countries. I quickly learned the different nuances in approaching students from varied cultural backgrounds, encouraging them to share their experiences and develop a non-threatening method for providing support and resources as well as a safe way to give feedback. I had the opportunity to put these skills into practice the following year.
in a more formal setting as a Peer Facilitator at the Pearson Seminar for Youth Leadership, a three-week summer leadership program for Canadian and Japanese youth, where I was briefly introduced to the Experiential Learning Cycle, only being told of the importance of getting students to reflect on their life's experiences.

Over the next few years, I took on different roles within what I now understand to be an overall training context, such as leadership positions in student organizations, a youth mentor in community service groups and coordinator and trainer for new student orientations, all in the United States. When I moved to the Dominican Republic in 2009 to work as a community organizer, I was unwillingly thrust into the role of the 'expert', since community members expected me to solve many of their existing problems, such as unemployment, lack of access to clean water, infant health concerns as well as a general lack of motivation to break out of the cycle of poverty. I tried to implement many different activities and programs but abandoned all of them a few months into my position and reverted back to what I knew was my strength. I talked to everyone I could and interpreted what they said into a set of objectives that could be achieved through short-and-long term programs. However, I knew that I did not have the skills or knowledge to deliver those programs and workshops, and felt as though I had reached another roadblock. Having been involved in student organizing and peer facilitating from the age of 16 in intercultural settings, and having received positive feedback about my abilities to lead, motivate and provide support, I realized the need to acquire yet another new language, an education that would work to enhance my existing abilities, and challenge me to acquire a toolbox of new information and skills that I could share with people looking to change their existing situations.

1.2 Influence of SIT coursework

At SIT, I enrolled in the Intercultural Service, Leadership and Management degree (SLM), an interdisciplinary program that adequately mirrored my self-selected degree focus areas in Training and Youth Programs. When I began the Training Design for Experiential Learning (TDEL)
course and completed the initial trainer-self assessment, I was humbled by the vast preparation it took for one to become a skilled trainer. By learning about the various competencies that one works with in order to create change, I began to reflect on my own experiences and started connecting theory to real life. One area that I initially struggled with was understanding the difference between a teacher, a trainer, a facilitator and a coach. As my colleagues and professor helped me process my thoughts and ideas, I realized the impact that different cultural situations and circumstances can have on one's understanding of training and the various elements of training design. Growing up in India, I was not used to anything else besides a teacher providing information – given the burden placed on the educational system, there was no time to formulate one's own thoughts on a subject, nor were many educators aware of educational models about experiential learning or different learning styles. Consequently, the idea that learning can be facilitated using participants' existing knowledge based on principles of adult learning theory by using different training styles was information new to me.

1.3 Developing as a trainer at SIT: Theory into Practice

During my time at SIT, three events allowed me to develop my skills as a trainer and build on the foundations of my coursework from TDEL. The first two were structured experiences as part of the TDEL syllabus: the Train-In Techniques Fair and the Team Training. During the three-hour training session and the weeks leading up to it, I understood firsthand what the training design process looked like from start to finish. When I was first introduced to Kolb's terminology (1984) that defined my learning style – Assimilator – I identified with it so much that I found myself being impatient with those who had different learning styles. However, the process of working on these events with colleagues who were also going through the same experiences pushed me to acknowledge my preferences and biases towards certain activities. Among one of the crucial insights that I had during my training coursework was the question about whether my preference for
a certain learning style was based on the culture within which I was currently immersed. Having the space to reflect on my preferences in the absence of any external influences made me question the influence of culture on learning styles, especially for individuals who are constantly crossing borders, shifting their frames of reference and adapting to more than one local context. It is a question that I still revisit today, more than a year after that initial insight.

Another area of coursework that influenced my education and development as a trainer were the classes in Organizational Behavior, because they provided me with examples of context-specific work that I could engage in as a trainer. Growing up in a constantly changing multicultural environment and being multilingual myself, I have always been fascinated with the idea of people from different backgrounds working together. However, I had never examined the process of working together in teams nor the skills it would take to facilitate those group dynamics and move the team towards achieving a specific goal. I had the opportunity to bring these experiences together when I took the initiative in October 2011 to organize the first TEDxSIT conference in Brattleboro. I was in the unique position of being a Trainer of Trainers as well as a participant in the group process. During the seven months that I worked on the event with a team, I found myself cycling through different trainer styles put forth by Eitington (2002), beginning with the Director in order to set the tone for the group and clarify the purpose and goals of the event. I moved to the Interpreter style when we began a discussion on what our event's theme would be. I did not want to be in charge of single-handedly making a decision, and observed many group members gravitating towards the same theme in different ways, in which case being able to interpret other people's thoughts was useful. As we moved forward with our individual committee responsibilities, there were moments where team members came in conflict with one another, either over personality differences or over division of responsibilities. As a natural outcome of my having taken initiative to stage this event, I ended up having team members approach me with their issues. The Listener style proved to be very useful here, since the team was also going through the remnants of the
Storming stage as per Tuckman's Model of Group Development (1965). By providing them with a space to reflect their thoughts, and by helping them put their roles in the bigger context, team members began to outline ways in which they themselves could address the issue for the sake of the big picture and ended up modifying their behavior accordingly. In the last month leading up to the event, I played the role of Coach by being available to support people with last-minute tasks or requests.

As this event took place towards the end of my time at SIT, it allowed me to reflect on my strengths and weaknesses both as a trainer, and a trainer of trainers. I realized that I depended to a large extent on my prior knowledge of my team members' personalities in order to help me effectively navigate issues of group dynamics. While I was also able to see the team progress through Tuckman's stages of group development as well as go through Lewin's three-step model of change (Burnes, 2004), I did have my own agenda in wanting to see a successful event take place, and having a cohesive, efficient team was to that benefit. Though not strictly a training opportunity, I was grateful for the chance to nevertheless practice many of the strategies that I had learned in my training coursework and identify specific areas related to training competencies as well as ethics and power, that I wanted to explore during my RPP.

1.4 Development as a trainer at my RPP

At my RPP, I have been challenged in my role as a trainer as well as a professional working in a third culture. There have been multiple opportunities for me to incorporate aspects of training such as needs assessments (formal, informal and needs predictions), outlining goals and objectives for activities, creating effective learning environments and designing activities to incorporate learning styles based on the Something For Everyone model as outlined by Brooks-Harris and Stock-Ward (1999, p.21). I began my RPP by building on the existing Girl's Leadership Program at The Mariposa DR Foundation and designed a series of weekly workshops during the year that
covered themes ranging from self-esteem, public speaking, team-building and leadership skills to HIV/AIDS awareness, theatre workshops, art and crafts, and celebrating national and international holidays. As a result, I gained considerable insight into designing workshops that fit within a long-term program, but that also addressed specific competencies during individual sessions.

Two of my main challenges from a training perspective included my attempt to apply principles of Adult Learning Theory and the Experiential Learning Cycle in my work, as well as adapting my knowledge of learning styles, different change models and frameworks to the Dominican cultural context. As I elaborate more in the supplementary literature review (refer to Appendix B), it is challenging to pin down one particular definition of who is an adolescent, especially since it fluctuates between being a biological and a social construct. The stage of adolescence, as it falls in between childhood and adulthood, is virtually non-existent in the Dominican Republic, given the prevalence of 14 and 15 year old girls who get married or give birth at these ages – both of these considered to be adult characteristics. As a result, it was sometimes difficult to explain the idea of adolescence to girls who, in the eyes of society and in their own eyes, were adults. My second challenge dealt with a topic that I had personally experienced growing up in India, and thus could relate to it better than probably other staff members: the Banking model of education as proposed by Freire (1971). Students here have been used to a uni-directional flow of information and knowledge from the experts, which made it difficult to employ more participatory techniques, such as brainstorming, group discussions or fishbowls. By employing techniques that allowed me to get a better sense of the girls' learning styles and interact with them in a manner that corresponded with Hall (1970) and Hofstede's (1980) frameworks on intercultural communications and dimensions, I was able to move them from an attitude that accepted – and expected – information delivered by 'experts' to a stage where they are beginning to test their voice and be more comfortable with sharing their opinions. These experiences provided useful insights and information that I used in designing the training programs with parents as part of my capstone.
2 TRAINING THE TRAINER: SELF AWARENESS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 Existing competencies

At the start of my RPP phase, I reflected on my competencies as a trainer and on my approach to training as a profession and a catalyst for social change. Among the different competencies that a trainer must possess, especially in an intercultural Training Of Trainers setting, I believe that awareness and acknowledgement of one's own cultural identity, assumptions, biases, world-views and beliefs is of the utmost importance. Only by identifying how my approach to my work has been influenced by a variety of socio-cultural factors can I begin to understand how to develop my competencies as an intercultural trainer, and face my own personal challenges and inadequacies.

While it is essential to know the culture and history of my participants, it is more important to understand my own perceptions of culture, history and behavioral motivations in order to be aware of what I am consciously or unconsciously bringing to the training environment, in terms of my knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness and language.

Since my capstone work was focused on training a group of parents to serve as volunteers for the organization at a future date and assist in other training programs, my focus as a trainer needed to shift from simply delivering content or working immediately on addressing participants' competencies to developing a more long-term plan for capacity-building and creating a new group of individuals ready to understand and assume the ethical responsibility of creating change in their communities. In order to achieve this goal, I recognize the need to be grounded in my understanding of non-formal education methods such as the Experiential Learning Cycle and Adult Learning Theory that can be applied to a low-literacy context, such as the one in this and other communities. By grounding my training philosophy in these concepts, I hope to model the expectations of a parent volunteer in a way that is accessible and can be adapted to the local context.

My previous experiences as a trainer were constrained by having worked only with a
community of my peers as well as facilitating/training based on a curriculum designed by someone else. As a result, my skills at facilitating groups and creating a supporting learning environment were higher than my competency at curriculum design and paying attention to the pre-planning process. An important component of the pre-planning process for any training includes assessing the need for the training and the willingness of the participants. Working with a population that has had very little exposure to formal education or the concept of training as a means of developing competencies required careful planning on my part of gauging participants' reactions to the idea of a training program, as well as being open about what I could and could not specifically contribute to this program. I believe that trainers working with adult learners must be open from the outset about what they can bring to the program, thereby creating the space for learners to co-create their learning environment and take responsibility for their learning by supplementing the trainer's contributions with their own experiences. My extensive personal intercultural experiences provided me with a strong background in processing information by developing active listening skills and learning how to provide feedback in a manner that can be easily understood across cultural barriers while still acknowledging my own ethnocentrism in certain instances and not resorting to generalizations or harmful stereotyping.

My self-assessment prior to planning the training program for my capstone indicated a strong understanding of the fundamentals of experiential learning and adult learning as well as group dynamics, facilitation styles and the different components of training design, with room for growth in applying the theory to practice. I was confident in approaching the training-of-trainers process from the appropriate attitudinal standpoints, since I did sincerely believe in the ability of people to change and assume responsibility for their growth. Additionally, my previous experiences had allowed me to develop a non-judgmental style of facilitation that encouraged emotional risk-taking and showed sensitivity for different cultural experiences. In order to measure movement in my skills-based competency areas, I focused on curriculum design and created opportunities to select
and modify training methodologies appropriate to this environment and group. I wanted to be conscious about the impact of my presence in the training room, as a perceived 'expert' and outsider working in a culture where the teacher who provides answers holds more authority and influence than the trainer who encourages reflection and introspection. Another challenge that I foresaw was working with resistance, not just with the participants within the training room, but from those who never showed up.

