

**ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN ALLEVIATING POVERTY.**

BY

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DECLARATION

This dissertation represents original work by the author and has not been submitted in any other form to another university. Where use has been made of the work done by others it has been fully acknowledged and referenced in the text.

The research for this dissertation was undertaken in the School of Development Studies at the University of Natal, Durban. Research was conducted under supervision of Professor Lisa Bornstein during the period of March 2001 to March 2002.

The Researcher bears the responsibility for the findings, recommendations and conclusions which follow.

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the major developmental problems facing the democratic government is to eradicate poverty in South Africa. May (1996:1) has indicated that despite the dramatic economic, social and political changes, over three million of South African households are still categorized as being poor. He further states that 95% of those who are poor are black and 75% of those are more concentrated in rural areas. These figures clearly suggest that any effort made at dealing with poverty should create a balance in providing services to all racial groups, and between rural and urban communities. Hence we are all faced with the challenge of helping poor people living in rural areas uplift their standard of living.

The South African Government has realized that one of the essential conditions for introducing positive changes on the lives of the poor should be promotion of a people-centered approach to development, White Paper for Social Welfare (1998:7). People-centered approach ensures that key role players in rural development follow a bottom-up process of facilitating change in the lives of the poor. This implies that the top-down approach which is characterized by centralized control, dependence syndrome and production centered development has no place in the democratic society. Hence the Government has formulated and started to implement development programs that encourage and support indigenous initiatives, promote local participation and bring back the dignity of poor communities.

It is generally known that poor people have demonstrated their capacity to take initiative in analyzing their own problems and work out appropriate solutions to solve them. They have learnt to cope with their miserable conditions by being innovative, and use their indigenous skills and knowledge to pull their resources together and bring food on the plate for their children.

They do this by engaging in small community projects that enable them to earn enough income to meet the basic needs for their families. Therefore according to the researchers' opinion, poor people only need competent people to link them to resources, facilitate their activities and help them put ideas into action.

Community based development have become popular with the Government and other stakeholders as a strategy for translating developmental policies into action. Community development projects have been used as one of the interventions for alleviating poverty, especially in rural areas.

Given the complexity of poverty problem, the questions being addressed by the study are whether income generating development projects are an appropriate strategy for addressing poverty in rural areas? What makes the poor in the rural areas to either succeed or fail to produce the desired results in dealing with poverty?

Muntizwa Mangiza (1991:20) has indicated that there are high expectations with regard to the potential of community development projects. There is however not much systematic research, which has been carried out about their achievements. It was this paucity of information that stimulated the researcher to undertake this research study.

Secondly, as a community development worker I have noticed that large amounts of money have been injected in community development projects with the hope of addressing poverty and facilitating self-reliance in rural communities through job creation. My experience warrant me to suggest that contrary to everyone's expectations, some of community development projects, especially those that engage in small scale income generating activities, collapse just before they bear any fruits.

There are various kinds of community development projects that have been initiated to improve living conditions in rural areas. The presentation however will be confined to those projects that are initiated to help rural poor alleviate poverty by engaging in income generating activities.

This study was conducted in March 2001 with the aim of identifying the factors that contribute to the successful functioning of poverty alleviation projects. The study was based in one of the remote rural communities in Lotheni, in KwaZulu Natal. The information was solicited by interviewing the leaders who serve as the chairpersons for the four community development projects.

It is hoped that the study will highlight some of the factors, which contribute to successful functioning of community development projects aimed at improving the quality of life for the poor people in rural areas.

A community development project can be useless unless it has a positive impact on the lives of the poor. The research addresses the following questions:

- ◆How can we know whether the project has really made the lives of the poor people better?
- ◆Has the project raised the income of the beneficiaries above the poverty line?
- ◆Has the project allowed the poor to develop positive self-image, learn to organize and manage activities aimed at improving their quality of life?
- ◆Have development interventions reached the poorest of the poor?

Although it is difficult to get precise and definite answers to the above question, we need to find ways of addressing them if we are genuine about improving the standard of living for the poor.

Having orientated the reader to the rationale for conducting the research, it is appropriate to highlight the direction in which the study will proceed. Objectives of the study and statement of the problem are covered in chapter one.

Development problems occur within a particular social context. It is therefore imperative to get a better understanding of the developmental issues being addressed by putting them within a particular context. Briefly this section looks at the dynamics of poverty and the question of what factors influence the success of community projects as one of the solutions for addressing poverty in rural areas in South Africa.

This will be followed by definition of concepts such as poverty, community development and projects. Definitions of these concepts are covered in chapter two. If we claim that competent community development projects can have positive impact on the lives of the poor, then what are the standards for a successful development project? Briefly, when do we say that the project is successful?

Chapter three deals with the process of collecting data. The researcher explains how the participants were selected (sampling), rationale for selecting the research methodology (case study), the research tool (interviews), and limitations of the study.

This is followed by Chapter four, which entails data presentation. This is an interesting part of the study, which contains vast amount of qualitative data that need to be coded and categorized to produce meaningful findings.

Lastly, Chapter five covers the analysis, conclusion and recommendations emanating from the results of this study. This part of the paper provides answers to the key questions in community development and presents suggestions to improve planning and management of poverty alleviation projects in rural areas.

CHAPTER ONE

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The statement of the objectives of the research project is the most critical step in the research project because it determines the directions for all further steps in the research. Smit (1995:23) states that formulation of the research objective is a precise documentation of what the researcher hopes to achieve with the research concerned. The following objectives, therefore, were stated to give direction and focus to the foregoing research:

- 1.1 To clearly identify and define community development factors that prevent poor people taking control of their own development and become self-reliant.
- 1.2 To highlight factors that contribute to successful functioning of community development projects.
- 1.3 To make a positive contribution to strategic planning related to implementation of programs directed at eradication of poverty.

2. PUTTING THE PROBLEM INTO PERSPECTIVE

Addressing the National Conference on World Summit for Social Development, Dr Chikanda (1998:36) emphasized that social development is inseparable from the economic, ecological and cultural environment in which it takes place. She added, social development is also clearly dependent on developing the economy, peace, stability and security at local, national and international levels. Efforts to break the cycle of poverty would be unsuccessful without the existence of these conditions at macro level. The discussion, nevertheless, will not focus more on these factors because it is difficult for poor people in rural areas to understand how well the economy is doing and its implications to their standard of living.

Lastly, social development is perceived as a shared responsibility and joint efforts by many actors, such as, Government, social partners, Non-Governmental Organizations , families and informal community networks.

The researcher supports Chikanda's statement that it is essential to create an enabling environment with the above mentioned conditions for people to become self-reliant, rather than depending on long-term support from the Government.

At least, poor people now understand that war on poverty is a shared responsibility between them and the Government. All the stakeholders in social development need to facilitate and strengthen this common understanding about poverty eradication, rather than imposing development plans that promote dependency.

Bearing in mind Chikanda 's view of the conditions necessary to promote positive changes in the quality of life for the poor, let us narrow the discussion to poverty as the main problem threatening the communities in rural areas.

Before we look further into poverty and community development projects, it is important to have a clear understanding of what is poverty. Poverty is the main factor that drives rural communities to organize themselves and make plans to improve their standard of living. Rural effort has been visible through the existence of community development projects intended to create jobs for poor people. We would be losing focus if we look at how community projects are initiated, implemented, monitored and evaluated without having a clear understanding of the term poverty, as the major social problem.

Burkery in Dlamini (1998:7) states that absolute poverty is the inability of the individual, a community or a nation to satisfactorily meet its basic needs. He further defines the basic needs as those things that an individual must have in order to survive as a human being - *"these are clean air and water, adequate and balanced food, physical and emotional security, appropriate clothing and shelter"*.

In addition to the above definition, May (1998:2) indicates that poverty is linked to hunger, unemployment, exploitation, lack of access to health care, education and vulnerability to crisis and homelessness.

What do the above definitions suggest to people who are involved in helping poor communities better their lives? The definitions imply that poverty alleviation strategies should focus on meeting the basic needs for rural communities. Any development program or strategy should be guided by "basic-need approach" in order to effect positive changes in rural communities.

It is always difficult for the rural poor to pay more attention to their surroundings because their priority is to get means for feeding their families. People, however, cannot be separated from their environment. Therefore it is important to look at how poverty manifests itself and creates barriers for the poor to improve their lives.

The study, therefore, is not trying to bring back bad memories of apartheid, but proper assessment of poverty alleviation interventions has to be conducted taking into consideration the history, nature and severity of poverty. Just like Neuman (1997:331) who indicates that qualitative researchers emphasize the importance of social context in which events and social action happen.

The researcher has therefore decided to create a bigger picture of how the environmental forces create barriers for uplifting the community. The research will be meaningless unless it clearly states what contributed to the current situation. In spite of changes in socio-economic conditions in South Africa, the study needs to show why rural people continue to live under severe impoverished conditions. The following section outlines key dimensions of rural life that reinforce poverty and negatively impact on socio-economic changes.

2.1 Poverty and Gender Differences:

Table 1: Gender Differences May et al (1998:11)

GENDER	%OF ADULT IN POVERTY	AFRICAN RURAL IN POVERTY
Women	47,5	70,1
Men	41	64

The above table shows the differences in share of poverty between men and women. The table indicates that 70% of poor people living in rural areas are women, compared to 64% of men. These figures clearly emphasize that women are the most vulnerable group when it comes to poverty.

It is generally known that rural women are responsible for the provision of the needs of their families when husbands fail to support them due to lack of employment opportunities. However according to the writer's opinion, there are still inequalities between men and women in terms of distribution of opportunities and services in rural areas.

2.2 Provision of Basic Services

Table 2: Provision of basic services (May et al 1998:11)

SERVICES	RURAL%	URBAN%
Running Water inside the dwelling	16,8	74,1
Electricity	21,1	82,4

The table above clearly shows the discrepancies in provision of basic services between urban and rural areas. Very few households have tap water and electricity in the rural areas as compared to urban areas. This shortage of services add to discrimination of women because they are required to spend lot of time collecting woods which is used as a source of energy for cooking and provision of light in rural areas.

It is estimated that just over three hours every week is spent on collecting wood, and one hour per day is spent on fetching water (May et al 1998:7). As a result, the unpaid work within the household limit women 's ability to engage in productive activities to earn a living and escape poverty.

2.3 Shelter:

If you look at the housing conditions in rural areas, people use traditional building materials such as mud walls and thatched roofs that need a lot of maintenance. It is sometimes difficult for people to maintain their dwellings because of shortage of building material. To illustrate the point, it is difficult to get adequate grass for thatched roofs during winter and drought periods. The situation worsens because poor people do not have money to buy proper building materials like bricks. Block making projects, which could be an alternative to rural housing, often fail because community members do not have cash to buy blocks. As a result they spend a lot of time gathering building materials to maintain their houses on regular basis.

The Government however, has initiated the anti-poverty program in relation to provision of subsidies to acquire housing. This has resulted in the construction of 491 000 houses, and some 3.7 million people having shelter and security (Fraser Moleketi 1998:14). The question that arises is how many people from rural areas benefit from the housing program?

2.4 Water Supply:

Lack of clean drinking water and proper sewage system is a clear sign of poverty (Swanepoel 1996:14). Provision of safe water and sanitation are the critical factors for implementing effective social and economic development in rural. For example, women spend most of their time walking to fetch water from unprotected streams and pools. As a result they do not have enough time to engage in productive activities that could improve their socio-economic status.

Community development projects, such as gardening, piggery, poultry and block making, may fail where there is a shortage or lack of piped water. Such projects fail because women do not have enough physical strength to carry large water containers on their heads to provide sufficient water for their vegetable plants.

Provision of water to poor people is threatened by the Government's plan to privatize service delivery, including water services Ngoben in Sibiya(2001: 10). One can imagine how this move is going to affect a poor person who had a dream of having tap water in his yard in a rural area. Water is regarded as one of the important basic needs for everyone, poor or rich. It is envisaged that efforts made by the poor to alleviate poverty is going to be affected by privatization of water, since poverty alleviation projects are dependent on the adequate supply of water for production.

