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Building social capital? The case of Afesis-corplan in the Eastern Cape Province.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background.

This research has been prompted by the escalating poverty levels in most rural parts of South Africa, especially in the Eastern Cape Province. The rural poverty trend in the country has resulted in a number of strategies developed including the ISRDS (Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy) to address it.

The Eastern Cape Province, the focus of this research, is one of the poorest provinces in the country and is dominated by rural communities. According to the 2001 Census, the province is the third most populous province in South African with 6 436 736 people after KwaZulu-Natal (with 9 426 017) and Gauteng (with 8 837 178). According to the Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council (2004) the provincial population is distributed disproportionately between districts (Amathole, Chris Hani, Ukhahlamba, Cacadu, Oliver Tambo and Alfred Nzo), with the two largest districts (Oliver Tambo and Amathole), just short of two million inhabitants each (1.7 million people each respectively).

The majority of people in the Eastern Cape Province live in the rural areas of the former homelands of Transkei and Ciskei. Land falling within the former Transkei is located in the Oliver Tambo District Municipality while that of the Ciskei is located in the Amathole District Municipality. It is here in Amathole District Municipality where the two case study areas for this research are located. It is estimated that about 70% of the households in the province are in poverty and the majority of them are found in the two largest districts (ECSECC, 2004 and EC Premier's Office, 2004).

The focus of this study is on investigating the relevance and effectiveness of the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) in strengthening social capital with an

intention to reduce household poverty and vulnerability in the context of impoverished rural areas of the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

There are many schools of thought on the subject of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. Some of them argue in favour of the SLA while others are critical of its relevance and effectiveness in reducing poverty and vulnerability in rural communities. However, the SLA has gained support from some quarters due to its inclusiveness and it has also proven to be effective in some rural development programmes where it was implemented (such as the Cambodian Participatory Natural Resource Management in the Tonle Sap Region in 1995 and Ethiopian Ruba Lomine Integrated Rural Development Programme in 1995 (FAO, 2004).

During the State of the Nation Address in February 2009, the then State President K. Motlanthe acknowledged that poverty is still too widespread in our society especially in the rural areas and that the level of inequality is too high. The President indicated that most of the challenges that rural areas are experiencing can be traced back to the existing levels of income inequality and asset poverty.

The Eastern Cape Province together with stakeholders has been engaging in a number of community development initiatives to alleviate rural poverty for many years. Many of these initiatives have been funded by international development agencies such as the Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ); European Union (EU); United Nations (UN); Ford Foundation (FF), and local donors and development agencies such as the National Development Agency (NDA), Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA); and Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF). Other programmes have been supported by government (national, provincial and municipalities) and the private sector. The non-governmental organizations have also been playing a crucial role in facilitating and implementing the programmes and projects on behalf of the funders.

The focus of this research is on the work of Afesis-corplan in the Eastern Cape. The organization came into existence in 1992 when it was registered as a trust and later in 1999 it changed its status to a not-for-profit section 21 Company. Afesis-corplan falls under the category of non-governmental organizations and it is based in East London

in the Eastern Cape. This organization has contributed to rural and urban development through its programmes that are premised on the principles of Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and good local governance, especially in the Border-Kei (Amathole) region of the Eastern Cape.

1.2. Objective of the research.

The main objective of this research is to investigate the relevance and significance of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach in reversing rural poverty through building and strengthening social capital with reference to the Eastern Cape communities; and to explore whether this approach offers a more appropriate way of addressing rural poverty than other current/earlier approaches.

Rural development programmes have over the years been characterised by conventional approaches that regarded people as recipients and/or consumers of services rather than agents of development. As a result, there has been little or no change at all in the lives of the rural poor who continue to experience poverty and some still migrate to urban centres in search of living opportunities (Cunningham and Mathie, 2003).

Sustainable Livelihoods Approach which emphasises the principle of mobilizing the available community assets for sustainable livelihood offers an alternative development approach in rural areas. Most importantly, the SLA emphasis is on building social capital and it is argued that it (social capital) is an important asset because of its potential in mobilizing other form of assets for sustainable livelihoods (Mathie and Foster, 2006).

It appears that the notion of building social capital seems appropriate at this point in time because many development initiatives in the past could not succeed presumably as a result of poor or the absence of relevant social capital. According to Stiglitz (1996) the role of social capital in development and sustainable livelihoods has been observed in the East Asian miracle economies. In these economies there has been substantial sustainable development due to some attention being given to building

social capital. This means that if social capital is appropriately built and strengthened through SLA the chances are high for a development programme to become sustainable.

