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South Africa’s Rural Development Strategy, its Application and Theoretical Underpinnings: using the application of the CRDP at Muyexe Village as a Reflector

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Research Report

Title: South Africa's Rural Development Strategy, its Application and Theoretical Underpinnings: using the application of the CRDP at Muyexe Village as a Reflector

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CONTRALESA	Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
DALRD	Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
DLA	Department of Land Affairs
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DRDLR	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
Framework Act	Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IRDSS	Integrated Rural Development Sector Strategy
ISRDS	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy
IT	Information Technology
NDP	National Development Plan
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NMC	New Macroeconomic Consensus
RDF	Rural Development Framework
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SANP	South African National Parks
SARS	South African Revenue Services
SETAs	Sector Education and Training Authorities
SMMEs	Small, medium and micro enterprises
SPLUMA	Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act
TKLA	Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act
UN	United Nations
WOP	War on Poverty

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South Africa's rural development strategy, its application and theoretical underpinnings: using the application of CRDP at Muyexe village as a reflector

Abstract

Rural development in South Africa has been a key component of economic strategy since 1994. However, evaluation by both the government and outside actors reveals limited success in set targets. Integrated development, sustainability and community participation have been its key concepts, with land reform, infrastructure investment, skills development, provision of necessities and job creation as some of its important tools. The CRDP was piloted at Muyexe Village in 2009, a period when South Africa was still reeling from the GEAR strategy. As a contribution to the continuous assessment, this report is an enquiry about the content of the rural development programme and its application, and how these have been influenced by the theoretical underpinnings of the country's macroeconomic policy choices. Reflecting on the Muyexe CRDP pilot, the report explores the theoretical anchoring of South Africa's rural development strategy, design, and implementation. This is done by evaluating the literature on economic development, academic and official publications on South Africa's post-apartheid macroeconomic posture, documentation on the design and implementation of the rural development programme and a case study at Muyexe village with information also collected from participants in the CRDP pilot projects, government officials and leaders of comparative communities using questionnaires, interviews and observations.

Keywords: *rural development, CRDP, theoretical underpinnings*

1. Introduction

Rural development has since 1994 been regarded as a key economic programme in South Africa. This is unsurprising given that about 32% of South Africans reside in rural areas most severely affected by poverty (The World Bank, 2023) with 81% of the country's poverty rate (Bila & Biyase, 2022). The key concepts of the country's rural development strategies have been integrated development, sustainability and community participation with land reform, infrastructure investment, skills development, provision of necessities and job creation as some of its important tools. Evaluations of the strategy by both the government and other actors reveal that it has had very limited success on key objectives such as community participation (Obadire, Mudau, Zuwarimwe, 2014), infrastructure, job-creation, skills development, enterprise development, and land reform over the past 23 years (DPME, 2013; Public Service Commission, 2016; DALLRD, 2023). There are probably many factors which led to this. This research focuses on whether and the extent to which this may be attributed to macroeconomic theoretical and policy choices and how they were influenced by neoliberalism.

Literature on rural development is as varied as economic development theory itself. Most literature places agriculture and natural resources at the core of rural development. This study draws from various economic development theories, UN research work, multi-lateral institutions and government policies and reports. For the earlier development theories "rural" is synonymous with agriculture and development is seen as a transformation from rural (agriculture) to urban (industrial) sectors. Recent scholarly work has however moved to de-agriculturalise rural development (Mahlati, 2011; Atkinson, 2017; Adamowicz, 2020) and focused on rural development as the focal object of study (Ward & Hite, 1998; Adamowicz, 2020). New concepts such as sustainable development, smart rural areas, and endogenous development have come to the fore (Adamowicz, 2020). Economic development as a specialised field emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War and whilst it has general application it became mainly a theoretical basis for the advancement of poor countries (Krugman, 1992). Development theory seemed to retreat following the neoliberal counter-revolution of the 1980s (Krugman, 1992, Lopez 2012).

According to Harvey (2005), neoliberalism is defined as a "theory of economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade". Mirowski and Plehwe (2007) see it as a political-economic ideology which propagates free market capitalism, limited role of government in the economy, deregulation, privatisation and free trade which ostensibly lead to efficiency and growth of the economy. Gaining prominence in the 1970s and 1980s through the influence of such leaders as the United Kingdom's Margaret Thatcher and the United States' Ronald Reagan, neoliberalism became the base tool for IMF and World Bank policies (Harvey, 2005). It has been criticised for being too abstract, prioritising the interest of big business, creating financial instability and being responsible for the growing inequality within and amongst nations (Klein, Smith & Caitlin, 2008). Gomersall (2004) and Padayachee (2020) argue that applying abstract and narrow neoliberal-inspired economic models has profoundly devastating effects on social development in poor countries. Harvey (2005) adds that neoliberalism often functions as a restoration of class power for the economic elites which is achieved through top-down implementation by governments.

Notwithstanding the neoliberal influence on macroeconomic policies adopted in many developing countries, state-led development theory has persisted as evidenced by debates on the developmental state model in Southeast Asia (Gomez, Masina & Vignato, 2020). Rural development has been an integral part of development theory (Ward & Hite, 1998).

Finding the links between theory, policy and application is not an easy task. In South Africa, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) set out a people-centred development path

driven by the developmental state. This is congruent with Sen's theory, which sees development as enhancing freedom and well-being through building human capabilities (Sen, 1979; 1999). However, in 1996 the ruling party shifted and opted for a self-imposed neoliberal-based Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), which, as Gomersall (2004) indicated, has had some macroeconomic successes such as stabilisation, but adversely affected development.

Rural development in the country has at the policy level at least, been an important element of the overall economic development strategy. Since 1995, several policy interventions have been made including the National Rural Development Strategy in 1995, the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy in 2000, the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme in 2009 and the current 2023 Integrated Rural Development Sector Strategy. Underpinning these strategies was the neoliberal theory that, in the early stages, had rendered rural development strategy ineffectual. Whilst there was an official move away from the neoliberal GEAR policy after 2000, its effects lingered on (Isaacs, 2014; Sibeko, 2019). This gives credence to the argument that South Africa has dithered on economic development policy since the post-GEAR period, which has only created confusion with its application, and this has permeated into rural development. Evidence of this has been the frequent shift in policies as seen by the introduction of the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative in 2006, the New Growth Path in 2010 and the National Development Plan in 2012 (Habib, 2013). Thus, one of the constraints faced by the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) was the lack of funding in areas such as infrastructure, social services such as education and health, land reform projects, support to small enterprises, human development and agro-industry, the key to the success of the programme. Within the rural development context, a neoliberal macroeconomic policy, which emphasises the role of the private sector in driving development, would decree that the government's role is to provide an enabling environment for private businesses including SMMEs to get off the ground. Other development theories such as Keynesian and capabilities approaches would suggest that just creating an enabling environment would not be a suitable approach in the poorest regions of the country. In South Africa, there seem to be ideological tensions between the neoliberal-inspired policies and the professed developmental stance of the ruling party, and this has influenced the design and implementation of the rural development programme.

This research explores the content of the rural development strategy by looking at its application from the approach laid down in the RDP, to the 1995 Rural Development Framework, the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS), and the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme. On paper, there is a noticeable shift in theoretical stance with CRDP where the role of government is more pronounced. The research seeks to answer the following questions:

- *How is the neoliberal theoretical anchoring of the rural development strategy reflected in the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme?*

- *Can how CRDP has been applied, as piloted at Muyexe village, be explained through the government's macroeconomic policy choices?*

In answering these questions, the research explores the development theory or theories underlying the government's rural development and land reform programmes; the consistency in the application of the theory/theories through the strategies and policies developed; the comparison between the conceptualised objectives and the lived experiences of rural development; the tension between statutory policy and informal customary practices and how this affects both policy formulation and implementation; the role of the recipients of rural development (communities) in both design and implementation and their own experience of the benefits or otherwise of the projects; and lastly, the extent to which the CRDP has built the capabilities of the members of the community to be economically and socially integrated into the rest of society and have sustainable livelihoods.

More focus is placed on the CRDP, which was launched at Muyexe village in 2009. This came more than 15 years after the first democratic elections and had been in implementation for 14 years when the recent IRDSS strategy was adopted. It therefore offers a legitimate avenue for a reflection of how rural development strategy has been implemented against underlying economic theory and how this is located within and compared to economic development theory in general.

The research follows the "de-agriculturalist" approach to rural development where the overreliance on agriculture is de-emphasised and economic diversification, skills development, infrastructure development, urban-rural linkages and environmental sustainability are also at the core. So, whilst agriculture and land reform are important elements, they are only focused on as part of the "new paradigm" where, as Ellis and Biggs (2001) conclude, "agriculture takes place along with a host of other actual and potential rural and non-rural activities important for the construction of viable rural livelihoods". The approach is to evaluate rural development strategy as a tool for advancing well-being in areas regarded as rural in South Africa, especially former Bantustan areas, and to use macroeconomic theoretical choices to evaluate its success or failures. This is done by assessing the successes of initiated projects, access to proper facilities, infrastructure, health improvement, education, income, employment, land access and development, and agrarian support. Many of the internal and external assessments on the rural development strategy in South Africa, such as by Obadire and others, DPME, Public Service Commission and DARLD mentioned above, have indeed covered some of these but focused on achievements of set targets as well as the institutional capacity of the state to implement the strategy. With this research, an attempt is made to add a macroeconomic theoretical perspective to the evaluation.

Section 2 of the report outlines the methodology used in the research. Section 3 gives some of the local environment and institutional information on Muyexe and Greater Giyani Local Municipality to contextualise the report. Section 4 reviews some of the key development theories

and contextualises them within South Africa's rural development programme and discusses the connections between theory and policy and how these underpin application. A brief reflection of South Africa's macroeconomic trajectory is done in Section 5 to provide a framework for the exploration of the content and application of South Africa's rural development strategy within the macroeconomic theory and policy choices in the country. This is followed in Section 6 by presenting the rural development journey taken in South Africa since 1994. Further details on the case study of the CRDP pilot at Muyexe village are presented in Section 7 with some comparative analysis with two other rural development initiatives outside the CRDP. Section 8 gives a concluding comment.

2. Research Methodology

The question identified for this research calls for the use of qualitative analytical research which, Creswell (2009) says, is useful for exploring and understanding the meaning behind social phenomena. The study hypothesises that the limited impact of the rural development programme in South Africa emanates from the neoliberal theory-based policy choices which were contrary to the established theoretical orientation of the ruling party resulting in policy confusion leading to a tentative focus on building state capacity to drive the rural development strategy and limited focus on building community and human capabilities, and whilst attempting to transfer development responsibility to private actors. In addition, the neoliberal top-down approach of the authorities had little appreciation of the institutional realities of rural communities.

The research instruments used include a literature review with a combination of semi-systematic and integrative review, interviews of key information and knowledge holders, participants and assumed beneficiaries, and a case study of the CRDP pilot site.

A literature review as defined by Snyder (2019) is a way of systematically collecting and synthesising literature that allows one to evaluate existing perspectives, state of knowledge and available evidence to support the current conclusions. Synthesising literature means that existing perspectives are combined with the researcher's perspective to create new and better ways of looking at the area of research. The literature review focuses on the following:

- Economic development literature to understand basic assumptions, causalities and implications for policy choices. This will include looking at international trends to scan the current rural development concepts.
- Orthodox neoliberal literature as the dominant macroeconomic theory and how this has influenced and shaped policy and application.
- The connection between macroeconomic policy and the rural development programme.
- Rural development policies and applications in South Africa to analyse the rural development strategies with a particular focus on the CRDP using reports on Muyexe as the pilot site and other CRDP sites for comparative analysis. The reports contain

justification for site choices, physical and socioeconomic profiles of the sites, and specific projects with targets and performance.

According to Torraco (2005), the limitation of the literature review is that it is not standardized, and therefore unlike other methods, few guidelines can be relied upon to develop a research strategy. Torraco also warns that the method is not only sophisticated but needs a great deal of skill and discernment from the researcher.