2.2 Ethics and power

Working as a professional in the field of empowerment has necessitated an in-depth, honest and critical examination of my ideas of power, power-sharing and the systemic effects of changing existing social and cultural structures in order to address an imbalance of power. This requires a shift in viewing power as a zero-sum game, where power needs to be taken from someone, or one group/individual must lose some of its power in order for another group/individual to gain theirs, to understanding the different types of power that exist in society and the ways in which they may be exerted. My capstone training provided me with a unique opportunity to identify elements of empowerment theories and frameworks that I previously employed with the girls and adapt them for use with the parents group. The challenge in working from an empowerment framework that addresses female and youth participation in traditionally patriarchal and conservative societies is the risk of isolating and excluding other groups in the process of envisioning and implementing change. Empowering parents through training and education is thus an indirect strategy that can support girls' empowerment programming as well.

I have always been keenly aware of the presence/absence of power in my life – and now in my training work – because the last eight years have seen me live and work outside my home country and culture, in settings where I have alternated between being the insider/outsider and the student/teacher, all positions where people either experience a gain or loss of control. In reflecting
back on those experiences, I realized that in situations where I did not belong to the majority group or culture, or when I came in with less 'power' than others, I worked hard to develop other skills and abilities that allowed me to make valuable contributions and support the group/community in new and innovative ways. This influenced my ideas about working as a trainer in different cultures, since I began to explore not only what I brought to the table in terms of competencies, but the power I had to include or exclude certain topics and areas of inquiry by virtue of being 'in charge'.

During my first experience in the Dominican Republic in 2009, by virtue of my education and my positional power, I highlighted specific topics that would be addressed in a public health workshop that I believed were relevant without fully considering their relevance or importance to the larger community. When a colleague pointed out the hypocrisy of my actions while operating under the assumption that I was contributing to a common cause, I initially refused to accept that I was preventing the community members from having a voice. However, I soon realized the dangers of placing myself, as a trainer and as someone engaged in development work, as the mouthpiece or 'voice' of the people. While I was welcome to translate for community members, I did not have the right to dictate their course of action or point out what was needed without fully involving community members and stakeholders in a formal needs assessment and evaluation. This made me more aware of the subtleties of power and the unconscious impact I can have as a trainer.

My time at my RPP has led me to develop another understanding of power, from something that needs to be taken to something that is freely given in the form of respect and trust. Working with the parents group was a challenging experience made possible only by the respect afforded to me by everyone in the group as an appreciation of my work with their daughters, my conversations with them outside of a professional setting and my genuine desire to understand first, and do later. By constantly engaging the parents and staff of the organization in conversations about the impact of foreigners coming to this country and this community with the intention of doing community service and helping to bring change as they perceived it, I tried to examine traditional
uni-dimensional models of training used in this community to be understood as work done by outsiders for locals. This resulted in community members feeling disempowered as mere recipients of well-intentioned but often unsatisfactory and inadequate efforts. Comments and feedback from the parents and other community members about past workshops and training sessions highlighted just how much or how little power trainers previously had, as witnessed by the changes experienced by their participants as well as their willingness to even begin the change process. The resulting understanding about respect being the equivalent of power in this community guided my interactions with the mothers in order to reach a stage where I could then use my power to engage them in a training process that would raise awareness of their inherent power, both as mothers of adolescent girls as well as members of a community who know what is best for themselves and their needs.

3  THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Youth empowerment programs are often seen as a vital and integral component of efforts to provide adolescents with the knowledge, skills and self-awareness necessary to pursue a path of positive development and emerge as self-aware, capable individuals, capable of withstanding social pressures and making healthy decisions in the future. In order to successfully support youth in this process of development, it is imperative to recognize that although the cultural understandings of terms such as 'youth', 'adolescence' and 'empowerment' may differ, there are some guiding principles behind these definitions that can assist individuals and organizations working in this field to develop socially and culturally responsive programs.

One particular area of interest is the role of adults in youth development and empowerment programs. In its inherent nature, understanding empowerment is strongly linked to understanding the distribution of power. Communities working to provide a strong, healthy and sustainable youth
development program must address questions of power-sharing and authenticity in the process of legitimately providing a safe space for youth to develop their voices, opinions and identities in society, without imposing their thoughts on how and under what conditions youth can develop and feel empowered. This capstone paper is focused on examining the roles of parents as allies in youth empowerment programs, and provides a model for a training program with mothers of adolescent girls currently enrolled in a leadership skills-based curriculum at an organization focused on empowerment and education. Consequently, the theoretical background will focus on examining the role of adults in youth empowerment programs and the philosophy behind parent training programs. A further elaboration of existing definitions of adolescence and empowerment both as outcomes as well as processes, and a discussion of current, relevant models of youth empowerment have been included in the appendices as a supplementary literature review (refer to Appendix B).

3.1 Adult roles in youth empowerment programs

In the field of empowerment theories, models and frameworks, youth empowerment is one that relies extensively on support from external assets such as societal structures, relationships, role models and activities that serve as catalysts for inciting internal growth and development (Hardman, 2005, p.33). Adults play a pivotal role in the healthy development of adolescents because their reactions, perceptions and actions towards youth can encourage or discourage the empowerment process (Hardman, 2005). An examination of existing research yields two different models for adult participation in organizations focusing on youth empowerment, based on the resources of the organization and the stage they are at in their growth, the needs of the community and the adolescent community as well as the philosophical approach taken by stakeholders in working with youth.
3.1.1 Model 1: Youth-adult partnerships

The rise of youth-adult partnerships (YAP) can be said to coincide with changing perceptions of adolescence. Leading research in the field of YAP was originally conducted by the National 4-H Council, a youth development organization inspiring youth to develop leadership skills and engage in creative, independent work with the support of adult mentors. They highlighted the necessity of creating strong partnerships between youth and adults as a means of combating the social isolation caused by youth programs originally designed to protect adolescents from adult society (Zeldin, Camino, Calvert & Ivey, 2002). As adolescence began to emerge as a crucial developmental stage towards the end of the 20th century, youth programs began to take an assets-based approach towards the young people they worked with, and began to “conceptualize adolescents as self-directed learners and critical thinkers who are able to make positive contributions to society” (Zeldin et al, 2002, p. 6). This change in attitudes was explained by William Lofquist in his Spectrum of Attitudes (Fig. 1) where one can see the progression from viewing youth as passive recipients of services offered to them, along the lines of Freire's banking model of education, to a place where youth are at the core of all activity and decision-making. This ideal final stage of power-sharing is what is considered to be at the core of YAPs (Libby, Rosen & Sedonaen, 2005) and highlights the success of all stakeholders involved in empowerment and positive youth development organizations to reach a level of open communication, trust and common vision for the benefit of the youth through an assets-based approach. However, the idea of sharing power, or for that matter giving power to youth is one that many adults fear, especially when power is seen as a zero-sum game, where one party must lose power for the other to gain it. While youth-adult partnerships may seem ideal for organizations that have an established presence in the community and a strong base of adult supporters, it can be difficult if adults who are – or will be working with youth – hold attitudes about youth being incapable of contributing in a substantial manner to community and social issues, or that young people do not have enough experience or knowledge to contribute to issues of
importance. Moreover, cultures with a High Power Distance and a strong tradition of submitting to authority and commanding respect from younger members of society may not even realize that their attitudes are biased (Klindera, Menderweld & Norman, 2001, p.13). In this situation, it is necessary to first attend to the attitudinal work necessary to shift adults’ attitudes towards working with adolescents, in order to progress to the next step in supporting youth empowerment.

**HANDOUT: SPECTRUM OF ATTITUDES**

It is helpful to look at attitudes underlying youth-adult relationships along a spectrum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth as Objects</strong></td>
<td>Adults exercise arbitrary and near total control over youth. Programs and activities are TO youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth as Recipients</strong></td>
<td>Based on what they think is in the youth’s best interest, adults determine needs, prescribe remedies, implement solutions, and evaluate outcomes with little youth input. Programs and activities are FOR youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth as Resources</strong></td>
<td>Youth help adults in planning, implementing, and evaluating work. Programs and activities are FOR and WITH youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth-Adult Partnerships</strong></td>
<td>Youth and adults share decision-making power equally. Programs and activities are WITH youth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Fig 1: Spectrum of Attitudes (Lofquist)
3.1.2 Model 2: Parent training and education programs

As a precursor to Youth-Adult partnerships, parent training and education programs provide the structural framework for beginning a conversation about the positive assets of adolescents, their physical and emotional needs and the different ways that parents can support them. Parent training and education programs primarily exist to provide knowledge and skills to enable caregivers to develop [...] positive parent/child relationships, encourage positive discipline methods, enhance monitoring and supervision, promote reduced family conflict, and advance effective communication of family expectations and prosocial values [that] have been shown to improve family functioning and, in turn, to prevent or reduce the incidence of problematic behavior among children and youth. (Wright & Wooden, 2010, p. 41).

Whereas parent training programs for those with infants and pre-adolescent children are focused on providing skills and knowledge about cognitive development, nutritional needs, language development and the skills to apply this learning at home (Barletta, 1995, p. 6), programs for parents of adolescents – as adults and community members who can help create a safe environment for youth empowerment processes – must also be focused on developing attitudes that view youth as positive contributors to society with their own skills, knowledge, opinions and talents.

Interestingly enough, one characteristic of parent training programs that echoes concerns raised in youth empowerment programming is the passive nature of some programs, given their unidirectional attitude towards working with parents. Once again, the concept of power arises as an issue between the participants (parents) and the service providers (trainers, scholars, practitioners). Wright and Wooden explain that “existing parent training programs have been developed via a 'top-down' strategy [where] experts in the fields of child development, family relations and parenting have conceptualized, designed and written the curricula” (2010, p. 43). This approach of delivering a set of instructions and suggestions to parents leaves them as “passive, deficient, depoliticized
recipients of predefined services” (Trethewey, cit in Wright & Wooden, p. 43). By not including parents as vital components of the youth empowerment process and integral players in the formation of positive relationships with youth, they are posited to not be the 'experts' in the development of their own child (Ruffolo, Kuhn & Evans, cit in Wright & Wooden, p. 43) and can be alienated and made to feel inferior and deficient.

A review of existing parent training programs reveal an increasing number of efforts directed towards families of adolescents with risky behavior, substance abuse issues, health problems and those included in rehabilitation programs, the vast majority of whom primarily come from African-American and Latino cultures (Barletta, 1995). Programs based on positive parenting skills were primarily provided to middle and upper class Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-American cultures (Barletta, 1995, p. 14) whereas programs provided to parents of adolescents from 'ethnic' backgrounds tend to focus on intervention efforts, risky sexual behavior and behavioral disorders (Reid, Webster-Stratton & Beauchaine, 2001; Coard, Wallace, Stevenson & Brotman, 2004). While this gap needs to be examined further, it leads us to question the messages being provided to parents through the trainings that they have access to, or the services that are offered to them on behalf of, and for the benefit of, their children.

Consequently, it is clear that there exists a gap in the literature on parent training about the influence of positive parenting on adolescents enrolled in empowerment, leadership and positive development programs that can only be filled with continued research in the areas of adolescent empowerment and the role of adults in a positive approach.
4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

With this background, I set out to design a culturally relevant and learner-centric workshop that would encourage a group of parents to examine their role in the process of adolescent development, and highlight specific competency areas they could develop in order to work more collaboratively with their daughters during their journey from adolescence to adulthood. My training design was grounded in working with adult learners from a non-Western context in a non-formal educational setting.

4.1 Adult learning

Having familiarized myself with the literature on existing ideas of parent training and education programs, I was aware of the challenges in approaching this work with adults from the position of an 'expert' or a 'teacher', as trainers are often perceived in this community, as well as the power dynamics that arise in training program settings. As a result, I grounded my training design in many of the principles associated with Adult Learning Theory, as proposed by Knowles (1980).

