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Stakeholder perceptions on the role and effectiveness of networking forums in promoting partnerships' and integrated service delivery between government and non-profit sector organisations : the case of Nelmapius Forum in the North Rand Region Pretoria.

Mafetsa, Sarah Moyagabo

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of the study

The study focused on exploring the perceptions of stakeholders on the role and effectiveness of networking forums in promoting partnership and integrated service delivery. The Nelmapius forum was used as a case study. Partnership is regarded as a collective responsibility of Government, civil society and the business society to deliver services (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997) herein referred to as WPSW. In 2006, the Department of Social Development, herein referred to as (DSD), published a service delivery model for developmental social welfare which buttressed the need for partnership and inter-sectoral collaboration in service delivery. The networking forums were therefore initiated as one of the ways in which to promote partnership between the Government and the Non- Profit Sector Organisations (herein referred to as NPOs). Since the establishment of forums, there has hardly been any research to date conducted that investigates the perceptions of stakeholders on the role and effectiveness of networking forums in promoting partnerships and integrated service delivery between Government and NPOs; hence the study. For the purposes of this study the term Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and NPOs will be used interchangeably.

1.1.1 Background to the study

The pre-1994 era in South Africa was characterized by a fragmented welfare system which mainly focused on separate development under Apartheid. Racial differentiation was a primary factor in the provision of welfare services whereby black people in particular were marginalized and oppressed (Patel, 1992). This resulted in high levels of unemployment, poverty and under-development for many people, particularly the black majority (Patel, 2005). In an attempt to redress the legacy of South Africa's Colonial and

Apartheid history the Government adopted a transformative and developmental socio-economic policy framework that was encapsulated within the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP, 1994). The RDP document signified a move towards becoming a developmental State. The aim of the RDP was to inform economic, political and social development in the post-Apartheid era (RDP, 1994). The RDP advocated for a developmental approach to social welfare and the focus was on meeting basic needs, developing human resources, social welfare rights and a review on policy and legislation (RDP, 1994). In keeping with the spirit of the RDP, in 1997 the Government adopted the White Paper for Social Welfare, which advocated for a developmental social welfare paradigm. As stated in the preamble of the WPSW (1997), the goal of developmental social welfare is to create a "humane, peaceful, just and caring society which will uphold basic human needs, release people's creative energies, help them achieve their aspirations, build human capacity, and self-reliance, and participate fully in all spheres of social, economic and political life (WPSW, 1997). In pursuit of these goals, the WPSW (1997) explicitly states that it would not be a prerogative of Government alone. Consequently, it advocated for partnership and inter-sectoral collaboration amongst Government, civil society and the private sector as key pillar principles that would underpin service delivery in the post-Apartheid era. Thus, the WPSW (1997) argues for the promotion and strengthening of partnerships between Government, the community and organisations in civil society and in the private sector, which are involved in the delivery of welfare services.

In terms of partnerships, the WPSW (1997) states that welfare policies and programmes will be developed and promoted in partnership with organisations within civil society, the private sector and Government departments. On the need for inter-sectoral collaboration the WPSW (1997) states that an inter-sectoral collaboration approach will guide the design, formulation, implementation and monitoring of anti-poverty strategies. Furthermore, the Government, with the adoption of the WPSW, acknowledged the fact that it could not accept the sole responsibility for redressing past imbalances in meeting

the basic, economic and psychosocial needs of the people of South Africa. The promotion of civil society was considered to be critical to building a democratic culture.

Thus, in the WPSW (1997) the Government committed itself to restructuring its social welfare system in partnership with civil society organisations and other stakeholders to develop a new system which would be socially equitable, financially viable and structurally efficient and effective in meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged sectors of the population and to involve communities in the planning and the delivery of services. In promoting inter-sectoral collaboration, the Government, through the adoption of the WPSW, committed itself to designing mechanisms to facilitate inter-sectoral policy formulation, planning, monitoring and evaluation, co-ordination and the definition of functions and responsibilities. The Government also committed itself to taking responsibility to facilitate the development of an inclusive and effective partnership with all the role players in civil society (WPSW, 1997). In 2006 the DSD published a service delivery model for developmental social welfare which further buttressed the need for partnership and inter-sectoral collaboration in service delivery (Integrated Service Delivery Model, 2006).

The building of partnerships and the promotion of integrated service delivery is regarded as crucial in the provision of social welfare services. By working together, all the service providers in Government, non-Governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs) and other organisations in civil society will be clear about their roles and the roles of other service providers in social development. Inter-sectoral collaboration will also help in ensuring that services are not duplicated and will also prevent fragmentation in the delivery of services (DSD, 2010).

1.2 Statement of the problem and rationale

As one of the practical mechanisms by which to promote partnership and inter-sectoral collaboration to enhance integrated service delivery, the DSD initiated networking forums. In these networking forums the DSD holds monthly meetings with NGOs operating within a particular geographical area. Through these monthly meetings a platform for networking between NGOs and the DSD is created which allows sharing of information and initiation of co-ordinated efforts in serving the communities within their demarcated radius of operation. Many such forums have been put in place in various regions of Gauteng and some have been in operation for more than five years. The purpose and objectives of establishing these forums is for government to liaise with relevant stakeholders such as NGOs, to facilitate inter-sectoral collaboration and to promote partnership to ensure the sustainability of development actions within communities and the provision of direct support to communities and administrative support on community development activities (ISDM, 2006).

While networking forums have been in existence for many years and were founded to address the above objectives, anecdotal evidence showed that there is dissatisfaction in the running of the forums; there seemed to be dysfunction in the forums and discontent amongst the stakeholders. It seemed that the forums were not achieving their objectives and that the forums were not addressing the core issues for which they were founded. These concerns remained unproved due to lack of research that investigated the effectiveness of networking forums in promoting partnerships and integrated service delivery between Government and NPOs. Research in this area is important in that it is one of the avenues through which information on how to consolidate and improve the functioning of the forums can be gathered. Using the Nelmapius forum as a case study, this research sought to investigate the experience of various stakeholders from Government and NGOs which participate in networking forums. In particular, the

research focused on investigating how networking between NGOs and the DSD contributes to promoting partnerships and integrated service delivery.

It is envisaged that this research will contribute to building new knowledge on operations of networking forums. Understanding the experiences of stakeholders participating in networking forums is also important in that it enables the DSD and NGOs to draw upon such knowledge in improving and consolidating on the structures and functioning of networking forums. It is also hoped that findings from the study may have implications on future policy formulation, particularly in regard to the operations of networking forums.

1.3 The Aim and Objectives of the study

1.3.1 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of the stakeholders on the role and effectiveness of networking forums in promoting partnerships and integrated service delivery between Government and NPOs using the Nelmapius forum as a case study.

1.3.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

- To elicit from the stakeholders participating in the Nelmapius networking forum their understanding and perceptions of the rationale for the establishment of networking forums.
- To explore stakeholder perceptions on how the Nelmapius networking forum enables integrated service delivery and partnerships amongst participant organisations.
- To explore the views of stakeholders on the challenges they face as participants of the Nelmapius networking forum.

- To elicit the opinions of stakeholders participating in the Nelmapius networking forum on the ways in which the functioning of the networking forums can be enhanced.

1.4 Research questions

The following were the research questions of the study:

- What understanding do stakeholders participating in the Nelmapius networking forum have on the rationale for the establishment of the networking forum?
- What are the stakeholders' perceptions on how the Nelmapius networking forum enables integrated service delivery and partnerships among participant organisations?
- What are the challenges faced by stakeholders participating in the Nelmapius networking forum?
- What are the opinions of stakeholders on the ways in which the functioning of the Nelmapius networking forum can be improved?

1.5 Research Design and Methodology

The research employed a qualitative research methodology and a case study research approach was used. A detailed account of the research design and methodology is given in chapter three.

1.6 Organisation of the report

The report is divided into five chapters. Chapter one focuses on the overview of the study. This entails the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem and rationale, the aim and objectives of the study, the research questions and the research design and methodology. Chapter two presents the literature review, while Chapter three outlines the research design and the methodology for the study. Chapter four focuses on the presentation and discussion of the research findings and Chapter five presents a summary of the major findings as well as conclusions and recommendations for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review for the study. The researcher is going to explain social welfare in South African context. The concepts of Networking and partnerships will be discussed in detail according to different authors. The chapter will also highlight the role and functions of the government and NGOs in promoting partnerships and integrated service delivery. The challenges and critics of NGOs in social service provision will also be pointed out.

2.1 Social Welfare in South Africa

Social welfare refers to the wellbeing of society and the individuals and groups of people that make up society (Compton, Galaway & Cournouyer, 2005). Whereas the WPSW (1997) defines social welfare as an integrated and comprehensive system of social services, facilities, programmes and social security to promote social development, social justice and the social functioning of people. The provision of welfare services during the pre-1994 era was shaped by Apartheid and Colonialism (Patel, 2005). Potgieter (1998) stated that social welfare efforts in South Africa were at that stage (Apartheid) concerned with the growing effects of poverty and employment that go hand in hand with urbanisation and industrialisation. It is during this period that the Government used separate development whereby race became a primary factor in the provision of welfare services and racial differentiation entrenched inequalities between the welfare beneficiaries (Patel, 2005). The system of separate development saw the creation of State departments for every population group, based on the belief that such a system would ensure equal development opportunities for all (Potgieter, 1998). Most policies during the Apartheid era did not originate out of widespread and open consultation between

Government and all sectors of the community and the welfare policy proposals developed during that era were met with widespread criticism by welfare groups who were not consulted about policy alternatives (Patel, 1992). The WPSW (1997) states that service providers were not accorded equal status by the Government, and organisations were not integrated into the formal welfare system. As a result, social welfare planning and policy development became an unrealistic exercise in that it could not ensure adequate results which would filter through to people at grassroots level (Potgieter, 1998).

McKendrick (1989, cited in Potgieter, 1998) identified the following as principles that were in place in the social welfare system during 1980's:

- Segregation of races
- The State / private welfare partnerships
- The rejection of socialism and the idea of welfare state
- A move away from residual and therapeutic focus to a community based preventative orientation

This resulted in the majority of people of other racial groups, black people in particular, being marginalized and oppressed and the outcome was high levels of unemployment and poverty, especially amongst the black population (Patel, 1992). Cole (1994, p. 122) further argues that "apartheid has substantially disrupted community life and social fabric of the majority of the South African people".

The Apartheid welfare system was faced with many challenges because people were not satisfied with the way welfare services were provided. As Midgely (1995, cited in Lewis & Kanji, 2009) indicated, there was growing frustration with Government's inability to take responsibility for promoting social development. Furthermore, social services approaches from the pre-1994 era were criticised as not being appropriate or developmental, and for creating dependency (ISDM, 2006). The study by Patel (1992) indicates that this resulted in voluntary social welfare activities being established independently of political and trade union organisations to address the needs of the

disadvantaged. It is during that period that most civil organisations in South Africa grew out of resistance to Apartheid, either overtly through boycotts and mass protest actions or covertly through making organized claims on the State and self-help activities (Patel, 1992).

After the first democratic elections in South Africa in April 1994, the new ANC Government and its political allies adopted a slogan that they argued captured the mood, purpose and challenge of post-Apartheid South Africa- from resistance to reconstruction. The underlying logic was that the political defeat of the formal institutionalised system of Apartheid represented the end game of the politics of mass struggle and resistance and that it was now time to move on to politics of social, economic and cultural reconstruction in which everyone could contribute to building and sustaining the new nation and its hard won democracy (McKinley & Naidoo, 2004).

In an attempt to redress the legacy of South Africa's Colonial and Apartheid history the Government adopted a transformative and developmental socio-economic policy framework that was encapsulated within the RDP document which signified a move towards becoming a developmental state (RDP, 1994). There was a need for a developmental approach to social welfare, based on the strengths of individuals, groups and communities and promoting their capacity for growth and development (ISDM, 2006). The aim of the RDP was to inform economic, political and social development in the post-Apartheid era. The RDP advocated for a developmental approach to social welfare and the focus was on meeting basic needs, developing human resources, social welfare rights and a review on policy and legislation (RDP White paper, 1997). According to Bak (2004), the RDP White Paper was the open acknowledgement that Government alone cannot and should not work alone for the eradication of poverty and the social welfare needs of citizens but rather that partnership between Government and the community and organisations in civil society should be strengthened.

In keeping with the spirit of the RDP in 1997 the Government adopted the White Paper for Social Welfare which advocated for a developmental approach to Social Welfare (WPSW, 1997). As part of its implementation, one of its restructuring priorities included, amongst other things, developing representative governance structures to build up the partnership between Government, organisations in civil society, religious organisations and the private sector. However the RDP was faced with many challenges that impacted on its successful roll-out which included the short time-frames which were set, the inadequate institutional delivery systems, lack of capacity in Government, limited funding, an overloaded transformation agenda coupled with high expectations of the Government to deliver on its promises (Patel, 2005). As Patel (2005) argues, these challenges therefore led to the closure of the RDP with the subsequent adoption of the Government's macro-economic policy (Growth Employment and Redistribution Policy-GEAR). The policy was intended to stabilize the economy and to integrate the economy into the regional and global economic system. GEAR was largely criticized for the fact that it shifted away from the Government's commitment to its social goals and that the Government embraced a neo-liberal paradigm in response to pressures from big business. This policy implied a shifting of responsibility for social welfare from Government to individual families and the private sector (Patel, 2005). Furthermore, GEAR did not produce economic benefits as intended and has contributed to a steady economic growth rate since 2003 by an average of 5% a year (Lombard, 2008).

The Department of Health and Social Development (DHSD) is currently taking the leading role in ensuring that the social services are transformed, integrated and accessible to the intended beneficiaries (ISDM, 2006). The developmental framework on integrated service delivery by the National Department of Social Development (ISDM, 2006) demands inter-related, inter-sectoral and integrated service delivery from all the stakeholders. The Department's service delivery model acknowledges that the developmental services are the collective responsibility of various players, including Government, non-Governmental organisations and the private sector.

2.2. Networking

2.2.1. Definitions of networking

Different meanings have been attached to the term ‘networking’ depending on how different authors perceive this term. This is confirmed by the study by Trevillion (1999, p. 16) which states that “the term network can itself be confusing because it has a number of meanings”.

