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EXAMINING KNOWLEDGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES OF ADULTS IN RELATION TO THE INSTALLATION OF ELECTRICITY IN SHITLHELANI VILLAGE.

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Johannesburg, 2006

ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study examines knowledge acquisition and the environmental practices of Shitlhelani community members in relation to the uses and benefits of electricity. Prior to the installation of electricity, the main source of fuel was wood which villagers gathered from the natural vegetation surrounding their village. ESKOM installed electricity to the village in 1985 and 1994, however deforestation of the surrounding area continued. This research study draws primarily on a qualitative research paradigm, using participant observation; semi-structured interviews and document analysis, to investigate the relationship between knowledge and the development of healthy environmental practices. The qualitative research paradigm allows insight into the social context and experiences of the Shitlhelani villagers in order to understand the complexities and diversity of their daily lives. The study's main findings highlight the need to recognise and value the existence of social networks, and the importance of fostering collaborative learning within communities to achieve collective action. Developing social capital as a framework that supports the process of learning through interaction is necessary if the Shitlhelani villagers wish to develop their community educationally, socially, economically and environmentally.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation/thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university**.**

_____

_____ day of _____, 2007

DEDICATION

I would like to pay a speciall dedication to my family Tintswalo Grace Hlungwani, Amukelani Evelyn Baloyi, Nyikiwe, Nyiko and Vonani for their support, love and encouragement during the writing of this thesis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
DME	Department Of Minerals and Energy
ESKOM	Electricity Supply Commission
GEZICOR	Gazankulu Electricity Supplying Industrial Corporation
KWh	Kilowatt Hour
NER	National Electricity Regulators
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SANCO	South African National Civic Organisation
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development