Compared to younger learners, adults tend to be more independent learners and need to be self-directed. Designing a curriculum that focuses on the knowledge of the trainer will be “less effective than methods that allow adult participants to identify what topics will be covered and provide them with opportunities to guide the learning process” (Wright & Wooden, 2010, p.45). Additionally, drawing on the lived experiences of the participants highlights their knowledge as parents and encourages the use of their collective knowledge as a group to solve problems. Relevance of the topic is another important principle for working with adults in parent training programs since “unlike young people [...] most adults choose to be involved in programs to enhance parenting capacity. For this reason, participants typically have specific goals they hope to achieve. The training program must recognize and incorporate these goals to the extent possible and as appropriate” (Wright & Wooden, 2010, p. 45). The last two principles of adult learning theory that
guided the design of this parent training program were centered around the need for immediate applicability of content matter by providing practical, hands-on skills in addition to information, as well as the importance of respecting and affirming the important role that adults play in the lives of youth and in the process of empowerment.

In a program that is primarily focused on shifting attitudes and raising awareness with a secondary focus on skills acquisition, the learner's impetus for change must come from an internal pressure, a desire to change their existing conditions, and must be voluntary. This is vital for learners to be fully engaged in the change process and begin the important work of unfreezing their previous attitudes by recognizing the relevance and importance of what the training program can offer them.

4.2 Experiential learning

Experiential learning occurs when a person “engages in an activity, looks back at the activity critically, draws a useful insight (or insights) from the analysis, and puts the result to work through a change in behavior” (White, 2006). Drawing on previous work by John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and others on applying experience to learning, David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984) explains the different stages of learning and the importance of processing an experience in order to derive learning outcomes that would ultimately benefit the individual, since they would be more invested in the answer by having arrived at it on their own.

Experiential training design involves the use of different training methodologies in order to accommodate participants' preferred learning styles and allow them to approach the learning process in ways that they feel most comfortable. I chose experiential learning as one of the cornerstones of my training design framework because of how it could complement the empowerment process for parents seeking to acquire skills in a training program. In seeking to address the issue of motivation and active participation by adult learners, highlighting the
connection between their lived experiences as real-life examples of models and theories can serve to
overcome barriers to learning and validate their existing knowledge and skills. This framework also
guided my choice of training methodologies and the sequencing of activities, as it allowed me to
focus on moving participants through the different stages of the Experiential Learning Cycle –
publishing reactions to information or experiences, processing those reactions in the context of
one's own situation, generalizing lessons learned from the entire group's processing and applying
those lessons to future situations.

4.3 Unfreezing, Changing, Refreezing

A shortcoming of many existing parent training and education programs as reported by
studies is the assumption that behavioral change can take place by simply teaching parents skills
and strategies to address certain situations, and providing them knowledge in the form of a list of
do's and don'ts. The challenge arises when parents may be unaware that their existing attitudes and
beliefs may be prohibiting these acquired skills and knowledge to be put into practice. Lewin's
three-step change model (Burnes, 2004) – also referred to as Unfreezing, Changing, Refreezing –
was another component of my pre-training design framework because I wanted the program to
focus on primarily shifting parents' attitudes about adolescent development and their potential
contributions to society while providing training on communication and conflict management skills
at the same time. Unfreezing refers to the idea that for change to take place, participants must
breakdown traditional mental and psychological barriers, and begin to question existing group or
community norms that they have known for a long time. It can be easy to ignore these new
questions and reject their validity unless it is connected to the participants' lived experiences. The
change takes place when participants make significant movement in their knowledge, skills,
attitudes, awareness and language. Refreezing refers to new behavior being 'frozen' in place as
participants adapt to changing circumstances and information.
A key element in creating an effective learning environment for this three-step process of change to take place is safety. Although motivation is necessary for participants to want to change, adult learners can be hesitant to simply engage in a trial-and-error method of employing new behavior and information for fear of failure. Trainers working with adult learners must possess the necessary skills to create an environment where participants will not experience consequences of failure significant enough to prevent them from 'refreezing' the new behavior. Additionally, the refreezing process must be adapted to the participant's specific context in a way that allows them to be the most successful in putting this new behavior into practice. In the context of parent training programs, for example, this would manifest itself in the form of personal goals and objectives being created by each parent that would work for their unique situation, instead of developing group solutions. Working in a TOT capacity, it is equally important to evaluate and assess the outcomes of learning for participants who will serve as future trainers. As such, I used Lewin's model as a guide for selecting specific activities that would establish an effective learning environment by addressing and working with learner resistance, and varied my use of trainer style based on the facilitation intervention needed at different moments of individual and collective learning.

4.4 Competency-based training design

The curriculum for the parent training program and the first workshop followed a competency-based design process in order to address specific learning objectives as well as develop a set of competency-based indicators of behavioral and attitudinal changes that could be measured and evaluated at a later date, as a means to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and address needs on behalf of the parents as well as their daughters. Competency-based training involves addressing certain areas of ability or understanding where an individual is able to reflect, develop and show progress. In the area of training, the five competencies that are used as indicators of resistance, change, growth and learning are Knowledge, Skills, Attitude, Awareness and Language,
also referred to in brief as KSAAwL. The primary competencies addressed for the first training were Attitudes and Awareness. While the goal for the overall program is for parents to possess certain skills that would assist them in dealing with specific situations, the need for attitudinal work is greater in order to ensure the retention of skills and knowledge provided, as well as the motivation to exercise the other competencies independently at a later date.

In addition to designing the structure of the training to specifically address certain areas of growth for the participants, I approached competency-based training design as a framework for highlighting my development as a trainer by addressing a lack of specific training competencies in the design and delivery process. As a trainer-of-trainers, I wanted to focus on designing a curriculum that would allow participants to understand the various competencies required to work with youth and allow them the opportunity to develop these competencies, beginning with an increased awareness and 'unfreezing' their old attitudes towards adolescents.

4.5 Training in other cultures

The final framework that was integral to my training design and contributed to an integrated model for the workshop was one that I developed based on theoretical considerations of training in different cultures, especially when the trainer and participant come from different backgrounds. As an intercultural trainer, I must be aware of how cultural characteristics can influence the training design and delivery, while maintaining a concrete understanding of overall learning and change processes as well as the different components of creating an effective learning environment. While it is not always possible to have an in-depth understanding of multiple cultures in order to effectively adapt certain elements of the training, it is possible to develop what is known as Cultural Intelligence in order to develop the skills to plan, design and deliver training under different

1. Cultural Intelligence refers to a person's capacity to successfully adapt to new cultural contexts [and is] a function of three different sets of capabilities: (1) cognitive capabilities (cognitive awareness, cultural differences and the metacognitive ability to understand that one is in a situation of cultural difference), (2) motivational capabilities (the magnitude and direction of energy applied toward learning about and functioning in cross-cultural situations), and (3) behavioral capabilities (having the aptitude to perform new skills properly in a foreign cultural setting). (Early & Ang, cit in Molinsky, 2007)
sociocultural conditions. This Cultural Intelligence can be developed by the trainer being open to definitions of learning as they exist in other cultures as well as understanding social dynamics and building relationships with community stakeholders in order to understand how interpersonal interactions take place.

In *Training for the African Mind* (1992), Sawadogo examines the relevance of what he calls 'Western principles of adult learning' in the context of non-Western cultures by using the African context as an example. Sawadogo points out that certain traditional societies utilize learning processes that challenge the assumption that adults learn best when they actively participate in the process, instead preferring to “valuing passivity [and] acknowledging that no one possesses the whole truth, and therefore no one should rush to make statements or choices” (Sawadogo, 1992, p. 283). Additionally, he highlights an emphasis on consensus as a group versus individual participation, relating this to the process of feedback as well, especially since persons of authority and rank in traditionally collectivist societies tend to speak on behalf of the group and deliver a collective opinion. While these observations were specific to the African context, they can be of use in examining other cultures with similar value dimensions, as highlighted by Hofstede (1980).

Morical and Tsai (1992) echo Sawadogo's observations by providing guidelines for adapting trainings for other cultures. In both these frameworks, cultural intelligence on the part of the trainer is highlighted as an important component of adapting trainings. Morical and Tsai emphasize that adaptation should not be confused with translation, since “even if a word is exactly translatable, its underlying concept doesn't necessarily manifest itself in the same way from one culture to another.”(1992, p.66) Interestingly enough, both researchers highlighted the word 'feedback' as an example of how certain concepts that apply well to a more participatory audience would not translate to other cultures. I chose to test this by asking colleagues and parents (outside of the training setting) about their understanding and interpretation of the word 'feedback' as well as the connotations it carried. When directly translated, they did not understand its meaning; however
further explanation and providing synonyms helped create a definition of their perception of the word, and under what circumstances—and to whom—Dominicans would provide their 'feedback'. Morical and Tsai also stress the importance of removing cultural references when adapting trainings from prewritten curriculums, as well as getting cultural experts to review activities, training goals and objectives as well as evaluation methods. These guidelines shaped my facilitation style and strategy as well, since I then decided to co-facilitate the workshop with a Dominican colleague and accordingly designed and refined activities and techniques based on her suggestions and revisions.

After a careful consideration of the different theoretical frameworks and models, I created a model for designing trainings for adult learners in the Dominican Republic by adapting Hofstede's Value Dimensions Framework. This served as the basis for selecting learning activities, designing structural interventions, understanding what trainer style to use and predicting potential reactions from participants to activities that would push them out of their comfort zone. (Appendix E)

5 TRAINING DESIGN ANALYSIS

5.1 Background and context

The training design that I implemented for my capstone was influenced by my previous experience living and working as a Community Organizer with young adults in a rural farming community as well as my time at my RPP as a Program Coordinator for a youth empowerment organization in a small urban tourist centre, both in the Dominican Republic. From 2009-2010, I worked with individuals who often blurred the line between being adolescents and being adults. 15-year olds, who I would have considered to be young girls, were often mothers of two children and were running households of 8-10 people. The average educational level for young women in the community was 6th grade, with the average age of marriage being a few years later. However,
dropping out of school did not extinguish their passion for education and desire to rise out of poverty and live a better life. Through workshops, meetings and long conversations, some of the young women decided to enroll in vocational training courses to be beauticians, hairdressers, nurses, etc. This crucial step sparked their journeys of empowerment, as they began to learn new skills and were seen as important, contributing members of the community. Gradually (and grudgingly), the mothers-in-law of these young women began providing their support to the women (all still under 19 years of age) as they finished their courses and began to work, or continued to study. This support of parental and non-parental adults was a crucial step in these young women choosing to re-engage in formal or non-formal education outside their house and families.

This inspired me to continue exploring the motivations of youth in the Dominican Republic and the appropriate conditions that would allow them to explore the world around them and make better decisions for themselves. The challenging aspects were the fluid definitions of adolescence and adulthood that existed in society, as well as the traditionally domestic roles of many young girls in the family, and parental expectations towards the fulfillment of those roles. However, seeing the positive reactions of many adults made me question the rigidity of these parental expectations and desires and whether the restrictions imposed on adolescent girls were merely a blind continuation of traditional social customs. At my current reflective practice phase site, I had the opportunity to explore these areas of inquiry further, by focusing my examination on the definitions of adolescence and adulthood and witnessing the impact of the presence or absence of parental support in the girls' lives. Although the Mariposa DR Foundation had begun meeting regularly with parents, there seemed to be a need for working further with parents in the capacity as allies for their daughters who were participating in empowerment and leadership programs.
5.2 Participants

The participants for the program were selected from the group of parents that normally attended monthly parent meetings at The Mariposa DR Foundation. The population consists primarily of mothers, since fathers are usually working at the times of our meetings and/or are not present in the family structure. The registration for this first workshop was conducted at a meeting whose attendees were all Dominican, or Haitians who spoke fluent Spanish. 10 mothers signed up, and 5 showed up on the day of the training, all of whom were Dominican. The average age of the mothers was 27 years. Reflecting back on the experience, I noted that I had not made alternate arrangements for parents who primarily spoke Haitian Creole, thus coming up against a language barrier that reflected existing social tensions in the Dominican Republic and unwittingly excluded a large population of society. While this was done unintentionally, I recognize that potential Haitian mothers could misinterpret this as cultural insensitivity and automatically be resistant to participate in future trainings. This is an organizational issue, since none of the current staff speaks Haitian Creole, and have been used to communicating primarily with Haitian parents who speak intermediate to advanced Spanish.