According to Engel (1997), networking refers to the process resulting from the conscious efforts of certain social actors to build relationships with each other to enhance sustainable development. Furthermore, Engel (1997) argues that networks are seen as less or more formalized, more or less durable relational patterns emerge as a result of such purposive relationship building efforts.

Networks are defined by both the DSD and Inyathelo (2010) as a set of nodes and the relationships that connect them. The definition is further expanded to refer to a set of nodes and the set of ties representing some relationship or lack of relationship between the nodes. Furthermore, they define networks as non-hierarchical social systems that constitute the basic social form that permits an inter-organizational coalition to develop.

A network is defined as a system of linkages by means of which diverse individuals, groups, projects and organisation may be flexibly linked through communication and interaction to exchange information and resources in order to expand their effectiveness (Schenck, Nel & Louw, 2010).

2.2.2. The role of networking in promoting partnership and integrated service delivery

Engel (1997) indicates that networks have received a lot of attention in recent years. This is mainly due to the fact that organisations recognised the need and importance to network, rather than function in isolation. According to the study by Inyathelo commissioned by the DSD (2010) social networks have existed throughout human history, individuals form loose networks to provide mutual and moral support and strengthen their influence. The historical, cultural, political, economical and institutional factors may also shape the development of networks in particular countries and regions (DSD & Inyathelo, 2010).

The DSD and Inyathelo (2010) state that both locally and internationally networks and networking organisations are increasingly being formed and that it has been widely recognised that this is essential for development. There are different ways which determine the need for individuals and organisations to network, as stated by Schenck et al. (2010) who argue that:

- Networking may grow spontaneously out of contacts or other meetings where individuals or groups of people become aware of a common interest.
- Sometimes people who have already started working together on a shared interest or concern start networking intentionally.
- Networking processes can be initiated by an individual who has been reaching out and sharing with others as part of his professional responsibilities or personal life and then intentionally starts putting the people in contact with one another.

Networking and developing partnerships is not a fruitless process, usually the partners engaged in networking processes have fruits to gain as they continually engage in the process of networking. Trevillion (1999, p. 6) argues that "networking is empowering because it enables individuals and groups to gain control over the environment". Furthermore Trevillion (1999) states that through networking, organisations are

capacitated which eventually results in organisational strength in service delivery. In a way, networking empowers organisations to improve their services. This is confirmed by Lewis and Kanji (2007) who indicate that networking includes the activities that take place among NGOs and communities such as capacity building work which seeks to develop and strengthen capabilities. While working organisations learn through joint reflection, this embraces all activities aimed at stimulating joint reflection to increase the level of the shared understanding of the complex situations dealt with by participating NGOs (Engel, 1997).

Activities that are included in networking as stated by Engel (1997) include training, communication, documentation and information services. It is through the training and information sharing that organisations are continually being updated of recent developments in policies and provided with ways on how to deal with these developments (Engel, 1997). As argued by Goel and Kumar (2004) networking helps to share experiences and expertise to work for common action programmes to create an impact on the policies of the Government. By doing this, network organisations make optimum use of existing capabilities and facilities among their members and, if possible, everywhere (Goel & Kumar, 2004). In other words, once organisations have benefited from the networking process, they will extend the skills to other organisational members in their organisation to ensure that their beneficiaries of their services receive improved quality service (Goel & Kumar, 2004). Schenk et al. (2010) argue that once networks have been formed they need to be maintained.

Maintaining networks is important as Engel (1997) argued that networking is also about sharing, which requires willingness to be open-minded and to have confidence in one's work to expose it to others and at the same time to have the necessary humility to understand one's own position as one among many. Networks represent communities of ideas, a space for like-minded people to interact on the basis of common interest, mutual trust and anticipated concern. The underlying argument is that networking helps to create

a fundamentally new quality for human co-operation and enhances inclusive thinking, creativity and dialogue (Engel, 1997).

Networking is "a value driven activity, which means great care must be taken to ensure that any patterns of linkage which are relatively encouraged or helped to grow are compatible with the principles of participation and power sharing underlying the concepts of collaboration and stake-holding" (Trevillion, 1999 p. 35). Through networking, organisations are empowered with knowledge and skills. Building networks is not an easy process since it requires communication, commitment and a shared vision between participating organisations (Engel, 1997). Networks facilitate the exchange of skills, experiences and resources that increase the efficiency of the members (Schenk et al., 2010). Networking therefore creates an opportunity for organisations to learn from each other thereby improving their services (Engel, 1997).

According to Schenk et al. (2010), networks:

- Enable the sharing and co-ordinating of information which leads to less duplication;
- Improves communication and links between different organisations;
- Facilitates the distribution and use of strategies or resources and materials;
- Connects those with resources with those in need;
- Creates increased awareness that others in the same field of work have similar concerns and challenges and create a sense of belonging and identity.

There may be various reasons why individuals and organisations may decide to network; Engel (1997) argues that every individual, every organisation engages in building relationships with others, thus networking for many reasons. This is guided by the individuals' and organisation's goal and objectives and how they wish to achieve those aims and objectives (Engel, 1997). One of the reasons for organisations to network, as stated by Engel (1997), is that networking cases seem to appear when NGOs themselves

or members of their staff perceive a critical lack of access to relevant knowledge and experiences of others and yet this lack is not seen as irrevocable.

Advocacy has been identified as one of the reasons for organisations to network (Engel, 1997). The author further argues that advocacy, which refers to activities performed or facilitated by the network organisation on behalf of its members, with regard to the participation in the public or Governmental developmental debate, putting forward the aims related to their mission statement and clients, is one of the critical aspects of networking (Engel, 1997). In this regard organisations which share similar values engage with each other to fight for the rights of the minority group. This normally happens when it is neither possible nor easy for individual voices to be taken into consideration. This has been largely observed in South Africa with organisations like the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC, 2012) which is engaged in fighting for the rights of HIV positive people with regard to their access to treatment. By advocating for the rights of the minority, the advocacy groups try to maintain social justice and also offer support to those particular groups. Advocacy is supported by Goel and Kumar (2004) who argue that collective action for social justice. When civil society organisations are offered the opportunity to partner with Government at a higher level, they are likely to influence policy in a positive way to ensure that it meet the needs of the poor. Civil society organisations are largely known as advocates for the needs and the rights of the poor. Such partnership ensures that the voices of the minority at the grassroots level will be heard (TAC, 2012).

According to Engel (1997) networking also involves management which has to do with facilitating the networking process itself and includes amongst other things, monitoring of the network resources, activities and outputs and co-ordination with other organisations. Management is important since it ensures that the networking process is running properly and that there is proper management of the resources. In every networking process there needs to be proper co-ordination. By doing this, organisations

will know not only their roles and responsibilities but also activities of the networking process

2.2.3. Types of networks

Networks vary in terms of their aim and purpose and as a result there is no single or uniform network. A single method of network can therefore not be generalized to communities or countries because companies, communities and countries differ and each will choose the type of network that will fit to its structure (Trevillion, 1999).

2.2.3.1. Social networks

> Mitchell (1969, cited in Trevillion, 1999, p. 18), defines social network as "a specific set of linkages among a defined set of persons". However, Wasserman and Faust (1994, p. 4), define social network as "a perspective which encompasses theories, methods and applications that are expressed in terms of relational concepts or process". The authors identify the following elements in which individual social actors are viewed as inter-dependent:
>
> - Linkages between social actors are seen to direct the flow of material and non-material resources
> - A network environment is seen in terms of opportunities and constraints on individual actions
> - Lasting patterns of relations can be thought of as structure
>
> (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 4)

According to Trevillion (1999, p. 16), social networks "pave the way to an understanding of the linkages existing between different institutional spheres and between different systems of groups and categories". It also helps social welfare practitioners to make sense of their cross-boundary working environment.

2.2.3.2. Inter-organisational networks

Many inter-agency partnerships are based upon a shared interest and involvement with a particular client group (Trevillion, 1999). Trevillion (1999, p. 34), argues that "it is not agencies which interact with one another but the people representing the agencies and this kind of relationship work involves working in a systematic way with the connections of the feelings about self and other's and the characteristics of the particular social networks in which those feelings are embedded".

2.4. Networking forums as a method to enhance partnership between the Government and the Non-Profit Sector

In South Africa the provision of developmental social services is "a collective responsibility of various role players including the Government, non-Governmental organisations and the private sector" (DSD, 2010, p. 44). One of the roles and responsibilities of the provincial DSD as stated in the ISDM is to facilitate the establishment and maintenance of social service structures (ISDM, 2006). This is mainly implemented by means of establishing networking forums with NGOs. In this regard the Department holds monthly meetings with the registered NGOs operating within their area of service. It is through these meetings that a platform for networking is created which allows for the sharing of information and initiation of co-ordinated efforts in serving the communities in their areas of service. These forums are encouraged and social workers (working in the section of community planning and development) are mandated to establish and co-ordinate these forums with the NGOs allocated to them for monitoring and evaluation (ISDM, 2006).

The main objectives of the forums as stated in the ISDM are to promote the integrated approach; liaison with all relevant role players (e.g. departments/provinces, NGOs, local community structures, faith-based organisations) and stakeholders to facilitate inter-sectoral collaboration and to establish partnerships to ensure the sustainability of development actions within the community; and the provision of direct support to

communities and administrative support on community development and related activities (ISDM, 2006).

2.3. Partnerships in development

2.3.1. Partnership

Partnership can be referred to as "a collective responsibility of Government, civil society and the business society to deliver services" (DSD, 2010, p. 14). According to Fiszbein and Lowden (1999) partnership are joint initiatives of the public sector in conjunction with the private, for profit and not for profit sectors, also referred to as the Government, business and civic centres. On the other hand Partnership is also defined by Brinkerhoff (2002) as a dynamic relationship among diverse actors, based on mutually agreed objectives, pursued through a shared understanding of the most rational division of labour based on the respective comparative advantages of each partner. This relationship results in mutual influence, with careful balance between synergy and respective autonomy which incorporates mutual respect, equal participation in decision making, mutual accountability and transparency (Brinkerhoff, 2002). According to Lewis (2007) the term partnership refers to an agreed relationship based on a set of links between two or more agencies within a development project, usually involving a division of roles and responsibilities, a sharing of risks and the pursuit of joint initiatives between Government agencies, NGOs and donors.

Partnerships differ and in this regard Lewis (2007) argues that partnerships may be active or dependent; active partnerships are classified by Lewis (2007) as those built through on-going processes of negotiation, debate, occasional conflict and learning through trial and error. Partnerships which are active are those in which the organisations involved are actively engaged in the process. This will be observed through active participation and co-ordinated efforts by all organisations which will eventually lead to the success of the partnership process.

Dependent partnerships may be those whereby there is one dominating organisation and other organisations involved do not have much contribution in the process (Lewis, 2007). This will be observed mainly through decision making whereby other organisations do not have much say but largely depend on the dominating organisation to control all the processes. This is likely to happen in partnership between NGOs and Government whereby the Government may be seen by NGOs as dominating. Mainly it is due to the fact that NGOs in South Africa rely largely on the Government for funding. This may result in a situation whereby NGOs are not likely to question or even disagree with other Government processes. This is in line with the argument by Lewis (2007) who argues that dependent partnerships are those partnerships that have a blueprint character and are constructed at the project planning stage according to rigid assumptions about comparative advantage and individual agency interest often linked to the availability of outside funding. Sometimes there maybe consensus in dependent partnerships among partners but in most cases the roles and responsibilities are not clear

2.3.2. Partnership between Government and non-profit sector organisations in South Africa as a way to promote integrated service delivery

In social development, partnerships emerged as a response to social and economic development needs of societies Patel (2005). Furthermore it is widely acknowledged in South Africa that the State alone cannot achieve its goals in addressing social needs and that organs of civil society partnerships are essential for caring, responsive and effective service delivery network (Kallis, 2000). This means that the South African Government in the post-Apartheid era recognised the need to partner with other civil society organisations to ensure that proper services are rendered to the community and that those services must be responsive to the community's needs.

A social development partnership is a "voluntary and collaborative agreement between one or more organisations whereby all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task" (Patel, 2005, p. 283).

The key features of social development partnerships as stated by Patel (2005, p. 283), are:

- "sharing risks
- responsibilities
- resources
- competencies
- benefits"

For the partnership process to be successful both NGOs and Government as partners in development must share similar goals and vision. This relates to what Kallis (2000) described by arguing that a formal partnership arrangement acknowledges and cements the distinct but complementary and supplementary roles of the State and NGOs into a synergistic strategy to achieve a shared vision and common goal. Scholars such as Evans (1996, cited in Lewis, 2007) argue that the Government and NGOs must not only complement each other's work but rather there needs to be a more useful and mutually reinforcing relationship based on a clear division of labour and mutual recognition and acceptance of roles. In other words both the Government and NGOs involved must enhance their relationship and play an equal role as partners. By doing this NGOs will see themselves as important role players in the development process since they will be determined to engage with each other (Henderson & Thomas, 2002). This is supported by Patel (2005) who indicated that partners recognise that they are mutually dependent on one another and agree to work under the shared process of decision making and joint problem solving. This will result in cohesion among the two organisations which is likely to impact positively on service delivery.

Robinson and White (1997, cited in Lewis, 2007) argue that the relationship between Government and NGOs must be analyzed based on their determination on which social services are to be supplied, the financing arrangement for these services and their actual production. Kallis (2000) also argues that the Government-NGO relationships should be rooted in the acceptance of both parties of their shared vision and responsibility for the

delivery of social services within policy and legislative framework governing a country's response to its social needs and problems. In South Africa, the Government with the adoption of the RDP (1994) as a legal policy framework as well as the WPSW emphasized the need to work in conjunction with the members of civil society, NGOs, the private sector and other stakeholders. As stated in the WPSW (1997) it is clear that the Government cannot accept sole responsibility for redressing past imbalances and meeting basic physical, economic and psychosocial needs. As a result the Government emphasized that the promotion of national social development is a collective responsibility and the co-operation of civil society will be promoted (WPSW, 1997). This is a clear indication that organisations in civil society and the community at large have a critical role to play. Without the involvement and active participation of civil society organisations, the partnership process will be fruitless.