Afesis-corplan offers a good approach in its development interventions because of the emphasis it has on building and strengthening social networks, relationships and trust as well as building institutions and capacity at grassroots level. This approach has been implemented by other organizations in other countries and the outcomes vary from one project to another. However, the implementation of all these principles in development programme does not guarantee a positive development outcome. What is relevant is how these principles are mixed during implementation and that should respond to the situation on the ground.

This study is important because it is taking place at a time when it appears that there are many supporters of the concept of SLA and this is evident because of its consideration in development programmes (such as those of Department of International Development (DfID); Cooperative for Assistance and Relief (Care); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and others) while at the same time the approaches have received some criticisms from other quarters who believe that it offers nothing different from the conventional development approaches (Carney et al., 1998). The concept has also declined when it waned as a development approach in DfID rural development programmes because it was not seen to be yielding results as originally intended. Institutional arrangements and bureaucratic systems within the organization were reported to be the main cause of the ineffective and inefficient implementation of SLA. DfID was not alone in its change of direction in the early years of this century. Development assistance as a whole was at this time refocusing its effort at a higher level, towards the creation of effective states and away from micro-level activities (Clark and Carney, 2008). However, it is important to note that the approach may still have validity and relevance because of its focus on empowering and encouraging the people to take charge of their own development and also because of its relevance to rural areas.

1.3. Problem Statement.

The poverty levels in the rural areas of South Africa and the Eastern Cape in particular pose a huge challenge to government, non-governmental organizations and communities themselves. This situation has prompted the government to introduce some drastic measures including the creation of the national Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform after the 22 April 2009 general elections precisely to focus on the issues of rural development. The purpose of the ministry as contained in the mission is to facilitate integrated development and social cohesion through participatory approaches in partnership with all sectors of society.

Poverty in many rural communities of the Eastern Cape has contributed to high levels of vulnerability and the destruction of some forms of social capital that existed before. The breakdown of social capital has been exacerbated by in-and-out migration with economically active people (men and women) moving between their homes and the cities such as Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban; as well as in-and-out migration within the same region. Other migrants are young people who leave their communities after they have completed matric to seek employment and study opportunities in cities due to the lack of job opportunities and absence tertiary institutions in their rural communities.

The trend of social capital disintegration in many rural communities has been evident not only through poverty indicators, but also through a decline in 'Ubuntu' and social cohesion that has resulted in high crime levels in many communities of the Eastern Cape and South Africa as a whole. Some of this information is captured in the two overall assessments of government programmes, Towards a Ten Year Review (2003) and Towards a Fifteen Year Review (2008). The two documents indicated an increasing trend towards social fragmentation, and the breakdown of social capital in the country, particularly in the rural areas. The main reason cited in the two review documents is income inequality across socio-economic sectors of the country. The problems in rural areas in particular have been linked to a number of reasons including lack of investment in infrastructure and poor service delivery, and most importantly the breakdown of social capital and migration.

Afesis-corplan has over the years been involved in community development work in the Eastern Cape. Many of the programmes that the organization has embarked upon were based on SLA. In order to get a broader perspective, two projects undertaken by Afesis-corplan will be used as case studies. The findings from the case studies will indicate whether there is confirmation or contradiction with the main arguments in the literature on Sustainable Livelihoods, rural poverty and social capital.

1.4. Research Question.

This research seeks to ask the following questions (main question as well as the three sub-questions) in order to establish if social capital can be built and strengthened through the application of SLA programmes; and also assess to what extent social capital can facilitate poverty alleviation in rural areas. These questions will be answered through investigating the livelihoods programme that was implemented in two communities in Amathole District Municipality, Eastern Cape by Afesis-corplan.

1.4.1. Main question.

- Has Afesis-corplan's SLA facilitated the strengthening of social capital in impoverished communities in the Eastern Cape?

1.4.1. Sub questions.

- What is the importance of social capital in poverty alleviation, and how does the SLA attempt to strengthen and deepen its operations and impacts?

- Have communities and households in the Eastern Cape demonstrated increased, unchanged or decreasing levels of social capital through the Afesis-corplan programmes?

- How can Afesis-corplan's experience assist development planners in strengthening social capital in rural communities?