From the viewpoint of multiculturalism and social justice, recognizing the multiple realities of the participants and the different invisible cultures that exist among the group was a vital competency area that I did not explicitly address while planning the training. As a trainer working in a capacity-building context in a multicultural setting, addressing the language barrier is critical in order to allow different cultural perspectives on child-rearing, parenting and ideas of community to emerge during discussions. Additionally, excluding Haitian parents through official programming inadvertently models exclusionary behavior on the part of the organization, that filters down to the girls as well. Although we did not have a sufficient number of mothers who only spoke Haitian Creole to merit the presence of a translator, another option would have been to attempt to bridge the language gap through French, another intermediary language that some Haitians in the community
spoke as well. What emerged from this situation was a commitment to conduct any future work in communities with populations speaking explicitly different languages through careful planning with translators or other bilingual trainers.

5.3 Needs assessment

The needs assessment conducted for this training involved a number of different formal and informal components, resulting in a combined needs assessment/needs prediction format. Through regular meetings, workshops and activities with the girls in our program, I started a discussion about their relationships with their parents and what they would/would not like to change. I subsequently met with our staff psychologist – who would also be the co-facilitator for this training program – to discuss her reports and observations of parents over the past eighteen months that she had been working there. The executive director of the organization also shared her insights, observations and vision for what parental involvement would look like as part of the long-term direction for The Mariposa DR Foundation. Last, but not the least, my co-facilitator and I met with many of the parents and proposed the idea of a parent training/education program, and asked for their input on designing the program. While parents were reluctant to provide many ideas about topics, they were all in general agreement about the overall idea of the training program. Analyzing the information gathered through the needs assessment process by speaking with different stakeholders was a humbling process because many of the issues raised by the girls were not the same ones raised by the staff of the foundation or by the parents. These gaps and disconnects formed the basis of the content for the three workshops as part of the current program.
5.4 Workshop goals and objectives

The purpose, goals and objectives for the first parent training program – consisting of three workshops – were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTLINE OF PARENT TRAINING PROGRAM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PURPOSE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **OBJECTIVES**                     | To raise parents' awareness about the physical and emotional changes and challenges experienced by adolescent girls (workshop 1)  
To share tools that foster healthy and open communication between parents and adolescents (workshop 2)  
To learn and practice methods of conflict management in a parent-adolescent relationship (workshop 3) |

The following table outlines the design considerations and motivations for the first workshop that was the basis of my capstone. For a detailed outline of the workshop schedule and activity summaries, please refer to Appendices D and F.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>WORKSHOP 1: UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PURPOSE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>GOAL</strong></td>
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| **OBJECTIVES** | To identify existing knowledge and beliefs about adolescent behavior and its motivations (survey)  
To introduce information about the different stages of adolescent development (lecturette)  
To examine prevailing myths about adolescent behavior and its motivations, and discuss the impacts of these on parental attitudes (values clarification activity)  
To explore how parents' personal experiences as adolescents have - and can - shape interactions with their daughters (storytelling)  
To identify and set one goal for one area of change in the existing parent-daughter relationship (break out in small groups and report back) |
The goals and objectives for the parent training program were drawn from the needs assessment as well as the organization's long-term goal of reducing dependence on international volunteers and making it a community-run organization. Based on the needs assessment and needs prediction, I was aware of the different motivations that the parents had for agreeing to participate in a training program. In order to outline the goals and objectives for the overall program and for the first training, I worked backwards from envisioning the ideal outcome of these programs in terms of the skills, knowledge and attitude we would want the parents to eventually possess and practice both in their homes and as future volunteers with the program. Once I did this, I also identified the competency areas that would be the focus of the first training. By combining the two, I arrived at the objectives for the training that subsequently guided the choice of appropriate techniques and training methodologies.

5.5 Creating an effective learning environment

A pivotal study conducted by Farrelly and McLennan (2009) on barriers to participation in parent education programs in the Dominican Republic listed three main barriers to attendance: (1) lack of money for transportation, (2) lack of an acceptable babysitter for other children and (3) competing demands on caregivers' times. In low-and-middle income or families this has proved to be a matter of concern since the primary caretaker is the mother who is responsible for attending to the daily necessities of the household and other children which can affect her participation in such programs. Keeping these culturally-specific barriers in mind, I arranged to have the participants transported to the workshop site by taxi. I recruited two of our office interns to babysit any young children belonging to the participants and fixed the workshop date after a month of consulting with the participants, thus helping them to arrange their schedule and other activities around this day, so as to ensure their participation. In order to create an atmosphere that would facilitate trust-building, interaction among the participants and facilitators as well a sense of safety, I focused on both the
physical and emotional components of a training environment, paying close attention to my role within this structure as well.

Room setup and location

Since this was the first of a series of three workshops that we would be offering to the parents, it was important for us to set the right tone and convey our sense of professionalism, as well as a respect for their participation and time. Our monthly parents meetings used to take place either in a room at the Mariposa office – with ten to fifteen girls outside working on homework or talking – or at the local church, an open air building exposed to the road and the accompanying afternoon traffic, noise, disruptions and chaos. For this workshop, I chose a small restaurant in the centre of town that was easily accessible to their homes in case of an emergency, but also provided a sense of quiet and tranquility for the day's activities. Since some of the participants had accessibility issues, this room was better than our previous locations because it did not have any steps and was easily accessible from the road. My only challenge was that I was not able to setup the chairs in a more open and circular formation, having to adhere to the existing restaurant setup with tables. I addressed this issue by moving the group to the back of the room where we would not be disturbed and by placing myself and the other co-facilitator in the middle of the group, thereby removing ourselves from being the focal points at either end of the table.

Food

Many social gatherings in the Dominican Republic revolve around food, because it creates a sense of familiarity and comfort. For a workshop that lasted from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm, I knew that breakfast and lunch would be important events for setting a familiar and comfortable tone to the event, as well as allowing the participants to interact with one another outside the formal structure of the workshop. Although lunch took place inside the restaurant, there was sufficient time for
everyone to step out of the literal and metaphorical training space, and connect with each other based on the emotions that had been released during the morning, as well as the new bonds that had been formed among the group. I overheard two participants comparing the stages of development that their daughters were passing through, while another participant asked for a piece of paper to note down some questions and ideas that she had developed during the session, and spoke to my co-facilitator about some of those questions. As Brooks-Harris and Stock-Ward point out, “it is helpful to build in opportunities for both formal and informal dialogue to occur throughout a workshop [since it helps] keep the workshop vital and engaging as well as a way to gauge the impact of the workshop” (1999, p.108). In this way, we were able to provide the space for a multidirectional communication between the participants and the facilitators. Lunch also served as an important structural intervention for me to connect with my co-facilitator as we evaluated the morning's events and made notes to follow-up with certain participants outside of the workshop.

Learning styles and choice of training methodology

In choosing activities and structured experiences for my participants, one of the challenges I faced was the educational backgrounds of my participants. Out of the five participants who showed up, only 2 had completed or were in the process of getting their high school diplomas. The others had an average equivalent of a 6th grade education. As a result, activities that involved powerpoint presentations, handouts, overhead slides or even those involving writing of some sort would have made a majority of the group feel uncomfortable and unable to clearly express themselves. While it is understood that trainers need to ensure the safety and security of their participants while challenging them to move out of their comfort zones, this was an area that would have potentially embarrassed or insulted some of the participants, causing them to shut down and not participate. In order to take advantage of the participants' knowledge and experiences in a manner that would allow them to also successfully process their experiences, I structured their learning environment
and activities with a stronger verbal focus, without excessive dependence on writing and using external equipment.

According to Kolb's model, the ideal learning process would have engaged all four learning styles – Converger, Diverger, Assimilator and Accomodator. However, in the case of these participants, I observed that they were more comfortable responding to requests for concrete examples from their lives and discussing them, instead of being able to grasp theoretical models or new concepts introduced by the trainers. When I was leading the activity on myths and realities of adolescence, the participants initially had difficulties understanding the myths that I read out loud. After watching them struggle with the activity, I began using concrete examples, such as names of their daughters or other girls in the program, in order to make the example more relevant. Once I did that, they understood the objective and began to eagerly discuss other myths that they had heard growing up. They had a similar reaction to the lectureette on adolescent development, leading me to summarize that this population was more comfortable with concrete experiences and reflective observation, placing them broadly in the category of Divergers. Since this was a small group, I believe that there were a few instances of group-think that took place, making it difficult to identify individual learning styles. The fact that Dominican culture tends to be more collectivist as well may have played a role in a lack of individual participation and sharing opinions, as well as indicating an individual preference for certain learning processes.

Building Rapport and Trust

My challenge with this group was not necessarily building rapport or creating trust among the group, but rather how to create a supportive environment for them to reflect on their experiences and take the next step in pushing their learning edge and exploring certain competency areas in more depth. I had known these women since June, thanks to our regular parent meetings and conducting home visits as part of our services. As a result, I had been able to connect with many of
the mothers on a personal level. Additionally, many of the participants were related to one another, and so they had a pre-established level of trust among themselves. This fulfilled two of Drum and Lawler's three realms in which trust must be created, 'genuine caring and respect on the part of the presenter' and 'trust between participants' (cit. in Brooks-Harris and Stock-Ward, p. 108), the third component of building trust being 'presenter expertise in the form of personal skills and knowledge'. Being aware of my position within the community and within the training room as a non-Dominican, single young woman without children and delivering a workshop to parents on effective parenting strategies, I was cognizant of the need to establish credibility and authenticity with the participants. In doing so, it helped create a sense of respect and belief in my capabilities, and allowed me to work on facilitating the experiences of the group and encouraging them to support each other as they revealed personal information.

*Trainer style and co-facilitation model*

In my previous experiences facilitating small and large groups, I noticed my tendency to primarily adopt a trainer style that encouraged active participation from all present, but did not make full use of processing questions in order to go further in depth into the issue at hand. Having previously been unaware of the different stages of the Experiential Learning Cycle, I often did not manage to move the participants to the generalizing stage on my own. This was also because other more experienced trainers would step in and wrap-up the workshop.

In the Dominican Republic, trainers often fill in multiple roles in the learning process and it can be challenging if one does not have adequate training in a specific competency area to fill these roles. Having attended many workshops by other youth trainers in the fall, I noticed that trainers often adopted a didactic approach that resulted in students repeating after the trainer about what they were going to do next. Additionally, since trainers were normally individuals who had been privileged to receive a university education, there were noticeable differences in the way some
trainers worked with participants from a lower socio-economic background, often 'correcting' their opinions and misunderstandings, giving them the 'right' knowledge without working to see the roots of these misconceptions and misinformation or examining their own biases. When I designed the training for my capstone, I knew that I wanted to use the co-facilitation model because I recognized that I would be unable to fulfill the competency required for knowledge, a crucial component of this training. Additionally, I recognized the existing dynamics of training in this context and wanted to supplement the expected Director training style with that of the Listener and Interpreter, with which I had greater familiarity and which would serve as a tool for furthering learning.