Kallis (2000) argues that partnership demands both close co-operation between the parties and the co-ordination of roles and functions throughout the entire process of policy development to service delivery. This is in line with the South African Government's objective as it is stated in the WPSW that the Government strives to promote and strengthen partnership between the Government, the community and the organisations in civil society and in the private sector who are involved in the delivery of services. In other words the South African Government, through the adoption of the WPSW, aims to promote social development inter-sectorally both within the welfare department, other Government departments and in collaboration with NGOs. In support or enhancing the process of building partnerships the Government further commits itself to funding and financing the NPOs, which is mainly regulated by the NPO Act (1997).

In an attempt to address the legacy of South Africa's Colonial and Apartheid history, the Government adopted a transformative, developmental framework and is moving towards a developmental State (DSD, 2010). In keeping up with the spirit of the developmental State notion based on co-operative governance and development, the DSD adopted a

developmental framework referred to as the ISDM, which demands inter-related, inter-sectoral and integrated service delivery from many sectors and Government departments involved (DSD, 2010). One of the Government's key responsibilities, as stated in the service delivery model, is to facilitate the process of development through various institutions of Government, its partners and civil society. Again the Government has committed itself through the adoption of the WPSW (1997) to facilitate the development of an inclusive partnership with all the role players in civil society.

Given this, partnership with organs of civil society remains a key element in the Department's efforts to ensure optimal functioning and the fulfilment of its mandate (ISDM, 2006). This framework is rooted in the concepts of partnership and collaboration with the members of civil society and other stakeholders. The framework is also in line with the WPSW which also emphasizes the need for restructuring of the partnership between stakeholders to develop a system which is socially equitable, financially viable, structurally efficient and effective in meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged sectors of the population and to involve communities in planning and the delivery of services (WPSW, 1997). Equally important to state is the fact that the Department, by adopting the services delivery model, acknowledges that developmental services are a collective responsibility of various role players including the NGOs and the private sector (ISDM, 2006). In the study by Fiszbein and Lowden (1999) it is indicated that participation by citizens and their organizations is an effective tool for development as well as a goal in itself with the implication being that civil society becomes the legitimate partner of the State and also that civil society cannot be neglected by the State.

2.3.3. The importance of partnerships

Partnerships have always been important in any undertaking. When it comes to social development, partnerships become even more important in order to enhance service delivery. Partnership is not a new concept - it has been embraced and practised in the past. Many African cultures have been practising it by encouraging people to work together. This is widely evident as it is expressed in the Northern Sotho proverb which says "Bobedi bo bolaya Noga" which means "Two are better than one". Scholars like Lewis and Kanji (2007) support this by stating that, a partner works together with another and shares the risk or benefit from a joint venture. This requires partners to openly share and communicate effectively so that they can benefit from the partnership process (Lewis & Kanji, 2007). According to Kallis (2000) partnership allows for levels of consultation and filling of the investment gap in social service provision and it requires a reciprocal accountability with the parties carrying equal status. Furthermore, the inter-dependent and interactive nature of the partnership requires openness, transparency and accessibility between partners.

Brinkerhoff (2002) state that, the motivation for establishing a partnership is the desire to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of development efforts. Again it is argued that partnership can provide a means for developing strategic direction and co-ordination of development efforts. Through partnership, organisations are enabled to jointly work together for the benefit of the communities they serve. Furthermore, Brinkerhof (2002) argues that partnership offers a platform for discussion and enhances the provision of integrated service delivery which cannot be achieved when organisations work in isolation. Partnership processes should not only be observed at the grassroots level, but also should be widely observed at policy level whereby organisations will be able to influence policies (Brinkerhof, 2002). In this regard Kallis (2000) argued that a partnership policy, agreement or compact should include the philosophy and principles that underpin the partnership, shared values and goals, roles and responsibilities and commitment to action.

Partnership is regarded as one of other principles which underpin the developmental approach to social welfare (WPSW, 1997). Brinkerhoff (2002) argued that partnership can provide a means for developing a strategic direction and co-ordination. The underlying argument being that partnership contributes to effectiveness by affording access to crucial resources including expertise and relationships that would otherwise be inaccessible. In addition to this, Lewis (2007) argues that the creation of partnership is a way of making more efficient use of scarce resources, increasing institutional sustainability and improving beneficiary participation.

Partnerships can also strengthen the partners in a number of ways that makes them more effective in their own endeavours, thus providing a strong rationale for public and private actors to become involved in such partnerships (Fiszbein & Lowden, 1999). Stoker (1997, cited in Brinkerhoff, 2002) argues that partnerships can also be used strategically to open decision making processes and this strategy can represent a moral dimension where the intent is to further public interests rather than private ones and an input from both parties concerned is essential in creating sustainable benefits. In a way, partnerships allow for levels of consultation among different partners and provide organisations with the opportunity to decide best practices and strategies for the benefit of their communities (Fiszbein & Lowden, 1999).

According to Fiszbein and Lowden (1999) partnerships have the potential to generate self-reinforcing patterns of change because partnerships bring new resources to poverty reduction initiatives and this leads to both quantitative and qualitative gains in output. Furthermore, partnerships can bring new inputs to poverty reduction and they can also produce outputs that carry the seeds of multiplier effects to enhance enormously the potential for real incremental progress in improving the lives of the poor. On the other hand Brinkerhoff (2002) states that partnerships increase the amount of available

resources and imply a number of asset generations that relate essentially to areas of human and social capital building creating conditions for multiplier effects.

Partnership processes enable organisations to share resources, be it human or material resources, for the benefit of their communities. Since it is not possible that an organisation can be complete and fully equipped with all resources, there is, therefore, a need to partner. Through partnership, organisations are able to interact and assist one another. Partnership is highly encouraged by the current President of the African National Congress (ANC) President Jacob Zuma, whose message is publicly advertised on the bill boards and pamphlets which says "Together We Can Do More". This sends a very clear message that an individual or one party cannot do much without involvement of other people. Again, organisations form partnerships not only to enhance outcomes whether qualitatively or quantitatively, but also to produce synergistic rewards where the outcomes of partnership as a whole are greater than what the sum of individual partners contributes (Brinkerhoff, 2002).

Fiszbein and Lowden (1999) indicate that within partnerships each of the actors contribute resources and participate in the decision making process. Brinkerhoff (2002) also supports this view by indicating that partnerships rationalize the use of resources and skills and further argues that creativity may emerge from the assembling of diverse actors with different perspectives and expertise resulting in efficiency improvements. Also, partnerships enable NGOs to scale up their own work and scope, and through them NGOs can build trust with communities even outside the intervention and NGOs may acquire new dimensions to their work that can enrich their core activities.

2.3.4. The role and functions of the Government in promoting partnership and integrated service delivery

The Government refers to the regular enactment of policies, decisions and matters of the State on the part of the officials within a political apparatus (Giddens, 2001, cited in Patel, 2005). The State has the governing responsibility to ensure that there is the required delivery of services within legislative and policy frameworks (Kallis, 2000). This puts the State as the primary institution to ensure that partnership with civil society is enhanced. As a result the State must encourage such partnership in development of policies. This must be done in consultation with other partners and must ensure that the society at large is informed of such policies (Kallis, 2000). In the case of South Africa, one of the goals for the national developmental social welfare strategy is "to promote and strengthen the partnership between Government, the community and organisations in civil society and in the private sector who are involved in the delivery of social services" (WPSW, 1997, p. 28). The framework also seeks to promote social development inter-sectorally both within the welfare departments and in collaboration with other Government departments and non-Governmental stakeholders. Kallis (2000, p. 3), states that, "the Government, in acknowledging the central role of voluntary welfare sector in the implementation of services rooted in policies and legislation, the development of policies and legislation is a joint process between the parties with the State driving, facilitating and co-ordinating the process". According to Patel (2005), the Constitution of the Government is the supreme law of the country from which all other laws and policies are derived.

As part of the principles of the developmental social welfare policy, the Government is mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 200 of 1993) to:

- Create favourable conditions for growth and development to facilitate every citizen's right to social security and social welfare through the maintenance of public and private welfare services.

- Create opportunities and mechanisms to promote participation of all citizens in planning, policy formulation and programme development.

Lombard (1996) indicated that there is still a belief that social development can be best be promoted by Government, their specialized agencies, policy makers, planners and administrators. Redistribution of resources as a basic requirement for social development, meeting basic needs and sustainable development are outlined as the strategies which should be achieved by the Government (Lombard, 1996). However, it should be noted as stated in the WPSW (1997), that the Government cannot take sole responsibility for meeting basic physical, economic and psychosocial needs but rather by collective responsibility. However, with regard to provision of social services Patel (2005) stated that the DSD is responsible for the drafting of legislation, the management and facilitation of participatory processes with constituencies. Furthermore, the DSD is also responsible for the execution and monitoring and evaluation of legislation which includes setting up the administrative and management systems and building the capacity of personnel to implement the legislation and funding (Patel, 1992).

Furthermore, Kallis (2000) stated that the State has the primary responsibility for the welfare of its citizens and accepts the responsibility for creating and maintaining an enabling environment for the delivery of such services. The fundamental notion of an enabling environment for the delivery of services is the Government's responsibility to adequately fund the organisations rendering services. This applies to approving, monitoring and evaluating the State-funded service programmes of welfare organisations.

In line with the WPSW, the South African Government enacted the Non-Profit Organisations Act 1997 as part of its intention to create an enabling environment for the non-profit sector and also as a way of fostering partnerships with NGOs. This legislation was seen as part of the project to transform the society (DSD, 2005). A study by Inyathelo commissioned by the DSD (2010) recommends that the Government should

work in partnership with the non-profit sector on a joint campaign to mobilize individuals in civil society and the private sector to offer their skills, experience and resources through service on NPO Boards. Again the Government is mandated to develop a national resource that can deal with some main governance challenges being faced by NPOs. All NGOs in South Africa are expected to register with the DSD under the NPO Act of 1997. To apply for registration as a NPO, organizations fill in a prescribed application form and submit it to the DSD with two copies of the organization's founding documents, such as the constitution for volunteer association, memorandum and articles of the association with the company's registration letter for a not-for-profit company and the deeds of trust with the trustees' authorization letter (DSD, 2010). Once the NPO's application for registration has been approved and the NPO has been registered, they are obligated in terms of Section 18 of the NPO Act to submit within nine months after the end of its annual year, the annual reports (a narrative report, annual financial statement and an accounting officer's report) including any changes to the organisation's constitution, physical address and office bearers. Section 21 of the NPO Act indicates that the organisations that do not comply are cancelled. The Act also makes provision for the NPOs to voluntarily de-register in terms of Section 23 (1) or dissolve in terms of Section 23 (2).

However, NPOs are thus required to provide the DSD with 30 days' notice of the intention to de-register or dissolve. The NPO Act is regarded as the primary legislation within the legal framework of NPOs. According to the DSD, the main purpose of the NPO Act is to create an enabling environment in which NPOs can flourish and to establish an administrative and regulatory framework within which organisations can conduct their affairs (DSD, 2010). The NPO Act (1997) aims to encourage NPOs to maintain adequate standards of governance, transparency and accountability and to create an environment within which people may have access to information on registered organisations

2.4. Non-Governmental Organisations

2.4.1. Definition of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Authors differ in terms of the meaning they attach to NGOs. The Non-Profit Organisations Act 71 of (1997, p. 2), defines NPO as "a trust, company or other association of persons that has been established for a public purpose and the income and property of which are not to be distributed to its members or office bearers except as reasonable compensation for service rendered". According to said Act, a NPO is an associated term for civil society organisations that range from faith and community-based organisations, charities (welfare), traditional organisations like social and sports clubs and a host of other development and social forms of organisations working tirelessly on the social fabric of society.

According to Dibie (2008), NGOs refer to different types of charities, volunteer groups, religious and cultural groups, people, co-operatives and community organisations. NGOs are regional, national and international groups and communities that tend to bring people together for the purpose of providing services and economic growth to human development around the world.

Kane (1990, cited in De Beer and Swanepoel, 2000) indicates that when defining NGOs the following criteria must be met:

1. NGOs should be privately set up and structured and sufficiently autonomous in its activity and financing.
2. NGOs should be a non-profit institution to ensure its voluntary character.
3. NGOs should support development.

2.4.2. The role of NGOs in Social Development

Not all NGOs are the same and neither do they have similar objectives, functions and purposes. According to Lewis and Kanji (2007) some NGOs may be charitable and paternalistic while others may seek to pursue radical or empowerment-based approaches. Dibie (2008) argues that NGOs can do a lot in helping a country to achieve its social goals and further states that the Government should encourage its partners in the development process to provide quality educational opportunities and to build social and cultural integration programs as well as address poverty and the general well-being of the local authority.

Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005) indicate that NGOs play a major role in the development of South Africa because they have features that make them more appropriate than public and private sector institutions and their advantages lie in the way they relate to intended beneficiaries and their freedom in organizing themselves. NGOs are good at communicating with and organising the poor, and they employ participatory bottom-up approaches in project planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (Davids et al., 2005). This is mainly due to the fact that NGOs are seen to be advocating and responding to the needs of the poor and thereby rendering services to organisations at grassroots level. NGOs are supported by Kallis (2000) who argue that it is the responsibility of NGOs to deliver services efficiently and effectively within the framework of Government policies and strategies consulted and negotiated between Government and NGOs. This requires NGOs to partner with Government to ensure that the services they provide are in line with policy guidelines of the Government. This is however not limiting NGOs as Lewis and Kanji (2007) argue that NGOs can be engaged in providing services to its clients through its own programmes, they may be contracted by Government to provide services formerly provided by the State or they may be contracted by a donor to provide services within a project.

There is a great need for Government to partner with NGOs as Dibie (2008) argues that most Governments and people in several African countries will not be able to achieve human development and poverty alleviation without the help of NGOs. In this regard Kallis (2000) indicates that NGOs have to work in partnership with Government to achieve common aims and objectives and to be accountable to Government for its policies and service programmes. Furthermore Cole (1994) views NGOs as contributing to building a foundation for sustained change. In support of this view Goel and Kumar (2004) indicate that NGOs today are involved in all areas e.g. health, education, agriculture, rural development, poverty alleviation programmes, adult education, environment awareness and development, women empowerment, old age homes, family planning and drug addiction. This is a clear indication that NGOs offer a variety of services depending on the needs of each community. These services are appropriated since they are the basic needs in every community and can be regarded as appropriate and responsive to the needs of their communities (Cole, 1994).