1.5. Hypothesis.

A hypothesis is an assumption about the status of events or about relations between variables. In this research, the focus is on the Sustainable Livelihood Approaches and social capital and their interrelation in sustainable rural development programmes in the context of the Eastern Cape.

Statistics on poverty indicators including the two overall assessments of government programmes, Towards a Ten Year Review (2003) and Towards a Fifteen Year Review (2008) have indicated an increasing trend towards social fragmentation, and the breakdown of social capital, particularly in the rural communities. Social fragmentation and destruction of social capital have been highlighted precisely because they are seen as some of the major contributors to poverty in rural areas.

It is expected that this research will confirm the importance of Sustainable Livelihoods Approach in building social capital and thereby reversing poverty in rural communities of the Eastern Cape. The findings are expected to reveal that social capital has been established (where it did not exist) and expanded (where it existed) in communities and households. These findings will come from the case studies where the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach has been implemented by Afesis-corplan; and it is expected that this might have reversed the trend towards increasing dissipation of social capital in those communities.

1.6. Research Methodology.

1.6.1. Introduction.

This chapter presents the methodological framework. First, the specific methods, approaches and tools to be used and their relevance will be discussed; second, a clear indication of research sites and data collection procedures will be provided and how the researcher will gain access to the area will be discussed; third, the ethical issues regarding the research will be discussed and lastly the research chapters will be outlined.

1.6.2. Methodological Approach.

As indicated earlier, this study sets out to investigate the extent to which a Sustainable Livelihoods Approach in development programmes can build or strengthen social capital with an intention to reverse rural poverty.

A qualitative research methodology has been used in this research. The researcher has been the main agent of the research process with reasonable influence in determining the direction of the research because he has been directly involved in all stages of the research including the literature review, the design of the questionnaire, data collection, analysis of the findings and the recommendations. The significance of the researcher as the main agent of the research processes is determined by the nature of the research that requires a lot of interpretations of realities that will be presented during the data collection period.

The researcher in this research is the main author of the research proposal and literature review. This places the researcher in a position to understand the main objective of the research and what its sets to achieve and can give a good guidance during interviews.

A qualitative approach in this research is important because it allowed primary experience to be accessed by the researcher, which is marked by parameters of openness and flexibility, in focusing on the comparison and testing of concepts and key categories. This research required a high level of analysis and interpretation because two case studies used to compare similar or dissimilar patterns.

1.6.3. Case Studies and Research Sampling.

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1991:23).

Two case studies have been used in this research: one is Mzintshane village in Buffalo City Municipality and the other is Ngxingxolo village in Great Kei Local Municipality. Refer to the map in the case study overview section. The two case studies have been chosen primarily for the following reasons: a) they are rural and characterised by high level of poverty, b) they were all part of the sustainable development programme undertaken by Afesis-corplan, and c) they are suitable, accessible, researchable, and methodologically adequate.

The sample for both case studies is presented using three categories, (project management category, community representative's category as well as household's category). The three categories were decided upon because they represent all the stakeholders who participated in the programme and the questions were designed to suit specific categories of respondents. It is important to have different sets of questions for different categories in order to get the relevant information from the relevant people.

The interviews for project managers gave the perspective on both case studies because they were responsible for the programme in both areas. Then four community representatives from each case study were interviewed to give their perspective and lastly, ten household members were interviewed from each case study area to give

their perspectives on the impact of the programme to their lives. The number of interviewees per category has been determined by the overall number of participants in that category during the programme. The number of household members was bigger than the number of community representatives and the number of project managers was the smallest. The other reason for the bigger number of interviewees in the community household category, apart from the one mentioned above is because of the nature of the research which seeks to establish the role of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach in building and strengthening social capital and the importance of social capital in poverty alleviation in the communities by looking at a household level in particular in terms of the impact.

1.6.4. Data Collection.

This step comes after the procedures and methods of data collection have been chosen. The researcher obtained the permission to investigate the cases from Afesis-corplan, which is the implementer of the livelihoods programme and from the villages through their representatives. The researcher after being introduced by the project managers from Afesis-corplan, ensured that all the prospective respondents understood the purpose of research to avoid raising wrong expectations that might distort the outcomes of the interviews.

Then the researcher continued with conducting the interviews himself. Interviews were done with key people outlined above (project managers, community representatives and households members). The reason for the researcher to conduct interviews himself was to ensure that the quality of work and those professional standards were adhered to during the interviews. The quality of data collected was enhanced because the researcher had full knowledge about the research, particularly in relation to the literature review, research questions as well as the rationale.