Running this workshop with a co-facilitator was a key component of both my training design as well as my personal growth as a trainer, because it was an important component for adapting trainings in different cultures and addressing the issue power dynamics arising from non-native 'experts' coming from foreign cultures to work with local populations. As we both worked together to design the curriculum, I was able to build upon my existing knowledge and understanding of adolescent development, as seen from a Dominican perspective, and also engaged in attitudinal work as we examined my approach to the training, the outcomes I envisioned and how realistic they were. Having a strong working relationship allowed us to present a united front and support each other during the training by providing examples and observing participants' reactions. By employing different trainer styles between the both of us, based on our natural preferences, we were able to facilitate each activity differently and use our strengths to connect with the participants. Whereas my co-facilitator tended to use the Director and Coach style during the activities she led, I tended towards the Listener and Interpreter styles, reflecting my natural tendency to try and connect with the participants and establish a strong level of trust before working on competencies. Although I felt comfortable in these roles and successfully facilitated several emotional learning moments and instances where the group collectivized their knowledge, I knew that I did not challenge myself enough to employ the other styles because I was working under the
assumption that my co-facilitator would naturally lean in that direction.

5.6 Sequencing and structural interventions

Participants are thrown off-balance when they are confronted with new realities that question assumptions and stereotypes. As a result, trainers must be able to effectively guide participants through this challenging process of examining their own beliefs and potentially admitting to certain flaws or mistakes. I used Kegan's model of Facilitating Environments (1982) as a guide to sequencing workshop activities in order to effectively move participants through what he describes as Confirmation (validating existing experiences), Contradiction (exploring feelings of discomfort and confusion) and Continuity (carrying on new knowledge and developing a plan for future action). This corresponded with a guiding framework of my training design, Lewin's Unfreezing-Moving-Refreezing model, and coincided with my choice activities, moving from low-risk to high-risk. I took advantage of the group breakfast and ice-breakers to set a comforting and familiar tone, and facilitated the impromptu discussion that arose at this time, allowing the participants to start getting comfortable with the ideas we were going to discuss in the workshop. The lecturette provided by my co-facilitator was still in the low-risk process / high-risk content since it touched upon new information that challenged some existing beliefs and pointed out misconceptions. While some of the mothers were open to the new information, a few were resistant to admitting the contradictions and refused to accept the new information at first. At this point, confirmation had taken place, and the contradictions were being addressed. When we took a break for lunch, I could see that there were still some questions, and so I decided to skip the post-lunch energizer and addressed some of the concerns, allowing space for the participants to share not just their feelings about the new information but also their thought processes at examining how they themselves had previously accepted certain information as true, and the resulting process of abandoning the comfortable and traditional way. At this stage in the training, the participants had
moved into what Lewin calls the Movement stage, and seemed ready to move to the next learning activity that would force them to identify contradictions. I considered the final activity before the closing circle to be high-risk because it required the participants to disclose information about their own past as adolescents and identify behavior and attitudes from their own parents that impacted their lives. While storytelling is normally considered to be a 'Reflecting-on-Experience' activity, it can be adapted in the 'Way of Council' format by encouraging participants to explore different, deeper layers of the story every time, thereby allowing for the publishing, processing and possibly the generalizing process to take place within one activity. In the case of this training, it evoked strong emotions for all the participants because of their personal backgrounds and family histories, with many of the participants getting choked up and taking a few moments to recover. One participant passed when it was her turn because she said the process evoked too many difficult memories. However, with the encouragement and support of the others, she shared her story and expressed surprise at how the simple process of sharing stories made her think back to a time so far ago, and made her feel the same vulnerability she felt as an adolescent, thus reminding her of what her daughter may be going through.

6 EVALUATION

Donald Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation model (1975) guided the design of my training evaluation process. The four different levels of the model measure participant reaction, learning, behavioral change and 'bottom line' results for the organization following the workshop/training. As each level measures a different component of participant learning, it also allows the trainer to evaluate their effectiveness in the pre-planning, design and delivery process as
well as confirming to see if learning objectives were met.

I had designed evaluation forms that were to be distributed at the end of the day for participants to record their feelings and reactions to the workshop (refer to Appendix G for a copy of the evaluation form). However, since we had noticed a slight resistance to working with handouts and written materials during the course of the day, my co-facilitator and I resorted to asking for verbal feedback as per Kirkpatrick's first level of evaluation because participants were more comfortable expressing themselves in this manner. We covered the same questions and were also able to use more probing questions to push the participants to explain their answers. This proved to be more effective because we were also able to observe and record non-verbal reactions and body language that indicated a positive response to the overall workshop. The following are some of the comments provided by participants (translated from Spanish) during breaks and at the end of the training that highlight Level 1 reactions as per Kirkpatrick's model:

*It feels so great to have a space to ourselves – we never get time to ourselves or people who want to listen to us!*

*I enjoyed the different activities because they were a change from just listening to one person talk*

*You both did a very good job by giving us new information that I can now use with my daughter, but also by asking me to share my experiences. That was a very emotional process for me, but I now understand I need to start being more open with my children*

In order to measure changes in participant learning and whether they had understood the content, I designed a pre-and-post test that was administered at the beginning and at the end of the day (refer to Appendix H). The test primarily addressed competencies related to knowledge about adolescent development and attitudinal awareness on the parents' behalf. Based on suggestions by my co-facilitator, the test was designed with True/False statements, since we did not want to overwhelm the participants by specifically pointing out their lack of knowledge, as this could be considered shameful especially in a large group. While responses to attitudinal questions remained the same for the most part, there was a significant change in participants' responses to questions
about factual knowledge of adolescent development. There were specific breakthrough moments in learning for some participants as they applied the content provided to their real-life situations; two participants felt validated in providing their adolescent children with increased private time, even though their neighbors had been criticizing them. As a result, I would venture to say that although there was not a significant attitudinal shift that could be measured, there was definitely an increased awareness on the participants' part of their current approaches to parenting and what they could do (now and in the future) to fill that gap.

Evaluation of a competency-based training design requires the creation of specific indicators that would measure behavioral change as well as the assessment of participants' performance of certain tasks and activities that would demonstrate the competent acquisition of skills (Dobson, 2003, p. 18). In the case of a parent training program, competencies acquired by the parents must be evaluated in multiple ways in order to establish validity and effectiveness, as perceived both by the parent as well as by the adolescent child. Three types of assessment evidence can be gathered in order to provide a holistic view of the change process – direct (observation of participant's performance), indirect (gathering samples of work) and supplementary evidence (third-party interviews and testimonies) (Dobson, 2003, p. 22). Together with Kirkpatrick's framework, I incorporated some of Matthews and Hudson's guidelines for evaluating parent training programs that stress the importance of “multiple indirect and direct measures of parents and child behavioral outcomes” (2001, p. 77). Matthew and Hudson stress on choosing culturally relevant and appropriate indicators for assessing learning outcomes and behavioral change in parent training programs, since “there may be cultural differences in the extent to which behavioral techniques (such as ignoring, praise, and negotiation) are acceptable to parents of differing cultural backgrounds” (Matthews & Hudson, 2001, p. 77). They also recommend focusing on strengthening existing positive behaviors on the part of both parents and children, instead of solely concentrating on reducing/changing inappropriate behavior A crucial observation made in their research that
guided my training design was that mothers from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds were “more successful if they received parent training that included modeling and role-playing than were low SES mothers taught by written materials, short quizzes and discussions” (Knapp & Deluty, cit in Matthews & Hudson, 2001, p. 80). As a result, specific indicators such as reduced instances of emotional outbursts, decreasing frustration/stress levels and openness to communication for example, were created that were measured primarily through oral response and role-plays during the training, since we were unable to observe firsthand parent-child interactions.

Three weeks after the training, we conducted our follow-up interviews. At this point, I hypothesized that parents would be able to act on at least one of their goals that they mentioned during the training and that their daughters would see a shift in the mothers' attitudes towards communication, based on the objectives of the training and the collectivized learning. My co-facilitator and I visited four of the participants at their homes and conducted interviews about their post-training experiences, as part of gathering direct evidence. Two mothers spoke specifically about coming home after the workshop and sharing this information with their husbands, in order to involve them more in the process of raising their children. They also mentioned an increased awareness of their immediate reactions when they were upset or frustrated with their children, and took care to not resort to physical violence or using abusive language, as they had done in the past. One mother specifically mentioned taking more of an interest in her daughter's school life and picking her up from school on some days, and noticing a positive change in her daughter's behavior at home as well. In order to corroborate these findings, we also interviewed the daughters of these participants during the following week, as a means of obtaining indirect and supplementary evidence in the form of examples and opinions. When asked if they noticed changes in their mothers' attitudes, two girls said that their mothers had stopped using negative language when they were angry. They all talked about an increased interest shown by their parents in their schoolwork, and mentioned increased independence and privacy provided to them at home, something they were
surprised to receive.

Surprisingly, the mothers who also had sons mentioned that they tried similar strategies with them as well and were successful in opening channels of communication and receiving more respectful behavior in return. While not unexpected, I realized that this was an example of adult learners applying new skills to their individual situations and taking responsibility for furthering their learning through a trial-and-error method, after implementing it on their daughters. This was an indication of transfer of learning, where participants received positive feedback from one instance and applied their skills to another situation. In the case of parent training programs, skills acquisition is the most important, but also the most difficult, competency for participants to master, especially if they face initial resistance. Although this first training was focused on the attitudinal competency, subsequent trainings have been designed around developing and practicing skills in the training room with sufficient time for feedback and critical analysis.

The uniqueness of this training program is that it allows for the content and design of every subsequent session to be created through evaluations of previous workshops. This was initially a challenge, since it was difficult to leave the structure and planning of the other two workshops in the program up-in-the-air. In order to demonstrate competence and preparedness, I found myself trying to come up with the perfect three-part package that would ideally address everything that was brought up during the needs assessment. However, I soon discovered that for this training program to be truly successful and for me to fulfill my role as a trainer and facilitator, but not a teacher, I must allow the participants to guide the flow of learning based on what they were interested in addressing, and not vice versa. By shifting my perspective and viewing the parents as the 'experts', I was able to adjust my understanding of my role as the trainer and was able to subsequently be more flexible and open to changing certain activities or content matter while still being guided by the overall purpose and goals for the individual workshop and the larger training. Being able to visualize an end outcome for the participants helped me to be more open to alternative
methodologies and techniques for achieving those goals.

The resulting process allowed the participants to play an active role in conducting the needs assessment for the next workshop, since they themselves created a list of topics that they would want to address and skills that they were interested in acquiring during the remainder of the program. In doing so, they identified the gaps in their knowledge and, at the same time, set indicators and benchmarks for their progress. In this way, the evaluation process contributed to the empowerment of the parents as participants in the training program and served the dual need of a needs assessment for the next stage. As a trainer of trainers, this was a crucial step in showing the parents – as future trainers – what the process of designing a workshop or training session involved and guiding them through the process at the same time.

7 REFLECTIONS

7.1 Strengths and challenges related to training curriculum and design

Adult learner-centered

The workshop activities were designed keeping the principles of adult learning in mind, and succeeded in engaging the participants in accomplishing one of the objectives of the day – beginning an open and candid dialogue about the challenges of parenting adolescents. By explaining the day's goals and objectives at the start and reiterating the purpose of each activity, I highlighted the relevance of their experience to the theories and models we were discussing, and provided examples of immediate applicability in their own contexts. A noteworthy moment took place when one of the participants commented that she didn't really know when she herself
transitioned from an adolescent to an adult, and had all these experiences to reflect upon. The following comment she made struck a chord with me because it highlighted the delicate balance that trainers working with adult learners must navigate in order work efficiently within the cultural context:

- *I wasn't getting any love from my mother, she treated me like a child. So I decided I wanted to be an adult and I started my own family at an early age. I don't know when I stopped being an adolescent and became an adult...it was scary.*

By understanding cultural conceptual definitions of adulthood, it became possible for me to explore culturally-specific understandings of parenting, and accordingly adjust training content and processes in response to these interpretations, thereby developing a modified framework for working with adults who contribute to youth empowerment processes.