The second instrument is a case study, which, according to Bhattacherjee (2012) allows for intensive study of a phenomenon "within its natural setting in one or a few sites". Muyexe village was selected as a case study because it is the pilot site of the CRDP. Reports on the implementation of projects and physical visits for observations and assessment augment the interviews of direct and indirect beneficiaries.

The face-to-face semi-structured interview method was used as the third research instrument. Rusell (2011) suggests that the semi-structured interviews provide flexibility which allows the researcher to explore particular themes whilst allowing participants the room to express themselves more, thus enriching the data. As a "personalized form of data collection" (Bhattacherjee, 2012) interviews allow for interaction with participants with the advantage that probing questions and follow-ups can be made. Interviews' limitations however are that they need more time and resources. The use of focused groups, explained by Morgan (1997) as collecting data through group interaction, proved very useful as the participants were able to share viewpoints allowing for the gathering of wide-rage opinions in a short space of time. This assisted in addressing the time limitation. The following interviewees were arranged:

- Government officials who are the implementers of the rural development programme: one at the national and one at the provincial or local level. They were expected to give insight into the budgeting, sustainability, and scaling of the CRDP. This insight is necessary not only for the success of the pilot project but also to assess the overall impact of the CRDP on development objectives such as inclusivity, employment creation and access to services. It would probably have been ideal to interview high-ranking policymakers such as Directors-Generals and Municipal Managers. However, these are not easily accessible and with the limited time span, it would have derailed the research. Nevertheless, the participant officials were involved in both the policy design and implementation which proved very useful for the research.
- Assumed direct beneficiaries who are the participants in the CRDP projects at the pilot site for their experiences, perceptions, and perspectives regarding the various projects. Interviews were conducted with informants who are participants in various projects such as crop production, poultry farming and textile enterprise. This provided information on the participants' perceptions of the CRDP. The sampling was based on whether participants had specific roles in the projects. As the beneficiaries of the

programme, these participants provided valuable insight into the application of the CRDP. This included community participation in the design of the programme, adequacy of funding and sustainability of the CRDP projects. These are key elements in evaluating the CRDP's potential success within the country's macroeconomic framework.

- Two traditional leaders from outside the pilot site, who have either been involved in land reform policy negotiations with the government or led community development projects to gain insight into the contradiction between customary tenure and administration and statutory policies as well as how the government supports community-initiated projects, and how effective the current land tenure arrangements are in facilitating development. These two leaders, having initiated their community development programmes outside the CRDP, provided a useful comparison of alternative rural development theories, for example, the community-driven development to the CRDP's top-down approach.

3. Muyexe Village – the context

The Muyexe Village features are presented upfront to contextualise this research report. This tiny village of 826 households and a population of 3228 (Stats SA, 2011) is an apt location for the evaluation of the implementation of the rural development programme in South Africa. Located about 33 km northeast of Giyani, the town that is the seat of both the Greater Giyani Local Municipality and the Mopani District Municipality, the village has always been at the periphery. Its bordering of the Kruger National Park exacerbated its peripheral state as we shall see below.

The village was launched as a CRDP pilot area by former President Jacob Zuma in 2009. The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform's 2009 profiling of the village (DRDLR, 2009) reveals that the access roads needed upgrading to "all-weather gravel roads" with constructed "crossings" over perennial flowing streams. Internal streets were also rocky making them undrivable. The villagers could only access a bus for public transport which came only twice a day. They lived in predominantly dilapidated mud houses, but some households had RDP houses built for them. Unemployment was very high at more than 60% for the narrow definition (see Table 1 below for the Greater Giyani Municipality)[1] with many households depending on social grants. The community had no water, even though water infrastructure had been installed, and relied on buying from the few households that had family boreholes, which was not made easy by the meagre incomes of households with 54.6% earning less than R20 000 per annum whilst 19.1% had no income at all (Stats SA, 2011).

Muyexe's proximity to Kruger National Park makes it fall within the "red line area" which restricts the movement of livestock to control foot and mouth diseases. Besides the South African National Park's (SANParks) intention to cater for the socioeconomic needs of

[1] No village level data on unemployment was found hence the Municipal unemployment levels are used.

communities that border the national parks, benefits for communities remain muted (Anthony, 2007) and this perpetuates the disconnect between border communities such as Muyexe and the Kruger National Park. The profiling of Muyexe noted the need to improve the fence that separates the village from the park to reduce both poaching and stray wild animals preying on domestic animals and destroying crops. It is clear therefore that the village's proximity to the Kruger National Park has the effect of constraining the attainment of proper livelihoods by the villagers. This unfortunately continues to be the case even though tourism offers considerable economic potential, and the village falls within the Greater Giyani Municipality's ecotourism zone (see also Annexure A). A 2016 SANParks commissioned report on the proposed gate indicated that it "fits the Tourism strategy of development of underdeveloped nodes" and would have considerable positive socioeconomic impact such as new businesses, job opportunities, tax revenue and other economic opportunities for local communities (Envirolution Consulting, 2017).

The Muyexe profiling adds that the community had one creche, one primary school and one secondary school which were about enough for the small community. There was no clinic and community members had to travel 17km to the nearest Muhlava Wellem Clinic which, considering the inadequate public transport, considerably curtailed access to health care. The many child-headed households pointed to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. This stood at 21% and was linked to factors such as poverty, gender inequalities, unemployment and low literacy levels (Greater Giyani IDP, 2010).

The major resource at the disposal of the Muyexe community is the land. Like all trust lands in former Bantustan areas, the land is owned by the government through the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (formerly Department of Land Affairs, and Department of Rural Development and Land Reform). It is administered customarily by the traditional leadership. Akin to what Hull et al (2019) call "holdings" and "commons" customary tenure rights, community members have both individual (e.g., on their allocated housing, business, and cultivation sites) and communal (e.g., on grazing, recreation, and unallocated land) rights. No individual has titled ownership of the land. This point is further developed theoretically in section 6.2 below.

In 2009 Muyexe fell under Ward 13 of the Greater Giyani Municipality which supposedly made it to be under the leadership of the municipal ward councilor and the ward committee. However, the village is part of the Shiviti Traditional Community led by Hosi Shiviti of the Thomo village. Hosi Shiviti and the Shitivi Traditional Council (Authority) have legal jurisdiction over the land on which the Muyexe community reside. This empowers the Shiviti Traditional Council to "administer the affairs" of Muyexe including land management and administration, working with the government in the identification of the needs of the communities, and advising the government on matters related to economic development and service delivery (Traditional

Leadership and Governance Framework Act [Framework Act], 2003; Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act [TKLA], 2019). Whilst both the Framework Act and the TKLA provide for the election of community representatives into the traditional councils, the "headman" of Muyexe village is currently supposed to serve in the Shiviti Traditional Authority as its representative as the elections have not taken place since the promulgation of the two Acts. Headman Muyexe (and several other headmen of other villages within the Shiviti Traditional Community) had however not been participating in the Shiviti Traditional Authority since around 2004 after he had lodged a claim for Muyexe to be recognised as a separate community until 2016[2]. This situation complicated decision-making processes and initially threatened to derail the implementation of the CRDP programme. For instance, repurposing land use requires the consent of the Shiviti Traditional Authority. This required protracted negotiations because of the strained relationship between Headman Muyexe and Hosi Shiviti. It also had the potential to negatively affect investment in land because of the tenuous security of tenure.

The available 2009 statistical information on the Greater Giyani Local Municipality shows low literacy levels with less than 7% having obtained tertiary education. More than 74 % of the population had no steady income whilst unemployment stood at 60.4%, narrowly defined. Access to health care was limited and the Department of Health had to use 10 mobile clinics to reach out to more villages. 30 villages (including Muyexe) had no access to water. Access to electricity was comparable to national figures with 80.9% of households having been connected to the grid. Whilst available tracts of land made agriculture to be the backbone of the economy adverse weather conditions and poor water infrastructure greatly constrained the potential. Lastly, proximity to Kruger National Park offered tourism opportunities where there were plans to open a public entrance gate to the park (as alluded to above), dams for sports facilities and fishing, the statute of King Nghunghunyana and hospitality facilities in town. For further details on the profile of Greater Giyani see Annexure A.

The above discussion provides the local environmental and institutional context within which the CRDP programme was implemented. As the DRDLR 2009 profiling shows, Muyexe village was at the highest rung of the poverty hierarchy in the rural Greater Giyani Municipality. Unlike typical rural villages, the Muyexe villagers' livelihoods were not based on on-site agriculture, which was only of subsistence type used seasonally to supplement food requirements. In a sampled study Obadire, Muda, Zuwarimwe and Sarfo-Mensah (2014) found that "63.1% of the participants have non-farming occupation as their primary occupation". The Muyexe community can be characterized as what Du Toit (2017) called a "pensionariat", surviving mainly from government grants and remittances from migrant workers. Its dependency ratio of 74.6% (Stats SA, 2011), suggesting a smaller pull of the working-age population relative to the non-working population, adds to the burden of need in the community. Whilst there is available land its full

[2] This was confirmed by the officials in the Mopani District Office of the Limpopo Department of Cooperative, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs, at which the researcher once worked, and the Office of Hosi Shiviti.

potential has not been realised for stock farming and crop production due to its proximity to the Kruger National Park and lack of water. Furthermore, the inadequate transport and poor roads curtailed the linkage with the nearest trading centre, Giyani, reducing commercial activities to the very basic. Private investment in the land was virtually non-existent due to insecure land tenure and the absence of a *modern* land market. Participation of the community in decision-making processes on key socioeconomic development issues was also limited by the non-participation of the headman in the Shiviti Traditional Council which in any case was still governed as the old (apartheid era) tribal authority where all powers of decision-making were centered around the senior traditional leader (*hosi*).

The question then arises as to whether a rural development programme based on the government's neoliberal approach, clothed as it was in populist rhetoric, could be successfully launched in a village such as Muyexe and progressively spread to the rest of the rural communities.

4. Rural development within the broader development theory

Rural development in the modern sense entails a wide range of efforts aimed at building environmentally, economically, socially and institutionally sustainable livelihoods of people who reside in rural areas (Yaro, 2013). This description locates rural development within the scope of development economics which, according to Krugman (1992), is "concerned with explaining why some countries are so much poorer than others and prescribing ways for poor countries to become rich". Development economics "implies an active role of the state" to generate and reallocate resources to drive the economy in a desired direction (Bass and Bremen, 2009) and, unlike the minimalist approach of the Washington consensus, economic development "requires sound financial regulation, competition policy and policies to facilitate the transfer of technology and to encourage transparency" (Stiglitz in Atkinson et al, 2005). Renowned author Ha-Joon Chang argues that the state has to take an active role through industrial policy, infrastructure development and economic planning and that successful economies have historically done so due to state intervention (Bytyci, 2013). This is a recognition that markets will not on their own achieve the required social well-being.

Given the above, it is legitimate, when discussing any contemporary application of a development strategy, to reflect how it relates to the tradition of development theories such as the balanced growth theory as espoused by the likes of Rosenstein-Rodan (1943) and Lewis (1954), Hirschman's (1979) unbalanced growth, and Rostow's (1960) model of development stages. Rosenstein-Rodan's growth model came from a recognition that underdeveloped countries needed huge initial capital investments to put them on the development path. Investment in social overhead capital, i.e., infrastructure, and complementary industries ensure "pecuniary

externalities", where activities of some firms have economic effects on through prices, resulting in increasing returns (Rosentein-Rodan, 1943). Lewis's (1954) dual sector model has on one side, an agricultural (subsistence) sector that has surplus labour with close to zero productivity, and on the other side, a nascent capitalist (industrial) sector with a high level of productivity. The capitalist sector uses its surplus savings for more investment and hires more labour from the agricultural sector. The growth in the industrial sector will continue until the wages of the two sectors are relatively equal. Implicitly, the model states that countries must pursue industrialisation to grow their economies. Hirschman (1979) on the other hand, modelled a theory in which growth is spurred by creating imbalances and disequilibrium in the economy, by investing in priority sectors. This improves efficiencies through, amongst others, decentralised decision-making, innovation and better use of resources. Rostow's stages of development model outlines how societies develop pre-conditions for take-off from the traditional state, then take-off before driving to maturity (Rostow, 1960). Rostow's model requires developing countries to modernise their economies fashioned on the capitalist industrial states. These models have been criticised for being oversimplistic by not accounting for complex historical, institutional, political and other unique contexts of developing countries (Thirlwall, 2011; Przeworski, 2009; Dowding, 2001). Indeed Muyexe, like many rural villages in South Africa, has been characterized by high unemployment for years as the urban sector has not been able to create enough job opportunities (Du Toit, 2017). The earlier development economics models do however suggest that investment in social and economic capital, which have been the key element of South Africa's rural development programme, are key for any economic development programme.