NGOs prefer to use grassroots tactical strategies in executing their projects in several African nations; they adapt to changing environmental conditions and manage changes effectively, constantly transitioning to new strategies in executing their projects (Dibie, 2008). This author argues that service delivery work has increased as NGOs have been increasingly contracted by Government and donors. It has also become prominent as increasing emphasis is given to the role of NGOs responding to man-made emergencies or natural disasters within the framework of humanitarian action (Dibie, 2008). As an instrument of civil society the NGO sector accepts the role of watchdog over the policies and practices of Government in the interest of the consumers, its services and the wider public. In this role it will target the Government in its advocacy, lobbying and negotiating functions when required (Kallis, 2000). According to Lewis (2007) NGOs reach the poor in remote areas where Government's reach does not exist or is ineffective, they operate at a lower cost due to the voluntary nature of their activities and they promote local

participation by working with community groups as partners emphasizing self-help initiatives and local control of programmes.

The role of NGOs is further defined in terms of their ability to inspire, facilitate or contribute to improved thinking and action to promote change (Lewis & Kanji, 2007). According to Brinkerhoff (2002), NGOs can raise the issues and concerns that might otherwise be neglected and can also enhance transparency and accountability. They can also deliver services, mobilize productive energy and resources and also provide feedback to donors and Government. The major goals of NGOs are to provide welfare, economic growth to human development around the world, observe religious beliefs, promoting social and cultural beliefs as well as communication ideas around the world (Dibie, 2008). Cole (1994) argues that the strength of NGOs should lie in the relevance and effectiveness in achieving their goals, in their responsiveness to the needs and their ability to mobilize resources to maintain their services. It is further stated that relevance is measured against the needs and perceptions of communities being supported. In South Africa, the WPSW (1997) recognizes NGOs in terms of their ability to provide services at grassroots level.

2.4.3. NGOs as catalysts

According to Kallis (2007) NGOs serve as catalysts for the implementation of the development process with the primary objective of development being to initiate a process of awareness building. In order for NGOs to be effective in performing their role as catalysts they have to maintain their substantial independence in defining and interpreting their own mission. They should also aim at producing participation, empowerment and sustainability in terms of their development process (Lewis, 2007). However, De Beer and Swanepoel (2000, p. 117), argue that "the fact that an NGO has to function as a catalyst of development process does not give such an organisation the mandate to control and manipulate the process especially in terms of the primary importance of participation, empowerment and sustainability". In other words, for an

NGO to perform a catalyst role it has to maintain substantial independence in defining and interpreting its own mission so that it does not fall captive to power holders and their agenda (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2000).

2.4.4. NGOs as partners

According to De Beer and Swanepoel (2000) NGOs have a very important role to play as partners of Government in the development process and because of that most Governments need to monitor the functioning of NGOs closely. Furthermore, these authors argue that NGOs are instruments of Government policy formulation since they participate with the State in providing services that the State would otherwise not be able to provide. Boris and Steuerle (1999) indicate that as providers of services, NPOs frequently act as partners of Government and in this regard the Government may use the NPOs to undertake the activities that require reaching local populations with culturally sensitive material. NGOs are seen to select poorer or targeted groups and communities who need to be saved from devastating human conditions. They play a very important role in choosing appropriate programmes or activities that are concerned with the alleviation of poverty and its impact on welfare workers and disadvantaged sections of society (Dibie, 2008). In addition, Lewis (2007) argues that NGOs can encourage and facilitate participation of the poor and can reach the strata of the population which have been left untouched or by-passed by public service delivery systems.

2.4.5. Challenges faced by NGOs in Social Service Delivery

There are a number of reasons why most communities are unable to initiate development project process by themselves; one of the reasons may be attributed to the fact that most communities do not have organisational structures that are able to cope with initiatives that emerge from the community (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2000). Furthermore, due to various historical factors, most of these NGOs are trapped in a dependency relationship which hampers spontaneous development activities (Erasmus, 1999, cited in De Beer and Swanepoel, 2000). This is evident in South Africa where the legacy of Apartheid still

remains. This has resulted in many NGOs not being able to function independently and largely reliant on Government.

According to Davids et al. (2005) the success of some NGO projects depends on a complementary support from the public sector. The main challenge in this regard is that many projects of NGOs do not effectively reach the poor, rather their initiatives fall into the hands of local power elites, like municipal councillors. Many NGOs are facing challenges due to lack of resources and have to cope with the momentum and unpredictability of change in such a way as to enhance the relationships between CBOs and service providing organisations (Cole, 1994). In South Africa many NGOs are faced with a dilemma whereby they do not have enough resources to provide services to the community. Many NGOs suffer from a lack of human resources since they do not have enough money to employ staff and material resources such as computers and cars. This hampers service delivery in that the respective NGOs will not be able to adequately respond timeously to the needs of the community. It therefore leads to a point whereby some NGOs may be seen to be inefficient. Some NGOs close down due to lack of resources which leaves a huge gap in the community since there will be no one left to do the little they did.

Davids et al. (2005, p. 71), indicate that "lack of co-ordination of the efforts of individual NGOs hampers the spread of macro level development". Furthermore, the inability or unwillingness to effectively collaborate at appropriate levels with Government agencies can lead to failure to influence the relevant policy environment on a sufficiently broad scale to take account of the felt needs of the poor and to facilitate a process to satisfy those needs (Davids et al., 2005). This is mainly observed in some NGOs where the founders want to remain in power and would run their NGOs without partnering with Government. In this regard such NGOs are less likely to be involved in the activities of Government.

NGOs may fail to attain self-sustainability because their activities are financed mainly by grants from donors with limited Government funding (Davids et al., 2005). NGOs in South Africa rely heavily on funding from Government and local and international donors. This is a challenge since NGOs are unable to generate their own income. This becomes problematic because when funding is cut many NGOs face financial crises and cannot function properly. Such NGOs resort to retrenchment as a way of survival which puts more pressure on the remaining staff to do the extra jobs. Another challenge faced by NGOs as stated in the study by McKinley and Naidoo (2004) is that since the foreign Governments and their agencies fund NGOs and seek accountability in return for their funding, these NGOs are too susceptible for all intents and purposes to these Government institutions. As a result, funding relations make NGOs more accountable to foreign donors than to the poor in whose name funding is raised.

De Beer and Swanepoel (2000) indicate that the lack of leadership and management skills have negative effects on the capacity of NGOs to perform complex projects, this increases the inability of NGOs to be able to scale up successful projects and replicate them on a regional or national scale. This results in most NGOs being unable to provide routine services to large populations on a sustainable basis.

2.4.6. Criticisms of NGOs

Despite the fact that there is positive reporting about NGOs and their contributions to development, Lewis and Kanji (2009) point out the following critiques relating to NGOs: NGOs impose their agendas and become self-interested actors at the expense of the people they are in theory supporting and they undermine the centrality of the State in developing countries. In other nations they have been accused of intruding into the domestic affairs of the indigenous Government (Lewis and Kanji, 2009).

Lewis (2007) criticizes NGOs for becoming closer to being private sector businesses, and run the risk of being deflected from their original mandate. Also they have not lived up to

their expectations in providing assistance in emergency situations, with crises pointing to institutional self-interest by individual NGOs and lack of co-ordination leading to duplication of effort. NGOs have also become the monopoly of a few individuals; they have become a racket for pilfering Government money (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). There is a lot of duplication, no transparency and also no accountability (Goel and Kumar, 2004). NGOs are routinely criticised for introducing processes of individualization and de-politicization that undermine the possibility of collective mobilization and promote the interests of the State and neo-liberal capital (Robbins, 2008). Furthermore, these individual interests are emerging in the context of growing donor interest in the democracy programmes that seek to promote community participation, State accountability, citizen empowerment and social capital.

Lack of adequate accountability by NGOs has heightened concerns about the way they use and abuse power around the world (Grant and Keohane, 2005, cited in Dibie, 2008). There is also a concern about accountability and sustainability of NGO service delivery work. As Lewis (2007) states, the criticisms revolve around the relationship to Government and whether NGO services are supplementing, undermining or replacing public services. Some scholars have also argued that international NGOs have not been able to eradicate poverty in developing nations because of the geo-political motivation behind aid giving (Dibie, 2008).

The mainstream of NGO literature tends to portray NGOs as autonomous, participatory and accountable (Robbins, 2008). However, critics claim that NGOs have lost their critical edge as they come increasingly under pressure to manage their programmes on a profitable basis with the State subsidies being cut and soft loans and grants for development programmes being minimized by the IMF and the World Bank via structural adjustment programmes (Robbins, 2008). According to Brinkerhoff (2002) there is also a long-standing criticism of the World Bank's co-operation with NGOs that NGOs who participate with the World Bank tend to be a selected group and are not viewed as

representative of the NGO community broadly defined and no objective selection criteria support their participation and sector representatives.

2.5. Summary

This chapter focused on the discussion of literature in relation to the topic. The chapter discussed the history of social welfare in South Africa with specific reference to the pre and post apartheid era. The chapter explained the importance of networking and building partnerships whereby the benefits of networking and partnering were explored. The chapter also discussed in detail the role and functions of NGOs and government in promoting integrated service delivery. The challenges faced by NGOs in the provision of social services were also explored. Lastly the different authors' views of criticisms of NGOs were highlighted. The following chapter will focus on research design and methodology used for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology used in the study. Attention will be paid to discussing the research method, research design, sampling procedures, research tools, pretesting the research tool, methods of data collection and data analysis. The limitations for the study will be highlighted followed by a discussion of ethical considerations taken into account during the study.

3.2. Research Method

The research employed a qualitative research methodology. According to Mack et al. (2005, p. 2), qualitative research "seeks to gain a rich and complex understanding of a specific social context". The use of this qualitative research methodology enabled the researcher to obtain rich and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

3.3. Research Design

According to Kerlinger (cited in Bhattcharyya, 2003, p. 38), research design is "the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain the answers to research questions and to control variance". For the purposes of this, a case study research design was used. According to Merriam (1998, p. 21), a case study is "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident". By using the case study the researcher was able to gain a rich and holistic account of the phenomenon being studied (Merriam, 1998). In this research the case study was of the Nelmapius networking forum in which various organisations participated.

3.4. Sampling Procedures

3.4.1. Research Population

Neuman (1997, p. 203) defines the "target population as the specific pool of cases that the researcher wants to study". To define the population the author specifies the unit being sampled, the geographical location and the temporal boundaries of populations. In this research the research population consisted of social workers and social work supervisors participating in the Nelmapius networking forum in Pretoria.

3.4.2. Sampling

Sampling is a process of systematically selecting cases for inclusion in a research project (Neuman, 1997). Since it was not possible to include the entire population of social workers participating in the forum meetings, the researcher selected 15 participants from the whole population of social workers and social work supervisors participating in the forum meeting. Purposive sampling, a type of non-probability sampling was utilized in the selection of participants. Purposive sampling is based on the "assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Furthermore, Fossey et al. (2002, p. 726), states that "qualitative sampling requires identification of appropriate participants, being those who can best inform the study". The researcher utilized this method of sampling to select the participants who were also able to provide an in-depth explanation about the phenomenon.

Table 1: The profile of participants

Number of participants	**Years of experience in the field of social work**	**Years of experience in the Nelmapius forum**
Total = 15	0-2 years = 4	6 months to 1 year = 4
	2-5 years = 4	1-3 years = 8
	5-10 = 3	3-5 years + = 3
	10 years + = 4	

Merriam (1998) states that to begin purposive sampling the researcher must first determine what selection criteria are essential in choosing the people to be studied and as such, the participants in this study had to meet the following criteria:

- They must be registered social workers and supervisors employed either by the DHSD or an NGO during the period of participation in the forum
- They must have been participated or participating in the forum for at least a period of six months or more.
- Their organisations must be within the Mamelodi area

3.5. Research tools

A semi-structured interview schedule was used by the researcher to collect data. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, (2011) semi-structured interviews gives a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions, or accounts of a particular topic. Furthermore De Vos et al. (2011, p. 352), States that "with semi structured interviews the researcher will have a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule, but the interview will be guided rather than dictated by the schedule". For the purposes of this research, the researcher compiled an interview schedule with a set of open-ended questions which helped in guiding the interview process. One uniform semi-structured interview schedule was used during the study for all the research participants, namely social workers and social work supervisors who participated in the Nelmapius forum. The interview schedule is attached in Appendix A of this report.

3.6. Pre-testing of the research tool

According to Berg (1998, p. 71), when pre-testing the research tool, "the schedule should be critically examined by other people familiar with the subject matter". In this study the semi-structured interview schedule used was pre-tested by the researcher before the actual study commenced. One social work supervisor and one social worker who are currently participating in the Stanza Bopape networking Forum participated in the pre-test and these social workers did not participate in the subsequent study. Their responses

were measured in terms of whether or not they produced more or less the desired outcomes. This process helped the researcher in identifying other areas which had been omitted as well as identifying poorly worded questions (Berg, 1998).

3.7. Method of data collection

Cresswell (2007) states that data collection is a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions. The researcher collected data via semi-structured face-to-face in-depth interviews with the research participants. De Vos et al. (2011) state that semi-structured interviews offer the researcher and the participants more flexibility and they are suitable when one is particularly interested in complexity or process. This method of collecting data helped the researcher to gain the detailed picture of the participants' views and perceptions about the phenomenon being studied. In circumstances where participants were agreeable, the interviews were tape-recorded to avoid possible loss of data due to memory decay.

3.8. Data analysis

Qualitative analysis is "a process of reviewing, synthesizing and interpreting data to describe and explain the phenomena or social worlds being studied" (Fossey et al., 2002 p. 728). According to De Vos et al. (2011, p. 399), Qualitative Data Analysis is "a process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorising which certainly is far removed from structured mechanical and technical procedures to make inferences from empirical data of social life". Thematic content analysis was used for data analysis. According to Patton (2000) content analysis refers to analyzing text rather than observation-based field notes. Furthermore, it refers to any qualitative data reduction and sense making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings (Patton, 2000).

The following steps by Cresswell (2007, cited in De Vos et al., 2011) were used by the researcher to analyse the collected data.

3.8.1 Planning for recording of data

The researcher should plan for the recording of data in a systematic manner that is appropriate to the setting. In this regard special attention needs to be paid to the consideration that data recording strategies will be used that fit the setting and the research participants' sensitivities and that these will only be used with their consent (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher planned to record data using audio- recorder and participant gave written consent to be audio recorded.