For example, people are still battling to walk long distances to fetch water for their communal gardens in rural areas. It appears that the dream of installing piped water and irrigation systems, will fade when the privatization of water gets implemented, since poor people may only afford to use little income they get to buy food for their families, rather than paying for water.

A research conducted by London based Greenwich University revealed that privatization has been disastrous in many countries. For example, the people of Nairobi and Kenya were forced to spend more than 160 million when water was privatized to French multinational Gererales Des EAUX.

The company decided to install a new and not budgeted for R1.5 billion billing revenue collection service. As a result, water prices went up by 40%, and 45 foreign staff to replace the new system replaced at least 3500 municipal workers Sibiya (2001:10). Therefore, South Africa must learn the lesson from other countries.

The privatization of water can perpetuate poverty and make it difficult for the poor to get access to free water. Thus, according to the writer's opinion, water should be provided on the basis of need rather than profit.

2.5 Inadequate Health and Educational Facilities:

It is not easy for an unskilled and sickly person to secure a job. The nature of available jobs in rural areas need people who are physically fit because they have to work long hours under bad weather conditions. Rural people are more vulnerable to disease due to inadequate health facilities. Linked to health issues is the problem of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which is destroying the nation.

Shortage of educational facilities has deprived rural communities opportunities to acquire skills and knowledge necessary to compete in the labor market. Lack of facilities for basic adult education makes the matters worse because old people were severely affected by the unjust socio-economic policies. It is apparent that the majority of rural people are not educated due to shortage of schools.

Those who managed to get educated are not competent enough to sell their skills in the labor market because of poor or inappropriate education they have received.

The researcher argues that people with low levels of education tend to have low self-esteem. As a result, they are often dependent on other people to make decisions on their behalf rather than taking control of their own future. This dependence syndrome contradicts with the principle of community development that encourages poor people to become agents of their own development. Hence poverty alleviation projects are struggling because of people who want to monopolize power, and control and manipulate the poor for their own individual interests. On the other hand poverty alleviation projects may provide a good opportunity for the poor to feel good about themselves by learning that they are capable of changing their circumstances.

2.6 Unemployment:

Swanepoel (1997:16) argues that unemployment is both a cause and a result of poverty. It is a cause because without a job, a person has no income and cannot afford to pay for proper housing, food, medical care and education for his family.

He further explains that it is a result in the sense that poor health caused by drinking dirty water, eating unbalanced diet, poor housing and lack of appropriate education has a negative effect on an individual's ability to get a job and earn a reasonable standard of living.

Dlamini (1998:9) indicated that the White paper on Social Welfare acknowledges that individuals, families and communities become more vulnerable to poverty during times of unemployment. It is generally known that unemployment has devastating effects on the lives of the people. It removes the source of cash income on which people live on. Unemployment has also a negative psychological impact in making people think that they are redundant.

Rural people have decided to involve themselves into organized small scale farming and selling of crafts due to lack of employment opportunities. Dlamini (1998:9) reported that other families are surviving on wages of migrant laborers as well as social security pensions of the aged.

The S.A. Foundation (1996:90) has reported that the economy has virtually no capacity to create jobs for its people. Unemployment is highest amongst unskilled workers. This implies that the labor market is failing to provide unskilled work seekers with jobs and income. In eight years time, with four in ten workers openly unemployed, about two and a half million more people will be unemployed than today. Their number is increasing by 300 000 each year.

What do these figures suggest to a housewife who is solely dependent on her husband's wages to survive? Will the government be in a position to reduce poverty through creating income-generating projects and continue with providing social security?

2.7 Provision of Roads and Transport:

Poor road conditions make people's lives more difficult in rural areas. They are not easily accessible to people, who live as far as fifteen kilometers away from the main road. People walk on footpaths in areas where there are no roads in order to reach transport.

Transport is another severe disadvantage for the rural poor. There is limited access to public transport, owning a car is often impossible since most of them cannot even afford funds for fares.

Townsend (1999:12) states that it is common for people to walk from 25 to 75 kilometers to attend work or look for it in rural areas.

The mode of transport ranges from buses and taxis to vans and donkeys, which makes it difficult to operate during heavy rains. Poverty alleviation projects rely more on public transport to buy materials for production purposes. This implies that progress of production can be hampered by bad weather conditions. To illustrate the point, poultry projects can lose customers if the project members fail to deliver chickens on time due to difficulties experienced driving in muddy roads.

2.8 Electricity Supplies:

Unlike urban areas, rural communities are deprived of electricity supply. It is generally known that poor families without electricity spend most of their time collecting wood from the bushes. As a result poor people do not have adequate time to involve themselves in activities that will improve their standard of living.

It is generally known that electricity plays an important role in making life easier for the people, and also for economic development. For example, community projects such as poultry are more likely to succeed if there is sufficient electricity supply rather than using gas supply, which is not reliable, and time consuming.

2.9 Trades and Industry:

Apartheid policies perpetuated urban bias development policies. Urban communities had more opportunities, easy access to services and accumulated wealth. On the other hand, development of rural communities was neglected and people had to fend for themselves while becoming more and more vulnerable to poverty. Hence this kind of development hinders any effort made at improving the quality of life for the poor people.

For example, people who manage to create jobs for themselves are unable to sell their products successfully because industries and shopping centers are more concentrated in urban areas. Lack of marketing opportunities for community development projects will be dealt with at length in the discussion. It is worth mentioning that marketing is crucial for the projects to sustain themselves and be able to fight poverty.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the previous section, we have briefly explained the conditions surrounding the lives of rural people and how these hinder any attempts to improve their lives. The discussion clearly shows that in any community there is a direct link between political, economic and social development. This part of the paper is narrowing down the focus of the study by looking at what purpose do community development projects serve in uplifting the lives of the poor, how they are initiated, managed and what prevents them from overcoming poverty in rural areas.

The Government has spent considerable time and money trying to strengthen partnership and community initiatives. Besides the constraints related to underdevelopment of rural areas, it appears that there are other factors that block the production of visible and sustainable community development in rural areas.

The question that could be raised again is "Why do community development projects aimed at alleviating poverty fail just before they make any difference in the lives of the poor?"

Perhaps the problem lies in our limited knowledge and understanding of what is poverty and community development. It is also crucial to examine our understanding of community development as one of the strategies for alleviating poverty. The following scenarios taken from the four community development projects, which are the subjects of this study, highlight some of the major problems prevailing in community development arena.

Mrs. Mkhize was struggling to provide food for her family. She was a widow with four children. Her eldest son managed to complete matric while her husband was still alive. Her son's dream of becoming a doctor faded when her husband passed away in 1993.

Life became miserable for Mrs. Mkhize and her children. It was a painful experience for her to see her children going to school on empty stomachs. She had no one to turn to and her husband's job was not stable for her to get any death benefits.

Fortunately, her husband left behind two pigs, goats, and a big plot of land, which she used to grow vegetables such as potatoes, mealies, and sweet potatoes. She started growing other vegetables like spinach, onion, and cabbages. Her livestock started breeding and multiplied.

She was able to feed her family with vegetables, and she slaughtered her pigs and goats to sell within the community to raise money. In that way, Mrs. Mkhize was able to send her children to school to get quality education and provide nutritious food for them to develop healthy minds and healthy bodies. Mrs. Mkhize's children never went to bed without having supper. She was able to earn an income that was sufficient for her to pay school fees and buy school uniforms.

She decided to help other women who could not see any way out of poverty. She asked one of the community leaders to help her organize a community meeting to share with her neighbors how she managed to get out of her poverty trap. She then suggested that it would be a good idea if they can come together and shared resources to uplift their community. The community members welcomed the idea of forming an income-generating project to address poverty.

The management committee was formed to oversee the functioning of the poverty eradication projects. It was clearly spelled out in the meeting that membership would be open to unemployed people who have no source of income and stricken by poverty. Mrs Mkhize was democratically elected to become the chairperson and lead the project. Fifteen people, mainly women, joined the project and paid small contributions as membership fees to cover the running costs for the project. Project members were prepared to work hard to ensure that the project was up and running without getting any remuneration initially. Mrs. Mkhize's initiative therefore led to the establishment of Qondisani community development project in 1994.

The group engages in the following activities: piggery, cultivating vegetables, and poultry. People started to see the benefits of working together to fight poverty. They managed to sell their products and feed families with the surplus.

Young people living in other villages approached Mrs. Mkhize wanting to join Qondisani project. The committee felt that they were not well equipped with all the necessary skills and knowledge to manage a community project with large numbers of people. As a result, Ntuthuko Yesizwe community project was established to accommodate the young people who showed interest to create job opportunities for themselves.

It was so interesting to note that young people who did not want to resort to crime to feed themselves formed this project. The project targeted unemployed youths with matric certificates, which could not continue with tertiary education.

Their main activities included poultry, block making, and home based care. Ntuthuko Yesizwe was formed in the same year as Qondisani community project.

It is important to mention that the two community projects were established to address an identified need within the community by the community itself. Mrs. Mkhize just sold the idea, which was accepted by the community. She was in a better position to influence the community because she was talking about something she had experienced. It appears that community members could easily identify with her since she understood the realities of being poor.

The project members managed to kickstart the two poverty alleviation projects using their limited resources. Seeking assistance from the local volunteer they compiled the constitution to guide their organization. The local volunteer also played a vital role in showing them how to assess progress made in achieving their goals.

The chairpersons from Zamokuhle and Thandanani decided to form these projects when they learnt that Qondisani and Ntuthuko Yesizwe projects had received funds from the Government. They approached their friends and family members to join the projects. Each member also paid a small contribution as a joining fee.

The two leaders assigned themselves into leadership positions as people who initiated the projects. Membership was open to everyone who could afford to pay the joining fee. The projects started operating when the funds from the Government were deposited into their account.

They started production and sales did not go very well. The projects are struggling to stand on their own and project members have stopped going to work and anticipate more financial assistance to come from the Government.

In a nutshell, the four cases demonstrate key issues to be taken into account in planning, implementing and managing community development projects.

Bearing in mind the kind of development issues addressed by the study, let us assess our understanding of poverty and community development processes and principles against the definition provided by Sanders(1975) . A definition of poverty was presented in detail in the previous chapter.

Hence the focus will be more on defining community development process and highlighting standards to measure successful community development projects. Definitions of these concepts are going to be covered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

2. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Bearing in mind the bigger picture of the problem we are dealing with, let us define the key concepts that constantly crop up in the study. It is important to have an understanding of what is meant by the following concepts: poverty and community development

2.1 What is Poverty?

Defining the concept poverty was dealt with at greater length in the previous section. Here poverty will be looked at from another angle. It is worth mentioning that the poverty line perspective on poverty by Greeley (1994:50) complement Burkery 's basic need approach to poverty which states that absolute poverty is the inability of an individual, a community or a nation to satisfactory meet its basic needs. The basic needs include clean air and water, adequate and balanced food, physical and emotional security, appropriate clothing and shelter (Dlamini 1998:7). Looking at poverty line as another measure for defining poverty will enhance our understanding of this concept.

There is general agreement that income alone is inadequate as a measurement of poverty. Also there is a broad agreement that income growth is a necessary condition for poverty reduction in developing countries. Hence poverty line has been used to determine the extent of poverty within the households.

According to Greeley [1994:50] poverty line is a point on the income distribution curve where given the share of food and non-food expenditure in total expenditure income is sufficient to buy nutritionally adequate diet. People are counted as poor when their measured standard of living is below a minimum acceptance level known as the poverty line. The poverty line is a measure that separates the poor from the non-poor. Those with income below the line are poor, and those above are non-poor. Households with a total income that falls below R 501 are considered to be below poverty line and vulnerable to poverty Erasmus (1995:10).