*Learning styles and training methodologies*

Although I took the time to process each activity through the stages of the Experiential Learning Cycle, not all learning styles were addressed in my choice of activities. This was partially due to a lack of resources and partially due to an uncertainty on my part about the reactions of the participants to new and unfamiliar activities. Since many of my interactions with the parents have been informal/semi-formal, I did not have the right conditions within which to administer the Learning Styles Inventory, and consequently resorted to the 'Something-for-Everyone' model of workshop design. I struggled with the challenge of designing activities for different learning styles for a group with extremely varied literacy levels, and still continue to reflect on how to address this topic. This training program is being designed to serve as a model for this organization and others in the country. Consequently, I did not want to rely excessively on external aids such as handouts and paper materials, or on technology in a country with irregular power supply and issues of maintenance.
As I was working on evaluating this training, I realized that I did not make sufficient use of visual aids to tap into those learners who need visual stimulation. My assumption that any sort of written materials would be difficult to use prevented me from seeing creative possibilities such as comic strips, cartoons, drawings or even videos that could serve as concrete experiences for the participants. Another strategy that can be used in future trainings (if the participants are known beforehand) is to pair a participant with higher literacy levels with one that has little or no formal education, especially in paired work. Drawing on my experiences in working with the girls, guest speakers can be an effective training methodology to use with a low-literacy group in this cultural context as well, since this would addresses the knowledge competency, provide the chance for participants to generalize their learning and engage in abstract conceptualization by developing hypothetical situations as questions, as well as address the issue of authority of the trainer/facilitator in a high power-distance culture.

*Competency-based design*

Raising awareness and working on attitudinal change were the primary goals of the training, and I believe that these goals were accomplished based on the feedback I received from the participants once they were able to examine their own beliefs and reflect on their experiences. The activities that were designed to allow the participants to share their experiences drew on an inherent cultural tradition in the Dominican Republic of telling stories and comparing one's own experiences with those of other community members.

As I worked to address specific competency areas for the participants, I noticed a change in my comfort as a trainer employing different methodology and varying techniques based on the activities and objectives. I realized the importance of possessing strong facilitation skills and the ability to ask pertinent processing questions while working with a competency-based training design so that the participants retain the responsibility of learning and develop an understanding of
what it means to work on a specific competency area. Working with participants from a high-power distance culture made me realize that they would be uncomfortable providing me with specific and immediate feedback about my training style and other elements of training, preferring not to offend me as the authority figure in the room. Consequently, I made the decision to take everyone out for ice-cream at the end of the training as a celebration of a successful workshop. While it may be unconventional, I decided to ask for feedback as we sat down in a more relaxed environment and was pleasantly surprised by the reactions and comments I received. Once they were out of the formal training room, the mothers were talking over each other to highlight the strengths of the day and the areas that they felt could be improved.

Although it seems strange that such an emotional and attitudinal shift would occur by merely crossing the street, it opened my eyes to the power placed in authority figures and people's perception of the role of students/learners in an educational setting, especially in the Dominican context. This was the first time many of the mothers had participated in such a workshop, and I would venture to make the assumption that they expected a session delivered in the traditional banking system of education as proposed by Freire, where my co-trainer and I would provide a list of information and do's-and-don’ts that they would then take back home. By highlighting the different areas of growth for themselves as parents through a clear explanation of the purpose, goals and objectives of the training, and by approaching them as adult learners capable of directing their own learning, I was able to note their gradual understanding of their role as learners/participants and the freedom they had to provide credible feedback, and support my learning as a trainer as well.

7.2 Relationship between curriculum design and trainer competencies

My curriculum design reflected what I have come to recognize as one of my strongest trainer competencies: creating an inclusive environment based on an enhanced awareness of
intercultural communication and demonstrating Cultural Intelligence. As I encouraged participants to explore their existing attitudes and beliefs in order to raise their awareness of issues surrounding adolescent development, I employed the Listener and Interpreter trainer styles in order to facilitate this process. This proved to be useful in navigating the generational and cultural gaps between myself and the participants as well, since I took care to ensure that my chosen trainer style maintained respect for older participants in order to recognize their experiences and knowledge. At the same time, I was also intentional about fully integrating my co-facilitator in the planning, design and delivery of this workshop in order to create a sense of partnership and collaboration as a way of building a sustainable and long-term program that could be adapted and modified by future staff as well. I recognize now that I concentrated a significant portion of my energy on ensuring the comfort of the participants and my co-facilitator. While I would not change this focus because I believe it was responsible for creating a good first impression of what training programs with The Mariposa DR Foundation would involve, I intend to create more learning opportunities for myself during subsequent trainings by alternating between co-facilitating and leading workshops on my own, as well as continuing to build my knowledge competency – both for training processes and for workshop content – in order to feel more secure and comfortable in different trainer styles by taking ownership of the content material.

As I was planning the training, I became aware of how memories of my adolescence and my parents began to play a role in my interpretation of what the role of parents should be. In order to not completely ignore my personal views and opinions but also not allow them to go unheard and brushed aside, I engaged in conversations with my co-facilitator to explore how I could best use my training competencies to help design a workshop that was participant-centered, while still being able to bring my experiences as an 'outsider' to the table. We eventually agreed that given my previously-established level of trust with the participants, I would open the training by sharing anecdotes about my personal life, my understandings of adolescence and how I have envisioned the
role of parents. In doing so, I was able to bridge the credibility gap by actively playing the role of a learner in addition to being the trainer as well. I believe that this process was facilitated by my intercultural communication skills as well as my intention to be a reflective practitioner as well as showing empathy, respect, patience and tolerance of ambiguity – both in terms of participant learning as well as my growth based on my training experiences.

8 LESSONS LEARNED

8.1 Evolving understanding of multiculturalism and influence on my training philosophy

As someone who grew up in India, the land of 22 official languages of which I speak 4, my idea of culture was something more encompassing than simply the rites and rituals belonging to one particular group of people. Culture referred to Indian culture on the whole – not Hindu culture, nor Muslim nor Sikh or Christian. While India was not without its bloody history of invasions and conquests either, the stories that I heard in school celebrated Mughal kings who ruled Hindu lands and united elements of multiple religions in order to celebrate the beauty of different cultures. Additionally, it was difficult to assign stereotypes to any specific cultural group since I lived in a country where Muslims are the largest minority group and significantly integrated into daily culture and routine, but my government was constantly at war – overtly and covertly – with Pakistan, a Muslim state. I remember my childhood mind trying to grasp the difference between Indian Muslims and Pakistani Muslims, arguing that they were first Indian or Pakistani. Although some may argue otherwise and term my interpretations as naïveté, the fact remains that coming from a collectivist society that had a long and rich tradition of multiple cultures co-existing together made it very difficult for me to shift that mindset when I moved to the United States, the self-proclaimed
'melting pot' of the world.

Living in a country that prided itself on being built by immigrants provided me the opportunity to be part of another society comprised of multiple cultural groups. It was during my time in college that I began to fully comprehend the politics of multiculturalism. Everything and everyone had a label. My fluency in English and my knowledge of Western pop culture made it difficult for my friends to simply call me 'Indian', after they realized that I was not 'Indian-American'. When I introduced myself to people as Indian, they proclaimed their 1/2 Irish, 1/4 German, 1/4 French and 1/8 Norwegian heritage. With time I became aware of the importance that each group placed on its collective history and struggles against different forms of oppression faced in the past. I found this intriguing because although friends of mine in college who self-identified as Black, Latino or Jewish placed great significance on membership in a specific group and being part of a collective movement, their base nature was still very individualist at heart, leading me to question what culture meant to them. Some were willing to admit that they were American at heart, while others refused, citing their strong connection to their heritage even though their parents were born in the US and had lived there for the duration of their lives. This was an eye-opening experience for me, because it highlighted my own ethnocentric view of what cultural identity is supposed to look like. As a trainer, it is my responsibility to honor different cultures and self-described identities that participants consider integral to their self. I now recognize my initial discomfort at the fragmentation of the idea of culture, of being able to pick and choose moments and elements, as a bias that hindered my growth as an interculturally competent communicator.

While I was still struggling with the concept of fragmented identities, I was able to interact with American students with an ease and comfort that not many other international students possessed. I attributed this comfort to language, one of my cornerstones in understanding multiculturalism and a guiding principle of my work in intercultural communication and social justice. Languages fascinate me. Languages protected me and opened doors. Whereas
socioeconomic class and religion were limiting factors for many of my interactions in India, even among friends, speaking a common language helped overcome some of those barriers temporarily and created a kinship that fell out of restrictive social norms. In a similar way, learning Spanish allowed me to connect with cultures halfway around the world from mine and shift my frames of reference in ways that have allowed me to be more open to different experiences and interpretations of the same concepts. My Spanish language abilities also allowed me to do something that all my Indian languages could not do – immerse myself in a completely different socioeconomic class and truly understand what it means to be the Other, and to also interact with what society refers to as the Other. Whereas my middle-class upbringing in India had always restricted my movements even within Indian society, over the years my Spanish language skills allowed me to interact with people from different backgrounds in Spain, Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile and Nicaragua, in addition to my time in the Dominican Republic, thus presenting me with multiple historical, cultural and socioeconomic perspectives. Although most of them were native speakers, we would bond over similar moments of isolation and inclusion, by virtue of being travelers in a new place, international students at the same college or students of a second, third or fourth language. Speaking a different language has been an instrumental tool in bringing about intentional culture contact for me, since my inherent curiosity drives me to explore all aspects of culture including food, idioms, traditions, history and not just the spoken language.

My curiosity in discovering multiple layers of one culture as a global citizen has led to my commitment to identifying multiple perspectives and opinions of community stakeholders as a trainer. While it is not always possible to have prior knowledge of all my participants and their realities, developing my knowledge and skills competencies involves conducting extensive prior research both for my personal learning as well as for a needs assessment that would allow these multiple perspectives to be heard during the pre-planning process, thereby impacting the rest of the training and evaluation process as well.
8.2 The hybrid

As a result of my experiences with languages, intentional culture contact as a result of different personal and professional journeys and changing definitions of cultural identity, I have found myself drawn to what Homi Bhabha refers to as *hybridity* in his work on postcolonial discourse (1994, 1996) as a means of integrating the principles of Intercultural Communication and Social Justice in my training work. Over the past few years, I noticed an increasing trend in my personal correspondence with family and friends of using the metaphor of boundaries: bridges, borders, crossing back and forth, being kept out, allowed in, coming back. Just the physical journeys themselves showed me the financial power I had over those who could not cross borders for a variety of different reasons. As I continued to visit new places, both through physical as well as intellectual journeys, I became aware of my privileged position in serving as a container for all the experiences, interactions, epiphanies and revelations from my travels and work. Excerpts from my correspondence with friends over these past years highlight my thoughts about these 'journeys':

*I always liked to joke that globalization and this whole movement of people across continents and across cultures has been both a blessing and a curse. A blessing, because doors in my world that never existed before have been opened up. I've met people that I wouldn't have ever met before, and been to places/experienced things that I never knew existed. A 'curse' because I don't think I can ever 'go back'. Physically, yes. Intellectually, no. Once you've experienced what it's like to be part of another culture, another society, another reality, I truly believe that something inside you changes. So even if you want to go back to your earlier life and pretend like everything is normal, or whether you're going back to the 'real world' after working somewhere else, or no longer interacting with the 'Other', I don't think we really have a choice.* (Shroff, 2011)

*That's really what it's all about, at the end of the day, listening to what people say is important to them, helping them get that across and telling the right stories, especially if you're acting on someone else's behalf, speaking for someone else. In one way, that's what also scares me about the work I do, about going out every day and working with these girls or doing anything for the community - am I getting the right story across to those who will listen to me and not them? Especially since I feel like I'm always playing the role of essentially a 'go-between' who is constantly trying reach out to both sides and bring them to the middle.* (Shroff, 2011)