3.8.2 Data collection and preliminary analyses

Data analysis involves a two-fold approach, namely, data analysis at the research site during data collection and data analysis away from the site following a period of data collection (De Vos et., al 2011). The researcher began the process of analysing data during the period of data collection and a more detailed analysis of data continued after the process of data collection was completed.

3.8.3 Managing data

This is the first step in data analysis away from the site, which is often referred to as the intensive data analysis phase. This phase involved transcribing of the tape-recorded interviews. Once the interviews were transcribed, the researcher managed the collected data by organizing the data into file folders according to the responses received in different questions. This process enabled the researcher to organise data while making them easily retrievable and valuable (De Vos et al., 2011).

3.8.4 Reading and writing memos

During this phase the researcher read the transcripts in their entirety several times to get immersed in the details. The researcher did this to get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into parts (De Vos et al., 2011).

3.8.5 Generating categories and coding the data

According to De Vos et al. (2011) this process involves identifying salient themes, recurring ideas or language and patterns of belief that link people and settings together. This includes categorisation and coding of data into themes that reflect the hard work of reducing mountains of raw data into manageable piles. At this point the researcher noted the themes, patterns and categories that emerged and interpreted them. Data was organised into themes as emerged from the study to make it easily retrievable.

3.8.6 Testing emergent understandings and searching for alternative explanations

This process entails a search through the data during which one challenges the understanding, searches for negative instances of the patterns and incorporates these into larger constructs as necessary. This includes evaluation of data for their usefulness and centrality.

3.8.7 Interpreting and developing typologies

Interpretation involves making sense of the data, the lessons learnt (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher also reflected back and tried to make sense of the data and identified the lessons learned from the whole research process.

3.8.8 Presenting the data

In the final phase of the spiral the researcher presents the data, a packaging of what was found in the text (De Vos et al., 2011). In this phase the researcher packaged the data that was found in text. It is in this phase that the researcher put together all the data that was collected and data was presented in the form of a narrative which was guided by the themes identified.

3.9. Limitations and delimitations of the study

3.9.1. Biased Responses

Kvale (1996, cited on Ord, A. Eisenhauer, L. & Wynaden, D.) argues that participants' responses are affected by the interview and that the knowledge gained through interviews affects our understanding of the human experience. The personal interaction between researchers and participants is crucial in data gathering by keeping in mind the research focus and being clear about the role of researchers. The researcher ensured this by explaining to the participants about the focus of the study, being clear about her role and assuring the research participants of confidentiality.

3.9.2. Transferability

The findings of a qualitative project are specific to small number of particular environments and individuals, it is impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions are applicable to other situations and populations (Shenton, 2003). However it should be noted that the purpose of conducting qualitative research is not to generalise the findings but obtain an in-depth understanding and rich information of the phenomenon under study.

3.9.3. Credibility

According to Trochim (2006) Credibility involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are believable from the perspective of the participant. The purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participants' eyes (Trochim, 2006). To achieve this, the researcher asks if there is a match between research participants' views and the researcher's reconstruction and representation of them (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher investigated the phenomenon in depth in order to obtain unbiased responses to ensure that the findings of the research are accurate. The researcher established credibility of the study by doing

member checking after data analysis to check whether participants were in agreement with the researcher's interpretation of their responses.

3.9.4 Data loss due to refusal of participants to be audio recorded

Some of the research participants refused to be audio recorded, this affected the process of collecting data in that some of the information may have not been captured. However the researcher tried to reduce loss of information by making field notes and immediately after completion of the interview the researcher reflected on the interview and made additions to the field notes.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Research ethics deals primarily with the interaction between researchers and the people they study (Fossey et al., 2002). The following are the ethical issues that were taken into consideration by the researcher during the research process.

3.10.1. Avoidance of harm

Babbie (2007, cited in De Vos et al. 2011) regards this as the fundamental ethical rule of social research as it is argued that research must bring no harm to participants. De Vos et al. (2011) state that subjects can be harmed in a physical or emotional manner during the research process. The study did not contain any sensitive issues that could have been of emotional harm to participants and the research had no risk of physical harm to participants.

3.10.2. Informed consent

Informed consent is a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether they want to participate (Mack et al., 2005). Consent may either be oral or written. Oral consent means that the person receives all the information either verbally or

in writing and then verbally consents to participate while written consent means that a person receives a form that describes the research and then signs that form to document his or her consent to participate (Mack et al., 2005). The researcher ensured that this ethical principle was achieved by informing the participants about the study. Apart from the participant information sheet, the researcher also informed participants orally about the purpose of the study and the participants were also required to sign the consent forms in order for them to participate in the study.

3.10.3 Coercion and perverse incentives

In this study no participants or organisations were forced to participate and participation was strictly voluntary. The researcher also informed the participants that this research is mainly for academic purposes and that there were no incentives that were to be given in any form. However the researcher encouraged the selected participants to participate by stating that their input was crucial for shaping and transforming the way forum meetings are addressed and that the given input is valuable to the social work profession as a whole.

3.10.4 Deception

According to Neuman (1997) deception arises in several ways in field research, the researcher may be covert, may assume a false role, name or identity or may mislead the members in some way. Deception refers to misleading participants, deliberately misinterpreting facts or withholding information from participants (Struwig & Stead, 2001, cited in De Vos et al., 2011). According to Corey et al (1993, cited in De Vos et al, 2011, p. 119), deception "involves withholding information or offering incorrect information in order to ensure participation of subjects when they would otherwise refuse to participate". In this research, the research participants were not misled in any way by the researcher. The research participants were provided with true and honest information about the study and no information was withheld from them.

3.10.5 Confidentiality

According to De Vos et al. (2011) confidentiality indicates handling of information in a confidential manner. To ensure confidentiality in this research the researcher did not record the participants' real names; instead pseudo names were used.

3.11 Summary

This chapter has focused on outlining the research design and methodology. A detailed discussion of the research method, research design, sampling procedures, research tools, pre-testing the research tool, methods of data collection and data analysis was provided. The chapter also highlighted the limitations for the study and ethical aspects taken into consideration. Chapter four, which follows, focuses on presentation and discussion of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation and discussion of the research findings in relation to the objectives of the study. The findings will be presented supported by direct quotes from participants. The findings will also be discussed and analyzed in relation to the literature of networking, partnerships and integrated service delivery.

4.2. Objective 1: To elicit the perceptions of stakeholders participating in the Nelmapius networking forum on their understanding of the rationale for the establishment of networking forums

The first objective for the study was to elicit the perceptions of stakeholders participating in the Nelmapius networking forum on their understanding of the rationale for the establishment of networking forums. The following themes were identified during data analysis; strengthening the relationship between DHSD and NGOs, and the sharing of information.

4.2.1. Strengthening the relationship between the DHSD and NGOs

The Nelmapius forum was seen by the research participants as one of the avenues through which to strengthen the relationship between the DHSD and NGOs operating in the Nelmapius area. The relationship between the Department and NGOs was considered to be crucial in the Nelmapius community. Participants pointed out that before the Nelmapius forum was formed the relationship that existed between the DHSD and NGOs was mainly through funding. As participant C stated "*In the past we used to communicate with the department during the period of submitting business plans and our*

reports for funding review. We mainly met with the department when we needed some clarity on funding related issues but there was no platform whereby we would sit down as NGOs and the department to discuss issues in the community". Some participants indicated that the funding relationship that existed was not enough for the provision of social services in the Nelmapius area.

The Nelmapius forum was initiated to offer a platform for discussion between the NGOs and the DHSD. Participants stated that before the Nelmapius forum was formed there was no platform for discussion and engagement between the Department and NGOs in Nelmapius, to meet and discuss the issues in the areas they served. As participant C stated that, *"The relationship that we had with the department was not enough because we only contacted them to inquire about funding issues but there was no space to discuss other issues. We also did not know who to contact when we wanted to inquire about certain issues.*

Participants regarded the forum as an opportunity for all the service providers in the Nelmapius forum to meet and discuss issues of concern thereby enhancing the relationship that exist between the DHSD and NGOs in the Nelmapius area. Participant B noted that; *"The forum is a meeting point between Government and NGOs because that is where we would sit as stakeholders in the Nelmapius community and discuss community needs and the ways to address them".* Participant J also stated that; "*It is through the forum that our relationship [as NGOs] with the department was strengthened because we got the opportunity to meet and share information about our services".*

Participants explained that, when the relationship between the Department and NGOs is strengthened through the forum, organisations were able to build rapport which fostered strong working relationships for the benefit of communities. As participant B noted "*I believe the forum was established to build rapport among officials from different organisations in order to improve service delivery in the Nelmapius community"*

Participants regarded the NGOs and Government as partners in service delivery and they highlighted the importance, as partners in service delivery, of needing to know each other and have a good working relationship. Participant K stated that *"The forum was a platform for us to get to know each other as service providers".* The Nelmapius forum is considered to be one of the efforts by Government to strengthen the partnership between Government and NGOs. This is in line with one of the national goals of the National Developmental Social Welfare Strategy as stated in the WPSW (1997). The WPSW (1997) advocates for the promotion and strengthening of partnership between Government, the community and organisations in civil society and the private sector who are involved in the delivery of services. The building of partnerships between Government and NGOs is crucial for effective service delivery. When partnerships between Government and NGOs are enhanced, it is more likely to result in effective service delivery, which will eventually result in clients receiving better services. Most participants noted that the strengthening of the relationship between Government and NGOs through the Nelmapius forum has resulted in the building of good relationships among the service providers in the Nelmapius community.

It is evident that the Nelmapius forum was a platform for strengthening the relationship between the Government and the NGOs. This promoted partnership and integrated service delivery between Government and NGOs and ensured that organisations did not work in isolation. This is the core for social service provision as it is stated in the WPSW (1997) that the Government cannot take sole responsibility for the delivery of social services and that the partnership between Government and NGOs should be enhanced.

4.2.2. Sharing information

Participants pointed out that the Nelmapius forum provided an opportunity for forum members to share information about their services. It is through the platform that was created via the initiation of the Nelmapius forum that service providers in the Nelmapius area were able to meet and share information pertaining to service delivery. Through the

forum, organisations were able to know of their different service areas. As one participant pointed out, *"In the forum we shared information related to our services and all organisations ideas are taken into consideration and put on the table for discussion".* Participants highlighted the importance of information sharing as partners in service delivery. By sharing information, organisations learnt from each other, which would eventually lead to improved service delivery. As participant H stated; *"In the forum all the members were given an opportunity to share their views on how services can be improved in the Nelmapius community".*

Compton, Galaway and Cournoyer (2005) support the view that sharing information is a vital skill in social work as it enables co-operation and learning to occur. This promotes the quality of services given to community. Participant F argued that; *"The forum helped us to understand the services of each organisation as we were able to share amongst one another information about our services".* Information sharing in the Nelmapius forum was a crucial aspect in the building of partnership among organisations as it allowed for open discussion among service partners. This enhanced service delivery within the Nelmapius community as it provided forum members with the opportunity to communicate on important aspects of service delivery, such as where and when to refer clients.

4.3. Objective 2: To explore stakeholder perceptions on how the Nelmapius networking forum enables integrated service delivery and partnerships among participant organisations

The second objective of the study was to explore stakeholder perceptions on how the Nelmapius networking forum enables integrated service delivery and partnerships among participant organisations. The following are the aspects that the participants stated based on their experience in the forum with regard to how they believe the forum enabled partnership and integrated service delivery among the participant organisations;

partnership building, capacity building, networking, education, organising community awareness campaigns and spotting service delivery gaps.

4.3.1. Partnership building

Participants mentioned that the Nelmapius forum provided an opportunity for the DHSD and the NGOs to partner when rendering services in the Nelmapius community. Partnership building was regarded by participants as the main aspect that enabled integrated service delivery among the organisations participating in the Nelmapius forum. Participants argued that the forum was effective in promoting partnership and integrated service delivery among organisations that participated in the forum. As noted by participant C; *"The forum helped us to be alert of the issues in the community because if one organisation has noticed some trend in the community they would discuss it in the forum and all the forum members would engage effectively on the issue".* Participants explained that there was a time when they experienced problems with xenophobic attacks in the area as the affected people were reporting to their offices. In the forum members were able to co-operate with one another and shared cases amongst themselves including methods of intervention. Participants stated that organisations were able to assist one another in terms of resources, for example, other organisations volunteered to offer food parcels. They also pointed out that in the meetings they were able to inform one another in terms of accommodation available for victims of xenophobic attacks in the community. Communication was not only limited to the meetings but rather participants stated that whenever they needed assistance or information from one another they were able to communicate telephonically. It is clear that the Nelmapius forum enabled organisations in the Nelmapius community to build partnership and work together thereby enhancing integrated service delivery.

Participants explained that they were able to work together and assist one another if one organisation was experiencing challenges. On this point participants argued that the organisation which was experiencing challenges would normally share with the forum

members and the forum members would discuss the matter and provide suggestions on how they can assist the other organisation. Participant D stated that; *"There was a time where one organisation did not have a social worker and as a result they were experiencing difficulties in terms of providing services to the community. Other organisations were able to assist that organisation by providing their social workers until such time that that organisation was able to employ a social worker".* This indicates that the forum members had developed trust with one another and a sense of belonging in the forum. It also points out that the partnerships that were created through the forum enabled organisations to develop a strong bond with each other. Schenk et al. (2010, p. 91), argue that "The value of working collectively is that it creates a collective pool of human resources and energy and caring for one another in distress". It is only through the platform that was created through the Nelmapius forum that organisations were able to build partnership and render integrated services to the Nelmapius community.

The partnerships created in the Nelmapius forum allowed the organisations to work effectively with one another. Participants argued that the forum helped them in improving their services to the community as they were able to liaise with one another to share information on services. They indicated that when they shared their services with one another it was evident that some organisations were offering generic services relating to foster care, substance abuse, family problems, group and community work. Participants explained that through their communication in the forum other organisations were able to assist by offering to handle specific cases in the Nelmapius area. This was done to reduce the work load on other organisations so that they can focus on other areas of work, thereby rendering effective service to the community. Participant B stated that; *"As participants of the Nelmapius forum we were able to co-operate and work effectively in order to improve our services in the community. Through the forum one of the organisations agreed to handle all substance abuse cases in the whole of Nelmapius irrespective of the jurisdiction, as a result all substance abuse related cases were handled by them".* Participant B also pointed out that; "*Another organisation also agreed to*

handle all the adoptions cases in the Nelmapius area". This helped to reduce the case load of other organisations and enabled those organisations to focus on other areas of work such as foster care, child abuse and neglect, marriage counselling and others. It also improved the quality of services and ensured that cases were processed faster.