The poverty line however has shortcomings in terms of explaining what is a nutritional diet. There are also variations both within and between households in terms of individuals capacity to convert given levels of income into energy. The Physical Quality of life Index and Human Development Index have been used as an alternative to measure poverty due to drawbacks in using income.

Therefore since the focus of the study is on income generating projects, poverty line will be used as a baseline.

It is important to mention that although the above poverty line figures is used as a baseline in the study, poverty varies from individuals and districts. A poor person living in Msinga may be better off when migrating to Ixopo. Mkhize family may fall below the poverty line in terms of income but be better off than other households within the same vicinity due to assets such as land and cattle. The poverty line therefore should be used with caution. The study however is going to use the above income level as a yardstick to analyze the impact of poverty alleviation projects and determine factors that contributes to their success.

2.2 What is Community Development?

According to Jeppe (1985: 50), the primary aim of community development is to enhance people's abilities to solve their individual and community problem. This is often achieved by mobilizing communities to learn to manage and sustain their own development without seeking assistance from outsiders.

In addition to Jeppe's point of view, the researcher would like to adopt Sander's definition of community development as the main reference of the foregoing study. Sander in Lombard (1992: 112) states that community development can be best described by putting it within the broader context of development in terms of technological progress and economic growth. Economists assume that with economic growth the standard of living for the impoverished will also improve in Third World countries.

Contrary to the above assumption the writer supports Sander's argument that a trickle down approach to development is unlikely to succeed in the South African context. South Africa has a history of inequity in terms of distribution of the country's income and resources. Hence we have a situation where poverty is more concentrated among African people living in rural areas. Adoption of the Western approach or view of development would have negative impacts in South Africa. Such an approach will facilitate poverty and imply that the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. Sander therefore suggests that development can never take place in isolation. It is an integral part of the comprehensive social, political, psychological and economic changes taking place in a given country. The previous section has demonstrated how these conditions manifest themselves and create barriers to eradicate poverty in rural communities.

According to Sander in Lombard (1999:112-115) community development can be regarded as a process, method, program as well as a movement. Community development as a process moves by means of stages from one situation to the other. The community should undergo certain stages in order to attain its goals and objectives. This suggests that development role players should also follow these stages as guidelines for implementing development policies.

The key phases are indicated as follows;

- Situation analysis.
- Determining needs and unfulfilled opportunities.
- Decision making about what can be done and should be done to rectify the situation.
- Formulation of specific goals to be achieved.
- Moving towards the direction of achieving goals and objectives.
- Monitoring and Evaluation

In addition, the following principles must guide any community development interventions:

- Have people as a focal point.
- Allows for a presence of a worker to facilitate the process and demands community involvement and participation.
- Emphasis is on self-help

Community development as a method involves the following of certain procedures in relation to the different phases to achieve specific goals. Sander argues that community development, as a method does not happen in isolation. It needs to be supplemented by other disciplines, for instance education. According to Sander, monitoring and evaluation of goal attainment is also essential to determine the success of community development.

Community development can be regarded as a program that consists of a set of procedures and a list of activities. The focus is placed on activities, which are implemented according to a budget within a time frame. The success of community development as a program depends on the availability of specialized expertise.

In spite of training provided in community development, knowledge and tools made available through research by different authors, effort made at alleviating poverty appears to be lacking adequate information and proper guidance. It seems like there is a big gap between planning of community projects and getting feedback on progress from poor people themselves. Writers who clearly understand the South African context provide us with effective tools and knowledge to facilitate change in the lives of the poor people. Could the problem be that development role players place more emphasis on following procedures rather than changing people and their environment?

Having defined community development concept it is now appropriate to go through the journey of discovering some answers to the above questions.



2.3 What is a project?

Defining a project is important because community development would not be a reality without the existence of projects. Projects are the visible means to measure the results and effectiveness of Government policies. A project is an undertaking that has a beginning and an end and is carried out to meet established goals within cost, schedule and quality objectives (Baguley 1995:3). This definition appears to support Sander's view of community develop which emphasizes the importance of setting objectives and putting plans and systems in place to attain them. Thus community development projects consists of three major factors, namely financial resources ,time and money.

Generally, development role players need to strike a balance between time, cost and attainment of objectives to generate positive results in overcoming poverty. However, the nature of community development projects undertaken to alleviate poverty has poor people as an important component of the project. Sander (1995:104) states that the main emphasis is on what happens to people and their social and psychological development. This implies that community development should manage to change the perception of the poor and their living conditions. This can be achieved by active involvement of the poor people in the decision making process on matters affecting their lives. In summary the researcher would like to stress that the above common elements of community development should be the guiding principle for field workers.

Table 3 highlights the core factors, which need to be mastered in community development management. These are the key issues that serve as a tool to drive any project toward success. The question that arises therefore, is, where do we go wrong in the struggle against poverty?

2.4 What is a Successful Project?

TABLE 3: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PARAMETERS

TIME
MONEY
OBJECTIVES
PEOPLE

The above table summarizes factors, which determines the success of a community project. According to Young (1996:100) a project is considered successful if it is completed within a specified time period, budgeted costs and achieves stated objectives.

In addition to the above important components of the projects community projects would not exist without community members. Therefore the project can claim to be successful if it generates changes in the way the poor people perceive themselves and their living conditions.

These are the parameters of all the development projects and determine the extent to which the projects produce the desired results in the communities. This implies that project members as well as the project managers of poverty alleviation projects must pay enough attention to controlling the above mentioned factors to produce positive results in the fight against poverty.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that these parameters cannot be isolated from people and their environment. As was mentioned earlier, that any development strategy should put people first as the driving force of their own change. Furthermore one should not lose sight of the fact that community development projects take place within a particular political, social and economic context.

Contrary to the above, development role players tend to neglect the importance of time, cost, performance and objectives during implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages during project management. As a result, poverty alleviation projects battle to stand on their own and collapse just before they bear any fruits.

This has been confirmed by projects that struggle to stand on their own when Government funding is exhausted. To illustrate the point, as a community development worker I have come across a communal garden project that could not start ploughing vegetables because all the funds allocated to the project were utilized on training the project members and erecting fence on the site. That could have been prevented if project members and project manager had knowledge of how to manage money, and link that to time and objectives, using the projects administrative records.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Rationale for Selecting the Methodology.

The case study method was used to obtain information on constraints and opportunities for successful functioning of community development projects. Community development projects that provide impoverished rural communities with opportunity to engage in income-generating activities were the focal point of the study. The researcher studied four cases of community development projects, two successful and two unsuccessful, using interviews as a research tool. The study looks at how certain factors manifest themselves and prevent the poor to uplift their standard of living. Four questionnaires with open-ended questions were used to elicit information from the respondent.

Using knowledge and experience of working with development project and studying literature on community development, the researcher was able to classify community development projects intended at generating job opportunities for rural communities as successful or unsuccessful.

Neuman (1997:331) has indicated that a qualitative researcher collect a large amount of information on one or few cases, go into greater depth and get more details on the cases being examined may use case study approach. Assessing four cases has been the appropriate approach for the researcher to obtain detailed information on issues related to community development and deal with time and cost factors.

Neuman further states that unlike the quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers become immersed during data collection and gain better understanding of people's lives and culture. He looks for patterns in their lives, actions and words in the context of the complete case. This was noted when the researcher paid attention and listened to the words expressed by the participants during the interview sessions.

The researcher became engaged and gained better understanding of how community development projects in rural areas struggle to attain their goals of enabling poor people to rise above the impoverished living conditions.

Although the case study approach can be helpful in demonstrating how the social forces shape human behavior and produce results, Stoeker in Neuman (1997:30) warns that generalization is more difficult. The main aim of the study was to give a picture of factors contributing to the success of community development projects in rural areas rather than generalization.

In spite of its limitations, the case study approach was followed, taking into account the main aim of the study. It is worth mentioning that findings of this study can only be generalized with caution to subjects with characteristics similar to those of the cases involved in the research.

3.2 Description of the Participants

The community development projects, which are the subjects of the study, operate in Lotheni rural area (\pm 42 km) away from Impendle. Just like all the rural areas, this community has been neglected and stricken by poverty.

Community members took the initiative to organize themselves into income-generating projects in response to unemployment and poverty. The intention of such projects is to help poor people fight poverty by being economically independent and self-reliant. The four poverty alleviation projects investigated were introduced in chapter one.

Here they are listed with a brief organizational history. Qondisani and Ntuthuko Yesizwe projects were started in 1994 and obtained financial assistance in 1998. On the other hand Thandanani and Zamokuhle projects were established and funded in 1999. These projects have received financial assistance from one of the Government Departments. The researcher used her knowledge and experience of facilitating and managing community development projects to classify the former projects as being successful in alleviating poverty, and the latter as being unsuccessful. The projects includes poultry, piggery, sewing, cultivating vegetables, block making and home-based care activities. Each project is made up of \pm ten members.

Four leaders representing the four community development projects participated in the study. The leaders were all females and serve as chairpersons in their respective projects. The community members democratically elected leaders from Qondisani and Ntuthuko Yesizwe in a public meeting. On the other hand leaders from Thandanani and Zamokuhle projects appointed themselves to leadership positions.

It appears that women in most of these projects often play leadership roles. Gender issues as they relate to leadership will be briefly discussed later in this paper. The number of project members seems to have an impact in determining the progress of the projects. These are all issues that will be covered later in the discussion as well.

3.3/ Selection of the participants (Sampling)

Non-probability and purposive sampling method was utilized to choose the participants. The researcher's intention was to identify certain types of community development projects. These community projects that are directed towards helping rural communities break the cycle of poverty through engaging in income-generating activities.

The researcher had a specific purpose in mind and used her judgement to select cases that fit the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study was to demonstrate factors that contribute to the success of community development projects. Generalization of the findings appears to be not the main purpose of the study. Non-probability method of selecting subjects therefore was used taking into account the main aim of the study.

The researcher sought the assistance of a field worker in order to obtain community projects that matched the purpose of the study. The field worker is familiar with all the development initiatives taking place in Lotheni. He works closely with community members and links them to appropriate resources. The researcher used her in-depth knowledge and experience of working with rural communities to describe and select the kind of projects that would meet the purpose of the study. The cases of the study had to consist of community projects that are self-sustainable and those that appear to be collapsing. Two projects from each category were selected.

According to Neuman (1997:206) purposive sampling is appropriate under three conditions namely:

- ◆A researcher may use it to select unique cases that are informative.
- ◆A researcher uses purposive sampling to select members difficult to reach specialized population.
- ◆It can also be used to identify particular types of cases for in depth investigation.

The researcher supports Neuman's views because it would have been difficult to use one of probability sampling methods in a rural setting. For example the researcher's experience showed that it was difficult to compile a sampling frame. One had to cross-rivers and walks fifteen kilometers to reach the participants. In view of the situation, purposive sampling therefore was appropriate to undertake the foregoing study.

It is imperative to mention that, just like all the other non-probability-sampling methods, purposive sampling has its shortcomings. Bailey (1982:97) points out that purposive sampling limits the researcher to generalize his findings beyond the specific sample being studied.

3.4 Data Collection Method

The research took place on a one -to -one basis in an office setting. The researcher asked questions and recorded the responses on the semi-structured questionnaires. Semi-structured interview methods with open-ended questions were used to elicit information from the respondent. Interviews were conducted with four women serving as leaders in their development projects.

The first session was used to familiarize with the women and explaining the purpose of the study. The researcher indicated that there are no right or wrong answers and that answers would be treated confidentially.

Collection of data took place during the second session whereby interviews were conducted privately with individual leaders. Each interview session lasted up to 2 hours. Questions were structured around the following development issues:

- Recruitment of project members
- Establishment of the project
- Activities
- Resources
- Networking with other organizations
- Leadership
- Sustainability of the project
- Training
- Monitoring and Evaluation

It is worth mentioning that the above mentioned development issues will be used as themes for presenting and analyzing the data later in the discussion.