For the mid-20th century development theories, economic growth, as measured by the country's income or Growth Domestic Product (GDP), embodies what development is all about. More recently, there has been a move to a "capabilities" approach to development (Sen, 1979; 1999). Development is seen as building human capabilities through dismantling the "unfreedoms" such as poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, social deprivation and poor public infrastructure that constrain people's ability to make free choices (Sen, 1999). The influential weight of Sen's approach has been expressed through the United Nations Human Development Index (HID) (Malik, 2014). Like many countries, South Africa has committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which in theory have informed its development path. The list of the country's MDGs, which is like Sen's (1999) prescription of tackling "unfreedoms" includes eradicating poverty and hunger, promoting universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and ensuring environmental sustainability (Stats SA, 2015). These are, as Sen counsels, "capabilities-building" actions, which would, as the CRDP (2009) programme aims, enable "rural people to take control of their destiny".

Development strategies may equally be influenced by the neoliberal theories aimed at shifting responsibility away from government and placing rural communities in the marketplace (Hallstron, 2019). The neoliberal theory, which Reinert (1999) calls "passivist-materialistic", places its faith in the market and calls for minimum state intervention in the economy. The infamous Washington Consensus is perhaps the clearest articulation of the neoliberal theory, calling for fiscal discipline, austerity and privatisation, amongst others, as important for macroeconomic stability and sustainable growth (Kumar & Ter-Minassian, 2007). The central proposition of this research, which is developed in detail in Section 6 is that neoliberalism has had a huge influence on South Africa's development strategy.

Locating rural development policies within development theory is a complex process due to continuous diversification in rural areas (Adamowicz, 2020). Whilst dualistic models have treated agriculture as a springboard to industrialisation (implying transformation from rural to urban), the more recent rural development models aim to attract "various social groups of varying ages and professions" to work and settle in rural areas (Adamowicz, 2020). South Africa's Integrated Sustainable Rural Development strategy aligns with this through its vision of creating "sustainable
economies and universal access to social amenities, able to attract and retain skilled and knowledgeable people who (are) equipped to contribute to growth and development" (ISRDS, 2000). These recent models provide parameters for new strategies, policies and actions, which are packaged through new theoretical concepts such as sustainable development (Obadire et al, 2013; Adamowicz, 2020), smart rural development and endogenous rural development (Barquero, 2007; Adamowicz, 2020).

The "appropriate conception of rural" is important for an adequate discussion of rural development (Mahlati, 2011). Atkinson (2017) says that "the view of rural areas as one and the same with farming, or merely places where oil extraction occurs, have become increasingly inaccurate, if not obsolete". The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) admits however that there is "no standard international definition of rural" and emphasises the importance of context (FAO, 2018). It identifies sparse settlement, land cover and use and remoteness from urban centers as the three dimensions of rurality to use for statistical comparative purposes (FAO, 2018). Other elements that define rurality are "immobility of natural resources" (Wiggins and Proctor, 2001), poor facilities and low life expectancy (Donavan & Mather, 2004) and low population density (The World Bank, 2018). In South Africa, whilst sparsely populated settlements are still one of the defining characteristics of rurality, densely populated former Bantustan rural areas are prevalent due to the legacy of apartheid (ISRDS, 2000).

The economic path taken in any society invariably has its basis in economic theory and, as Mkandawire (2005) says, ideology. Policies are based on different "sects" of knowledge which

may be factual, based on decision rules, empirical and/or theoretical (Walt, 2005). As Hull et al (2019) postulate, theory "sets the scene for what data is collected, how it is processed to obtain information". Finding a *linear* relationship between theory and policy choices is not the aim of this research. Nevertheless, the fact that theory has a profound influence on policy and practice is without doubt. Of the three channels of policy development and implementation, i.e., state, markets and civil society (de Janvry and Sadoulet, 2021), the state to varying degrees is omnipresent; Reinert (1999) refers to the role of the state as "essentially business as usual". It is the nature and role of the state that influence the development trajectory that a country takes.

In pre-Keynesian neoclassical economic theory which advanced the idea of self-regulating markets and consequently focused on the role of supply and demand (Snowdon & Vane, 2005), the economic course is determined by changes in prices and wages, with random fluctuations along a long-term equilibrium growth path (Visco, 2005). Keynes' "discovery" of the underemployment equilibrium, however, revolutionised the role of the state in the economy through monetary and fiscal stabilisation policies. Visco (2005) points out that Keynesian economics gave rise to modelling as a way of predicting economic outcomes given certain interventions. Modern development theory recognises the transformative role of the state in the economy within unstable institutional settings (Grindle, 2000; Yusuf and Stiglitz, 2000; Hoff and Stiglitz, 2000; Chang, 2011). Development is seen as the "process of organizational change" (Hoff and Stiglitz, 2000)" which requires "reform leadership" (Grindle, 2000). Accordingly, the nature of existing institutions (both formal and informal) has a profound influence on development outcomes. For instance, institutions determine the nature of transaction costs which affect efficiency, and incomplete markets may lead to information asymmetry (Hoff and Stiglitz, 2000). The importance of institutions is in contrast with earlier neoclassical economics according to which economic outcomes are only determined by resource accumulation, technology and preferences leaving out the role of institutions which are the "heart of development economics" (Hoff and Stiglitz, 2000). Chang (2011) however cautions that the neo-institutionalist crusade has led to prescriptive policies aimed at creating "quality institutions" such as liberalised markets and property rights guarantees. These, according to Chang (2011), are no guarantee of economic growth. It is therefore important to analyse the direction of causality, as development may improve the quality of institutions instead of the reverse. The relevance of this discussion in the South African rural setting cannot be overemphasised. Taking the Muyexe case, it has already been pointed out that traditional leadership governance and underdeveloped land markets are two of the institutional realities. It would however be a mistake to make generalized assumptions about their influence on development without analysing how they affect and/or are affected by development initiatives. This would inform decisions on whether and how these institutions are to be changed, taking cognisance of Chang's (2011) warning that there are opportunity costs of transforming institutions. This discussion points to the fact that the choice of economic theory, e.g., institutionalist theory of economic development, leads to specific policy interventions, e.g.,

regulating property rights to create land markets to improve the quality of institutions, which leads to specific outcomes, e.g., concentration of land markets and marginalisation of the poor.

5. South Africa's post-apartheid macroeconomic trajectory: a journey of austerity and fiscal consolidation at odds with the espoused developmental agenda

5.1 The neoliberal genesis of macroeconomic policy and its costs

South Africa's transition in 1994 promised a new trajectory based on an inclusive and participatory democratic system. The Constitution guarantees socio-economic rights, which include a healthy environment, access to land, adequate housing, health services, food, water and education (South Africa, The Constitution, 1996, s24-27). The Reconstruction and Development Programme, defined as "an integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework", outlines as its underlying "political and economic philosophy" the following principles: integrated and sustainable programme, people-driven process, peace and security for all, nation-building, link of reconstruction and development and democratisation (White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, 1994). Turok (2009) and Marais (2011) show how the ruling ANC's conception of development was founded on the Keynesian state-led approach, redistribution and social justice, growth with equity and integrated planning. Both the RDP and the Constitution's socioeconomic rights section reflect this conceptualisation.

Adopting the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy in 1996 marked a clear departure from the developmental macroeconomic framework of the RDP and an embrace of the earlier Normative Economic Model of the pre-democracy governing National Party which called for structural adjustment (Isaacs, 2014). South Africa's macroeconomic policy transitioned to the New Macroeconomic Consensus (NMC) post-2000, however, this still reflected the triumph of neoliberalism (Marais, 2011; Habib, 2013; Isaacs, 2014). In Fontana and Palacio-Vera's (2005) account of the NMC, inflation changes are a subject of the gap between the current and potential (or natural) output, and the current short-run real interest rate is crucial in determining the output gap. Given that output is modelled to be in equilibrium in the long run, the short-run deviations from the natural output can best be managed through monetary policy. Consequently, the nature and role of the central banks have changed to now exude *independence, price stability* (achieved mainly through inflation targeting), and *indirect monetary policy* (using short-term interest rates) (Epstein, 2006). This, as Epstein (2006) explains, is a far cry from the original developmental role played by central banks which included "financing governments, managing exchange rates, and supporting economic sectors by using direct methods of intervention". The elevation of inflation optimisation as the main function of central banks that emerged as the neoliberal theory began to dominate economic thinking, resulting in central banks' role as "development agents" being largely discarded (Epstein, 2006). This recent monetary stance, however, can only work

within “given supply-constraint factors” (Isaacs, 2014). An economy like South Africa may exhibit other factors in which supply can be expanded through increased investment and productivity, which may come through wage increases, increased government spending and low interest rates (Isaacs,2014). These could be the ingredients that are required for a successful rural development programme. Government spending is required to support productive activities in rural areas with lower interest rates to facilitate investments.

One of the most prominent aspects of neoliberal economics is austerity, which comes through fiscal consolidation. This is about reducing government expenditure and budgeting for surplus to reduce unsustainable debt. Clark and Newman (2012) contend that austerity is usually sold as a no-other-option choice necessitated by the global economic condition and the need to be “tough” to deal with unsustainable debt, and despite evidence that it comes at huge social costs, neoliberal thinkers still hailed it for invigorating private consumption, investment, and economic growth. The notion, also referred to as *expansionary fiscal contraction*, is debunked by evidence in Europe (Latvia, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Portugal and Greece) where enforcement of austerity measures led to contraction (Clark and Newman, 2012). From European experience, another ominous cost of austerity is social unrest and the perpetuation of inequality. These result from the fact that austerity leads to cuts in public spending, which affects infrastructure, public-sector jobs and wages and spending on public education and health. Post-apartheid South Africa has always been worried about public debt. The Reserve Bank Governor, Lesetja Kganyago, wrote in 2012 that the debt needed to be stabilised at 42% by 2014/15 (Kganyago, 2012). For former Finance Minister Tito Mboweni, fiscal consolidation through “wide and deep” cuts in government expenditure had to be implemented to reverse the debt crisis (National Treasury, 2020). Fiscal conservatism in South Africa has been criticised by both Marais (2011) and Habib (2013) for constraining the government’s capacity to address the structural challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. The rural development programme has experienced the brunt of neoliberal thinking of austerity, fiscal consolidation and supremacy of the markets. In Muyexe, the government has spent on infrastructure such as the access road, health centre, community centre and police station, but little to nothing on enterprise projects that should increase the incomes of the participants. The idea undoubtedly was that infrastructure would facilitate private investments and that once given initial support the small enterprises would be able to grow sustainably as commercial ventures. However, the evidence from the projects (see section 7) shows that this has not been the case, as all projects have virtually collapsed. Moreover, the CRDP programme has not expanded beyond the pilots due to funding (see interview with DALRD official, section 7).

In discussing the costs of austerity, Sibeko (2019) shows how expenditure cuts have resulted in a significant shortage of healthcare workers and delayed implementation of the National Health Insurance policy. Poor educational performance, as evidenced by the grade 4 learners’ inability to read for understanding, has also been attributed to cuts in teacher personnel and education infrastructure expenditure. Sibeko also attributes the weakened state's capacity to meet its

obligations to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) to the austerity measures.