Organisations providing generic work may not perform optimally in all areas of work. Some areas of work are likely to be compromised with preference being given to others. In some instances where organisations are overloaded they may try to cover all areas of work but the disadvantage is that the quality of services may be compromised which eventually affects the performance of such organisations. The fact that some organisations in the Nelmapius forum agreed to specialise in certain areas means that services were improved as organisations moved from generic to offer specialised services. From the participants' perspectives, as presented above, it is clear that the Nelmapius forum has indeed been able to enhance integrated service delivery amongst organisations operating in the area.

Participants highlighted that whenever they encountered problems in the community they were able to work together to deal with the identified problem. Participant E stated that; *"The forum members from different organisations were able to work with one another in terms of the problems they encountered in the community"*. Participants stated that they experienced a problem whereby their areas of work were not divided and they were working everywhere. Participant C indicated that; *"Before the forum was formed there was chaos in terms of rendering of services in the Nelmapius community. Every organisation was working everywhere".* Through the forum they identified the need to divide the sections amongst themselves. They stated that all organisations participated. Hence they succeeded and even today each organisation knows their area of service. Partnership created through the Nelmapius forum enabled the organisational members to co-operate with one another and communicate effectively thereby enhancing integrated service delivery. Participants indicated that it is important to have forums because the

forums provide a platform for organisations to support one another as it has been observed in the Nelmapius forum.

Participants identified the importance of participating in the forum as a way in which to promote partnership. They argued that partnership building requires participation of all stakeholders. Participant C pointed out that; "*It is very important to participate in the forum because it is through the forum that we get an opportunity as service providers to network whereby we are able to identify problems that affect service delivery and to sort them out".* Active participation in the forum requires organisations to attend meetings regularly, provide valuable inputs in the meetings and participating in decision making.

Participants argued that if there was no platform for NGOs and Government in Nelmapius to meet and discuss service delivery issues then the delivery of services to the community would still be chaotic even today. However it is evident that the Nelmapius forum has contributed positively to addressing the problems that existed in the Nelmapius community by encouraging partnership among the organisations in Nelmapius thereby promoting integrated service delivery.

4.3.2. Networking

Networking in the forum was also pointed out as one of the ways in which to build partnership and enhance integrated service delivery among the members of the Nelmapius forum. Participants indicated that the forum provided a platform for stakeholders in Government and NGOs to network for joint service delivery. They indicated that service providers in the Nelmapius community cannot work in isolation but rather must network with other organisations to enhance service delivery. Participant A noted that; "*For me the forum provided an opportunity to meet with social workers from other organisations and to network with them".* In the same vein Participant I stated that; "*The forum helped our organisation to liaise with other stakeholders in order to render effective service to community.*

In the Nelmapius forum, networking enabled organisations to improve their services as it gave members the opportunity to learn from one another. Networking ensured that forum members were empowered with knowledge and skills regarding social service provision whereby members who were new in the field of social work were able to learn from others.

The Nelmapius forum consists of social auxiliary workers, social workers, senior social workers and social work supervisors. As a result networking was considered as a valuable aspect in the forum since it provided an opportunity for members to learn from the experience and expertise of others. This means that organisations that network must ensure their commitment during the process and communicate effectively in order to succeed. Schenck et al. (2010) state that networking can facilitate the exchange of skills, experiences and resources that increase the competence and efficiency of members and this was evidenced in the work of the forum.

Other participants highlighted the importance of stakeholders to network with each other. Participant B stated that; "*It is important to liaise with other stakeholders if you are working in the same community in order to provide effective service necessary to the community".* They argued that networking enhanced service delivery since it provided the opportunity for organisations to share resources when rendering services to the community. This view is supported by Henderson and Thomas (2002) who argue that networking is essential - it seeks significance in acts of association with others in order to achieve some improvement in their social and material wellbeing. Participants indicated that it is important for organisations to know each other and network as partners in service delivery.

The Nelmapius forum was effective in promoting integrated service delivery since it created the opportunity for different organisations to network and discuss critical issues of service delivery. Participant J pointed out that; *"Those organisations which were*

active in terms of participating in the forum and who took the forum seriously, they were able to network and relate to each other". Participants stated that there was a point where they experienced large volumes of clients reporting to their office requesting food vouchers. Some participants stated that they were not aware of such but through networking they were able to liaise with other stakeholders. As Participant O stated; "*I learned a lot from the forum as I was still new in the profession, we were able to liaise with other stakeholders to ask for clarity especially on Social Relief of Distress since we did not have much knowledge".*

Through networking as stakeholders in the Nelmapius area they were able to learn about the food vouchers which are provided by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). Networking enabled communication among forum members which resulted in a regular flow of information sharing among forum members. This enabled the forum members to improve their services in the community as they were able to respond effectively to clients who reported to their offices requesting food vouchers unlike before when they did not have much knowledge about Social Relief of Distress (SRD). Clients were also referred accordingly to the relevant organisations for further assistance. This therefore demonstrates the power of the Nelmapius forum in promoting partnership and integrated service delivery between the organisations in the Nelmapius area. Networking is supported by Henderson and Thomas (2002) who argue that integrated development implies the creation of opportunities for people to join with others for a period in order to do things of both value and service.

4.3.3. Capacity Building

Participants noted that the forum has improved NGO capacity whereby the DHSD ensured that the NGOs were informed and provided with the necessary training about legislation and information on changes and new areas of developments. Participant D stated that; "*As the department we are expected to update and advise NGOs in terms of acts and legislation to ensure that there are no misinterpretations and ensuring that*

legislation is properly implemented". In the Nelmapius forum capacity building ensured that forum members were continuously updated of changes and amendments in Acts and policies. Capacity building in the Nelmapius forum involved equipping NGOs with skills, knowledge and expertise through the training offered by the DHSD. As participant E stated; "*We were learning a lot in the forum because the Department would normally conduct training about Acts and Legislation to keep us updated. This really helped us to be aware of the Department's expectations and had a positive impact in our rendering of service to the community".* By capacitating NGOs, the DHSD was able to align its strategies and policies towards the successful achievement of its objectives. This is supported by the ISDM (2006) which states that the Department has to study the legal and policy framework in order to advise and update stakeholders to ensure that all actions are in line with the requirements of such policies and Acts.

Educating forum members in the Nelmapius forum also improved the capacity of the concerned organisations. This resulted in the NGOs concerned being able to perform their task and deliver according to the expectations of the DHSD. Schenck et al. (2010) argue that organisational capacity includes the structural and functional ability of the organisation to perform its task and deliver that which is expected of it. Through the forum activities we see clear evidence of organisational capacity being enabled. This helped in reducing confusion and misinterpretation as the forum members gained knowledge of Acts and other policies thereby impacting positively on service delivery. Capacity building of NGOs through training is also supported by Skinner (1997, as cited in Henderson and Thomas, 2002) who argues that capacity building includes aspects of training, organisational and personal development and resource building. This is also evidenced in the work of organisations in the Nelmapius area as a result of the forum.

There may be various reasons as to why the DHSD recognises the need to provide training to NGOs. A lack of knowledge about Acts and policies which impacted negatively on service delivery was identified as one of the possible reasons. As a result it

was indicated that the forum should be held monthly in order to empower and equip the NGOs with knowledge. Participant B pointed out that; *"In the forum I have discovered many things that I did not know as I am still new in the social work profession".* Participants indicated that the forum was effective in addressing the service delivery issues. They argued that initially when the forums were established there was lots of confusion on the NGOs' side about the expectations from the Department and NGOs did not know who to contact for assistance. Other participants stated that in the forum the NGOs' concerns were clarified and addressed. As Participant J from DSD indicated; *"In the forum all the NGOs concerns were attended to and addressed and the concerns were referred to the relevant sections and NGOs were linked up with the relevant people who can assist them within the Department".* One of the participants, who is also the current facilitator, pointed out that there are currently less issues to discuss in the forums which sometimes leads to them starting the meeting at 09h00 and concluding by 09h30. She argued that; "*At this point the forums are held bi-monthly because there are few issues to discuss and it is because most of the issues were addressed and that NGOs were capacitated".* This shows that forum members were fully capacitated through the Nelmapius forum. Capacity building is important in partnership and the Government has the responsibility to promote the NGO community and strengthen its capacity thereby enabling social service NGOs to function and deliver optimally (Kallis, 2000).

The Nelmapius forum has provided a valuable platform to also improve the individual capacity of forum members whereby the forum members were able to understand the Acts which enabled them to provide their services in line with the Departmental objectives. This is supported by Schenk et al. (2010, p. 284), who define individual capacity as "understanding, willingness, confidence and ability to perform the indicated tasks effectively and efficiently, the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and to extend or even improve the task". This points out as evidence that the Nelmapius forum has been effective in promoting partnership and integrated service delivery between government and NGOs operating in the Nelmapius area.

4.3.4. Education

Participants mentioned that the Nelmapius forum offered an opportunity for them to learn about different aspects in the field of social welfare. Participants described the educational part of the forum as one of the positive aspects that fostered partnership and integrated service delivery between forum members. Participants mentioned that during the time when the Nelmapius forum was initiated, they used to invite different speakers to the forum to deliver presentations to them on different social issues. They stated that in every meeting there will be someone to deliver a presentation on, for example, HIV or disability and many other social issues. On this aspect Participant D pointed out that; *"By participating in the forum we learned lots of issues. I remember during the period that the forum was functioning well, our facilitator used to invite speakers to come and do the presentations for us. In each meeting there will be a speaker to present for example about HIV or disability etc."* In agreement with Participant D, Participant G stated that; "*We discussed a lot of issues in the forum which enabled us to gain information and empowered us. The officials from the DHSD would brief us about their school uniform projects or social relief of distress. In this regard they will brief us about these programmes, how we should go about identifying clients and referring the clients to them. This really helped us a lot because when clients came to our offices for information we were able to assist them properly".*

From the above it is evident that the forum was not only just a platform for discussion but also a learning opportunity for forum members. It is through the platform that was created through the establishment of the forum that the forum members were empowered with knowledge and skills through the presentations stated above. By participating in the forum, participants were also able to keep abreast of current issues related to their work. This resulted in the community of Nelmapius receiving improved services. It also enabled the members to be able to respond effectively to their community with the knowledge they acquired, thereby rendering integrated service delivery. By participating in the forum the members were able to gain ownership of the forum since they were able

to identify collectively on areas where they lacked the skills and they would invite relevant experts in the identified field to provide a presentation to the forum. These views are supported by Schenck et al. (2010) who state the advantages of participation in community practice are that it contributes to learning opportunities, leads to community building, increases self-reliance and it provides a pool of resources including local knowledge.

4.3.5. Organising community awareness campaigns

The Nelmapius forum has been effective in bringing organisations together to partner in terms of organising community awareness campaigns. It is through the forum that they were able to identify the service delivery areas in which they needed to work together in terms of planning and implementation of community projects. In this regard the participants indicated that they were able to work jointly to ensure the success of the planned projects. Participant E indicated that; "*As forum members we were able to plan jointly as stakeholders in the forum in terms of organising community awareness and campaigns. We worked together in terms of planning, organising and implementing the Campaigns".* The participants referred to the programmes that they planned and implemented together as the service providers in the Nelmapius community. In this case Participant G stated; *"I remember the time we were celebrating the mental health awareness month in our organisation. We invited the members of the forum and they helped us a lot in terms of manpower".*

Participant H noted that; "*When we organised community awareness all the organisations were given different tasks to ensure that each organisation participates and during the day of the event each organisation will have their own stall to advertise their services and they will also bring pamphlets and leaflets for community members.*

It is evident from the participant views presented above that the forum members were able to successfully partner when organising and implementing community awareness

projects. This point to integrated service and partnerships by organisations in the Nelmapius community. It is only through the platform that is created through the Nelmapius forum that such partnerships were enhanced and ensured the success in the implementation of community projects. The awareness programmes empowered the community members with knowledge and skills which enabled them to lead positive life styles and make informed decisions. Swanepoel and De Beer (2006) support this view by stating that empowerment includes information or knowledge which offers people the responsibility to make wise and informed decisions.

During the awareness campaigns, members of different organisations were able to interact with one another when responding to clients' enquiries thereby ensuring that clients received correct information. From the participants' views it is clear that organisations were able to partner, support one another and work together as service providers. Participant L also stated that; *"Through the forum, organisations were able to support one another and to partner in terms of organising community events".* Participant K also supported the view by stating that; *"Our organisation has benefited a lot from the forum because we managed to get assistance from forum members when we planned our community awareness day".* This points to the forum being a critical platform which facilitates integrated service delivery by enabling organisations to work in partnership having established the shared objectives.

This is in line with one of the key aspects of the ISDM which states that the DSD has to ensure that there is participation in various awareness campaigns and public appearances aimed at educating communities and other stakeholders on self- empowerment and disseminating information to communities on social services (ISDM, 2006). Through the implementation of the awareness campaigns the forum members aimed to promote and render prevention services in order to enhance the process whereby people are provided with ways and means of taking greater control of factors that impact their wellbeing. The forum members worked towards the up-liftment of all people and communities by

promoting wellbeing, encouraging people to make healthy choices and supporting them in these choices (ISDM, 2006). It is therefore without a doubt that the Nelmapius forum enabled the building of partnerships which promoted integrated service delivery among participating organisations.

4.3.6. Service delivery gaps

The Nelmapius forum offered a platform for members to identify service delivery gaps. Participants stated that through their discussions as forum members they were able to assist each other in identifying service delivery gaps, problems in the community and challenges and also to provide ways of improving service delivery. By identifying the service delivery gaps the forum members became aware of areas that were not properly covered during their provision of service to the community. This process helped in improving service delivery in that members were able to brainstorm among themselves on how to fill those gaps. Participant J stated that; "*In the forum we realised that clients were benefiting from all organisations since all organisations were working everywhere but the forum helped us to restructure our services to ensure that our services are not misused".* This requires all forum members to actively partner and participate effectively in ensuring that the areas are properly covered.