The interview used as a tool to collect data was appropriate to the characteristics of the participants. For example, most of the participants have low levels of education, which could contribute to misunderstanding of questions. The interview setting enabled the researcher to read the questions, and clarify any concepts or statements that appeared confusing to the participants. In addition the researcher was able to probe for more information and select information relevant to the questions.

It is generally accepted that this type of data collection tool ensures that participants do not get an opportunity to study and discuss the questions and answers with other people. They give their personal views and thoughts spontaneously.

The participants brought some sensitive issues affecting their lives during the interview. The researcher empathized with them and used her interview facilitation skills to guide and keep the session focused on development issues.

Lastly, the researcher was able to ensure that all of the questions were answered.

Bailey(1982:420) states that open-ended questions ensure flexibility and allow for unanticipated responses. This was evident when the participants freely express their opinions and brought up important and relevant issues related to their standard of living.

The researcher also requested project documents to be brought to the interview. All the financial records and project records, which were made available to the interview, were assessed. Other project members kept some of the records at home. The researcher had to take the participants words and believe them.

3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher was unable to verify the information obtained from the chairpersons by interviewing other members of the projects because of the long distance and expensive traveling costs involved reaching their residential areas. As a result a central venue was arranged to meet the participants and their traveling costs were refunded.

In future a study like this needs to be supplemented with direct observation of the project members in real life situations doing their work to ensure the reliability of the information and counter act bias in the responses.

X The interviews conducted provided less opportunity for anonymity since the researcher knew the respondents and their community projects. The respondents may have been biased in their responses to protect the image of their projects. Hence the possibility of them giving information they think is correct and required by the researcher may not be totally excluded.

The issue of extraneous variables was not properly accounted for in the study. It was not clear why there was a difference in terms of bookkeeping between the successful and unsuccessful projects.

For example, one can assume that the level of education among the project members contributed to the ability of the leaders to guide the projects, delegate tasks properly and keeping all the necessary records; hence the other two projects could have failed due to low levels of education from the participants.

X In addition, project members may be willing to implement good record keeping system to manage the project but fail to do so due to illiteracy problem. Therefore more research and intervention is still needed to assess the impacts of illiteracy in enabling the poor to learn to facilitate their own development.

Finally the study has managed to highlight factors that contribute to success of community projects aimed at alleviating poverty, however the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other community projects. Generalization can only be done to community projects operating within rural communities similar to Lotheni and possessing characteristics similar to those of the participants of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter consists of ten major subsections namely, membership, objectives, nature of activities, leadership, record keeping, projects sustainability, capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation. Noting pattern, themes, clustering, similarities and differences were the tactics used to attach meaning to the information collected during the interviews. Bailey (1982:150) states that these tactics are useful in managing and interpreting information collected through qualitative method.

The first theme deals with membership and the issues of targeting. Ascertaining the extent to which community projects reach the appropriate beneficiaries has been the major concern for the developing countries faced with the challenge of alleviating poverty.

The second theme deals with formulation of objectives to guide the project. The importance of stating clear objectives was covered in chapter two.

The type of activities is very important in determining the success of the project. The third theme therefore looks at the match between the needs of the community and the products made by the projects.

The fourth theme deals with leadership as the most important element of driving community development. The type of leadership exercised by the project committee and managers contributes to empowerment of the project members.

Presenting the administration of the poverty alleviation projects follows this. The results of the study are going to show the importance of keeping all the necessary documents for reference purposes.

The sixth theme deals with another vital element of poverty alleviation projects that is, sustainability. The nature of the community development projects is different in the sense that projects have to be able to stand on their own when Government funding gets exhausted. There are various factors, which should be taken into account to ensure that community projects survive beyond Government funding and generate sustainable results.

It was mentioned in chapter two that people are the most important element of community development. This subsection therefore looks at the extent to which poor people's capacity is developed and enhanced during implementation of community development projects.

The Government has invested considerable money supporting community initiatives engaging in job creation in rural areas. The eighth part of research findings therefore deals with the effectiveness of the community development projects in alleviating poverty. The last part of the presentation of the results discusses monitoring and evaluation of poverty alleviation projects.

4.1 MEMBERSHIP

Targeting the appropriate beneficiaries has always been problematic in service delivery. The South African government is faced with the challenge of redistributing social services to the poor people living in rural areas. Along the process of service delivery people who do not deserve those services end up being the beneficiaries.

Research conducted in other countries, reveals similar dynamics. In Bangladesh for example, leaders who were running Action Aid Nepal emerged from rich families rather than poor. Poor people are vulnerable to exploitation by people who have power and influence in the community (Harris and Poulton 311988:42).

The manner in which beneficiaries are recruited can have a bearing in involving the right people in the project. The table below shows how the participants in the study addressed the issue of membership and targeting.

Table 4: Criteria for Selecting Members

CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANAN I
no specific criteria			•	•
joining fees	•	•	• •	•
age 18 - 30		•		
unemployed	•	•		
commitment	•	•		
no source of income	•	•		

Table 4, reveals that Zamokuhle and Thandanani projects did not have a specific criteria for selection of members. It was noted in all the four projects that project members pay a small amount of money as a joining fee. According to them member's payment of a contribution is important to motivate them to work hard and be committed to the success of the project.

On the other hand, Qondisani and Ntuthuko Yesizwe projects went a step further and looked at personal characteristics as criteria for membership in poverty alleviation projects. Among other things these projects consider the willingness of the members to work without expecting immediate payment. Attendance and active involvement in activities of the group was also regarded as very important. The management committee of Ntuthuko Yesizwe decided that age was important for membership since their target group was mainly youth with senior certificate. People interested in joining this project had to fall between the ages of eighteen and thirty.

In all four projects poor people are perceived to be those who are unemployed, have no source of income and sit at home doing nothing other than doing the domestic chores. Due to lack of job opportunities poor people are unable to feed their families, and send children to school.

Table 5: RECRUITMENT OF MEMBERS

RECRUITMENT	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
Public meeting	•	•		
unemployed people	•	•		
approach friends and relatives			•	•
senior certificate		•		

Table five shows that project members belonging to Qondisani and Ntuthuko Yesizwe were recruited through community meetings. Zamokuhle and Thandanani shows that one member had an idea of starting income generating projects and she then approached her unemployed neighbors and relatives to come together and start

the project. Members were motivated by other projects that had received funding from the Government Departments. Some of these community projects had received sewing machines as a donation from the Government. Only one project, Ntuthuko Yesizwe ensured that, people who were interested in joining the projects produce their senior certificate to qualify for membership.

4.2 SETTING OBJECTIVES

Ntuthuko Yesizwe and Qondisani community development projects started as a result of high unemployment rates in the area. One of the main goals of the projects was to create job opportunities for the unemployed people.

Although all the four community projects had received funding from the Government, the first two projects started by sharing skills, knowledge and equipment as a group. The other goals were to:

- Supplement the household income.
- Buy food and clothing for the children.
- Be able to pay school fees.
- Render a service to the community.

It is apparent that the community projects had clear goals and direction. They did not crop up to become dependent on handouts from the Government. The study showed that these projects have been operating well without any intervention from the Government for four years. They were started in 1994 and only received financial assistance in 1998. It was interesting to note that the second two community work projects, Zamokuhle and Thandanani, were formed in 1999 and received financial assistance in the same year but cannot stand on their own.

It is worth mentioning that the differences between the four projects can be attributed to their main objectives for starting the projects. Both chairpersons from Ntuthuko Yesizwe and Qondisani commented:

"There are no firms and industries in our area. People sit at home doing nothing and expect their grandparents to use their social grant to support them. We decided to share our common knowledge and skills to start income generating projects and fight poverty".

The above comment shows that the project members went through the stage of identifying unmet needs in the community and working out strategies to meet those needs.

The project members were clear about what they were hoping to achieve. On the other hand the participants from Zamokuhle and Thandanani state the following:

"We started the projects because we heard that Mrs. Mkhize's garden project has received funding from the Government".

It was clear that Zamokuhle and Thandanani projects mushroomed because of misconception that starting a community project enables one to get rich quickly.

Community projects, which start without the objective of uplifting the community, may turn out to be one man's show or family asset. This problem was also noted when the researcher attended a public meeting intended to planning for the establishment of community projects in one of the remote rural areas.

One Women commented...

"Mr. Shabane (not his real surname) and his wife assisted us in starting a garden-project. They told us that our club has received R 50 000 from one of the Government Departments. Mr. Shabane, his wife and his brother-in-law looked after the bank account for our group.

They used some of the money to buy seeds, irrigation equipment and fencing material. Mr. Shabane told us that his son has been paid R 3000 for erection of the fence.

Our work was getting tough because we have not made any profit. Community members cannot afford to buy our perishable product because they are unemployed. We are unable to sell some of our vegetables to people living in cities due to transport problems We like to work but where are we going to sell our product?

The project collapsed when the chairperson (Mr. Shabane) passed away and his wife told us there was no money in the bank"

The above case is a typical example of how community projects become family assets and problems encountered by the poor people in rural areas. This approach to solve community problems is ineffective because certain individuals manipulate decision-making powers and exclude others. This case clearly shows that other project members were not involved in decision making.

The Shabane family was in charge of everything and unilaterally made decisions without involving all the projects members. They served as signatories at the bank, which makes the projects more vulnerable to fraud and lack of financial accountability.

This project was based on the wrong premises because this family's objective was to make themselves rich rather than serving the whole community. As a result, project members were not informed about the projects' financial status. This is where the community leaders can play a major role in identifying and keeping an eye on community members that use the poor to get rich.

Generally, it is envisaged that with proper guidance and active involvement of the beneficiaries in stating clear objectives, poverty alleviation projects can generate positive results in the lives of the poor.

The results show that more attention should be paid to formulate clear objectives to serve as the map to lead to the success of the project. Objectives are very important because the project members can look back and reflect on their progress by assessing the extent to which they have attained their objectives. Project members are also able to identify areas that need adjustment in order to produce the desired results in the project.

4.3 NATURE OF THE ACTIVITIES

The interviews revealed that the main activities of these community projects include sewing, poultry, piggery, block making and home based care.

Table 6: What type of activities do you engage in to earn income?

ACTIVITIES	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANAN I
Poultry	■	■		■
Sewing			■	■
Piggery	■			
Home Based Care		■		
Block Making		■		
Vegetable Garden	■			

The above table shows the type of products produced by the two successful community projects and the ones produced by the two unsuccessful communities projects. It is worth mentioning that the two community projects focused on producing goods that meet the immediate needs of the customers, which is satisfaction of hunger.

Qondisani project members engaged in income generation activities such as; communal garden (vegetables) poultry and piggery. It is worth mentioning that Qondisani project members plough vegetables such as potatoes, onions, and spinach which according to them sell very well. Ntuthuko Yesizwe project members engage in the following activities: home based care, poultry and block making.

Zamokuhle project members do sewing and Thandanani project members are involved in poultry as well. The sewing project produces school uniforms and tracksuits.

The results of this study support my experience as a community development worker that the type of vegetables cultivated by project members determines the success of the project. It is generally agreed that potatoes, onions, beans, mealies, cabbages and spinach are in demand and used often by poor people living in rural areas. It is unlikely that such a project will collapse due to poor marketing because these vegetables are often in demand within poor communities. By contrast growing carrots, lettuces, beetroot and cucumber can have negative impact on the project because such vegetables are not always part of the diet for poor people.

The results of this study established that sewing projects are not viable in rural areas. Schools and people prefer to buy quality products from external business. The chairperson from Zamokuhle states the following:

"We are struggling to sell the school uniforms because the principals do not want to give us contracts to supply the schools".

The above statement shows that work must be done to educate poor people about quality control and marketing strategies in order to have positive impacts in the eradication of poverty. Engaging in more than one activity help the project members to sustain their activities. For example Qondisani engages in gardening, poultry and piggery.