Steeped in the neoliberal model, macroeconomic policy in South Africa has been premised on the need for macroeconomic stabilisation. Amongst its key assumptions were that low savings levels dampened investment and that government expenditure (through deficit spending for instance) crowded out private investment (Isaacs, 2014). Isaacs (2014) however argues that government spending could stimulate the economy and thereby crowd *in* investment. According to Isaacs (2014), GEAR advanced the neoliberal theory that markets are sacrosanct and the state has a minimal role, a state where all aspects of life are subsumed "under market imperatives". For Du Toit, the adopted post-apartheid macroeconomic models espoused "narrow normative models of what constituted 'efficient', 'progressive', 'modern' and 'world-class' economic transformation", which were "out of touch with the lived realities, actual capacities, material interests and livelihood strategies of the marginalised rural and peri-urban poor" (Du Toit, 2017). Such lived experiences in a rural village like Muyexe include the fact the land remains an unoptimized resource and continues to be administered customarily without the "efficiency" of modern developed markets made worse by the disconnect between the community and the rest of society. Further, participants in projects had little experience and skill to conduct successful commercial enterprises.

GEAR was clear in its pursuit of austerity, fiscal consolidation, and price stability. This affected spending on development and constrained access to finance by SMMEs, as interest rates were continuously raised in the inflation-targeting regime. Further, austerity harms tackling "unfreedoms" as spending on education, health, infrastructure, and skills development has been subdued. Additionally, the reduced government in the economy implies that the state's required capacity to support the rural development programmes e.g., extension officers to support farmers, remained low. Lastly, reliance on the market ignores situational factors in most rural areas in South Africa, e.g., the absence of land markets (in the neoliberal sense).

Breakfast and Chindoga (2022) point out that post-colonial and specifically, post-apartheid South Africa has maintained some of the key elements of the colonial/apartheid state such as Mahomad Mamdani's bifurcated character, where the customary forms of governance were submerged into the colonial state but stripped of any political power and only used to keep indigenous people as subjects instead of citizens (Mamdani, 1996, as cited in Breakfast and Chindoga, 2022). In South Africa, the state has taken a minimalist and gradualist approach to transforming rural communities, where the customary power of traditional institutions competes in a dualistic manner with that of democratically elected municipal councils. Whilst traditional communities fall within municipalities, they are also supposed to be governed "customarily" by traditional councils with powers to "administer the affairs of the communities" (s. 22 of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, 2019). Similarly, spatial planning and land use management, which is key to any developmental programme (UN, 2015), can only be introduced incrementally in areas

under traditional leadership (SPLUMA, 2013). Hagg (2017) reports that the modern-traditional governance dualism has left communities in traditional areas having to navigate between the two "mainly conflictual" institutions, i.e., traditional authorities and elected municipal councils. The tensions between traditional governance, which the NDP (2012) characterises as a constraint to development, and the elected municipal councils are confirmed by both senior traditional leaders interviewed for this research (see also sections 7.6 and 7.7)

Rural development in South Africa is "aimed at enabling rural people to take control of their destiny" with the "overall purpose …… to improve the quality of life of rural households" (CRDP, 2009). In mainstream economic theory, households are regarded as consumption units or producers of "commodities that are designed to satisfy separate wants such as thirst, hunger, warmth and shelter" for the immediate members of the community (Ironmonger, 2001). Properly conceptualising the rural household within the South African context is important if its role as the key instrument of local production acting within national and global environments is to be enhanced. For instance, it may be misleading to characterise them as "agricultural households" that "control production and the use of resources" (UN, 2007). The apartheid-inherited rural households coupled with the transformative failure of post-apartheid policies have resulted in the "pensionariat" household (Du Toit, 2017) which, devoid of tenure security and support, produce very little even for subsistence and is dependent on social grants and remittances.

5.2 Policy ambivalence

South Africa's post-apartheid macroeconomic policy has shown ambivalence and, according to Isaacs (2014), exhibits a combination of "inconsistent approaches" marked by indecision, frequent shifts and contradictory priorities (Marais, 2011; Habib, 2013). The utility and profit maximisation-based neoliberal/NMC approach on which its macroeconomic policy is based ignores South Africa's historical realities where economic relations have been shaped by institutionalised racism – a long-time understanding of the ruling African National Congress referred to in its documents as the *colonialization of a special type*, and whose antagonistic relationships needed to be broken down if the sought after *national democratic society* was to be successfully created (ANC, 2007).

Writing from a different perspective, Croucamp and Malan (2016) say that the ambiguities in economic policy in post-apartheid South Africa arose from various factors, which included the dependence of the new elite on the extractive market on the one hand and the "liberationist-embedded" distributive new dispensation on the other. A symbiotic "patron-client" environment has thus emerged in which a weak "extractive-distributive" legitimacy-seeking state dispenses patronage to a society that, in turn, does not demand accountability and provides little oversight. This situation not only undermines the imperative of creating the "ethical and capable developmental democratic state", which, the ANC declares, is required for economic transformation (ANC, 2019); it also, as Croucamp and Malan (2016) argue, creates a "trust

deficit" between government and the private sector and policy uncertainty both of which can undermine investment in the economy.

As an illustration of a situation that directly affects rural development, Hull et al (2019) contend that the South is still grappling with the "contending philosophies" on customary land tenure. They refer to two contending theoretical currents. The first advances the theory that customary systems are incompatible with economic advancement as they repel investments and credit given the absence of property ownership rights. Consequently, the customary tenure system should be replaced by land titling, which will facilitate commercial farming in former homeland areas, leading to more production and employment. This is the stance taken by the National Development Plan and Communal Land Tenure Policy (Hull et al, 2019) and confirmed by the Communal Tenure Bill (DRDLR, 2017). The second current proposes a recognition of existing institutional customary rights necessitating a policy alignment to empower existing land rights holders as the Interim Protection of Informal Land Rights (IPILRA) does (Hull et al, 2019). These contradictory positions are well captured by Kgoshigadi Moroka in the interview who points to the trepidation in government circles around its programmes (see Sectio 7.5.1).

Further, what Du Toit calls the "nationalist modernization" project of the post-apartheid government led to policy ambiguities resulting in unintended results. As an illustration, "agricultural liberalization" aimed to dismantle protectionist policies which favoured white farmers, and to expose South Africa to the benefits of the global market whilst at the same time creating opportunities for the aspirant black farmers who would fill the spaces of inefficient white farmers falling by the wayside (Du Toit 2017). However, the redistributive aspect of the nationalist modernisation project also called for the improvement of labour conditions and secure tenure rights of black labour tenants. As it turned out, global exposure served mainly to make white farmers improve their efficiencies resulting in vertical integration within the agricultural value chain as well as market concentration to take advantage of economies of scale. The offshoot of this was the crowding out of small farmers and agriculture-linked non-farm SMEs who could not compete with the globalized value chains. This can be seen, for example, through the large penetration of large chain supermarkets linked to big agro-food businesses into the local market in rural communities. Meanwhile, labour rights and tenure security regulations led to retrenchments and farm evictions. These have exacerbated "jobless-deagrarianization", where people are increasingly alienated from land and agriculture with little prospects for non-farm opportunities (Du Toit, 2017). Therefore, instead of the intended increased participation of black commercial farmers and employment growth, more people were forced out of rural areas into the cities to seek better opportunities.

The neoliberal policy trajectory can be theoretically aligned with Ward and Hite's (1998) four elements of development, i.e., liberalization and structural adjustment, global integration, physical infrastructure investment and institutional and social infrastructure investment. The verdict on South Africa's neoliberal GEAR policy is that whilst it may have had some success as

a macroeconomic stabilising policy, it failed dismally as a development strategy (Gomersall, 2004). As has already been argued, the macroeconomic policy choices in South Africa have not supported the rural development programme as it led to implausible assumptions such as the ability of rural communities to participate in commercial activities whilst austerity reduced the state's capacity to support rural projects, as evidenced by the lamentable state of the few projects at the Muyexe pilot site, and the failure to roll them out in large scale. Having provided a theoretical base of rural development in its general sense, the discussion now turns to some specificities about South Africa's rural development programme.

6. The nature of the rural development programme in South Africa

6.1 Scholarly perspective of rural development in South Africa

Rurality in South Africa is complicated by the apartheid spatial planning which created a duality with modern mechanised white rural farms on the one hand, and African rural areas in mostly (former) Bantustan areas characterized by inadequate "infrastructure, means of communication, health, education and commercial services" on the other hand (Erskine, 1985). As Hall (2004) amplifies, there are "capital-intensive" white commercial farmers on the one side and "labour-intensive" black survivalist farmers on the other side. Like Atkinson (2017), Mahlati (2011) warns against the "agriculturalisation" of rural development in South Africa. This is more relevant given the legacy of Bantustan enclaves which were deliberately underdeveloped (Erskine, 1985).

Yet rural development strategy in South Africa is still anchored in natural resources with agrarian and land reform as its key pillars (DLA, 2000; DRDLR, 20009; DALRRD 2023). As discussed in section 4, for dualistic development models, agriculture is "a precondition to, and has a significant positive impact on, long-run growth" (Grabowski & Self, 2006). The diversified nature of rural development is however underscored in the National Development Plan (NDP), for which expansion of irrigated agriculture and dry land production, commercial agriculture, land reform and management, rural infrastructure, institutional capacity, quality education, health care, basic services, social security, human development, agro-industry, tourism and small enterprises are the key drivers (National Planning Commission, 2011).

Given the importance of land reform in South Africa's rural development strategy, it is important to heed Ward & Hite's (2002) counsel that the appreciation of institutional land dynamics in local communities is important for appropriate policy choices. In South Africa, land reform has the dual purpose of redressing historical injustices and socioeconomic transformation (Hall, 2004). Its successes over the years can be assessed through the prism of the theories that underlie the policy choices made in the country. As Hull et al (2019) indicate, "theoretical positions

underlie and inform land development". Their insight into the problems of the country's land reform programme evokes a question of whether it is paralysed by the theoretical ambivalence alluded to in section 5. The neoliberal policies with emphasis on lean a state leading to market-led land reform (Hall, 2004) seem to be at odds with the developmental objectives espoused in the RDP. Indeed, Cousins' (2016) comprehensive list of land reform failures in South Africa could be a logical consequence thereof. For Mafeje (2003), the failure in land reform results mainly from "eurocentric" notions of land tenure, which, because it mistakenly characterized land tenure as communal, prescribes individual titling, which will ostensibly boost investment. As Kenjio (2013) indicates neoliberal land reform policies (of which titling is a key part), not only undermine established customary practices but may exacerbate marginalisation and inequality. A different strand on land reform is that pursued by the likes of AfriForum, who argue that land reform undermines private property and therefore investment and economic growth (Roets, 2018).

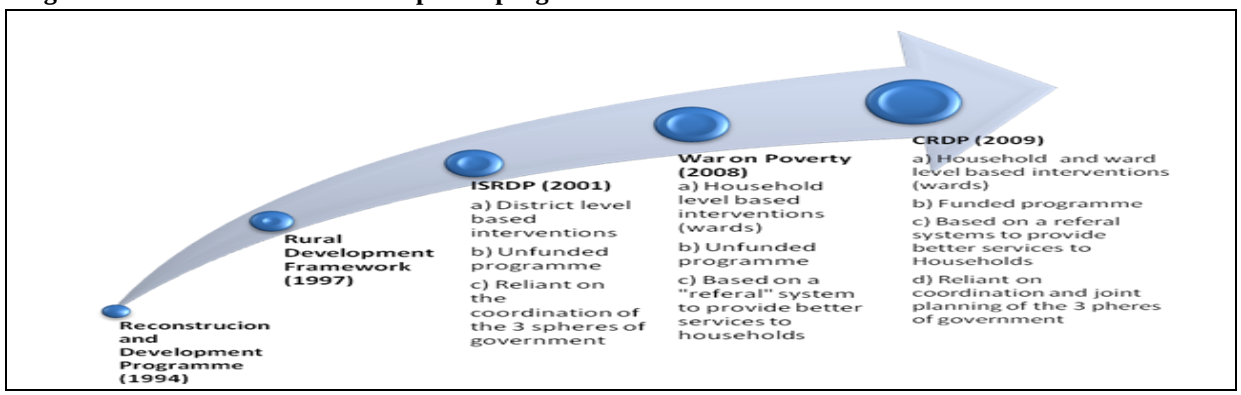
Agricultural policy has been influenced by a powerful bias against subsistence and smallholder farming and has tended to emphasise models that require 'tight' value chain integration governed by powerful retailers and importers (Du Toit, 2017). Even more seriously, agricultural and land reform policies have been characterized by a largely uncritical 'productionism,' reducing land reform to agrarian reform and considering land almost exclusively as a factor in the production of agricultural goods, ignoring its central role in non-farm livelihoods, social security, informal welfare and institutions of social cohesion (Ferguson 2013). This has had important implications for the implementation of the CRDP programme, where interventions beyond infrastructure development have mainly served to support agricultural cooperatives. Alternatively, the Mahumani and the Barolong Bo Seleka community development plans are holistic and integrative of various sectors (see sections 7.5.1 and 7.5.2). Ironically, DALRD, which is the custodian of the CRDP, has been instrumental in developing the Mahumani plan, albeit without any funding obligations. It can be argued that the rushed nature in which the Muyexe pilot was designed and kickstarted (see section 7.2: interview with DALRD official) presented little time for a truly integrative plan like the Mahumani one.