As a result, participation of service providers in this process ensured that services were integrated for the benefit of the community. This was achieved through good communication which was shared among participants of the Nelmapius forum. Kallis (2000) states that partnership allows for such levels of consultation and negotiations that would result in the filling of investment gaps in social service provision, for example; ensuring that services are provided in areas not covered or sufficiently covered and ensuring the relevance and appropriateness of services. The work of the Nelmapius forum is a clear case in point in which partnership building allowed for the filling of investment gaps in good service provision.

4.3.7. Duplication

Participants stated that when the Nelmapius forum was initiated, one of the critical issues which had to be dealt with urgently was the prevention of duplication of services. They pointed out that when they first met as forum members they did not know each other and also they did not know the specific areas of operation of each organisation in the Nelmapius area. After the establishment of the forum the participants noted the need to divide and allocate geographical areas of operation. They stated that it is within the forum that they were able to clarify the services of each organisation and negotiate the areas of operation. As Participant D stated; "*In the beginning we were just working haphazardly, we did not know each other as service providers in the Nelmapius area and also did not know which organizations were providing services to other sections of Nelmapius. When we met as forum members we divided the sections accordingly between the organisations. We also drafted a working agreement between all organisations and as a result we were able to know which organisation is responsible for which section".*

Preventing duplication of services was a critical aspect that had to be dealt with in Nelmapius to ensure that the community receives better service. This enabled organisations to be aware as to which organisation is rendering what type of service and where. The partnerships built through the Nelmapius forum allowed organisations to deal with this aspect effectively, thereby enhancing integrated service delivery. One of the mechanisms used to ensure that services were not duplicated was the drafting of the working agreement by the forum members. In the working agreement the forum members generated demarcation areas and divided them among the organisations.

Through the forum, participants developed a strategy on how to structure their services through the drafting of the working agreement. Participants explained that this helped them a lot because the clients were referred to the correct organisations at the right time. They indicated that it is through the forum that they were able to know each organisation's service and to refer the clients to the relevant organisations. Participant E

stated that; "*The forum served as a guide to my work because through the forum I was able to know other organisations in Nelmapius and their area of operation".* Patel (2005) argues that through collaborative partnering, duplication and fragmentation in service delivery at local levels can be addressed, and this is clearly evidenced in the Nelmapius forum.

Participants indicated that their discussions during the forum meetings helped them to clarify and clear the roles and responsibilities for each organisation. Participant B states that; "*The forum served as a guide to my work because that is where I got to realize my area of operation and those of other organisations. I was also able to know the services of other organisations".* In the same vein Participant D stated; "*Dividing the sections and knowing our areas of jurisdiction helped to improve service delivery because we were able to control our services and prevent our clients from misusing the system because sometimes a client will go to one organization to request a food parcel and do the same with another organisation".*

Another participant stated that; "*The forum helped us to know each other and their area of operation for each service organisation. The working agreement was a very fruitful tool because I was sure of where, when and to whom I should refer the clients. This helped me a lot because clients were not sent from pillar to post".*

It is through the Nelmapius forum that organisations were able to rationalise their services. This improved service delivery whereby clients were provided with quality service and prevented clients from misusing the system. The WPSW indicates that where there is duplication organisations will be encouraged to rationalize their services and structures as a means of overcoming fragmentation in the delivery system (WPSW, 1997). From the participant views presented above the Nelmapius forum seems to have enabled all participant organisations in the forum to communicate effectively and share ideas in terms of how to divide areas of operation. This helped organisations to prevent

duplication of services since all the organisations became aware of their areas of operation. Knowing one's area of demarcation was considered by the participants as being important for effective service delivery. Kallis (2000) states that it is imperative that the respective roles and responsibilities of the Government and the NGO sector are negotiated, clarified and understood by all based on the shared vision and common goal including the competencies and mandates of the partners. This negotiation of roles and responsibilities mentioned by (Kallis, 2000) is clearly demonstrated in the work of the forum. This shows the importance of a networking forum enhancing service delivery.

4.4. Objective 3: To explore the views of stakeholders on the challenges they face as participants of the Nelmapius networking forum.

The third objective of the study was to explore the views of stakeholders on the challenges they faced as participants of the Nelmapius networking forum. The challenges which were identified in the Nelmapius forum were the facilitation of the forum, new member integration, poor attendance, failure to honour commitments and delegation of junior staff to participate in the forum.

4.4.1. Facilitation of the forum

Facilitation of the forum was pointed out as one of the major challenges within the Nelmapius forum. Participants noted that when the forum was first initiated meetings were facilitated in a satisfactory manner until the time when the facilitator resigned. Firstly after resignation of the facilitator it took time for the DHSD to appoint another facilitator and when they actually did, the facilitation did not meet the expectations of participants. Participants indicated that since then the forum began to lose its momentum.

Participants I stated that; *"At first the forum was functioning properly but the problems started when the social worker who was facilitating resigned. It took time for the department to appoint another person to facilitate the meetings and during that time the*

forum meetings paused for a while". Resignation by the previous facilitator affected the forum negatively since there was nobody appointed immediately to ensure that the forum continues. The NGOs did not take a stand to ensure that the forum continues while they were waiting for the DHSD to provide them with another facilitator. They relied heavily on the Department to provide them with the new person who was going to take over. This led to the forum not functioning for some months. It is clear that facilitation in the Nelmapius forum was not participatory as the DHSD was taking the lead role.

Participants stated that since the year 2010 the functioning of the forum declined. Participants explained that the other facilitators from DHSD who came after the "committed" facilitator left did not show interest in terms of facilitating the forum. This led to a situation whereby some forum meetings were not held. Participant B stated *"sometimes the meeting do not even take place".* As a result the majority of participants especially from the NGO felt that the forum was losing its effectiveness. They indicated that the NGO issues and concerns were not properly addressed in the forum and they related this to the inefficiency of the DHSD to address those issues. Participants stated that since the past year (2010) there was no proper planning in the forum and they regarded poor planning as the reason why the forum was beginning to "lose its bite" in promoting partnership and effective service delivery for people in the Nelmapius area. The later stages of the forum provided limited growth and development for participants. In this regard Participant F noted that; *"For the past year there was no proper planning of the meetings and as a result some organisations felt that the forum was not important anymore".*

Participants regarded poor leadership on the side of the Department as the main reason why the forum's effectiveness declined in terms of promoting partnership and integrated service delivery between Government and NGOs participating in the Nelmapius forum. Participant E stated that; *"The forum is currently not effective in promoting partnership among the participant organisations because other organisations seem to have lost*

interest and they do not attend the meetings anymore". Participant D indicated that; *"I cannot really say that the forum is effective in promoting the partnership between the government and NGOs because the department is not always there and in most cases we meet as members of NGOs only".*

Participants had common concern about the way the officials from the DSHD were facilitating the forum. Firstly, the participants mentioned their concern regarding poor attendance and lack of facilitation by the social workers from DHSD. They indicated that the leading department DHSD was hardly there to facilitate meetings. One of the participants stated that; "*My experience is that the forum can be worthwhile but unfortunately up to now there are only five organisations which are fully committed which makes the forum not to be fruitful. The NGOs get discouraged when the DHSD does not play an active role and they end up feeling that it is a waste of time to attend meetings".*

In support of this view Participant C stated that; "*We are currently faced with the problem whereby the DHSD does not properly facilitate the meetings because they do not attend meetings properly leaving the NGOs with the responsibility to facilitate the meetings".* Whereas Participant H stated that; *"You know the problem that we are currently experiencing in the forum is that the Department must spearhead and play an active role in facilitating the forum and currently that is not happening".*

Other participants stated their concerns as follows: Participant I stated that; "*As the NGOs we are very much committed, I tell you if you can invite Heartbeat, CMR, SANCA, Beam Africa and Society For The Aged for a meeting tomorrow we will all be there. The problem is just with the department".* Participant F argued that; "*Social development was not always there to be part of the meetings and this really killed the morale of the forum members. Other organisations started to feel that it is a waste of time to participate in the forum and they slowly withdrew their participation".*

Further, Participant J stated that; *"Since the department is not playing an active role other organizations started to feel that they are doing the departments work by facilitating meetings and they started to resist until we reached a point whereby no organisation wanted to chair or even facilitate the meetings".* Participants expressed their concern that they had to start meetings late while they had to wait for the facilitator from Social Development. Participant G indicated that; *"As NGOs we always had a concern because our facilitator was always late, in most cases she will come an hour late then we had to wait for the whole hour for her".* This shows that the other members would not start the meetings if there was no representative from the DHSD. The NGO members were very dependent on the DHSD to run the meetings. This led to NGOs' members playing a very limited role in terms of facilitating the forum by not taking a stand to ensure that the forum continued successfully without the DHSD. From the above stated findings it is evident that the Nelmapius forum is currently faced with a dilemma as there is no one who is prepared to take responsibility in facilitating the forum.

It is clearly evident from the participants' views presented above that the NGOs relied heavily on the DHSD to facilitate the forum hence they put the blame on the Department for the challenges that currently exist in the forum. The NGOs feel that it is not their duty to facilitate the forum. This raises questions as to whether this forum is owned by the Department or is an initiative of all service providers. This also demonstrates failure on the NGOs to take responsibility, which may be attributed to the fact that they did not realise that they also have an important role to play to ensure the success of the forum. Hence, other participants indicated that they are being used by the Department when they have to facilitate the forum in the absence of the representative from the Department. This is in contrast with the concept of real participation as defined by Schenk et al (2010, p. 91) who state that "real participation implies that people are not passive spectators of something, such as their development, but share fully and have an equal voice in any decision making and efforts directed towards change".

4.4.2. New Member Integration

Since its initiation the Nelmapius forum has experienced a situation whereby members were leaving the forum and new members joining. Participants highlighted that some forum members resigned from their respective organisations and organisations employing new workers who eventually joined the forum. Participants who joined the forum during the later stage raised a concern that when they joined the forum they were not fully informed about the purposes of the forum. Participant L stated that; "*When I was employed by the organisation I work for, I was informed that I am supposed to attend the forum meetings but there was no explanation as to why this forum. Even in the forum there was nobody who explained properly about the forum".* Participants were concerned that DHSD was not providing clear explanations to the forum members about the rationale behind the establishment of the forum, the purpose of the forum and the importance of participating in the forum. This led to a situation whereby new members have to carry on attending the forum meetings while they did not see the benefits of the forum. As a result, members reduced their attendance in forum meetings and did not play an active role in the forum's activities. This affected service delivery in the sense that organisations were not able to partner effectively to tackle service issues in the community.

4.4.3. Poor attendance

Poor attendance was described by the participants as the one of the aspects that affected the partnership process among participating organisations. It was indicated by participants that participation by some organisations started to decline which reduced the process of organisations partnering with each other. Due to poor attendance by some organisations, the process of building partnership and integrated service delivery in the forum declined. Participant C stated that; *"As forum members we used to meet monthly but due to poor attendance by some members from other organisations we had to change from meeting monthly to meeting bi-monthly hoping that attendance would improve but still it never improved".* Participant L also stated that; *"Due to poor attendance some of*

the issues had to be postponed to the next meetings because individuals who were tasked to inquire about certain issues would not pitch up in the next meeting to give feedback. This created a drawback".

From the participants' views presented above it appears that poor attendance by some organisations was the main challenge experienced by the participants of the Nelmapius forum. Participants stated that this interfered with the effectiveness of the forum. Participants explained that some of the organisations will attend some meetings while on the other hand they did not attend others. Poor attendance seems to have resulted in lack of communication between the participant organisations as it was stated that this interfered with other organisations that were not attending the forum effectively being not up-to-date with the forum issues. In this regard, Participant A stated that; "*There is currently lack of communication between NGOs and government in the forum because many organisations are not attending properly".*

Poor attendance was an indication that organisations were beginning to lack confidence and interest in the forum and it impacted on the functioning of the forum in a negative way. As participant N stated; "*It was very difficult to address issues effectively in the forum because the people whom the issues concerned them were not part of the forum. For example we always had problems with intake social workers from DHSD not being available in their office on their intake days. Their clients used to come to our office for assistance and we could not assist them. That problem was never solved because this issue was not addressed with the relevant persons. The representatives from the DHSD kept on saying I will take the matter forward to their supervisor* ''

4.4.4. Failure to honour commitments

One of the greatest challenges that the Nelmapius forum experienced was the failure by some organisations to honour commitments. Participants indicated that as members of the forum they used to divide tasks amongst themselves. The challenge they experienced in this regard was that individuals who were allocated specific tasks were not honouring

them. This was largely observed when some organisations did not honour the drafted working agreement. Participant M stated that; "*Some individuals would be given a task to inquire about certain issues and to bring the information back to the forum during the next meeting. In most cases the concerned individuals would not attend the next meeting or will come to the meeting without information and the task will be postponed to the next meeting.* In the same vein participant G argued that; *"When we organised awareness campaigns some organisations promised to bring resources and to perform certain duties but on the day of the event we experienced a problem with such organisations not delivering as they promised".* This led to members losing confidence in the work of the forum which reduced instances of partnership when delivering services.

4.4.5. Delegation of junior staff members to attend the forum

The other challenge that the Nelmapius forum was faced with was that during later stages organisations began to delegate junior staff (Social Auxiliary Workers) to attend the forum. It was discovered that out of the eight organisations that were part of the initiation of the forum only three organisations were still delegating senior staff to attend meetings. The other five organisations were represented by junior staff. This affected the development of the forum since junior staff members were not in a position to make binding decisions on behalf of their organisations. Furthermore, this affected the forum negatively since the majority of the junior staff did not have enough experience in the field of social welfare. As a result they could only make limited input on the forum.

4.5. Objective 4: To elicit the opinions of stakeholders participating in the Nelmapius networking forum on the ways in which the functioning of the networking forums can be enhanced

The last objective of the study was to elicit the opinions of stakeholders participating in the Nelmapius networking forum on the ways in which the functioning of the networking forums can be enhanced.

The research participants suggested the following in terms of the way they believe the forum can be improved; active participation by stakeholders, rotation of facilitation by the forum, forum participation and forum attendance.