The information was collected through structured questions. However, the interviews with the project managers were extended even beyond the scope of the questionnaire in order to get a broader perspective of the entire programme. The type of questions was structured to suit different categories. Questions seek to establish the state of

social capital in both communities before and after the programme, and cover: the incorporation of social capital in the programme design and implementation; the impact of the programme on building and strengthening social capital; and assessment of the programme in terms of achievements and lessons learnt.

Some of the questions are as follows:

A. Questions to Project Managers

1. How would you define the concept of social capital? What role does social capital play in the programme?

2. Was the programme designed to build/strengthen community networks and relationships? Explain how and why?

3. What do you think community/people/groups understood and expected from this component of the project?

4. Did the existing groups participate in the programme preparatory processes? And if so what was their role?

B. Questions to the Community Representatives

1. What was the aim of the programme?

2. Before the programme started, was there much local activity by community networks and social groups? To what extent did the community organize itself according to different socio-cultural groups like stokvels, youth/women clubs, etc?

3. Did some groups have access to other community structures like NGOs, Business forum etc. before programme commenced, and why?

4. In general, what were the relationships between people in the community like – were they characterised by trust and sharing, or were households isolated from each other and fearful or suspicious of each other? Give examples.

5. Which groups were not so involved? And why were they not involved?

6. To what extent did the programme unite or divide the people? And how?

C. Questions to the households

1. What were the goals and objectives of the programme?

2. What were your expectations from the programme?

3. How had the community organized itself according to different socio-cultural groups like stokvels, youth/women clubs, etc?

4. Did you belong to any group before the commencement of the programme?

5. If so, how long have you been a member of a group?

6. How often did you attend the group meetings and activities?

7. How did you benefit from being a member? If not why not?

The complete questionnaires included in annexure A.

Direct observation was also used to collect the information that would normally be omitted or overlooked through structured questions.

The interviews took maximum of three days. One day was spent per case study area, interviewing fourteen people (households including the representatives) and one day for project managers. An estimated thirty minutes maximum was spent per one interview session. This allowed fourteen people to be interviewed in one day and the interview sessions started in the morning at around 08h00.

The researcher took full responsibility for recording the information on the question form. After data collection, the researcher took full responsibility for analysing the findings. This ensured good quality results because the researcher had practically gone through the interview processes.

1.6.5. Ethical Considerations

The researcher took into consideration the issues of ethics as required for academic work. First, the researcher abided by the code of informed consent regulated by the university (ethical clearance) because data collection required interviewing the respondents using questionnaire face-to-face.

Second, at the outset, the researcher disclosed the purpose of the interviews and research in general to avoid misunderstanding, confusion and even expectations that could have influenced the interview outcomes. Henning et al (2004) warn that respondents must be fully informed about the research in which the interview finding is going to be used.

Third, the respondents' right to remain anonymous was guaranteed up front to ensure a high level of honesty by respondents. It was expected that respondents might be afraid to divulge some of the sensitive information.

Fourth, respondents' right to discontinue with the interview if they did not feel comfortable anymore was guaranteed upfront. It is important to guarantee freedom/right to discontinue the interview because once a respondent realises that they are under pressure or no longer interested in the interview, they might give wrong or irrelevant information deliberately, just to finish the interview session.

Lastly and most importantly, the researcher ensured that the research was undertaken through local language and traditional norms and values in those communities were adhered to. The researcher had an advantage of speaking the Xhosa language which is the local language used in those rural communities.

1.6.6. Outline of Chapters.

This research paper will be composed of six chapters and these are outline as follows:

1. Introduction.

The introduction part of this research introduces what prompted the study to be undertaken; the purpose and what it seeks to achieve; and where is going to be conducted. In this research, the relationship between the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and social capital in the context of sustainable rural development is introduced.

2. Conceptual Framework.

The conceptual framework chapter of this research identifies and elaborates on the concepts that inform the study. The concepts in this study are - Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, rural poverty, and social capital. The literature review is predicated on the relevant case studies; discussion on the main arguments and ideas emerging from key bodies of literature of relevance; and most importantly the researcher indicates how his work is positioned in relation to the existing body of scholarship.