By its admission, the government's rural development interventions have had little impact in addressing the key challenges faced by rural communities with the recently adopted Integrated Rural Development Sector Strategy – 2023 (IRDSS) still lamenting about "high levels of poverty, poor spatial planning, landlessness and overcrowding in former homeland areas" (DALLRD, 2023). As alluded to earlier, the adoption of the Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) in 1996 (The National Treasury, 1996) may help explain this conundrum. As an orthodox macroeconomic policy (Padayachee, 2020), GEAR put the private sector and foreign investments at the centre of development and growth through such measures as conservative fiscal policy, low interest rates, low wages and trade liberalization through tariff reduction (Gomersall, 2004). Below is a detailed discussion of how this unfolded.

6.2 Evolution of rural development in South Africa

Figure 1 below traces the evolution of the rural development programme from the Reconstruction and Development Strategy to the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme.

Figure 1: Evolution of rural development programme in South Africa



Source: DRDLR. 2010. *Rationale and Criteria for the Selection of the 160 Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) Sites, 2009 – 2014. '*

6.2.1 The National Rural Development Strategy and the Rural Development Framework

The National Rural Development Strategy (NRDS) of 1995 and the Rural Development Framework (RDF) of 1997 were the first concerted attempts to institute a rural development programme in the post-apartheid era. The NRDS was a "rights-based" 25-year vision that sought to free rural communities from poverty by creating productive jobs through supporting commercial activities, diversified agriculture, providing infrastructure, ensuring rural-urban spatial linkages, building local capabilities and promoting close collaboration amongst local government, civil society and private sector (Integrated Rural Development Sector Strategy: Draft Version, 2022). One of the limitations of the strategy is that it did not account for local institutional realities such as traditional leadership governance and customary relations could influence the direction of development interventions. With the advent of GEAR, the NRDS "took a backseat" and a revised strategy called the National Development Framework was developed (IRDSS: Draft Version, 2022). Having identified the key obstacles as landlessness, skewed land ownership and development patterns as well as the apartheid spatial planning patterns the RDF aimed to integrate rural communities into the mainstream economy by entrenching participatory local democratic governance, building infrastructure, building local economies through promoting entrepreneurship and access to investment capital, promoting sustainable livelihoods and building local capacities to plan and implement. Whilst it points to the need for coordinated implementation, RDF had no successes as it was not fully embraced as a government strategy (IRDSS: Draft Version, 2022).

6.2.2 *Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy*

Developed in 2000, ISRDS was a spatially focused intervention where 15 rural nodes were identified in the country's poorest districts. Its vision was socially cohesive, stable and viable communities with the ability to attract skills and knowledge to build sustainable local communities. The ISRDS viewed cooperation at the local level between government institutions and informal organisations such as NGOs and CBOs as key to the development and empowerment of local communities (DLA, 2000). It listed as amongst its core principles participatory and integrative development, cooperative governance, local capacity to implement programmes and good governance. The ISRDS's approach to rural development was the decentralization of decision-making and implementation (DLA, 2000). This is also referred to, in academia, as "endogenous development" (Barquero, 2007). Like the Rural Development Framework, the ISRDS was not project-driven but identified coordination of government programmes as the key necessity for successful implementation.

The ISRD strategy of 2000 came at the period of GEAR's austerity measures and did not "add any value" given that no additional funding was set aside by the government for its implementation (Public Service Commission, 2009). The ISRDS strategy was dropped in 2009 when the government adopted the CRDP. Given the ideological and theoretical dithering within the ruling party, it would have been unlikely for CRDP to be a decisive break from the earlier strategies. Evidence of this is the party's adoption of the technocratic, instead of its vouched ideological, approach to development (Taspcott, 1997), the failure to appreciate the skewed but interdependent rural-urban and rich-poor linkages as seen in former President Mbeki's two nations in one dichotomy (Du Toit & Neves, 2007; Black et al, 2017) as well as, and perhaps even more ominously, the continued pursuit of neoliberal policies over its own Macroeconomic Research Group's proposals for state-led investment programme (Padayachee, 2020).

6.2.3 War on Poverty

The War on Poverty (WOP) was a 2008 Special Presidential Programme aimed at transversal coordination across spheres and levels of government. According to DRDLD (2010) the government's 2004 10-year review, just like the RDF and ISRDS, pointed to a lack of coordination in poverty interventions by the government. Therefore, whilst some gains had been scored in fighting poverty, poor coherence within the government meant that no full account could be made of the anti-poverty interventions and their successes whilst the level of inequality was growing. Although not exclusively focused on rural development, as an "instrument of coordination, alignment, support and supervision of anti-poverty initiative" (DRDLR, 2010) WOP sought to produce a clear poverty matrix with specific interventions, where the progression of supported households is monitored from entry to exit. A concerted effort was made to address the plight of women as they were most affected by poverty and inequality. Whilst WOP produced valuable baseline information on household poverty which has been useful for

government planning, it faced the same challenge as the ISRDS of lack of funding and as such its viability as a poverty reduction strategy was extremely limited.

6.2.4 Comprehensive Rural Development Programme

The CRDP was launched in Muyexe village in Greater Giyani Municipality, Limpopo (DALRRD, 2009). As a pilot, Muyexe would be used together with 21 other pilot sites to better shape the CRDP concept and "to develop a coherent strategy and policy". The medium to long-term aim was to develop an Agrarian Transformation, Rural Development and Land Reform policy that would be implemented throughout the country. The CRDP would empower communities to take responsibility for their livelihoods through optimal and sustainable use of resources. To empower communities, the government would implement a "coordinated broad-based agrarian transformation" and invest strategically in social and economic infrastructure. The CRDP explains integrated rural development as "planning and thus a strategy for multi-sectoral and multi-facetted interventions designed to ensure sustained improvements in the lives of rural-dwellers and rural communities" (DALRRD, 2012). This is in line with Erskine's (1985) description of integrated rural development as entailing a comprehensive planning approach to simultaneously carry out interventions that increase agricultural productivity, provision of infrastructure and services that enable improvement of quality of life and stimulating commercial and industrial activities to boost employment. It emphasises community participation to integrate local knowledge into the design and implementation of projects. The three pillars of the CRDP are: (a) agrarian transformation which includes optimal use of resources to increase production in stock farming and cropping as well as the use of modern technology in production; (b) rural development focusing on social infrastructure like access to basic facilities, building cooperatives and savings clubs, strengthening local democratic governance and forging partnerships with government and private sector, and (c) land reform, which encompasses land redistribution, tenure reform, planning and restitution. A Rural Development Agency would be established and responsible for (a) the coordination of role players that include government, civil society and the private sector, (b) planning and resource mobilisation, (c) monitoring and evaluation, and lastly (d) reporting and accountability. Importantly, provinces were required to develop regional strategies based on situational analysis and the participation of communities in the identification, prioritisation and design of projects. It would be these localized strategies that would inform the roll-out of the programme to other sites.

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform at the national level set the criteria for the selection of the CDRP sites on two basic factors:

(a) Population size: for maximum impact, densely populated rural areas would be selected.
(b) 2001 Provincial Indices of Multiple Deprivation for South Africa based on a deprivation index consisting of:
    1) Income and material deprivation,
    2) Employment deprivation,

3) Health deprivation,
4) Education deprivation, and,
5) Living environment deprivation.

Other sites were added based on the Minister's discretion and information from the War on Poverty Programme. Using the above criteria, a hundred and sixty (160) sites (including the original 22 pilots) were identified for the period 2010-2014. As Table 1 below summarises, this translated to 432,000 targeted households over the 5-year period, which would benefit an estimated rural population size of 1, 944, 000, found by multiplying the household size (4.5) and the number of targeted households. Relative to the total rural population, this amounted to only 9.9% that would benefit from the programme.

Table 1: CRDP targeted Households and Population 2010-2014

Rural Population House Households	**Quantity**
Total Rural Population	19 600 000
Rural Households size	4.5
Targeted Households	432 000
Total Rural Households: Population/size	4 355 555
Targeted Rural Population	1 944 000
Percentage targeted households/population	9.9%

Source: Adapted from DRDLR. 2010. *Rationale and Criteria for the Selection of the 160 Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) Sites, 2009 – 2014*

The CRDP was planned as a three-phased programme as follows:

- Phase One: an incubator stage focusing on basic needs;
- Phase Two: the entrepreneurial development stage with infrastructure development being the focus;
- Phase Three: a focus on supporting rural industrial and financial sectors driven by small, medium and micro enterprises and village markets.

An evaluation report commissioned in 2016 for the overall implementation of the CRDP reports limited successes in access to basic services and employment through public works but failure in land reform (DPME, 2016). The DPME evaluation was based on three elements, viz., institutional arrangements, achievement of objectives and value for money. The findings were that some successes were scored in infrastructure development and food security but that a) the government had not developed the adequate institutional capacity to implement the programme as seen through poor coordination, municipalities having difficulty in aligning the CRDP to their IDPs and weak monitoring of performance on set targets such job-creation, b) there was limited local enterprise development and, (c) there was little to no land reform progress on the pilot sites (see further details in Annexure B)

The DPME review reflected the technocratic (as shown by Taspcott (1997)) as well as the micro-based developmental approach of the new classical consensus macroeconomic model. No attempt was made to evaluate the programme in terms of the country-wide macroeconomic policy of the government. For instance, the pace of the CRDP roll-out would be very slow given the two-year expenditure of R757 million (as observed by the DPME review) whilst the programme needed R61 billion for full implementation, i.e., in the 160 sites. The fiscal consolidation programme, which marked the aggressive return of austerity in 2015, could have been identified as having a considerable effect on the budget and recommendations could have been made to that effect.

Cousins (2013) has criticised the CDRP for its top-down nature citing its centralised decision-making, bureaucratic control, limited community participation and its focus on infrastructure, which, whilst important may not address structural issues such as land reform and access to basic services. He further points out the neoliberal influences such as reliance on public-private partnerships and market-driven solutions that place the burden of development on individual entrepreneurship.

6.2.5 Integrated Rural Development Sector Strategy (IRDSS)

This is the latest of the government's rural development intervention. The IRDSS was finalised and adopted by the Cabinet in 2023 and has not yet been implemented. It does not bring anything new but aims to draw lessons from previous strategies and "take forward the implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme encompassing intergovernmental and sector interventions in the 44 districts and 8 metros in a collaborated and coordinated approach through the District Development Model and Rural Development Sector Plans" (IRDSS, 2023). The IRDSS does not provide an appraisal of the CRDP as an ongoing programme. However, it does indicate that only limited progress has been made in developing rural areas since 1994, citing for example, that a meagre 27,000 jobs have been created in agriculture since 2011. It highlights the fact that increased rural-urban migration has put more pressure on infrastructure and the job market in cities. This, together with the COVID-19 devastation, was an added reason for the continuation of rural development interventions.

