





























Women and children in the community should be empowered to know what their rights are and to stand up to abuse against them. In the context of a history of violence, often extending over many years, and all the while eroding and destroying self-esteem and self-determination, it is essential to understand that effective help must be directed towards enabling the woman to take control of her own life. The aim should be to offer her realistic choices, while accepting that the decisions are hers alone and are always valid in her particular situation. Her autonomy should be encouraged (Keeling & Mason, 2008:171).

Table 5 reveals that the majority of respondents (67.98%) said that they would like the social worker to establish social clubs. Clubs that empower youths need to provide opportunities for development at both individual and community levels. These should be opportunities that provide them with stronger ties to the community, a greater understanding of other people's needs and a commitment to making that community a better place to live in (Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger Messias & McLoughlin, 2006:49). Young people should be encouraged to become entrepreneurs and earn an income so that crime does not become an option.

According to Scheve, Perkins and Mincemoyer (2006:220), there should be opportunities for young people to engage in their communities, because with their energy, they can reinvigorate adults and organisations by approaching challenges with a fresh perspective and offering creative solutions.

## CONCLUSION

Even though the families indicated that poverty causes conflict in the home and family breakdown, the respondents felt that the family was their most important strength. They valued the closeness and commitment to one another very highly. Families have the capacity for growth and change and to adapt. They also have many capabilities, abilities and strengths. In some way or another they survive despite huge challenges. For the sake of these families' wellbeing and happiness, it is important that they should be empowered and that their strengths are accepted and enhanced. The social worker is the person who can empower them.

A study such as this may contribute to a better insight into the world in which families have to live and survive today, but also into the structure and functioning of families in South Africa. Healthy families will help to build healthy communities in the future and this will benefit everyone in the country.

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