3. Case study overview.

The case study overview gives an indication about the background of the areas where the study has taken place. In this case a brief background on the Eastern Cape Province is provided followed by the district (Amathole) and local municipalities (Great Kei and Buffalo City) where the case studies are located, and finally the two villages (Mzintshane and Ngxingxolo) that are used as case study areas.

4. Analysis of findings.

In this chapter the data collected from the two case study areas is analysed linking the case study findings more closely to the literature in chapter two to see if it confirms or contradict the main arguments in the body of literature.

5. Conclusions and recommendations.

This is the last chapter of the research. The research questions are answered here by summarising the main findings and the recommendations that speak more specifically to the Eastern Cape communities and the NGO are presented.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction.

The conceptual framework chapter is mainly based on a literature review and sets up the parameters for the case study. The literature review component focuses on the following concepts: rural poverty; sustainable livelihoods approach and social capital because they will help to enrich the perspective about the relevance and significance of a sustainable livelihood approach in building and strengthening social capital with an intention to reduce and reverse the trend towards rural poverty.

In order to enrich the perspective local/regional and international literature materials and case studies are reviewed in order to get a broader and comprehensive perspective on the diverse similar and differing arguments, discussions and opinions on the issues of rural poverty/areas, social capital and the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach.

The first discussion is on rural poverty. It is important to discuss rural areas and poverty before a discussion on the sustainable livelihoods approach and social capital takes place in order to have a perspective about poverty itself and where it exists.

2.2. Rural Poverty.

Most rural areas across the world are characterised by more or less similar features. Populations are spatially dispersed. Agriculture is often the dominant, and sometimes the exclusive economic sector and opportunities for resource identification and mobilization are limited. According to Bester (1994) agriculture in most rural areas is not only dominant, but also a primary source of livelihood. These characteristics mean that people living in rural areas face a set of factors that pose major challenges to sustainable livelihoods. However, in South Africa, agriculture is not the dominant

economic activity in many rural areas, and most of the breadwinners are either migrants working in the cities or are receiving social grants from the state.

The spatial dispersion of rural populations often increases the cost and difficulty of providing rural goods and services effectively, particularly by service providers with governments as the main player. The specific economic conditions in rural areas result in fewer opportunities than in non-rural locations. Consequently, the tax base is limited, so rural areas are rarely able to mobilize sufficient resources to finance their own development programmes, leaving them dependent on transfers from national and provincial spheres of government. The above situation in the context of South Africa has been exacerbated by the discriminatory policies of Apartheid (Mc Kendrick, 1990).

Factor markets in rural areas often operate imperfectly, rendering the search for efficient outcomes an extremely challenging one. Further, rural areas are often politically marginalised, leaving little opportunity for the rural poor to influence government policies. In many developing countries, policies have discriminated against agriculture through high levels of taxation and other macroeconomic policies (Premiers Office EC, 2004). Policy discrimination towards agriculture is highlighted because in many rural areas, agricultural activities are the backbone of people's livelihoods. In some countries like Indonesia, the agricultural sector remains as an important part of the country's rural trajectory (Muktasam, 2006).

South Africa is regarded as one of the strong economies in Africa, but it is characterized by high levels of poverty and inequality, especially in the rural areas. It is argued that this situation has been caused by the number of factors including the advent of British colonial rule and subsequently apartheid policy (Mc Kendrick, 1990). Further, the above conditions have created two situations: first, a widened gap between the have and the have-nots due to the inequitable distribution of wealth and secondly, residential separation according to race whereby the majority of the poor people, mainly blacks, live in townships, squatter camps and rural areas (Stats SA, 2001; Mc Kendrick, 1990; and the Presidency, 2008).

It is estimated that around 70% of South Africa's poor live in rural areas, and approximately 69% of the rural residents are poor (Stats SA, 2001). The high cost of living presents a burden to the rural poor who have to face the realities of daily spending on basic social necessities such as food and water, energy, health and transportation (Stats SA, 2001 and the Presidency, 2008). This statement spells out how some rural communities in the country are subjected to poverty through unnecessary procuring of food and services that can be locally produced and rendered if the communities are organized through strong social capital. In essence, it means that if rural communities have strong social capital, they will be in a position to produce some basic needs (such as food) without any outside help.

South African rural settlements have been shaped by the Apartheid policies to a large degree. The creation of the former homelands (Bophuthatswana, Venda, Transkei and Ciskei) was a result of Apartheid policy and these former homelands are mainly characterised by rural areas. Two of these four former homelands (Transkei and Ciskei) are located in the Eastern Cape Province. The Eastern Cape Province has the third largest population after Gauteng and the majority of people live in these former homelands (Stats SA, 2001; ECSECC, 2004; and Premiers Office EC, 2004).