In his work on examining assumptions of culture and identity, Bhabha refers to this 'go-between' feeling as *hybridity*, “celebrated and privileged as a kind of cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to celebrate the difference” (Meredith, 1998, p. 2). He claims that this hybridity takes place in a *third space,*
outside the binary system of cultural identification where one can either belong completely to this culture or to that one. This hybrid identity honors multiple value systems while still making space for the creation of new ones, based on the idea of transculturation. While Bhabha's concept was originally situated in the post-colonial discourse, I believe that it is still applicable in today's increasingly globalized world where culture encompasses much more than the 'food-fashion-fabric' continuum. By recognizing myself as what Bhabha calls a *hybrid*, I am able to better situate myself in ICC and Social justice discourses by drawing on my strengths as a facilitator and negotiator between cultures, using my different knowledges to break stereotypes and be an active agent of change by making harmful boundaries and borders between people non-existent, having already crossed barriers that were once considered impenetrable.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE APPLICATIONS

As with any skills-based training program, care must be taken to ensure that the workshops refrain from criticizing existing parenting techniques by first approaching topics that are culture-general, and allowing for questions and specific concerns to arise from the participants in order to maintain interest and relevance, and then implementing and practicing specific skills. Based on participant evaluations and my reflections from a trainer lens, the following recommendations are suggested for working with parents as part of The Mariposa DR Foundation's girls' empowerment programs:

**New parents to complete this training within six months of joining:** Having the cooperation of parents in programming and activities is beneficial to the organization both from an immediate as well as a long-term perspective. Parents must be aware of their role in the home and
their responsibilities to support the teachings provided through Mariposa programs. Additionally, their presence in the parents' group assists in the creation of a neighborhood support structure that ultimately supports the creation of a community-run organization. The process for new girls to enter the program involves home visits by a staff member who outlines expectations from parents once their daughter has been accepted. In order for parents to understand these responsibilities, their daughters' participation in the program can be conditionally linked to parents' completion of this training within six months of her joining the program.

Providing opportunities for implementing learning: Parents who successfully complete the three-part training program must be provide with opportunities to participate in programs in order to reinforce and validate the skills and knowledge acquired during the training and to allow for transfer of learning as well as feedback from trainers and other staff members. As adult learners, parents will be more likely to seek to develop themselves as trainers if they can see the impact of their skills and participation in the programs. Examples of involvement opportunities would include working at the Girls Leadership Programs in an intense four-week summer environment or during weekly sessions throughout the year. Parents can also be encouraged to volunteer at the Mariposa Center and support literacy and other activities while having the chance to implement their understanding of emotional challenges faced by the girls, use different communication methods and resolve conflict or disagreements.

Introducing experiential learning model and fundamentals of facilitation: While some parents may be content to implement lessons learned from the training within their own home, other parents may demonstrate an interest in participating in programs and activities. These parents should be introduced to the Experiential Learning Cycle, with specific training on facilitating group discussions, posing questions to further learning and learning styles in order to build their knowledge base and raise their awareness of the different learning processes that children experience as well.
Youth-adult partners in the community: Working to successfully integrate parents as well as other non-family adults in programs addressing youth empowerment is a long-term process that requires patience, effort and a sincere desire for involvement and participation both from the parents/community adults as well as from the participating organization. Youth-adult partnerships as described in the literature review of this capstone paper are one option for involving adults in youth empowerment; however, the focus must not stray away from the youth who are the primary beneficiaries, stakeholders and participants in their own empowerment. Providing information to only one partner in the learning process (i.e. parents or other adults in supervisory roles) without allowing youth to share their thoughts, opinions, knowledge and skills isolates both parties and prohibits true learning and an exchange of ideas from taking place. After the first series of parent training workshops, it is recommended that parent-adolescent sessions be organized on relevant topics that would allow the participants to practice skills in expressing themselves before adults in a safe setting outside the house.
In recent years, the training-of-trainers model has gained popularity in community development settings, especially in the field of youth work. The main objective is to build human resources in the form of trained community members and locals who can take a stronger role in increasing awareness and services offered in the community. As a result, the role of the trainer becomes doubly important since they are now not only responsible for content but also for creating sustainable systems within which information and skills will be transmitted in the future. A trainer working in this capacity needs the committed support of community organizations, whether they are international or locally-based. My experiences have also taught me the necessity of collaborating with local experts and stakeholders who play an important role in introducing the trainer to the community, especially in the case of training in a new culture, and can provide crucial feedback and evaluation of training materials and adaptation of existing curriculums. At the core of this TOT process, however, must be the belief that all individuals can be trained to develop their skills and competencies in working as future trainers, and not just those who have been recipients of professional training in Western societies. By acknowledging this, we take the first step in pursuing a socially just and ethical approach to training the trainers.

Although youth empowerment programs can be considered a new development in the field of social work, the philosophy behind this can be summarized in the age-old saying “It takes a village to raise a child”. In the case of adolescent girls in the developing world, parental involvement is even more crucial in order to protect her during a stage in life when she is vulnerable to both external as well as intrinsic pressures and challenges. While it is difficult to gauge the immediate impact of this training on the overall youth empowerment process, it is certainly a step in the right direction. Overcoming their initial resistance and working everyday to use their newfound awareness are indications from the parents that the process is working.
APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY


for Training and Development.


B.1 Understanding adolescence

In a comprehensive study on adolescence in the developing world, Mensch, Bruce and Greene view the developmental stage known as adolescence as “a powerfully formative time of transition to adulthood, roughly concurrent with the second decade of life” (2002, p.1). However, they also mention that adolescence has had a short history, both as a topic of research and analysis as well as its existence as a developmental stage throughout history. Early indicators of adolescence in traditional societies were limited to biological markers for young girls that signified a transition to adulthood (primarily the onset of menstruation) whereas young men had time to acquire resources in order to setup a household (Caldwell et al, cit. in Mensch, Bruce & Greene, 2002). One of the two main camps of opinions that characterized adolescence during the twentieth century was that of being a period of 'universal and inevitable turmoil' as well as a time of *sturm und drang* (storm and stress) brought about by biological and hormonal changes. (Hall cit in Hardman, 2005).

The other perspective that is crucial to an understanding of adolescence as we know and interpret it today is that adolescence is a development of modern societies, resulting out of the industrialization and urbanization period in European history (Senderowitz, 1995; Alaimo, 1992). Eisenberg (1971) confirmed that while biological considerations primarily restrict adolescence, cultural norms played an important role in its manifestation in society: “the more sophisticated the society [was] in its technology, the more prolonged [was] its adolescence, since the complexity of the preparation required for the assumption of adult roles depend[ed] on the demands the society set” (cit in Hardman, 2005, p. 4).

It appears, then, that one of the main challenges in working with definitions of adolescence that one may need in order to guide policy and research is that the boundaries of adolescence can be viewed from a variety of perspectives besides the biological and cultural limitations, such as
cognitive, social, legal and emotional (Steinberg, 1995, 2002) which raise questions about how alternative models of education such as adult learning and experiential learning can be applied to their cases.

B.2 Understanding empowerment

The origin of empowerment as a theory can be traced back to the world of Brazilian educator Paolo Freire, when he suggested a plan for 'liberating the oppressed of the world through education' (Freire, 1973) through his work Education For Critical Consciousness. Freire's model of Empowerment Education in Brazil involved the development of conscientizacão, a critical consciousness on the part of the student that involved an analysis of historical discourse, an understanding of power relations in society, challenging oppressive myths and traditions as well as taking the initiative as an individual to transform relationships (Freire, 1973). The principal goal of Freire's work was to change power relationships in society, with the objective of creating mechanisms of collective power for a more democratic society. From Freire's work of 'conscientizing, inspiring and liberating' (1971, 1973), we can then begin to understand empowerment in terms of Power, and consequently Powerlessness as well, which serves as the impetus for embarking on a process of change.

Based on the field of study, empowerment has been classified both as an outcome (eg. financial independence for women, leading to increased confidence and a feeling of being empowered) as well as a process (e.g. developing one's own voice and opinion, and being comfortable to share it within a group, standing up for one's beliefs). Existing literature on theories and conceptual definitions of empowerment attempt to provide a framework for identifying both these outcomes and processes so that changes may be measured and documented. Zimmerman (1995) defines empowerment as a process by which individuals, organizations and communities gain mastery over issues of concern and increase understanding of their environment. Malhotra,
Schuler & Boender (2002) define empowerment as the enhancement of assets and capabilities of various individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them. A third definition notes that “individual empowerment develops when people attempt to develop the capabilities to overcome their psychological and intellectual obstacles and attain self-determination, self-sufficiency, and decision making abilities” (Becker, Kovach & Gronseth, cit. in Hyung Hur, 2006, p. 9) Although these are only a small sample of existing definitions on empowerment, it is worth noting that Malhotra, et al's definition considers societal institutions to be the barriers to empowerment whereas Becker, et al's definition speaks of personal obstacles that need to be overcome in order to be empowered. This, then, leads us to a consideration of the different levels and dimensions of empowerment as a framework for change and the different levels at which it can, and should, operate for a greater impact.

At its core, empowerment can be understood as a change process. Individuals or groups seek to change their existing situation by leveraging the information available to them or by engaging in the pursuit of more information and skills that would allow them to move out of their current conditions to a level that allows them greater satisfaction. While individual empowerment has been extensively studied from the viewpoint of personal motivation and the feeling of powerlessness as an impetus to change (Lord & Hutchinson, 1993), working with adolescents in youth development and empowerment programs requires a stronger consideration of community support and societal perspectives towards the role and purpose of youth in order to effectively address their needs and develop their voice.

B.3 Origins and theories of youth empowerment

In opening a space in this discussion on empowerment to include adolescents, we must first understand the motivation behind the idea of 'youth' programs, and the philosophical foundations of a movement that works with young people in society. According to Small and Memmo (2002),
contemporary models of youth development can be classified into one of three categories: prevention, resiliency and positive youth development. The earliest youth programs were focused on rehabilitation and prevention as a means of preventing further problems in the first place. As pointed out by the authors, this model tends to be deficit-oriented, emphasizing youth problems […] It leads us to look at what is wrong with youth instead of what is right. From a practitioner’s stand-point this can be problematic because of its potential to stigmatize youth, undermine their motivation and prevent them from being involved in programs in the first place (p. 8).

The second type of programs, focusing on resilience emphasize internal characteristics of the adolescent and his/her environment that allow the individual to survive stressful situations and develop coping mechanisms to adapt to unpleasant or disruptive situations. It is impossible to completely isolate indicators of resilience and factors that contribute to the development of internal resilience, due to the influence of external environmental factors, (Small and Memmo, 2002, p.15), leading to more widespread acceptance of a third model – positive youth development. This approach seeks to “not only foster youth development but the development of the community as well [because] simply preventing problems is not enough to prepare youth for adulthood” (Small and Memmo, 2002, p. 18).