The preceding discussion outlines the trajectory of rural development in the country. Only the ISRDS of 2000 and CRDP of 2009 have been implemented long enough for any impact assessment to be made. The ISRDS was a GEAR product and was discarded without much impact in 2009. The CRDP was supposed to be a departure from the neoliberal GEAR and a return to the "developmental" rights-based approach of earlier strategies. The report now turns its focus to the CRDP implementation by reflecting on the pilot project in Muyexe village with a comparative perspective of two other rural communities which were not part of the programme.

7. A reflection on the CRDP implementation: the Muyexe pilot

In this section, details of the information and observations from the Muyexe pilot project are given. These are sourced from interviews conducted with Headman Muyexe and the Office of the Hosi Shiviti; two government officials directly involved with rural development, one from the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development and one from Greater Giyani Municipality; focused grouped interviews with members of the four (4) cooperatives where a total of 21 informants were involved; two senior traditional leaders outside Muyexe who have led rural development initiatives in their communities to provide a comparative perspective; and lastly, observations from the walkabout in the community and visit to some infrastructure projects.

7.1 Headman Muyexe and the Office of Hosi Shiviti

The interaction with Headman Muyexe was at an informal level mainly to request permission to conduct the research and obtain his overview of the project. Headman Muyexe expressed satisfaction with the CRDP programme in his village. His wish was that a public gate could be opened to the Kruger National Park as that would have economic spinoffs for the community. The researcher observed how he was opportunistically using the programme for personal gain. As an expectation that the researcher should pay some money, he used the expression "*emahlweni ka nghala, yana na xisana*" (loosely translated: in front of the lion, go with a burning log) and also disclosed that most project developers were paying money directly into his account.[3] The Office of Hosi Shiviti indicated that earlier (before 2016) non-participation of Headman Muyexe in the Shiviti Traditional Council had created tensions between the village and the traditional council, which had affected the implementation of the CRDP. The government had to use its influential authority to roll out infrastructure projects and support community projects without necessarily following the required process. For instance, a community resolution signed by Hosi Shiviti would be required to repurpose communal (customary) land. The sidelining of the Shiviti Traditional Council resulted in the office having no records of the CRDP projects in Muyexe. Consequently, it is unable to provide the support and interventions required for the sustainability of the projects. Further, community members have difficulty in making applications for financial and other support from government institutions as most require the Traditional Council's recommendations.

The interaction with Headman Muyexe and the Office of Hosi Shiviti underscored the relevance of local institutional realities in the conceptualization, design and implementation of development projects.

[3] Let it be noted that others may regard this as customarily legitimate, that it is expected that whoever interact with a traditional leader should bring a *ndzuvo* (offering). This is part of the institutional realities which have to be factored in rolling out any programme in traditional rural communities.

7.2 Interview with the national official of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform

The DALRD official gave further emphasis on the objectives of the rural development programme and how it had been implemented. A long-serving official of the Department, he confirmed that the government's initial programme, the ISRDS, was to identify rural nodes and development corridors as well as municipal priority projects that would catalyse rural development. Through the National Spatial Development Plan, 16 rural nodes were identified. The private business was to be the key player. The National Spatial Development Framework allowed for further secondary and tertiary nodes with an emphasis on infrastructure, especially road infrastructure. The CRDP was initiated as a transformative programme and specific sites were identified as demonstration sites to evaluate impact. He indicated that R11 billion was set aside for the implementation of the CRDP for the period 2009-2011. He gave an example of the CRDP intervention on housing where land would be proclaimed for upmarket housing development. Amongst the challenges in the implementation of the CRDP were:

- Governance and opposition from political parties and civil society. According to him, this challenge affected implementation at the local level as groups would obstruct implementation.
- There was no feasibility study conducted before the implementation of the programme. It was more a political programme than a properly conceived development strategy. Consequently, it had no sustainability plan and no continuous roll-out of the plan since the original pilot projects.

The DALRD official's information and insight confirm the postulation that the government's theory and policy ambivalence affected both its conceptualisation and the implementation of projects. Amidst the complaints from left-leaning members of the ruling alliance about neoliberal policies, of which the ISRDS was the product, it was not surprising that the developmental-sounding CRDP came about. However, the neoliberal policies had been entrenched, making it impossible to implement the CRDP as envisaged.

7.3 Interview with the official of the Greater Giyani Municipality

The interview with the official of the Greater Giyani Municipality corroborated some information from both the DPME evaluation and the DALRD official. For its part, the Municipality had attempted to align the CRDP with its IDP although it meant that funds had to be reallocated from other programmes. It focused on road construction to facilitate economic and social linkage with the town and other communities. The Muyexe village is located within the potential tourism route given its proximity to Kruger National Park, making it a strategic investment site. Like the DPME review and the DALDR official, the Municipal official identified a lack of sustainability planning, poor coordination of implementation, and a "lack of

appetite" (commitment of financial resources) to roll out to other villages as the main inhibitors of the programme. Further, he indicated that lessons from the Muyexe pilot site were not crystallised, making it difficult to replicate.

7.4 Interviews with Focused Groups

The four focused groups provided valuable information on how the CRDP's objectives of enterprise development, support to cooperatives, employment creation, skills development and improvement of rural livelihoods were to be realised.

7.4.1 Zama-Zama Muyexe Cooperative: 9 informants

The Cooperative was enlisted as a CRDP project in 2010 but only registered as a business entity in 2019. Members heard of the opportunity to organise themselves into a cooperative to access funding from local leadership. It functions as a subsistence agriculture rather than a commercial project, made up of 18 members. There is no visible support for the project. It has a very poor self-constructed fence and no irrigation infrastructure.



Pic 1: A: Members of Zama-zama Muyeze Co-op B: With no irrigation infrastructure water is bought from borehole owners.

The members, however, did receive some training from extension officers. The project plants cash crops from which it gets meagre income used to purchase seedlings and, occasionally, payment for members. It practices rotational farming of maize, sweet potato and spinach. This is supplemented by collecting wild marula fruit to process its nut products for selling. The products from the project also supplement members' household food supplies. The immediate needs of the project are water services, fencing, a tractor and a storage facility. As of the time of the visit, the project appeared to be a completely failed commercial attempt.

7.4.2 Macena Agricultural Primary Cooperative. 5 informants

This was the biggest of the four visited projects**.** It had existed before the launch of the CRDP pilot and was enlisted as a CRDP project after the visit by former President Zuma in 2009. At the

time of the researcher's visit, it was registered as a cooperative. Whilst it is a bigger project, it consisted of only 12 members after the resignations of others. The project has received considerable government support which includes a pack-house, fencing, electricity (grid-connected and solar), irrigation infrastructure, water infrastructure through the Water Research Commission, as well as training of the members. It specialised in tomato production, which used to be exported to Mozambique. The income received was enough to remunerate the members of the cooperative. However, as a start-up business, it relied heavily on continuous financial support. Once funding stopped, production fell drastically, and the export trade also ceased. The earlier successes also brought challenges, such as leadership squabbles and corrupt practices which led to the withdrawal of support from its partner, Old Mutual. Added to that were the unfulfilled promises by the government such as a tractor which was not delivered.



Pic 2: A: Packhouse funded through CRDP **B: The project has been reduced to producing a few kilograms of tomato.**

The collapse of the Macena Agricultural Primary Cooperative is symptomatic of the inadequacy of the development model underlining the CRDP. There was an expectation that once given initial support, the project would flourish as a commercial entity. However, the members of the cooperative did not appear as astute businesspeople but were participating in the cooperative just to earn a living income. Old Mutual, the private partner, also did not seem to see it as a profitable business but as a corporate social responsibility.

7.4.3 Twananani Muyexe: 3 informants

Twananani Muyexe is a textile cooperative consisting of 6 female members. It was also established before the CRDP. Through the programme, its workshop building was renovated, enlarged and fenced. The project also received a R150 000 grant which was used to purchase sewing machines. The Greater Giyani Municipality supports the cooperative through exhibitions which promote market access. In a classic case of the lack of complementary support, the cooperative's members were not trained in financial and tax management. This created a problem with the management of the grant money, which was handled as if it were income. As a consequence, the cooperative owes SARS and it is unable to use its initiatives to raise funding

from other sources. At the visiting time, it was earning very little revenue from sales and members had to create a backyard garden to supplement their households' food requirements.

7.4.4 *Muyexe Poultry Primary Co-op: 4 informants*

This is a registered cooperative of 6 women established through the CRDP programme. It trades in poultry, where small chicks are purchased for breeding and selling. The initial support provided was the construction of poultry shelters and fencing and an R650,000 grant for stock purchase. After initial success, where it was able to sell 5 boxes of chicken per week to community members and small retailers, production had collapsed at the time of the visit. This happened after a failed stock sale of 10 boxes from which the project failed to pick up. Due to SARS problems similar to the textile cooperative, it is unable to raise funds, as all potential funders require a tax clearance certificate. Also exacerbating the problem is the lack of electricity, which Eskom has cut off due to debt. In addition, the poultry farm premises had no access to water and had to buy from local people with boreholes.

7.5 Observations from the walkabout visits to some infrastructure projects

Infrastructure projects provide the most visible evidence that Muyexe village is a CRDP site. There are marked positive differences between the period when the researcher last visited Muyexe (2009) and the latest visits (2023). New constructions have been made of a clinic; a community centre consisting of a community hall, offices, an IT centre and community library; a state-of-the-art police station and a connector paved road from the Giyani-Thomo-Mninginisi tar road. The actual impact of this infrastructure may not be tangible but a walkabout by the researcher revealed young people using the IT centre, a few young and adult community members in the library and a stakeholders meeting at the community hall. The paved road has enormously reduced the driving time from Giyani to Muyexe.



Pic 3: A: Typical housing at the start of the CRDP B: New housing investment including multi-storied houses.

The researcher also noticed a remarkable change in the state of houses (see Pic 3 above). Whilst before 2009 there were only a few multi-roomed houses, in 2023 there was evidence of many

people who were investing in huge housing projects as seen by the many multi-room houses, including double-storey ones, that have been and are being, built. The new infrastructure seems to have attracted investments at least in housing. This may have long-term positive effects on commercial enterprises.

7.6 *Interview with Kgoshigadi Moroka of Barolong Boo Seleka Traditional Community in Mangaung Metro, Free State*

The Barolong community is in Free State within the Mangaung Metro. Its senior traditional leader Kgoshigadi Moroka is a former member of the National House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders who was instrumental in the conceptualisation of the National House's InvestRural programme and has initiated various rural development projects in her community. Her perception is that the government's role in development policy, compared to the previous regime (the Bophuthatswana homeland administration in particular), is discriminatory and cites the BEE programme in particular. To her, this constrains development as white people (who are the main holders of finance) are reluctant to invest and partner with the government on projects that uplift black people. She does not believe that the current government is "comfortable" with its programmes and says that this contributes to its non-reception of new initiatives and concepts. She feels that the democratisation of the institution of traditional leadership has gone too far, to the extent of diluting the rural communities' own identity and heritage, which to her is the genesis of development. She cites the Orania model to illustrate the important role of culture. Her community has partnered with Afri-Forum to initiate community planning and development. This resulted in a Community Development Master Plan "tailored to the unique context" of the community. To Kgoshogadi Moroka land tenure should be improved to the extent that the land ownership is transferred to the traditional council which shall administer the land on behalf of the community.

7.7 Interview with Hosi Mahumani of Mahumani Traditional Community in Greater Giyani, Limpopo

Hosi Mahumani leads the Mahumani Traditional Community, which is about 60km drive from Muyexe village. He initiated the Mahumani Integrated and Sustainable Development Initiative for which he received support from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and the Greater Giyani Municipality. DRDR commissioned a status quo report based on socioeconomic and spatial analysis of the Mahumani Community, which was finalised in 2015. Interestingly, but also unsurprisingly, better situational and scientific analysis seemed to have been conducted in Mahumani than in the CRDP sites. Since it was not one of the identified sights Mahumani received no CRDP funding but used the status quo report to lobby for funding from other role players for projects identified through the Mahumani Integrated and Sustainable Development Initiative.