Types of Poverty.

It appears that rural areas across the world are to a large extent characterized by some poverty in one way or another as indicated by Mc Kendrick (1990) and Muktasam (2006). Poverty might mean different thing to different people depending on their circumstances and experiences. As a result, this poses a challenge in having a generalized definition of poverty.

On the one hand, the World Bank regards poverty as hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and not being able to see a doctor, lack of access to educational facilities, lack of job, fear for the future, living one day at a time, losing the loved one due to unclean water, lack of power, lack of representation and freedom (Mc Kendrick and Muktasam, 2006).

On the other hand, authors such as Kurien (1978) regard poverty as 'the socio-economic phenomenon whereby the resources available to a society are used to satisfy the wants of the few while the majority do not have even their basic needs met'. Thus, poverty is understood to be essentially a social phenomenon and only secondarily a material or physical phenomenon. Kurien's conceptualization of poverty is based on unequal power relations that are disproportionately skewed in favour of certain groups or elites within the community. This definition of poverty is much broader and detailed as compared to the previous one, but they both refer to socio-economic conditions. For the purpose of this study, poverty will be described taking into consideration the socio-economic and ecological conditions that affect the vulnerable and the poor in rural areas.

The following are two main aspects of poverty:

Income poverty:

Income poverty is defined as a lack of access to money/financial capital. It happens when people live below the poverty line and have difficulties in accessing sufficient food, water and medication, as well as clothing and housing.
This description of poverty is very similar to the World Bank definition. In the rural communities of South Africa, the majority of people are facing these challenges on a day-to-day basis.

The advent of poverty in most rural communities has been acknowledged by the former State President Mr. K Motlanthe in his State of the Nation address in February 2009. The former President however, acknowledged the role of the State in response to these challenges in the form of providing pensions and social grants to those who are eligible and also through creation of short and long term employment through the Expanded Public Works Programmes for the unemployed, and the mainly semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

Government intervention in poverty crisis is critical, but appears to be unsustainable because it is not linked to any long term strategies. Further, if there is weak or diminished social capital in these rural communities it will be extremely difficult

because people will not be able to use the little income they get productively for future sustainability. The global financial crisis also presents a burden to the state because the large-scale loss of jobs will mean loss of revenue into state coffers to sustain the growing number of people requiring social grants and to fund social development/poverty alleviation programmes. The global financial crisis also has negative implications for the private and corporate sectors which play a role in rural development through employing people or engaging in social responsibility programmes. Further, their investment in sustained economic activity has important indirect effects too and this will also be affected.

Income poverty in South African rural areas is a reality, but the available programmes including government social security programme provide only short term relief. The problem with this source of income for the poor is that it appears not to be integrated into sustainable long term strategies geared to reduce rural poverty.

Asset poverty.

Assets poverty is defined as a lack of access to resources by the poor. These assets may be human, natural, financial, physical and social in nature and they provide a value base to community life. It is important to note that a community with a single asset (e.g. land) in the absence of many other assets is not likely to draw the households out of vulnerability. In some rural communities, people continue to suffer even if they have assets at their disposal. The problem lies in the lack of human capability which is important in identifying the need to mobilize other assets for development purposes. SLA can play an important role in this regard because of its principle of focusing on providing the capacity to the people so that they are able to manage development on their own.

It is important to note that the assets referred to here are located in the communities where people live. Community assets are social, economic and environmental and they constitute skills, knowledge, associations, networks and resources (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003). Community assets can make a significant improvement in people's livelihoods if appropriately mobilized for the benefit of the broader

community. These assets are important because: a) they encourage people to gain control over their lives; b) if mobilized appropriately they give people an opportunity to begin development activities with little or no help from outside; and c) they are readily available.

The following are some of the main community assets that are important for the development and sustainable livelihoods of rural communities from household to community level:

Human assets – human assets comprise human skills, knowledge, health and capabilities of people in a given community. For a community to achieve its own sustainable livelihood it should be in a position to mobilise these assets from within. All communities have people with different skills, some are unnoticed and others are just ignored and neglected, like the indigenous skills and expertise that traditionally people relied on for their own survival. For instance, a community can resort to its traditional norms and value systems as a means to fight women and child abuse. This can restore dignity within a community and also serve as a basis for community development.