Youth empowerment consists of the development of the physical, social, emotional, cognitive and moral domains (Hamilton, 2004) and the “ability to act on behalf of what you value and have reason to value”, also referred to as agency (Malhotra, 2003). According to researchers, agency is what allows youth to wholly engage in the process of empowerment by converting the individual from a subject to be empowered to an agent of change, in control of his/her goals and choices (Malhotra, 2003; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). Factors affecting the agency of adolescent girls who live in countries outside traditional spheres of Western development differ in a small but significant way from those that affect adolescent boys. Mensch, Bruce & Greene (2002) highlight
six areas of experience that can shed light on their agency and ability to negotiate important decisions in their lives, thereby speaking to their abilities to take advantage of activities and opportunities designed for their empowerment: (1) living arrangement, (2) domestic responsibilities, (3) social and physical mobility, (4) schooling, (5) knowledge of reproductive biology and health and (6) marriage and relationships. Based on examining existing research, I would venture to add that one area of experience missing from this framework is the role that adults (mentors, role models and parents) play in supporting the agency of adolescent girls. The fact is that many organizations working towards the empowerment of adolescent girls neglect to understand that a majority of decisions and choices for young girls and women in many parts of the world are made by adult family members. By recognizing the fallacy of the assumption that many adolescent girls have “considerable authority over their lives” (Mensch, Bruce & Greene, 2002, p.79) and are often denied access to resources that would enhance their ability to participate in journeys of empowerment, we can begin to work with societal institutions that hinder access to these resources as well as with family members to renegotiate the social positions of these girls and engage them as well in the process of increasing agency for adolescent girls in different areas of life.
APPENDIX C: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Formulario de Consentimiento Informado

La Fundación Mariposa se complace en invitarles a participar en un taller dirigido hacia los padres de las niñas inscritas en nuestros programas. Este taller sucederá en tres partes durante el mes del febrero, en los días 12, 19 y 26 del mes, en nuestra oficina, de las 2.30pm a las 5.00 pm. Estoy suministrando este taller junto con la psicóloga Alexandra Filian como parte de los requisitos para mi programa de maestría en los Estados Unidos. Después del taller, voy a escribir un resumen e informe sobre los entrenamientos, la información que compartimos y los resultados del taller a través de evaluaciones y sugerencias. El propósito del taller es para entrenar aquellas madres que quieren apoyar a los programas de la fundación como voluntarias, y quieren recibir entrenamiento en algunas estrategias y técnicas de comunicación, resolución de conflictos y más información sobre el desarrollo de adolescentes, y cómo apoyar sus niñas en su crecimiento físico, emocional e intelectual en esta etapa de su vida. Sus datos personales y toda la información compartida durante el taller será guardada bajo seguridad y completamente anónimo, sin posibilidad de identificar sus respuestas.

Su participación es completamente voluntario y si usted elige no participar, su hija no va sufrir ningún consecuencia negativa. Si decide participar, usted nos da el permiso de usar sus comentarios, observaciones e información de manera anónima. Cuando yo termine el informe, tendrá la oportunidad de revisarlo o le podemos ofrecer un resumen oral de los resultados.

Durante este taller, no habrá ningún riesgo físico. Haremos todo lo que podemos para asegurar su comodidad y seguridad. Les avisaremos con tiempo si algún actividad involucrará un riesgo emocional, y les recordaremos que su participación es por su voluntad. Si quieren dejar de participar en cualquier momento, usted tiene el derecho de hacerlo.

Este taller le va a ofrecer un entrenamiento básico para trabajar como voluntaria en la Fundación Mariposa y apoyar los empleados en diseñar, ofrecer y evaluar programas para nuestras niñas.

Si tiene cualquier pregunta sobre el proyecto y su involucración miento, pueden hablar con Ria Shroff al número 849-853-4663 o con Alexandra Milian al número 849-869-4254, o pueden venir a la oficina para hablar con nosotros cualquier día de la semana.

Liberación de Responsabilidad

Yo, ___________________________, entiendo los términos y condiciones me explicó por los facilitadores y la he leído toda la información proporcionada en el formulario de consentimiento informado. Yo doy mi consentimiento voluntario para participar en el taller de formación de los padres voluntarios, llevada a cabo por Ria Shroff y Alexandra Milian de la Fundación Mariposa. Entiendo que ni ellas, ni los directores o personal de la Fundación Mariposa, será responsable de cualquier lesión o estrés en que incurra durante el taller, y lo que han hecho todo lo posible para crear un ambiente seguro para los participantes. Yo entiendo que mi participación en esta capacitación es voluntaria, y tengo el derecho a retirar mi participación en cualquier momento en el que yo elijo.

Firma: ___________________________
Fecha: ___________________________
Nombre completo: ___________________________
APPENDIX D: OUTLINE OF TRAINING

9.30 am  Breakfast
10.00 am  Agenda for the day
10.15 am  Ice-breaker
10.30 am  Pre-test survey
10.50 am  Break
11.00 am  Lecturette
12.00 pm  LUNCH
1.00 pm  Energizer
1.15 pm  Myths and Realities of Adolescence
1.45 pm  Break
1.55 pm  Storytelling/Way of Council
2.45 pm  Post-test survey
3.00 pm  Evaluations and closing
APPENDIX E: MODEL FOR CONTEXT-SPECIFIC TRAINING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural characteristics that influence training design</th>
<th>High Power Distance</th>
<th>Collectivist Society</th>
<th>High Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ Stress on personal wisdom from teacher (guru)</td>
<td>▶ Large classes split into smaller cohesive subgroups</td>
<td>▶ Students are rewarded for accuracy in problem solving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Older teachers respected more than younger teachers</td>
<td>▶ Teacher is never contradicted or publicly criticized</td>
<td>▶ Teachers and students are allowed to behave emotionally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Teacher is never contradicted or publicly criticized</td>
<td>▶ Students expect teacher to initiate communication and provide answers</td>
<td>▶ Intellectual disagreement is interpreted as personal disloyalty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Students expect teacher to initiate communication and provide answers</td>
<td>▶ Diplomas and certificates are important as proof of learning</td>
<td>▶ Teachers are expected to have answers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Exhibit 5-2 in Rothwell (2008), *Managing Cultural Differences in Learners* in Adult Learning Basics, pp.83-85
APPENDIX F: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITY SUMMARIES

Objective 1
To identify existing knowledge and beliefs about adolescent behavior and its motivations

Activity: Survey
Participants complete a pre-test survey that measures their existing information, beliefs and perceptions about adolescent development, causes for certain behavior and their needs. This survey serves as a pre-test to collect information before the workshop and will be administered at the end of the workshop as well to allow participants to indicate changes in their knowledge, beliefs and ideas.

Objective 2
To present information about the different stages of adolescent development

Activity: Lecturette
Participants are provided information about the different stages of adolescent development, including physical and emotional changes, challenges, and changing societal expectations.

Objective 3
To examine prevailing myths about adolescent behavior and its motivations, and discuss the impacts of these on parental attitudes

Activity: Values-clarification, 'Myths and Realities of Adolescence' (refer to Appendix F for a full list of myths provided as discussion topics)

- The facilitator begins by talking about the importance of parents being able to provide the right sort of knowledge to their children, as well as being informed about the changes that will be taking place in their adolescent child. Since much of the information that children receive can be false and a continuation of myths/rumors/misinformation, the facilitator mentions that it is the parent's responsibility to be well-informed in matters of health and to understand that motivations for adolescent behavior can have their origins in emotional and hormonal changes, without blaming the adolescent for changes in behavior.

- The facilitator passes around a hat or container with slips of paper, each containing a myth about adolescence. These myths have been transcribed from conversations and interviews with parents, adolescents and other community members. Each participant pulls out one piece of paper, reads the myth and shares their opinion. This continues until all the pieces of paper have been read.

- The facilitator's role in this activity is to stimulate conversation and discussion by asking pertinent probing and processing questions. In case of misinformation, the facilitator must provide the right answer and an explanation of why it is so. Care must be taken to not criticize existing beliefs, reasons for belief or traditional knowledge. Information must be provided with factual proof.

- If time permits and the participants are interested, the facilitator can ask participants to go
around and share one myth that they heard growing up, and their opinions on that myth, whether it influenced their childhood and development and their current relationship with their adolescent child.

**Objective 4**
To gain insight on how parents' personal experiences as adolescents have, and can, shape interactions with their daughters

**Activity: Way of Council (storytelling)**
- The facilitator begins by explaining the concept of Way of Council, a technique used to allow participants to share stories, listen to other people's experiences in a safe and uninterrupted environment, and reflect upon their own experiences. The facilitator sets the tone by beginning with a few moments of deep breathing to clear the mind, and then poses the first question, that the parents answer in a clockwise formation. This question is focused on parents reflecting on their own experiences as adolescents, their relationship with their parents, and the challenges they faced.
- The facilitator then asks the second question, that is focused on the participants' relationship with their daughters, what they are proud of, what challenges they face or can see in the future, and what direction they would like their relationship to take.
- The facilitator closes the circle by thanking everyone for sharing, and taking a moment to reflect on the experience.

**Objective 5**
To identify and set one goal for one area of change in the existing parent-daughter relationship

**Activity: Goal-setting**
- Participants reflect on one thing that they learned from this workshop that they will take home, and share one goal that they would like to work on with their daughter during the next month, before the next workshop
APPENDIX G: WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Por favor, haz un círculo sobre el nivel adecuado para anotar tu reacción al taller

1
no me ayudó
2
me ayudó
un poco
3
me ayudó
mucho
4
fue una gran ayuda

Comparte tus ideas sobre el taller con nosotros

¿Qué fue lo más importante que aprendiste hoy?

¿Te fue útil este taller? □ Sí □ No
Si no, ¿puedes explicar por qué no?

¿Te pareció interesante el taller? □ Sí □ No
Si no, ¿puedes explicar por qué no?

¿Qué fue lo que más te gusto de las presentaciones?

¿Qué fue lo que menos te gusto de las presentaciones?

¿Cómo vas a usar la información que recibiste hoy cuando vuelvas a tu casa?

¿Tienes ideas para otros talleres? ¿Qué más te gustaría saber sobre los adolescentes?
APPENDIX H: PRE-AND-POST TEST

Marque su respuesta como VERDADERO o FALSO a las siguientes frases

La edad promedio de la primera menstruación es entre los 10 y 15 años
The average age for a girl's first period is between 10 and 15 years
V _______________ F _______________

Los adolescentes requieren privacidad – espacio físico y emocional – para descubrir los cambios en su cuerpo
Adolescents need privacy – in the form of physical and emotional space – to discover the changes in their body
V _______________ F _______________

Si mi hija está hablando mucho del sexo o de asuntos sexuales, probablemente está teniendo relaciones
If my daughter is talking about sex or sexuality a lot, then she is probably having sexual relations
V _______________ F _______________

La forma de manifestar afecto a los seres queridos puede cambiar en la adolescencia
The ways in which one expresses affection can change during adolescence
V _______________ F _______________

Las niñas no deben hacer actividades físicas ni salir de la casa cuando tiene su menstruación
Girls should not engage in physical activity or leave the house when they have their period
V _______________ F _______________

Si mi hija no ha desarrollado físicamente a los 14 años, es por su culpa/su dieta/su estilo de vida
If my daughter has not developed physically by the time she is 14, it is her fault because of her diet/lifestyle
V _______________ F _______________

No soy buena madre si estoy peleando con mi hija y/o tengo problemas comunicándome con ella
I'm not a good mother if I am constantly fighting with my daughter and/or have problems communicating with her
V _______________ F _______________
APPENDIX J: MYTHS ABOUT ADOLESCENCE

No existe una edad “correcta” para empezar los cambios físicos que trae la adolescencia.
There is no 'correct' age for the onset of physical changes that mark the beginning of adolescence.

Un adolescente de 15-16 años ya tiene la habilidad de razonar completamente y puede casarse o empezar una familia.
A 15/16 year old already has the ability to make rational decisions and can get married and start a family.

Es normal que el adolescente sea bien contradictorio y expresa emociones diferentes a la misma vez.
It is normal for adolescents to appear contradictory and express different emotions at the same time.

No se debe abrazar ni besar a su hijo que ya es adolescente.
You must neither hug nor kiss your adolescent child.

Los adolescentes no quieren que sus padres les hablen sobre la sexualidad. Prefieren que les informen sus amigos.
Adolescents do not want their parents to talk to them about sex and sexuality. They would prefer to find out from their friends.

Los adolescentes todavía necesitan reglas.
Adolescents still need rules.

Si una niña sale embarazada o quiere casarse, ya está adulta.
Once a girl gets married or gets pregnant, she is an adult.