Hosi Mahumani is himself a prominent player within the traditional leadership institution. He has served in various committees including leadership positions in the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA). As a former magistrate, he assists in developing and facilitating training programmes on legal and land matters for the traditional leaders. During the interview, he presented his view of rural development as one that should be centred around the people so that they become the main drivers of their development. He argued that from the African worldview, land has the interlinked purpose of supporting material livelihoods for survival and spiritual belonging. He accepts that commercial activities should be promoted with people assisted to appreciate the commercial value of the natural resources in their areas. For example, indigenous trees such as *mondzo* tree for furniture, the *nxanatsi/mopani* tree which is the habitat of mopani worm, and *nkanyi/morula* with its multi-value products can provide a huge commercial base for rural communities. His lament was that the "Eurocentric" approach to development has alienated people from the land and the resources that it produces.

On governance issues, Hosi Mahumani believes that the role of traditional leadership has not clearly been defined and this has led to a leadership vacuum at the local level. He argues for instance that there is no clear interface between customary law and statutory law, e.g., on land administration. To him, the powers of the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development on customary land reflect the dominant ahistorical view of land acquisition and land holding. Like Kgosigadi Moroka, he wants land to be transferred to traditional authorities which would "guarantee" tenure security. The current process of land accessibility for investment is cumbersome. There is no necessity to turn customary land into private property holdings, but other forms of security can be used, e.g., land leases. The "communality" of land tenure means that (1) there are perpetual rights given to families; (2) there are shared rights on grazing land and share obligation in land conservation; (3) people have user- instead of ownership- rights; and (4) community participation is guaranteed. The Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) is skewed against the customary processes as they are not factored in – e.g., the traditional council is not included. The government, according to Hosi Mahumani, should provide technical input and advice but leave decision-making to community leadership. The government should empower traditional authorities to build local capacities and capabilities.

Hosi Mahumani's biggest criticism of the CRDP as piloted at Muyexe is that it enriches outside contractors instead of empowering local community members. He also indicates that the programme is not viable, as investors are reluctant to invest in communal land whilst the government have shown little appetite to invest in development projects beyond infrastructure. For any development initiative to work, it requires extensive study of the local conditions and local resources to build from its base. Skills development is also key to rural development. For his part, he has established the Mahumani Empowerment Centre to train local communities on

such activities as fence manufacturing, as well as programmes on the theory and practice of farming. The impact of this initiative is the creation of job opportunities in farming, construction, textiles, and plumbing. There has however been minimal support through SETAs and there are no off-take agreements for either products or skilled labour from the training initiative.

7.8 Inferences from the data

As pointed out elsewhere (see 6.2.4) CRDP exudes a top-down element in design which is reminiscent of the neoliberal elitist approach to development. Communities were not involved in the design of the CDRP, but the programme was designed by the national government which set goals and objectives. Of the four projects engaged two were established as CRDP projects whilst the other two existed before the CRDP. There seems therefore to have been a mixed approach of supporting community initiatives whilst establishing new projects in terms of the CRDP design. However, even the existing projects that were supported, fitted into the already formulated plan of how CRDP projects should look like. There is highly centralised control of resources where the national government decides which processes to fund, which negates community-driven aspects of the programme. All funding for the four projects was given conditional grants. This has constrained the projects' opportunity to decide on interventions that best suit them as well as how best to manage the allocated funds. For instance, the poultry project's major challenge is water resources. The grant was, however, only for the stock of chicken. The project could have split the allocation and drilled a water borehole to sustain its business. The conditionalities left both the poultry project and the textile project in dire financial straits because of the prescriptive way they should manage their grants.

The CRDP disregards institutional realities within local communities in favour of standardised solutions to desperate situations. The neoliberal assumptions of land tenure that individualised tenure equals efficiency (Walker, 2013), ignore, for instance, the rich and complicated customary tenure systems in traditional communities. Once left to their own devices, the Muyexe projects were unable to raise finance because their funding applications had to be endorsed by the Shiviti Traditional Council, under whose custodianship the Muyexe land falls, but which had been largely left out in the planning and inception of the Muyexe pilot.

Market-oriented development reflects little support for commercial activities – a view that once an enabling environment (infrastructure) has been created, businesses would grow, and investment would flow in. The Muyexe pilot projects were given initial funding with the understanding that they would grow into commercial enterprises. From the interviews and observations is it clear that all of them have remained survivalist projects with little prospects for growth. The Macena Agricultural Cooperative deteriorated from export production to become a self-consumption project. This is largely because no further funding was provided after the initial batch of grants.

Fiscal conservatism led to poor funding of the programme resulting in limited scope. The CRDP was planned to grow from the 22 pilot projects to 160. However, no funding was provided for this expansion. The result is quite logical given the austerity regime linked to the South African Reserve Bank's fiscal consolidation and the Treasury's resolve to reduce the sovereign debt (see 5.1)

The CRDP have had lofty goals with a development process led by the state and communities. However, realising its objectives was negated by a neoliberal macroeconomic framework which limited government support to projects. The focus on infrastructure could have been good, but without adequate budget to roll this out on a large scale, the impact of the CRDP to rural development remained minuscule.

7.9 Are there alternative pathways?

There are alternative rural development approaches both internationally and locally which the CRDP could have followed, and which would be better suited for South Africa's rural areas. One of them is the community-driven development (CDD) approach. Community-driven development according to the World Bank (2004) is an approach that empowers local communities to take control of their development process. This entails local participation, capacity building, local resource control, enhanced democratic local governance, building of partnerships and sustainability.

The CDD approach would however have been difficult to implement within the neoliberal paradigm. Firstly, CDD and government funding are interlinked (Mansuri & Rao, 2013) through the need for infrastructure, education, health services and direct funding to community organisations. Secondly, neoliberalism, with its emphasis on privatisation, reduced public spending, market-driven priorities and individualism, would greatly negate CDD (Soss, Fording & Schram, 2014). Consequently, a truly CDD approach would require a decisive break from the chosen neoliberal-based fiscal conservatism.

There are models of community initiatives which, whilst also receiving inadequate governance support, point out that there could be successful alternatives to the CRDP approach. The interviews with Kgoshigadi Moroka and Hosi Mahumani present interesting cases of community-driven development. The Barolong Community Development Master Plan and the Mahumani Integrated and Sustainable Development Initiative represent community-driven development models. The common factor amongst them is localised planning which augers well for community ownership, resource control and sustainability. The two communities have also been able to mobilise partnerships to inject the required expertise and investment. Whilst

government support for these initiatives has been inconsiderable, the two could be useful models for a successful rural development approach, which, through enough government funding can go a long way in addressing the structural challenges of the rural economy.

A more developmental approach would see the government spending more to support projects by investing in them and building appropriate state capacity to roll out the programme. Better research is also required to appreciate the institutional realities of local communities and build on them. More serious attention could also be given to land reform without the prejudicial Eurocentric approach. This would empower communities to utilise their most important resource, the land, for productive purposes. In this regard, a speedy finalisation of the Communal Land Tenure law, which supports rural development objectives, would assist the process.

8. Concluding comment

The strategy, application and theoretical underpinnings of rural development programmes are an important area of research. This is because rural development is seen as a major area for economic growth prospects in South Africa. In South Africa, the neoliberal policy choices have proved to be incompatible with developmental objectives such as land reform, support for rural livelihood projects, and the comprehensive programme to build rural capabilities to fight against "unfreedoms". Further, the reluctance to thoroughly assess local realities results in misguided assumptions leading to wrong interventions.

The macroeconomic policy choice in South Africa has had a profound effect on the design and implementation of the rural development programme. GEAR was clear on its pursuit of austerity, fiscal consolidation, and price stability. This affected spending on development and constrained access to finance by SMMEs as interest rates were continuously raised in the inflation-targeting regime. Further, austerity harms tackling "unfreedoms" as spending on education, health, infrastructure, and skills development is subdued. Additionally, the reduced government role in the economy implies that the state's required capacity to support rural development programmes, e.g., extension officers to support farmers, remains low. The reliance on "the market" and generalised assumptions about traditional rural communities ignore institutional factors in most rural areas in South Africa, e.g., the absence of land markets (in the neoliberal sense) and the conflictual interface between traditional governance and elected municipal councils. All these are clear in South Africa's rural development programme. The ISRDS received no funding at all but relied on re-prioritisation of existing funds and attracting private investment. The government did allocate funding for the CRDP, which was spent mainly on infrastructure. Whilst this seems to have positive spinoffs at Muyexe, the poor funding for projects resulted in them failing to grow beyond mere subsistence activities. More importantly, austerity means that the programme

cannot be extended beyond the first pilot sites. Relative to the enormity of underdevelopment in rural areas, it must be concluded that the rural development programme has had no impact at all.

The new macroeconomic consensus model's micro-based approach to development focuses on removing the bottlenecks that constrain entrepreneurial activities, such as poorly developed markets and financial institutions. Land reform falls within this approach. This was completely absent from the Muyexe pilot, even though an opportunity presented itself to study customary land relations and develop a model that could be tested in other traditional rural communities. The other part of the NMC model is the emphasis on infrastructure investment also aimed at facilitating market-based development. The implementation of the CRDP has failed on the supply-side interventions as no viable enterprises have emerged out of the CRDP support. This can be attributed to the misguided assumptions about the capabilities of local people to establish commercial entities.

Yet it has been shown in this research that there are alternatives which would yield better results. The Borolong and Mahumani initiatives offer an alternative community-driven approach which with adequate government support can prove to be successful.

For the rural development programme to be successfully implemented, a clear developmental policy is required with the government taking a leading role in investment.

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ANNEXURE A: Key Statistical Indicators on Greater Giyani Local Municipality, 2009

No	INDICATOR	DETAILS		
1.	Education: % school attendance - 0–25-year-olds	None:	22.6	
		Pre-school – High school	76.6	
		Tertiary	0.7	
		Adult Basic Education	0.1	
2.	Income in rands	None	78.04	
		0-400	8.27	
		401-800	7.64	
		801-1600	1.97	
		Above 1600	4.08	
3.	Employment	Employed	39.6 (16.1)	
		Unemployed	60.4 (83.9)	
		Economically inactive	59.1	
		Contributors*	Agriculture: 8.37 Mining: 1.09	**9.46**
			Manufacturing: 3.14 Construction: 6.25 Electricity/Gas/Water: 1.76	**11.15**
			Retail: 13.93	**13.93**
			Private Households: 9. 25 Community/Social/Personal: 39.21	**48.46**
			Other	**17**
4.	Health	Clinics	26	
		Mobile Clinics	10	
		Health Centers 2	02	
		Hospitals 2	General	01
			Mental	01
5.	Water provision	The then infrastructure was inadequate: 30 villages had no water		
6.	Electricity*	80.9% of households had access to electricity by 2007. The 2010-2011 IDP planned that all households would be		

		electrified by the end of that financial year
7.	Agriculture*	The vast tract of arable land and irrigation schemes make agriculture to be the *backbone of the economy*. Adverse climatic conditions such as drought however cause water shortages which undermines agricultural production.
8.	Tourism*	Tourism opportunities are offered by proximity to Kruger National Park with plans to open a public gate to the park, dams for sports facilities and fishing, the statute of King Nghunghunyana and hospitality facilities in town.