The Chairperson commented:

"We have exhausted funds from the Government but our projects are continuing and selling very well. Income generated from gardening is used to sustain poultry and piggery. Members who have no other source of income are only allowed to take vegetables on Fridays to feed their families".

Contrary to Qondisani and Ntuthuko Yesizwe, Thandanani and Zamokuhle projects do not have a combination of more than one activity. Responding to the question of sustaining the project, the Chairperson from both projects stated:

"Sales of our product go very slowly. We are waiting for the Government to give us more money".

Thandanani and Zamokuhle appear to be struggling to survive. Project members are more dependent on handouts from the Government rather than trying innovative and empowering ways of getting out of a poverty cycle.

4.4 LEADERSHIP

This part of the discussion looks at how leadership enhances the impact of income generating projects in alleviating poverty. According to Smit (1999:278) leadership is the process of directing the behavior of others to accomplish certain objectives. It involves setting tasks and activities in motion and motivating people, giving orders, managing conflict and communicating with partners in the business.

Table 7 summarizes the differences in the manner in which the chairpersons were elected into leadership positions between the four community projects. The results show that the people elected the leaders of the two successful community projects. By contrast the other two Chairpersons assigned themselves to leadership positions. This procedure of getting into leadership positions appear to have negative impact to management of the projects. It is generally known that these leaders tend to be authoritarian style of leadership which prevent other people to learn and grow.

Table 7; Election of Leaders and Qualities of a Leader.
How do you select leaders to supervise and guide the project?

LEADERSHIP	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANAN I
elected by the people	■	■		
delegate work	■	■		
good attendance	■	■		
hard worker	■	■		
interest of the community	■	■		
assigned herself			■	■
lack of team work			■	■
joint decision making	■	■		

Many poverty alleviation projects fall short in identifying suitable people for leadership positions. It was noted that people serving as Chairpersons from Zamokuhle and Thandanani community projects were automatically assigned to leadership positions because they initiated the projects.

According to Qondisani and Ntuthuko Yesizwe chairpersons, they were assigned to leadership positions because they demonstrated the following qualities:

- Commitment to uplift the standard of living with the community.
- Good interpersonal skills
- Interest of the community at heart
- Good attendance
- Hard work

What is also interesting is that these people were democratically elected in a public meeting. This shows that community members had confidence in their abilities.

The results show that the two successful community development projects stipulated clear roles and responsibilities for each member. Work was allocated equally to all projects members during weekdays.

It has been noted that leaders who encourage project members to contribute in decision- making get co-operation and commitment from them. Commitment, co-operation and teamwork motivate people to come to work on a regular basis and perform to their best abilities.

4.5 RECORD KEEPING

The research findings show that proper record keeping is the backbone for any organization because that is where the projects assess how effective does it make use of ideas, objectives, costs, and time to have positive impacts in addressing poverty. Table 8 below highlights the differences in the type of records utilized by the two unsuccessful and successful community development projects.

Table 8: RECORD KEEPING

RECORD KEEPING	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
attendance register	■	■		
minute book	■	■		
bank account	■	■	■	■
cash book	■	■		
constitution	■	■		
receipt book	■	■		
job description	■	■		
annual report				
inventory and sales book				

Ntuthuko Yesizwe and Qondisani projects keep the following records to monitor the progress of the projects:

- Attendance register
- Minute book
- Cash book
- Constitution
- Receipt book
- Job description for committee and project members
- Inventory
- Bank book

It is worth mentioning that the quality of the above records was very good. The records contained all the important and appropriate information. The attendance register was kept up to date. The minute book showed how the decisions were being taken by the projects. The income and expenditure figures corresponded with figures reflected in the cashbook. The job description sheet clearly explains the duties of each project member.

Both community projects had well formulated constitutions with mission statement, vision, objectives, type of meetings to be held and membership conditions. The chairperson from Ntuthuko Yesizwe commented:

"Unlike other poverty alleviation projects we do not experience problems with members who do not want to step down in leadership positions. The constitution guides us in terms of electing and changing office bearers in the management committee".

It has been generally noted that writing up notes of the meetings still appears to be a neglected part of administration for most of the community development projects. Minute books can be a good source for assessing the extent to which all the project members get involved in decision making. Contraries to the above, Thandanani and Zamokuhle project members only operate a bank account.

It was noted that, in spite of aiming at income generation, all the projects do not keep the sales, stock and quality control books. Lack of the business plan was also common to all the four projects. Qondisani and Ntuthuko Yesizwe project members use the constitution as a guide to manage and control decision-making powers and the activities of the projects.

The results show that poor record keeping contributes to waste of time, money and human capacity and eventually leads to collapse of the project. The chairperson from Zamokuhle confirmed this:

"Each person does his own thing, we do not have any documents that explain the roles and responsibilities of each project member".

The above case demonstrates that poor management of poverty alleviation projects can lead to lack of teamwork, high absenteeism, heightened conflict and poor motivation.

4.6 PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The study shows that the income generating projects sell their produce within the local community. Their main customers consist of people who get social grants. Project members go out to pension pay points to sell their produce. The chairpersons from both Qondisani and Ntuthuko Yesizwe had a similar lament:

"The community buys more chickens, vegetables, and poultry rather than blocks. Our block making project is going very slowly but we are negotiating with regional councils to give us contracts to supply them with blocks to build schools crèches and community halls".

The above comment supports Burkerys' opinion in chapter one, that poverty is linked to hunger. People prefer to buy food rather than building materials and poor people often use the traditional methods to build and maintain their houses.

The chairperson from Ntuthuko Yesizwe expressed her concerns regarding markets:

"It is difficult for us to secure contracts with other organizations because the quality and quantity of our products is not good enough. As a result the regional councils prefer well established building contractors where they obtain all the building materials they need such as blocks, stones, cement, sand and corrugated iron".

One of the piggery project members stressed the following:

"We want to supply our pork to the external butcheries and supermarket so that our product will not go off. The local community supports us but once our meat products increase, the local market becomes saturated and impossible to absorb all our product".

Reaching out to external markets can also be hindered by bad weather conditions and poor transportation. As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, it is difficult for the public transport to operate in rural areas because of gravel roads that become wet and slippery during heavy rains.

As a result potential customers outside the communities cannot rely on delivery of products made by the community income generating projects.

While Qondisani and Ntuthuko Yesizwe projects make an effort to secure and expand their market for produce, Thandanani and Zamokuhle project members appear to be dependent on the Government to provide them with more funds. The latter community projects defeat the Government's development principle of promoting self-reliant citizens.

The main aim of poverty alleviation projects is to improve the standard of living for the poor by creating employment opportunities. It is therefore a challenge for all the development role players to take poverty alleviation projects beyond survival to profit-making stage for them to have genuine impact in changing the lives of the poor. This objective is more likely to be attained if project members receive proper guidance about marketing strategies.

Table 9: AVERAGE INCOME

INCOME	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANAN I
prior to joining the project	none	none	unknown	unknown
after joining the project	R1200	R1500	none	none

The above table shows that in spite of the difficulties experienced to sell products, Qondisani and Ntuthuko Yesizwe project members manage to earn small income to support their families.

Each of the participants however obtain a salary of R 1 500 at the end of the year. This has made a difference in the lives of those who are really poor because they manage to buy clothes, food for their children and pay school fees.

Ntuthuko Yesizwe projects also struggle to survive due to lack of markets, which negatively impact on their ability to generate more profit. The chairperson expressed her worry:

"We are proud of ourselves because we have made profit because our project is surviving and help us to earn an income. When we are satisfied that the project has generated enough money we often divide it amongst ourselves and keep the balance to sustain the project. Each member receives approximately R 600 on quarterly basis".

It was indicated earlier in the presentation that people whose income falls below R 501 are regarded as poor. The question that arises is whether one can claim that income-generating projects have the capacity of uplifting the standard of living for the poor above poverty line?

It is important when answering this question to bear in mind that "poverty" and "poverty line" are relative terms.

The study found that Thandanani and Zamokuhle project members have never received any profit. They were rather struggling to sell school uniforms and track suits.

The projects need to identify the needs of the community members in order to produce something that is in demand, which will also help the project members make profit. For example the project that uses its capital to sew duvet covers and curtains only is unlikely to succeed because poor people in rural areas spend their limited income to meet their basic needs such as bringing food on the plate. They may rather spend that little money they have to buy bread rather than curtains.

The following case taken from Marais (1999) shows the importance of studying the needs of the community prior to implementation of the employment creation project in rural areas.

The community field worker organized a meeting with a group of women and discovered that they own two sewing machines. Four of the ten members have been sewing for their families and the two who own the machines have generated income by occasionally doing some mending for friends and neighbors. The members of the group are convinced that they can make a profit from producing and selling clothes in the community because shops are not easily accessible and sell expensive clothes.

The field worker decides to help the group by organizing training in sewing, bookkeeping and how to form and run a co-operative. She also has some contacts in the clothing industry. She meets the owner of a clothing factory who is prepared to donate the end of the rolls of fabric that cannot be used in big cutting machines in the factory. She collects the fabric on a regular basis from the factory. From the same factory, she also gets a full range of patterns that were used the previous season to produce dresses.

The group members were offered a grant to buy more machines and other equipment they need by the development agency. As months went by, the quality for the garments slowly improved to the point where community members started buying them at a cheaper price than the clothes in the shops. The field worker is also managed to sell a few to people who visited her organization.

The field worker is convinced that the business must be fully owned and controlled by the group members. She visits the group regularly to help with the problems that arise. She helped the group form the committee with office bearers and open a bank account.

The members of the co-operative decided to share the profit equally amongst themselves. The income helped them to meet the needs of their families.

At the end of the first year of operation, things settled down and the field worker felt that she could consider a job to another development agency. She accepted the offer, believing that the sewing project would sustain itself. Contrary to the field worker's expectations, within two months sales dropped drastically. The factory stopped giving fabric because it was not collected regularly. There was no money in the bank and the group members start fighting with one another.

The above case leads us to the next condition necessary for the success and sustainability of poverty alleviation projects, namely, capacity building. The case revealed the danger of doing things for the community rather than allowing them to take a leading role in facilitating their own development.

4.6 CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

People are the reason why development takes place. According to Jeppe (1985:50) the primary aim of community development is to enhance people's abilities to solve their individual and community problems. Any development strategy therefore should not only focus on improving income levels of the poor but also to empower them with knowledge and skills to become self reliant. Briefly, people are considered as an end rather than as means towards achieving various ends.

Poor people need to be empowered at all levels. Capacity building for poor people means that the development experts link the poor to the appropriate training to learn to direct and control their own development.

The previous case study taken from (Marais 1999) clearly show how development workers sometimes make a mistake of doing things for the people and prevent them from becoming independent. The field worker was convinced that when she withdrew from the sewing project, it would be in a position to continue on its own. However she overlooked the fact that the project members were more dependent on her skills, easy access to resources, contacts, and ability to identify needs and link them to appropriate resources, and even on smaller things like access to vehicles to collect fabric from the factory. The field worker should have encouraged the project members to learn to do the above-mentioned duties in order to develop their capacity to manage the project without seeking assistance from the outsiders.

Poor people usually have learned creative ways to survive and cope with their situation. It is the responsibility of field workers to enhance rather than block this coping mechanism by starting training opportunities. It is clear that people who work with the poor should not assume that they lack knowledge and skills for surviving. The field worker has to come and start where the community is and allow the process of learning to take place rather than imposing his idea upon the poor. A comment from one of the chairpersons demonstrates that poor people do possess skills and knowledge in a variety of areas. The leader from Qondisani commented:

"We usually wake up early in the morning at 04 h 00 and listen to Cobela Kufalaza Mlimi from the radio. This program has taught us lot of things about poultry, gardening and piggery".

This suggests that development role players should have more confidence in the capacity of rural poor to take initiative and make sound decision about improving their lives.