4.5.1. Active Participation by stakeholders

It is important that all participating organisations commit themselves in the forum. Organisations should participate actively in the forum's activities. Furthermore, organisations should improve their attendance in forum meetings. This is supported by Schenk et al. (2010) who argue that participation implies collective activity of interested and concerned people in achieving a jointly determined goal. Furthermore, the forum members should not rely on one organisation to take the leading role in terms of facilitating the forum. The NGOs' members need to recognise themselves as equal partners in this development process for them to be able to continue with the forum, even though there is no official from the DHSD. Commitment by all participant organisations is one of the mechanisms that will improve the functioning of the forum and will encourage other organisations to actively participate in the forum. Participant A stated that; "*All organisations which are offering services in the Nelmapius area must avail themselves and be committed in terms of participating in the forum"*. Participant E also stated that; "*The forum can be worthwhile if only all the organisations were participating actively".*

4.5.2. Rotation of facilitation of the forum

It is important that all forum members should regularly be given the opportunity to facilitate the meetings. This will help them to improve their facilitation skills and will give them confidence to take ownership of the forum. Furthermore, it will enhance participation of stakeholders as members will recognise that they have a powerful role to play to ensure the success of the forum. Participants who had the opportunity to facilitate meetings stated that being given an opportunity to facilitate the meetings was a crucial experience for them and also a learning opportunity. Participants explained that this helped the members to play an equal role in the forum. As it has been evidenced by Participant L who stated that; *"Being given the opportunity to facilitate the meeting was a wonderful opportunity for me because I felt my organisation was valued as a partner in the forum".* In the same point Participant M also stated that; *"When we were given the opportunity to facilitate the meeting realised we were equal to other organisations and it made us not to feel that the department was in control of everything".*

4.5.3. Forum must be open to all stakeholders

The Nelmapius forum consists of only social workers from Government and NGOs. Participants indicated the need to invite more stakeholders in the Nelmapius area to participate in the forum. Participants stated that the organisations that are currently partaking are few, whereas there are many organisations in the community that are not part of the forum. Participant A stated that; "*It is important that other service providers offering service in the Nelmapius area must be invited because some of them are not even aware of the forum"*

It is suggested that invitation of stakeholders should be extended to other Government Departments like the South Africa Social Security Agency (SASSA), the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Health (DoH) as well as churches and schools to take part in the forum. One of the participants also suggested that the forum must be open to all organisations that are engaged in social development work including small

organisations which are operating at grassroots level. As Participant J stated; *"We need to involve the schools and churches in this area because we cannot work alone as social workers".* To add on this point Participant L stated that; *"If only there would be participation by other stakeholders the forum would be effective as the forum currently consist of only social workers."* This is in line with the directive in the ISDM which states that the provision of developmental services is a collective responsibility of various role players, including the Government, NGOS and the private sector (ISDM, 2006). Participant B suggested that; *"I believe the forum can be worthwhile if we can involve other stakeholders because social services are broad. Sometimes clients come to us to request information about grants or ID and we are not always informed of the recent changes or developments. It will be very beneficial to involve those departments to keep us updated".*

4.5.4. Attendance by senior officials in each organisation

It is also suggested that the forum should be attended by people holding senior positions in their respective organisations, as it has been noted by the researcher that many organisations delegate social auxiliary workers to attend the forum. This will improve the functioning of the forum in that there will be more people with expertise and experience to guide and empower others who are still growing. Furthermore, it will ensure that there is greater input due to the fact that they will be able to make decisions on behalf of their organisations.

4.5.5. Rotation of venues for forum meetings

Participants were also of the view that organisations should rotate venues for meetings. They argued this would enable the forum members to know the offices of each organisation and encourage involvement by participating organisations. Rotation will help in encouraging all organisations to be active participants of forum meetings. This will result in members recognising the value and importance of the forum thereby encouraging ownership of the forum. As Participant I stated; *"We should rotate in terms*

of venues when holding meetings as that will motivated other organisations especially the ones that are still growing. I believe that will motivate all organisations and will improve attendance of meetings".

4.5.6. Monitoring and evaluation

Participants suggested that the progress of the forum should be monitored and evaluated to check whether it is reaching its intended objectives. The DSD emphasizes continuous monitoring and evaluation which should be aimed at co-operation rather than conflict so that the Department's valued relationship with service providers and beneficiaries is maintained for the betterment of society (ISDM, 2006). Participant D stated that; *"There is a need to do regular monitoring to check whether the forum is running properly and meeting its objectives. For the forum to be effective I believe that there needs to be a monitoring system in place because that will keep us updated in terms of ensuring that we are reaching our objectives".*

In every development work, time for reflection is needed. It is suggested that on a quarterly basis the forum members should evaluate the effectiveness of the forum. The evaluation process will help them to check what they are doing and whether they are achieving their intended objectives. When they conduct such evaluation they will be able to identify gaps and areas that were not properly covered. This will help them to provide ways for improvement in future forum meetings. Evaluation is important. Henderson and Thomas (2002) argue that evaluation is a means of checking on or taking stock of what we are doing, why we are doing it and whether we are meeting our original aims. This helps to choose the way in which we work more easily and to plan for future action (Henderson &Thomas, 2002).

4.6. Summary

This chapter focused on presentation and discussion of the findings in relation to the research objectives. The findings were analyzed in relation to the relevant literature and direct quotes from participants were presented to support findings. The following chapter focuses on summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The study investigated the perceptions of stakeholders from Government and NGOs who are participating in the Nelmapius forum on the role and effectiveness of the forum in promoting partnership and integrated service delivery among participant organisations. This chapter will provide a summary of the findings in line with the objectives of the study as well as conclusions and recommendations.

5.2. Rationale for the establishment of the forum

It was established that the Nelmapius forum was one of the ways in which to strengthen the relationship between the DHSD and NGOs in the Nelmapius area. It was evident that before the Nelmapius forum was formed the relationship that existed between the DHSD and NGOs was mainly through funding. The funding relationship that existed was not enough for the provision of social services in the Nelmapius area since it offered no platform for discussion and engagement between the Government and NGOs in Nelmapius. The forum therefore provided an opportunity for all the service providers in the Nelmapius forum to meet and discuss service delivery issues thereby enhancing the relationship that exists between the DHSD and NGOs in the Nelmapius area. By doing this the organisations were able to build a rapport which fostered strong working relationships for the benefit of communities.

5.3. The effectiveness of the forum in promoting partnership and integrated service delivery

It is clear from the study that during its initiation, the Nelmapius forum was effective in promoting partnership and integrated service delivery among organisations that participated in the forum since it brought organisations together, which enabled them to partner with one another. It was discovered that the forum provided a platform for stakeholders in Government and NGOs to network and partner for joint service delivery.

Capacity building was one of the areas which were highlighted, whereby the DHSD ensured that the NGOs were informed and provided with the necessary training about legislation and information on changes and new areas of development. In the Nelmapius forum capacity building ensured that forum members were continuously updated of changes and amendments in Acts and policies. The study also revealed that the Nelmapius forum was educational. It was found out that initially in every meeting there will be a speaker invited to do presentation in the forum.

The Nelmapius forum was effective in bringing organisations together to partner in terms of organising community awareness campaigns. It is through the forum that they were able to identify the service delivery issues and to work together in terms of planning and implementing community projects. The study also revealed that the Nelmapius forum offered a platform for members to identify service delivery gaps. It is through the discussions that emerged from the forum that the forum members were able to assist each other in identifying service delivery gaps, problems in the community and also to provide ways of improving service delivery. It was also established that duplication of services was prevented through the forum. After the establishment of the forum members noted the need to allocate geographical areas of operation.

5.4. Challenges encountered by the forum members

The study revealed that facilitation of the forum was the major challenge within the Nelmapius forum. It was discovered that when the forum was first initiated meetings were facilitated in a satisfactory manner until the time when the facilitator resigned. The study revealed that the forum did not function for some months as there was no facilitator. Eventually when the facilitator was appointed by the DHSD facilitation did not meet the expectations of the members. It also emerged from the study that the NGOs relied on the DHSD to facilitate the forum meetings. It is evident that the Nelmapius forum is currently faced with a dilemma as there is no one who is prepared to take responsibility for facilitating the forum and currently the forum is on hold.

It was also established that since its initiation the Nelmapius forum has experienced a situation whereby members were leaving the forum and new members joining. It emerged from the study that, for those participants who joined the forum in the later stages, there was nobody who informed them about the purpose of the forum. This resulted in members reducing their attendance in forum meetings and not playing an active role in the forum's activities.

Poor attendance was discovered as the one of the aspects that affected the partnership process among participating organisations, because it was indicated that participation by some organisations started to decline, which reduced the process of organisations partnering with each other. This resulted in a lack of communication between the participant organisations and it interfered with the functioning of the forum, since those organisations that were not attending the forum effectively were not up to date with the forum issues. It was discovered that the DHSD is not committed to leading the forum which discourages NGOs from attending and participating actively in the forum. It was clear that due to poor attendance by some organisations, the forum was in its later stages not effective in resolving some of the issues that were identified. This made some

members feel that it was a waste of time to discuss those particular issues and even to continue participating in the forum.

It was also discovered from the study that some organisations did not honour the tasks allocated to them in the forum. This led to a situation whereby issues were continually postponed. The study also revealed that in the later stages organisations were delegating junior staff (SAW) to attend forum meetings. This affected the development of the forum, since junior staff members were not in a position to make binding decisions on behalf of their organisations.

5.5. Recommendations

From the above study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- It is important that all participating organisations commit themselves in the forum. Organisations should participate actively in the forums' activities.

- NGOs' members should regularly be given the opportunity to facilitate the meetings. This will help them to improve their facilitation skills and will give them confidence to take ownership of the forum. Furthermore, it will enhance participation of stakeholders, as members will recognise that they have a powerful role to play to ensure the success of the forum.

- The Nelmapius forum consists of only social workers from Government and NGOs. There is a need to invite more stakeholders in the Nelmapius area to participate in the forum. Invitation of stakeholders to take part in the forum should be extended to other Government Departments like the South Africa Social Security Agency (SASSA), the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Health (DoH) and churches and schools.

- It is also suggested that the forum should be attended by people holding senior positions in their respective organisations as it has been discovered that many organisations delegate social auxiliary workers to attend the forum. This will improve the functioning of the forum in that there will be more people with expertise and experience to guide and empower others who are still growing. Furthermore, it will ensure that there is greater input due to the fact that they will be able to make decisions on behalf of their organisations.

- Forum meetings should take place in different organisations on a rotation basis. This will encourage participation from all organisations. This will result in members recognising the value and importance of the forum thereby encouraging ownership of the forum.

- There should be monitoring and evaluation systems in place to check whether it is reaching its objectives. It is suggested that on a quarterly basis the forum members should evaluate their work. The evaluation process will help them to check what they are doing and whether they are achieving their original aims. When they conduct such evaluations they will be able to identify gaps and areas that need attention. This will help them to provide ways for improvement in future forum meetings.

5.6. Conclusion

This research focused on exploring the perceptions of stakeholders participating in the Nelmapius forum on the role and effectiveness of the forum in promoting partnership and integrated service delivery. It is clear from the study that the phenomenon of networking forums is a viable initiative that enhances the building of partnerships among NGOs as well as Government departments. In light of the difficulties around the promoting of integrated service delivery in South Africa, it is important for NGOs and Government departments recognise the important role played by networking forums.

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Appendix A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Thank you for agreeing to this interview

1. What is your name?
2. What is your job title?
3. What are you roles and responsibilities in your organisation?
4. How long have you been practicing as a social worker?
5. How long have you been employed at the organisation you are working currently?
6. How long have you been participating in the Nelmapius forum?
7. How often do you frequently meet as members of the forum?
8. What is your understanding of the purpose for the establishment of the forum?
9. Why do you think that the forum was established for those purposes?
10. What has been your experience in the forum since you started participating?
11. Do think that the forum is achieving the purposes that it was established for?
12. What in your view is the importance of participating in the forum?
13. What type of service delivery issues are addressed in the forum?
14. Who facilitates the forum?
15. Please explain to me how the facilitation process unfolds.
16. Who take responsibility for chairing, writing minutes, inviting stakeholders and keeping records of the meetings?
17. In your view, how effective is the forum in promoting partnership and integrated service delivery between NGOs and Government?
18. Do you think the forum is a valuable and helpful platform where organisations are supported? Please explain.
19. Has your organisation been able to work in partnership with other participant organizations in the forum on any issue of concern as a result of the forum? Please explain.
20. How valuable is the forum as an information source?

21. What are the challenges that you face as the participants of the forum
22. How effective is the forum in addressing the service delivery issues and challenges
23. What is your opinion on the way the functioning of the forum can be improved
24. What would you do differently to make the forum more effective?
25. When service delivery problems are indentified in the forum are there any resources provided to solve the problem? If so who provides these resources?
26. Is there an equal relationship between NGOs participants and Government participants in the forum?
27. So far what would you say has been the main benefits to your organisation of participating in the forum?
28. Any concern or information you would like to bring to the attention of the researcher in relation to the Nelmapius forum

Appendix B

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT

Good Day,

My name is Sarah Moyagabo Mafetsa I am a Masters student registered for the degree Master of Arts (Social Development) at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research into the perceptions of stakeholders on the role and effectiveness of networking forums in promoting partnerships and integrated service delivery between government and non-profit sector organizations using the Nelmapius forum as a case study, in the North Rand Pretoria. It is hoped that the information may improve the functioning of the forum. The study will also enhance practice into how forums can be managed and implemented.

I therefore wish to invite you to participate in my study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you in any way. If you agree to take part, I shall arrange to interview you at a time and place that is suitable to you. The interview will last approximately 1 hour. You may withdraw from the study at any time and you may also refuse to answer any questions that you will uncomfortable with answering.

With your permission your interview will be tape recorded. No one other than my supervisor will have access to these tapes. The tapes and the interview schedules will be kept for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emnate the study. Please be assured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report.

Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the study. I shall answer them to the best of my ability. I may be contacted on telephone. 079 496 4656. Should you wish to

receive the summary of the results of the study, an abstract will be made available on request.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in the study.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Moyagabo Mafetsa

Appendix C

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

I hereby consent to participate in the research project. The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any particular items or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. I understand that my response will be kept confidential.

Name of participant:_____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix D

CONSENT FORM FOR THE AUDIO-TAPING OF THE INTERVIEW

I hereby consent to tape recording of the interview. I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times and that the tapes will be destroyed two years after any publication arising from the study of six years after completion of the study if there are no publications.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____