Adapted from DRDLR, 2009; * Sourced from 2010-2011 IDP: Greater Giyani Municipality

ANNEXURE B: Summary of DPME Evaluation of the CRDP

No	Elements	Findings
1	Institutional Arrangements	• CRDP was a top-down programme with no clear policy framework on the involvement of provincial and local spheres resulting in poor participation • DRDLR lacked the capacity and authority to coordinate the various sector departments in all spheres leading to duplication and overlaps • CRDP was seen as an added burden to municipalities and was not aligned with IDPs due to resource constraints • Councils of Stakeholders were established but did not function adequately due to ill-defined terms of operation • Weak monitoring and evaluation
2	Achievement of goals/objectives	• Profiling was done after identification of sites • Partnerships were established with training institutions but the training was only limited to a small group of community members. • Poor political leadership emanating from tensions among local leaders hampered the implementation • Job creation and rural livelihoods were promoted through the NARYSEC training programme, food gardens, fencing of small farms, ICT hubs, water harvesting, poultry farms, extension support, cooperatives and enterprise development, and access to basic services. Except for basic services, all were

		done on a small scale level. • Access to land and land tenure were the biggest obstacles in traditional community areas. Whilst land reform is a key pillar of CRDP very little was implemented through the programme.
3	Value for Money	• A roll-out to all rural wards would require an estimated budget of R61 billion. • R757 million was spent on 18 sites during the first 2 years. • Funds were not spent efficiently and effectively due to amongst others, the imposition of technologies not appropriate to localities resulting in non-utilisation, benefits of infrastructure not realized due to lack of complementarities, job-creation initiatives not achieving full value because of skills shortage, poor enterprise development, lack of facilitated value chain, infrastructure bottlenecks, poor basic services.

Source: DPME 2016

ANNEXURE C: Questionnaires

1. Official in the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development

No	Question
a)	What is your understanding of the government's rural development strategy?
b)	How do you think the strategy is linked to the overall government development programme?
c)	List at least two objectives and two outcomes of the rural development strategy.
d)	How do you rate the successes of the rural development strategy since 2000 against objectives and outcomes?
e)	Are there differences among the different strategies implemented since 2000? If so, list the key differences
f)	What is the annual budget allocation for the implementation of rural development? Is the budget located within one department?
g)	How is the CRDP implementation coordinated?
h)	What informed the identification of Muyexe as a pilot project?
i)	What do you think are the challenges of implementing the rural development pro-

	gramme?
j)	How are communities involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the projects?
k)	How often does the department monitor the implementation of rural development projects

2. Official in the Greater Giyani Municipality

a.	What is your understanding of the government's rural development strategy?
b.	How do you think the strategy is linked to the overall government development programme?
c.	Does Greater Giyani Municipality have a rural development strategy/programme? As a stand-alone?; or part of a broader strategy/programme?
d.	What are the key outcomes of the strategy/programme in c)?
e.	How is the Muyexe CRDP pilot project linked/ aligned to Greater Giyani Municipality's programmes?
f.	Does GGM fund some of the projects in the Muyexe CRDP pilot? Please list.
g.	How does GGM participate in the implementation of the Muyexe CRDP projects? Please indicate institutional arrangements.
h.	What informed the identification of Muyexe as a pilot project? How was GGM involved in the identification of the pilot?
i.	What do you think are the challenges of implementing the Muyexe pilot?
j.	From the GGM perspective, is the pilot replicable throughout the GGM area, i.e., in terms of financial affordability and government capacity to roll out?
k.	Please share any other information that you think is important for the researcher to know.

3. Beneficiaries (those who are part of leadership and/or working in any of the projects at Muyexe)

No	Question
a)	Demographic information. Name, age, gender (optional) ***Vito, malimbe, rimbewu (a swibohi)***
b)	How did you come to know that the government was bringing projects to Muyexe? ***Xana mi swi tive njhani leswaku ku tisiwa tiproject laha ka Muyexe?***
c)	What does your project do? ***Project leyi mi nga ka yona i ya yini?***
d)	Is your project registered? If so, as what? ***Xana project ya nwina yi tsarisiwile swa ximfumo, loko swi ri tani yi tsarisiwile tani hi yini? Xikombiso, Cooperative***

e)	How many are women? Youth? Male? ***Xana project ya nwina yi na vavasati vangani? Vatswha ke? Vavanuna vona?***
f)	How is the project governed?
g)	Have you received training for what you do in the project? ***Xana mi kumile ku leteriwa (ku dyondzisiwa) eka project ya nwina?***
h)	Does your project receive funding from the government? Which government institution? What much? How often? ***Xana project ya nwina yi kuma ku pfuniwa hi swa timali ku suka eka mfumo? Ku suka eka ndzawulo yini? Mali muni? Swi endleka ka ngani?***
i)	What is the funding for? ***Xana mali leyi mi yi kumaka yi tirhisiwa yini?***
j)	Do you produce and sell anything in your project? ***Xana mi tshovela swokarhi mi tlhela mi swi xavisa eka project ya n'wina?***
k)	When did your project start? Do you think your project will still be there for the next 5 years? Explain ***Xana project ya nwina yi sungile rinis? Xana mi vona wonge project ya n'wina yi tava ya ha ri kona eka ntlhanu wa malimbe lawa ya taka? Hlamuselani?***
l)	How has being in the project helped you? ***Xana kuva mi ri xirho xa project swi mi vuyerise yini?***
m)	Are you happy to be in the project? ***Xana ma eneleteka hi ku va eka project?***

4. Traditional Leaders outside the CRDP programme - for a comparative perspective

No	Question
a)	What are the major challenges facing your community?
b)	Mention some of the key community development projects in your community
c)	Who initiated the projects in b
d)	How are they funded?
e)	Does the government play any other role in the projects?
f)	Who owns the land in your community?
g)	How is land allocated for settlement? Business?
h)	Do you think the current land ownership and allocation system assist or hinder development in your community?
i)	Do you know of the government's rural development programme, CRDP? How did you come to know it? When? Is there any CRDP project in your area?

j)	What is your general view of rural development?

ANNEXURE D: Consent Letters

(i) Official in the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
(ii) Official in the Greater Giyani Local Municipality
(iii) Head of the Office of Hosi Shiviti
(iv) Representative of Zama-zama Muyexe Cooperative
(v) Representative of Macena Agriculture Cooperative
(vi) Representative of Twananani Cooperative
(vii) Representative of Muyexe Poultry Primary Cooperative
(viii) Kgoshigadi Moroka of Borolong Boo Seleka Traditional Community
(ix) Hosi Mahumani of Mahumani Traditional Community

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Ratlou Location
Thaba Nchu
9780

☎ - 051 875 2509
🖷 - 071 853 8552

KGOTLA YA BAROLONG BOO-SELEKA

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Ga-Rapulana
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✉ - motlhale.24@gmail.com

BAROLONG BOO SELEKA ● ROYAL FAMILY COUNCIL ● BAROLONG BOO SELEKA

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

STUDY TITLE: Implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme: Reflexions from Muyexe Village, Greater Giyani Local Municipality, Mopani District

RESEARCHER: KENNETH MANGANYI

CONSENT:

I, the undersigned confirm that the researcher has explained the elements of informed consent to me as the participant.

I know that participation is voluntary and that I do not need to answer all questions. The purpose of the research as well as the risks have been explained. I understand the issues of confidentiality.

PARTICIPANT NAME: **Kgoshigadi Moroka of Barolong Boo Seleka**

SIGNATURE:

DATE: 21 February 2024

WITNESS NAME: M. M. Madiga

SIGNATURE:

DATE: 21/02/2024

Chairperson: Kgosi G. Moroka **Secretary: Mr L.L Motlhale**

Hosi Mahumani - Mahumani Traditional Council

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

STUDY TITLE: Implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme: Reflexions from Muyexe Village, Greater Giyani Local Municipality, Mopani District

RESEARCHER: KENNETH MANGANYI

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I know that participation is voluntary and that I do not need to answer all questions. The purpose of the research as well as the risks have been explained. I understand the issues of confidentiality.

PARTICIPANT NAME: Hosi Chaohaeni Aaron Mahumani

SIGNATURE: [signature]

DATE: 3/1/2024

WITNESS NAME: Mhlongo T. Yesi (Mr)

SIGNATURE: [signature]

DATE: 3/1/2024

Zama-zama Muyexe Co-op

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

STUDY TITLE: Implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme: Reflexions from Muyexe Village, Greater Giyani Local Municipality, Mopani District

RESEARCHER: KENNETH MANGANYI

CONSENT:

I, the undersigned confirm that the researcher has explained the elements of informed consent to me as the participant.

I know that participation is voluntary and that I do not need to answer all questions. The purpose of the research as well as the risks have been explained. I understand the issues of confidentiality.

PARTICIPANT NAME: Joyce Shibambo

SIGNATURE: [signature]

DATE: 28 November 2023

WITNESS NAME: Ana Maluleke

SIGNATURE: [signature]

DATE: 28 November 2023

Twananani Muyexe

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

STUDY TITLE: Implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme: Reflexions from Muyexe Village, Greater Giyani Local Municipality, Mopani District

RESEARCHER: KENNETH MANGANYI

CONSENT:

I, the undersigned confirm that the researcher has explained the elements of informed consent to me as the participant.

I know that participation is voluntary and that I do not need to answer all questions. The purpose of the research as well as the risks have been explained. I understand the issues of confidentiality.

PARTICIPANT NAME: Vutisa Balogi

SIGNATURE: ~~AB~~

DATE: 28-11-23

WITNESS NAME: Tsakani Matthebyla

SIGNATURE: Matthebyla

DATE: 28-11-23

Muyexe Poultry Primary Co-op

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

STUDY TITLE: Implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme: Reflexions from Muyexe Village, Greater Giyani Local Municipality, Mopani District

RESEARCHER: KENNETH MANGANYI

CONSENT:

I, the undersigned confirm that the researcher has explained the elements of informed consent to me as the participant.

I know that participation is voluntary and that I do not need to answer all questions. The purpose of the research as well as the risks have been explained. I understand the issues of confidentiality.

PARTICIPANT NAME: Matebula Glory

SIGNATURE: [signature]

DATE: 28-11-2023

WITNESS NAME: Maluleke Josphinah

SIGNATURE: [signature]

DATE: 28-11-2023

Office of Hosi Shiviti: Shiviti Traditional Council.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

STUDY TITLE: Implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme: Reflexions from Muyexe Village, Greater Giyani Local Municipality, Mopani District

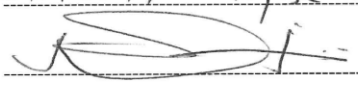
RESEARCHER: KENNETH MANGANYI

CONSENT:

I, the undersigned confirm that the researcher has explained the elements of informed consent to me as the participant.

I know that participation is voluntary and that I do not need to answer all questions. The purpose of the research as well as the risks have been explained. I understand the issues of confidentiality.

PARTICIPANT NAME: SHIVITI M.R.

SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 2024-02-15

WITNESS NAME: M.M. Baloyi

SIGNATURE: MBaloyi

DATE: 15-02-2024

Macena Agricultural Co-operative

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

STUDY TITLE: Implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme: Reflexions from Muyexe Village, Greater Giyani Local Municipality, Mopani District

RESEARCHER: KENNETH MANGANYI

CONSENT:

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PARTICIPANT NAME: Mafemani Patric Chauke

SIGNATURE:

DATE: 28 November 2023

WITNESS NAME: Ndakeni Maria Masinda

SIGNATURE: N.M. Masinda

DATE: 28 November 2023

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

STUDY TITLE: Implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme: Reflexions from Muyexe Village, Greater Giyani Local Municipality, Mopani District

RESEARCHER: KENNETH MANGANYI

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PARTICIPANT NAME: Magezi Enock Mhlanga

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: 09 November 2023

WITNESS NAME: NGODISENI MUSETHA

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: 09/11/2023

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

STUDY TITLE: Implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme: Reflexions from Muyexe Village, Greater Giyani Local Municipality, Mopani District

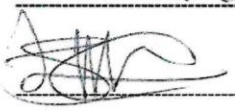
RESEARCHER: KENNETH MANGANYI

CONSENT:

I, the undersigned confirm that the researcher has explained the elements of informed consent to me as the participant.

I know that participation is voluntary and that I do not need to answer all questions. The purpose of the research as well as the risks have been explained. I understand the issues of confidentiality.

PARTICIPANT NAME: Mabunda Sizwe Louis

SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 23/02/2022

WITNESS NAME: Nomazwe. N. LEKOMA

SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 23/02/2024.