The research shows that relying on the outsiders to facilitate community development may not be feasible because of lack of understanding of community dynamics and lack of co-ordination of service. A considerable amount of money and time is spent on serving the same communities rather than stretching out the resources and reaching out to other poor communities. The chairperson from Ntuthuko Yesizwe commented:

"We are getting confused now because different people call us to meetings and teach us same things over again. They do not worry to come back and check how well we are doing".

Duplication of services is not only costly for the Government but it also takes a lot of time and energy from the poor communities who are expected to attend meetings and training workshops that deal with the same issues. Instead of strengthening the projects by putting into practice knowledge and information they have acquired. Poor people have to stop their work and attend endless meetings and workshops.

It is important to ensure that any kind of training planned for the development projects is based on needs assessment. By listening to the people expressing their needs, we would be facilitating development that is people driven.

According to my analysis we are reaching a stage where poor communities are well equipped with basic knowledge about committee skills and management. What is required is the monitoring in terms of getting guidance in implementing what they have learnt or putting ideas and information into action. The researcher agrees with Dlamini (1998:18) in stating that income generating project members need more information about how to maintain their projects. This enables them to increase productivity, create opportunities for employment for others and secure markets for their products so that they can benefit from their engagement in development projects.

Obviously whilst training plays a very important role in building capacity, the point is that development role players should assess the type of information that is required to assist project members learn to manage their own projects. For example, the next sub section demonstrates how involvement of project members in monitoring and evaluation can enhance their capacity to manage their own development.

Overall, capacity building should be driven by the need to promote sharp, smart, healthy, active, self reliant, citizens who are less dependent on Government to solve their own problems.

4.7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

It was mentioned earlier that the success of any development project is also measured by how well the project changes poor people's personal perception, facilitate control, self confidence and ability to make decisions and determine choices. Through engaging in monitoring and evaluation, poor people may learn to appreciate their own work. This will lead them to learn to write progress reports, which is imperative for any organization to check if things are still going according to the plan and the extent to which objectives are being met.

Monitoring and evaluation are the most crucial steps during project management. The manner however in which monitoring and evaluation are carried out often contributes to either the success or failure of community development projects in addressing poverty.

Before attempting to answer the above questions it is necessary to have an understanding of the main purpose of monitoring and evaluation. According to Mtshali (2000:68) the main aim of monitoring and evaluation is to ensure that all the activities are proceeding according to plan, to provide a record of input use, activities and results and to give a warning of any decision from the initial aims and expected outcomes.

She further states that the Monitoring and Evaluation process is important for providing feedback to decision-makers and policy makers on how their plans are working in alleviating poverty.

The Monitoring and Evaluation policy makers can learn about the effects of a project to be able to determine whether or not to continue with it as is or to modify or even abandon the strategies being used.

Poverty alleviation projects have undeniable value, but they need to be evaluated in an effective and efficient manner. In order words poverty alleviation interventions should enable the project members to learn to identify positive results of their work and how they can overcome obstacles that prevent them from attaining their main objective of overcoming poverty.

Oakely (1986:247) states that monitoring and evaluation of community development project tends to focus on quantitative outcomes and neglected qualitative indicators. It is acceptable that poverty alleviation projects should generate change in the economic status of the poor in rural areas. In addition, however, qualities such as motivation, determination, attitudes, communication, independence are important in judging how well a project is doing.

In her study of how the indicators for successful rural financial schemes were identified, Vermaak (2001:43) raised an important point by asking who are involved in setting the criteria used to measure success? She was concerned that biased viewpoint of the outsiders may prevail over the intended beneficiaries of the project. The question therefore, of who are involved, and how in monitoring and evaluation of poverty alleviation projects needs to be taken into account during management of poverty alleviation projects.

All leaders from the four poverty alleviation projects express their concerns:

"The development workers do not visit us often to give us support and guidance. When it happens that they visit our projects they only look for the financial statement and proof of expenditure."

The above comment leads to the point that development is not only about how much money has either been spent or obtained in the projects. Development of human capacity through giving feedback about where the project members have done well and pointing out where they need to improve is an essential ingredient for successful functioning of the community project.

The study shows that local leaders with genuine interest in uplifting the community dedicate their time and energy to organizing their fellow neighbors into productive and creative activities. It is the same people who understand the political, social and economic dynamics of their communities. These are usually referred to as volunteers.

The chairpersons from the four projects namely, Qondisani, Ntuthuko Yesizwe, Zamokuhle and Thandanani commonly echoed the contribution made by the local field workers in facilitating community projects:

"We rely on Mr. Kunene who helps us to form the project and seek financial assistance from the Government. He visits us now and again to check the progress of our work".

The above comment indicates that poor people in rural areas tend to trust their local leaders more than the outsiders. A wise community worker, therefore, needs to learn to work closely with the local volunteers in order to gain the trust of the community.

The fact that local volunteers or field workers are easily accessible to the community and spend a lot of time visiting poverty alleviation projects, implies that they can play a vital role in monitoring and identifying problems before they become big and negatively impact on the progress of the projects.

Mtshali (2000:68) emphasizes that the beneficiaries or project members should be trained in understanding the process of monitoring and evaluation so that they will appreciate the wider context and implications of their work.

The researcher therefore supports Oakley's view points that projects should not only be assessed in terms of how much money has been spent and how much profit has been made. The focus of monitoring and evaluation should also be on how well does the project contribute towards mental, emotional, physical and social liberation of the poor.

A response from Qondisani Project leader served to illustrate the point that people are the reason for community development. Thus, a community project in turn should contribute positively to the well being of the project members. She echoed this point by passionately saying:

"We are proud of ourselves because we are working and can afford to buy food and clothing for our children. Knowing that there is money that belongs to us in the bank makes us feel good".

"The project has been successful in reducing poverty because young people are involved in productive activities rather than engaging in crime".

The above comment shows that poverty alleviation projects can play a vital role in enhancing the self-esteem of the poor by giving them the opportunity to contribute towards their own development. The study has shown that people with high self-esteem have the desire to perform better and take initiative to improve all the areas of their lives.

In Table 10, the differences and similarities in terms of monitoring tools between the two successful and unsuccessful community development projects are highlighted. The two successful development projects use their constitution as a simple guide to measure the progress made in attaining objectives. Lack of annual reports and business plans were common among the four community projects. It was also noted that the four community projects focused on quantitative factors such as income to measure their progress in alleviating poverty. Local community workers play an active role in helping projects members assess their activities.

Table 10: DIFFERENCES IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION

MONITORING AND EVALUATION	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANAN I
constitution	■	■		
annual report				
business plan				
quantitative measures	■	■	■	■
project members and community worker	■	■	■	■

In summary, the discussion suggests that unless community development role players involve the project members in monitoring and evaluation, projects will often become a disaster. Clear objectives linked to time frames within specified budget and responsibility should be taken into account during monitoring and evaluation phases. There were differences in the four projects in terms of stating objectives.

The two successful projects make use of the constitution, which contained the objectives to guide their activities. Community volunteers also assisted the four projects to assess their progress. Local volunteers appear to play a vital role in facilitating development of their communities in rural areas.

CHAPTER FIVE

6.1 DATA ANALYSIS

What does the study tell us about community development projects as one of the strategies used by the development role players to alleviate poverty? The study reveals that poverty alleviation projects have the potential to create jobs and improve the quality of life for the poor communities. The research conducted by Snyman in Lombard (1992 :111) confirms that providing job opportunities is the best way of assisting the poor and combating poverty.

Certain factors, however, within or outside of the project, need to be taken into account to ensure that community development projects generate positive results in terms of helping the rural poor deal with hunger and poverty. The study has demonstrated how these factors retard or enhance the success of community development projects in combating poverty. Such factors include targeting, setting objectives, administration, leadership, project activities, marketing, capacity building, project sustainability, and monitoring and evaluation.

An outline of these factors will be presented followed by recommendations for improvements and a conclusion.

The study has established that there is a greater need to ensure that people who receive help from the Government are those who really deserve it. Grosh (1992:8) indicated that the goal of targeting is to direct resources to those who need them most. The study, however, demonstrates how this becomes a problem when it comes to implementation of poverty alleviation projects in rural areas. For example, there is a possibility that the two unsuccessful projects consist of people who are not poor due to a lack of proper screening criteria for membership. People without any source of income should be the main target group for poverty alleviation projects rather than the rich people.

Selection criteria were clearly stated, to include unemployed people in the two successful projects. The researcher strongly argues that poor people appreciate any help that is provided to change their impoverished conditions. Development role players therefore should have a clear understanding of who are the most needy beneficiaries of their services. Otherwise the gap between the poor and rich will continue and widen.

It was noted that in all four projects, members are women only. Women also served as the leaders of the groups. It can be concluded from the study that women always take the responsibility of running the household and find means for their families to survive. They engage in development projects in order to earn an income and bring a plate of food for their children.

Setting clear objectives for poverty alleviation projects also came out as a critical issue in determining the success of these projects. Objectives of the project are often contained in the constitution and business plan of the project. It became clear that objectives of the project might be linked to the rationale behind the establishment of the project.

The study shows that community development projects that start on the wrong premises obviously end up in the wrong direction. The respondents from the two cases of unsuccessful projects mentioned that their project was initiated after they learnt that other people in the community have received funds from the government to strengthen their development projects.

This finding was echoed by Lund (1987:108) in her research where she indicates that community work projects are often perceived as means of earning material gains in areas where there are limited resources. Powerful individuals may manipulate community members as their involvement is primarily based on personal benefit rather than promoting the philosophy of sharing and community uplifting.

The question that arises is whether poverty alleviation projects should be regarded as a quick scheme to get rich or the vehicle to address the needs identified by the community?

Another major finding of the study in section 4.6 and table 4 showing that finding a well established market is one of the critical factors in determining the success of poverty alleviation projects. It has been clear that without a proper marketing strategy, community development projects struggle to move beyond the survival stages and reach the point where they generate enough profit to benefit the project members.

The remuneration the poor received from participating in poverty alleviation projects often is just enough for them to meet their immediate needs such as buying food, and clothing and paying school fees.

In spite of the difficulties in competing with well-established businesses within and external to their communities, poor people manage to sustain their community projects because of the drive to get out of poverty.

One of the respondents expressed her concerns regarding the quality and quantity of their products, which makes it difficult for them to compete with well-established businesses in selling their products. This implies that there is a need to help poor people learn and master the skills to analyze the potential customers, competitors, do pricing, and costing and promotion of the products in order to become competitive in the market.

Linked to project sustainability is the extent to which the project is able to match its product and the needs of the community. The previous section demonstrated that poverty is associated with hunger and that community projects which enable the poor to meet this basic need are more likely to succeed in providing income for the poor and continue functioning even when external funds has been exhausted.

The study confirms the World Bank's report that inadequate access to markets where the poor can sell their goods and services undermines any strategy for job creation and poverty alleviation in Sub-Saharan Africa (African World Bank Report). It is argued that, provision of training and capital to kick-start the project is not good enough for poverty alleviation projects to realize better turnover. Proper research and action to secure stable markets should be integrated as one of the strategy during the planning phase to lead the projects into success.

The marketing plan will help the project members to understand who are their customers, what and how much are they going to produce, and how are they going to sell their products. Lack of a market in rural areas led to failure of the income generating projects because they competed with other well-established businesses, most of them coming from outside of the community.

There was evidence that proper record keeping plays a major role in determining the success of community development. One of the project leaders from the successful community projects indicated that making use of the records such, as the constitution, minutes-book, financial reports and job description helps to prevent conflicts, mismanagement of funds and wastage of time.

By keeping financial records, project members are able to see to it that they do not overspend money and find later that they do not have capital to sustain the project. The constitution plays a major role in helping project members track progress made in attaining the objectives of creating job opportunities and alleviating poverty.

Gerber (1995:91) emphasized that in order for the organizations to become successful it is imperative that a written document be kept which spells out what the employee does, how he does it, and under what circumstances the task is carried out.

The above clearly shows that poverty alleviation projects should be regarded as organizations that bring people together to attain a common goal of uplifting the standard of living for the poor. The main point, therefore, is that providing learning opportunities for the poor need to be supported with taking full responsibility to run poverty alleviation projects in an effective and efficient manner?

The manner in which leadership is practiced is certainly another critical factor in determining the success of community development projects. Gerber (1995:343) indicates that poor leadership is considered one of the key problems in the floundering and also downfall of any organization. According to the findings of this research the manner in which the person who assume the leadership position and get elected influences his or her ability to lead.

For example, the study confirmed that people who are often democratically elected by the community tend to be committed to uplift the standard of living for their communities as opposed to people who put themselves in leadership positions.

The study has revealed that successful leaders do not feel threatened by involving project members in decision-making processes. The leader of Qondisani project demonstrated the positive results of involving the rural poor in defining their situation. She managed to bring poor people together to analyze their situation and create job opportunities to address poverty.

It is interesting to note that people who unilaterally placed themselves in leadership positions and initiated community projects just to compete for Government resources with other people who are desperate to get out of poverty run unsuccessful projects.

It is apparent that although field workers make efforts to let poor people participate in decision making, this process is often constrained by the pressure to deliver as fast as possible. Moreover, there are pressures to be visible in the community. As a result I have noticed cases where the poor communities are exposed to the same kind of training repeated by different Government Departments and Non-Governmental Organization.

Poor people have learnt to adapt to their miserable conditions by looking at poverty as a way of life. As a result they do not see any way out of the poverty trap. One result is a tendency to expect outsiders to lead them. This is a great challenge for all stakeholders wanting to work with rural people and improve their quality of life. Just like Mrs. Mkhize who led and mobilized her community to work together to fight poverty, community development leaders are faced with the challenge of changing the attitudes, behavior and actions of poor people by encouraging and enhancing local leadership capacity.

One of the outstanding qualities of the community development leaders is that they have genuine interest for the poor because they have experienced the reality of being in poverty. The two successful community projects, namely, Qondisani and Ntuthuko Yesizwe projects were initiated by someone who, out of her own suffering, managed to feed her children by ploughing vegetables and breeding pigs and chickens.

She decided to help other poor people by sharing her experiences with them. It is evident that the most immediate and important requirement for achieving success in reducing poverty is conscious effort made by the leader to engage the poor communities in generating solutions to their problems instead of imposing ideas upon them.

According to the study, therefore, the type of leadership exhibited by the people who facilitate community development has a profound effect on the success of poverty alleviation projects.

The researcher, therefore, strongly suggests that leadership roles should not be taken for granted in community development projects. As informal as they may appear to be, leadership in community development should be taken very seriously because it involves the lives of people and Government resources. Gerber (1995:341) emphasized that leadership is the crucial determinant of the success of any institution, be it big and well established, or a small vendor in the street.

It can also be concluded that poverty alleviation projects can, perhaps, serve as part of the solution to problems of high unemployment and crime in general. The respondent from the successful community development project (Ntuthuko Yesizwe) commented that community projects enable them to earn income enough to meet their basic needs and provide jobs for unemployed youth. She envisaged that if there were no community projects young people in Lotheni community would have been bored and decide to engage in unproductive activities such as crime, just to occupy themselves.

Overall, the findings suggest that any intervention directed at alleviating poverty can claim to be a success only if it has enabled the rural poor to earn an income above poverty line, make them feel important and good about themselves and build on the existing capacity in the community.

The World Bank Report (1993:17) states that poverty is a gender issue because women are particularly vulnerable to the social and economic effects of poverty. For females the conditions of poverty are heightened by their limited opportunity attend school or engage in labor migration due to their added responsibility to raise and support children.

In a study conducted by Dlamini (1989:14) at Msinga, women pointed out that they were not aware of any women in leadership positions. Men often dominate key positions in community projects. Contrary to the above, the results of this study indicate that due to economic, social and political pressures, women assume an active role in improving their living conditions. In all the four community projects, women were the leaders. Therefore poverty alleviation projects may provide a way out of poverty for rural women.

The question to be resolved is who should actually carry out the monitoring and evaluation task in managing poverty alleviation projects? According to Conyers (1984:171) the main aim for monitoring and evaluation is to provide a learning experience for all involved parties so that planning for the future will be better than what had happened before.

The next question is if community development is about providing learning experience for the poor, why development planners tend to exclude the rural poor from planning, monitoring and evaluation of their change processes.

The other questions that need to be addressed are what do we monitor and evaluate? How do we do it? And, how often or when is it necessary to carry out monitoring and evaluation? Section 2.4 and table 3 has emphasized that any poverty alleviation project can claim to be effective only if it is completed within the available budget and specified time period and achieves the stated objectives and improves the quality of life for the poor.

Muntizwa-Mangizwa (1991:13) argues that capacity building is not about engaging the poor in rural development projects through manual work only. Capacity building implies that those affected by poverty are to be the main role players and decision-makers in matters affecting their lives. The study however reveals that rural poor are often used as a source of information.

The respondents from the four community projects state that external development workers do not engage with them during monitoring visits. They only focus on checking whether the community is not robbing the government by looking at the financial records. Development that focuses on financial accountability only has a limited understanding of the negative impacts of poverty on the lives of the poor.

Ngobeni as quoted in Sibiyi (2001:22) summarized the meaning of capacity building in community development by stating that teaching the poor how to catch fish as opposed to giving them fish is more appropriate. The findings suggest that field workers entering the community should understand their roles in facilitating community projects rather assuming that rural people do not understand their circumstances.

The two successful projects in the study support this because they were initiated by the community and managed to survive for years without external assistance. There should be no doubt therefore that rural people have the capacity to improve their impoverished conditions. the role development workers is to enhance and release this capacity by actively involving them in planning, monitoring and evaluation of their conditions and to facilitate the spirit of learning.

Nkuhlu (1994:7) emphasized that the development institution 's role is to provide funding and technical support and capacity building to enable poor communities to get access to information, purchase expertise, employ key personnel and, above all, train their own members.

Finally, the result of this research support Dlamini (1998:12) who points out that poor physical infrastructure hinders any development in rural areas.

The respondents commented that it is difficult to reach market places to sell their products during rainy days.

The alleviation of poverty in rural areas cannot happen without the improvement of physical infrastructure. Provision of roads, electricity, water schools, clinics, hospitals, early childhood centers, and recreational facilities can play a major role in allowing community development projects to progress and produce positive results in uplifting the quality of life for the poor rural communities.

CHAPTER SIX

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION:

Given the analysis of factors that hinder or facilitate the success of community projects in alleviating poverty, the study has provided the answer to the most puzzling question of whether income-generating projects are an appropriate approach to deal with poverty in South Africa? The results of this study provide a simple answer by stating that community development projects are the best programmes, and one of the solutions to the poverty problem. It is imperative to bear in mind that the impoverished conditions existing in South African country were created and reinforced during centuries of racial and economic oppression and that it will take a considerable period of time to get rid of poverty and inequality. However, the following recommendations need to be given serious consideration to enhance the contribution made by community development projects in combating poverty:

5.2 .1 ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

One of the prerequisites for successful implementation of community development projects is the existence of an appropriate macro-economic and institutional framework. The Government's macro-economic policies are critical in improving the access of the rural poor to productive resources and services. The current adoption of the Growth, Employment And Redistribution, and abandonment of the Reconstruction and Development Program by the South African Government, makes one wonder what the future entails for women in rural areas who are still struggling to sell their products within the informal market characterized by high competition. The researcher argues that the State still needs to take an active role in facilitating growth, employment and re-distribution of services.

Poverty eradication projects are likely to bear fruit only if the State provides a supportive environment by implementing the development principles contained in both documents. Reconstruction and Development Programme, emphasizes meeting the basic needs of the poor, and Growth, Employment, and Redistribution, is aimed at attaining a competitive economy.

Trade Unions estimate that unemployment is rising by 1350 per person per day in South Africa Synman in Lombard (1992:99). Many unemployed people are now active in the informal economic sector; the largest proportion in food related activities such as poultry, gardening, baking, craft and transport.

There is an urgent need for the Government to revise its policies and formulate those that protect the interests of the poor, especially in rural areas, and facilitate the development of self-reliant citizens.

Underdevelopment is evident in rural areas and influences large-scale migration to urban areas. This causes a rapid increase in squatter settlements, overuse of schools and clinics and the collapse of services like water provision (Lombard 1992:222). The Government has shown commitment to uplift the standard of living for the poor through provision of social security, low cost housing, water, electricity, upgrading and building more schools, clinics, hospitals and roads to name a few. The question that needs to be addressed is how many of these services reach the poorest of the poor living in rural areas? This question leads us to the second proposition.

5.2 2.PRACTICE GENUINE PARTNERSHIP

The results of this study show that the attitude of using poor people merely as a source of information to implement blue print programs is inappropriate in rural development. As far as possible, community development facilitators must be drawn from intended beneficiaries of poverty alleviation projects.

The fact that poor communities have more trust in their local leaders cannot be denied. It is working through local leadership that development role players can form partnerships with the poor and attain visible and sustainable results in developing communities. Local leaders can also play a vital role in making decisions about who should participate in poverty alleviation projects. However this approach need to be practiced with caution in South Africa because of the history of political differences.

Development is a product of learning, not of production, learning how to use oneself and one's environment to meet one's needs and those of others. This implies that one person cannot develop another, but through partnership the professional development worker can treat the poor as an equal partner capable of changing his own circumstances. Nkuhlu (1994:7) has summarized this point by stating that communities perform better with minimum outside interference. The community worker must be conscious about the manner in which he plays a role as a professional leader in managing poverty alleviation projects and facilitating partnerships.

5.2.3. PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION METHODS

The rural poor are the ones who best understand the reality of being poor and therefore must be involved in appraising the effort they make to improve their living conditions.

The next recommendations, therefore, supports study conducted in East Anglia on application of Participatory Evaluation Methods in community development.

According to this study one of the greatest advantages of Participatory Evaluation Methods is the involvement of people whom the community projects is intended and articulates their feelings. Swanepoel (1992:3) supported this statement by emphasizing that, "Only if poor participate in all the stages of the interventions can they learn to improve on their own and gain self-sufficiency and be self-reliant."

It is envisaged that engaging the poor in assessing their progress would encourage them to appreciate the importance of using records like a constitution, and minute's book, in managing community projects.

Again, involvement of local field workers and project beneficiaries in monitoring and evaluation of poverty alleviation projects may be a solution to the problem of dealing with inaccessible community development workers, lack of funds to decentralize services which requires building of more offices, and employing more development workers.

5.2.4. MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES, TIME, MONEY AND PEOPLE

My extensive knowledge and experience of initiating, monitoring, and evaluating community development projects and the research findings lead me to conclude that lack of understanding of what elements of the project need to be taken into account during monitoring and evaluation process is one of the obstacles to generate positive results in poverty alleviation projects. In other words, what do we monitor and evaluate in community development projects?

Going back to the questions posed earlier, there are five factors for Monitoring and Evaluation namely:

- What (objectives)
- How (method)
- When (Time)
- Who (Responsibility)
- Cost (Finances)

Many community development interventions could be strengthened if development role players have a clear understanding of what is being monitored in the project, how monitoring is undertaken, when it is appropriate to do monitoring and evaluation and who are the people to be involved in the process.

Leading and directing the projects requires one to focus on motivating the project members to attain their objectives, within the money available and a specified period of time.

It is advisable for the project managers and projects members to make use of charts to write down the objectives of the project, expected expenditure, and people responsible for tasks and time frame. This system ensures that project members keep focused to their objectives, avoid overspending and that tasks get done in time.

These charts should be displayed in a place where they will be visible to project members to constantly refresh their memories and keep them focused on their objectives.

Photographs may also be helpful in motivating project members because that is where critical incidents to the success of the project may be depicted. This should happen in a people-centered approach whereby the poor take an active role to drive the process of monitoring and evaluation of their own work.

5.2.4. ESTABLISHMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT FORUMS

Forming rural development forums where the poor can have a say on decisions affecting their lives is imperative in community development. The forums suggested in this study are different from the ones dominated by professionals who plan for the poor and develop monitoring and evaluation strategies that serve their own interests. Planning development with the poor and providing them with an opportunity to give input about the way they perceive their circumstances is instead recommended. Such development forums must consist of poor people and development facilitators drawn from the community and democratically elected by them to represent their needs.

Nkuhlu (1994:7) points out that one can learn from the experience of the Independent Development Trust (IDT) in establishing rural community structures and forums. The IDT has been successful in building capacity for the rural community by applying people-centered development which ensures that not only physical structures are left behind in the community but an empowered community with capacity to plan and manage their own development.

According to this research it is argued that community development forums may serve as a solution to highly structured meetings characterized by bureaucratic structures with decision making concentrated at the top of the hierarchy. Kotze (1997:500) indicated that usually these meetings delay the progress of the projects because they are used as a tool for financial control rather than allowing the poor to learn from experience.

Conyers (1995:170) concluded that reporting systems should be simple and avoid delaying the progress of community projects. She further noted that progress review reports should reach people who will take the corrective action required, otherwise there is no use in conducting monitoring and evaluation of poverty alleviation projects.

5.2.5. TRAINING

Capacity building and training should be carried out via the development forums in order to avoid duplication of development interventions. The training content should enhance the capacity of the poor by starting with the participant's information in terms of understanding project management and development issues. This implies that the training module should be compiled with the project members after they have expressed their needs regarding capacity building.

It would be inappropriate to assume that since the poverty alleviation projects focus on income generating and job creation, therefore, members need financial management skills. Such assumption can be detrimental and time consuming for project members that has already mastered financial management skills.

Allowing the poor to take their rightful place in facilitating development forums would be another way of enabling them to learn to chair meetings, write minutes, make decisions and facilitate discussion. Then they will go back and apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired to their respective projects.

Human development should be based on adequate assessment of the needs of the project members through engaging them and observing the way they interact and communicate with one another during meetings and assessing their level of understanding of issues relevant to basic management and accounting skills.

It is argued here that more training is still required to help professional development workers put into practice their knowledge of development process and its emphasis on people-centered approach. As part of orientation to rural development, students should be placed in rural areas where poverty is more concentrated in order to get better of what is meant by poverty and learn to interact with people at grass root level.

5.2.6. BASIC NEED APPROACH

Townsend (1994:4) argues that perhaps the alternative approach to eradication of poverty is to introduce a paradigm shift regarding poverty, its causes, possible solutions and even the definition of poverty itself. The findings of this study agree with Townsend in stating that if there is an inadequate support system to facilitate, evaluate and monitor community development projects. The question that arises then is ,why do we give poor the responsibility of managing lump sum of money rather than providing them with equipment and facilities to start or strengthen uplifting their community initiatives?

The study has shown that the two unsuccessful projects received funding on the same year that they were initiated. It appears that they lacked the experience of directing the projects towards success. They had not formulated relevant and realistic objectives, and ensured optimal utilization of their own resources prior to external funding.

The question to be addressed is the issue of providing funds to poor communities as a solution to alleviate poverty without establishing a strong support system. Further research is essential to find out the appropriate ways of enabling the poor to learn to manage their own development without causing damage to their self-esteem. When poverty alleviation projects fail, poor people may think they have contributed to the collapse of the project, which may not be the true situation.

Townsend (1999:20) quotes Mr. Mazibuko:

"South Africans have become poor because people have no soil sense. People have lost the art of self-sufficiency and therefore food security. He further stated that the major reason for poverty and hunger today is the fact that we have not exploited the soil as our basic resource to the fullest .The soil is our gold".

The study supports the above statement that provision of food security at individual and community levels would be a cost effective and efficient strategy to address poverty alleviation.

There is a need to educate poor people how to best utilize their land to create job opportunities and feed the families with the surplus of their products.

However, it is worth mentioning that the Government needs to speed up the process of redistributing land to the African people. South Africa may learn a lesson from European countries such as Italy and Holland, where low income groups in rural areas grow fruit trees and vegetable gardens as part of their life style to deal with poverty and increase self-sufficiency (Townsend 1999:23).

5.3 CONCLUSION

The results of this study confirmed that poverty alleviation projects are the best programmes for dealing with the problem of poverty in rural areas. It is generally agreed that the formal sector has difficulty in absorbing large numbers of unemployed South Africans. Hence, community development projects serve as a partial solution to poverty and unemployment. This was discovered by conducting case studies of two community development projects that were producing sustainable results in alleviating poverty, and those that appeared to be struggling to survive and have impact in uplifting the standard of living for the poor. The four projects were operating in a remote rural community characterized by high unemployment rate and poverty.

The leaders of the four community projects were interviewed using open-ended questionnaires. Assessment of all the records used to administer and run the projects was also done. The study enabled the researcher to identify the key factors that contribute to the success of community development project in combating poverty.

It is argued that poverty alleviation projects are likely to succeed if they operate within a stable socio-economic policy environment which can be attained through combination of the recommendations from both the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme and Reconstruction and Development Programme. In addition, an enabling environment through formation of partnership with rural community is essential for positive results in dealing with poverty.

The knowledge of factors that make community projects succeed in addressing poverty can serve as a guide to others as they plan and implement poverty alleviation programmes.

The study showed that community projects that are initiated monitored and evaluated by the communities themselves tend to survive and produce sustainable results. This initiative suggests that local capacity needs to be enhanced through provision of training and establishment of development forums that would be controlled by the rural poor themselves.

The earlier discussion emphasized that, any interventions aimed at eradication of poverty need to have greater positive impact in changing the standard of living for the poor through forming partnership with the poor and their local leaders in rural areas. It is therefore argued that development interventions should not undermine local capabilities by bringing outsiders to implement and monitor poverty alleviation projects. Strengthening local community development workers would be a cost-effective way of co-ordination and monitoring development initiatives, and dealing with the problem of long distance and shortage of staff on the part of the Government. Ngobení as quoted in Sibiyá (2001:22) indicates that teaching the poor how to catch a fish as opposed to giving them the fish is more appropriate.

The study found that the gap between the rich and the poor might widen unless there is a proper system in place to ensure that, services reach the poorest of the poor. The two successful community projects were made up of the poor people who used their indigenous skills to create job opportunities for themselves. Leadership was exercised in a democratic manner. Leaders of such projects had an interest of the community at heart and understand the reality of living under impoverished conditions.

In contrast, the two unsuccessful community development projects mushroomed with the aim of getting funds from the Government rather than providing a service to the community. The majority of members were not poor because there was no specific criteria to ensure that people who joined the projects were really poor. Probably, the projects failed because leaders were not representing the interests of the poor and they unilaterally placed themselves in leadership positions.

This study indicates that poverty is linked to hunger. The community projects that focuses on helping the poor meet their basic needs for food became successful because they were producing perishable products that were in demand within the community.

In contrast, the other two projects did not study the needs of the community to match their products. As a result they were running at a loss and failed to stand on their own when Government funds were exhausted.

The study revealed that formulation of a marketing plan is also the most immediate and important requirement for achieving success in income generating projects aimed at eradicating poverty. Proper research is required to help community projects learn to analyze the needs of their customers, understand who are their customers, competitors, location of the project, quality, advertising, organizational plan, business plan and financial costs.

The study shows that problems arise when the outsiders exclude the local leaders and projects beneficiaries in conducting, monitoring, and evaluation of poverty alleviation projects. Objectives, time, money and people should always be the guiding principles for conducting monitoring and evaluation in community development. It was apparent that poverty alleviation projects can only claim to be a success if they have managed to increase the income of the poor above the poverty line and enhance their capacity to plan and manage their own development.

The study suggests a paradigm-shift in addressing poverty by supporting Townsend's basic need approach, that is, if poverty is linked to hunger, the question that arises is, why do we provide money rather than food to the poor? This is a question that needs further research.

APPENDIX 1

Codes A=Qondisani Community Project
 B=Ntuthuko Yesizwe Community Project
 C=Zamokuhle Community Project
 D=Thandanani Community Project

Noting patterns ,similarities and differences was done by inserting bullets and leaving empty cells to cases.

1 How do you recruit project members ?

CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
no specific criteria			♦	♦
joining fee	♦	♦	♦	♦
age 18-30		♦		
unemployed	♦	♦		
commitment	♦	♦		
no source of income	♦	♦		

2 .What characteristics do you use to classify people as poor ?

PERCEPTION OF POOR PERSON	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
sitting at home doing nothing	♦	♦		
unemployed	♦	♦	♦	♦
no source of income	♦	♦		
unable to provide food	♦	♦		
unable to send children to school	♦	♦		

3. How do you recruit project members?

RECRUITMENT	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
public meeting	♦	♦		
unemployed people	♦	♦		
approach friends and relatives			♦	♦
Senior certificate		♦		

4. What was the rationale behind the establishment of the project?

RATIONALE FOR STARTING THE PROJECTS	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
funding form the state			♦	♦
donation of equipment			♦	♦
share skills knowledge and resources	♦	♦		
create job opportunities	♦	♦		
to earn an income to buy food ,clothing and pay school fees	♦	♦		
serving the community	♦	♦		
fight poverty	♦	♦		

5 What type of activities do you engage in to earn income?

TYPE OF ACTIVITIES	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
poultry	♦	♦		♦
sewing			♦	♦
piggery	♦			
home based care		♦		
block making		♦		
cultivating vegetables	♦			

6 Customers

CUSTOMERS	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
local community	♦	♦	♦	♦
pension pay out point	♦	♦	♦	♦
schools	♦	♦	♦	♦

7 What was the average income of the project members prior to joining the project?

INCOME	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
prior to joining the project	none	none	unknown	unknown
after joining the projects	R 1200	R 1500	none	none

8. What plans do you have to market your produce and sustain the project?

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
supply product to butcheries, supermarkets, schools and creches	♦	♦		
unit of products support one another	♦	♦		
supply to farmers	♦	♦		
awaiting funds from the state			♦	♦

9 What records do you use to manage and supervise the project?

RECORD KEEPING	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
attendance register	♦	♦		
minutes book	♦	♦		
bank account	♦	♦	♦	♦
cash book	♦	♦		
constitution	♦	♦		
receipt book	♦	♦		
job description	♦	♦		
annual reports				
inventory and sales book				

10 How do you elect leaders to guide and supervise the project?

LEADERSHIP	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
democraticall y elected by people	♦	♦		
delegate work	♦	♦		
good attendance	♦	♦		
Hard worker	♦	♦		
Interest of community	♦	♦		
assigned herself			♦	♦
lack of teamwork			♦	♦
joint decision making	♦	♦		

11 What are the constrains to running the project?

CONSTRAINS	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
poor road conditions	♦	♦	♦	♦
electricit y	♦	♦	♦	♦
water	♦	♦	♦	♦
market	♦	♦	♦	♦
funding			♦	♦

12 What training did the project members undergo to run the project?

TRAINING	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
indigenous skills	♦	♦	♦	♦
listen to radio	♦			
committee and financial management	♦	♦	♦	♦
home based care		♦		
management	♦	♦		
Facilitated by the volunteer	♦	♦		

13 How do you monitor and evaluate the progress of the project?

MONITORING AND EVALUATION	QONDISANI	NTUTHUKO YESIZWE	ZAMOKUHLE	THANDANANI
constitution	♦	♦		
annual report				
business plans				
quantitative measures	♦	♦	♦	♦
qualitative measures				
done by project members and community workers	♦	♦	♦	♦

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