It would make sense for a community to seek help from outside people to assist with development with an objective to transfer skills to local people where necessary and possible. This is important especially where technical skills are needed, but the emphasis should be on empowering local people so that they are able to organise themselves and run development on their own for their own benefit.

The DfID document on development (2003) states that, as well as being of intrinsic value, human capital is required in order to make use of any of the four other types of community assets (social, natural, financial and physical). This statement shows how important human capital is for a community to develop and it cannot do it alone without other form of capital. Avila and Gasperini (2005) indicated that, education and learning are some of the strongest components in ensuring sustainable livelihoods. They argued that education and learning represent an important ‘asset’ and learning can help people to improve their lives as well as managing vulnerability

and foster change. Sen (1993,2003a) argues that in as much as education is important, it should not be about training people in a narrow sense for existing rural occupations. Education is about more than earning a living and has multiple aims and benefits. These include the opportunity to assist people in their social and economic mobility, and contribute to cultural and political identity.

Social assets – social assets comprise social networks and relations of trust and reciprocity. This type of asset is generated mainly through community rules, norms, obligations, customs, networks and linkages that bind people together. There are four main aspects of social asset which can be generated in parallel with other activities:

1. Strengthen relationships and networks – these are the bonds between individuals and groups and their links to one another. Linkages can be horizontal (within a community) and vertical (between communities and external role players). There are two main types of social assets that are characterized by relationships and networks:
a) Bonding capital: this type of social capital exists where there are strong supportive ties within a group, be it club, religious group, family etc.; and
b) Bridging capital: this social capital comprises weak ties that connect people horizontally across group boundaries; and it is critical to providing access to new ideas, resources, communities and cultures (El Hadidy & Mathie, 2005).

2. Trust – in a rural situation, trust among people and within groups is common because of the tradition of shared customs, values and norms. These traditional practices are presumably important and it will be useful to consider them in sustainable livelihood programmes because they have a potential to bind people together. Further, relationships of trust provide a good environment for a community to exchange information and resources required for development purposes and this is important for sustainable livelihood (Mathie & Foster, 2006; El Hadidy & Mathie, 2005).

3. Reciprocity – reciprocity occurs when a person gives to someone else, expecting a fair and tangible return at some undefined future date. This practice commonly happens to people who know and trust each other and also live together. It is one of

the most important elements of social capital that is useful in a rural community whereby people do not always meet their daily needs immediately due to poverty. Through this capital, people are able to help each other even with simple day-to-day needs like food (MacDonald, 2006 and Mathie & Foster, 2006).

4. Norms and values – norms and values can serve as the basis for a community to sustain its livelihood. Norms and values that are shared by a group of people often dictate the kind of relationships that exist between people and groups in a particular environment. Traditionally, norms and values used to be the pillars of order, peace and stability in rural communities and this would form the basis of working together and helping each other for the benefit of all people. However, it is important to note that traditional attitudes do not guarantee positive development; they can also be highly divisive and raise obstacles to progressive, integrated development in a community (Mathie & Foster, 2006; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003 and MacDonald, 2006).

Woolcock and Sweetser (2002) stated that "Up against low income, poor education, few material assets, no insurance and usurious credit, social networks and relations of trust may be the most important resource of the poor". The above discussion spells out clearly the significance of building on existing levels of social capital in order to fight poverty and vulnerability in rural areas.

Natural assets – these are natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services useful for livelihoods are derived. These resources vary from intangible public goods such as the atmosphere and biodiversity to divisible assets used directly for production (trees, land and water) (Mathie & Foster, 2006; El Hadidy & Mathie, 2005). Natural assets have so many functions that are important for human livelihoods, and some of them are as follows: the first is a sink function, with air and water absorbing human-generated pollution; and the second is a production function, supporting livelihoods through output from forests, fisheries, and mines. These two functions are interlinked: human health-which suffers in the face of widespread pollution-affects productive capabilities, and a lack of output (such as food) affects health (Narayan et al, 2000). South Africa is one of the countries in the world that are

rich in terms of biodiversity and it is ranked third after Indonesia and Brazil (Mander and Mackenzie, 2005). It is also reported that most of the biodiversity sites are found in areas of great poverty. These areas are facing a rapid environmental degradation due to economic activities that do not benefit local people who are poor and vulnerable (Mander and Mackenzie, 2005 and Narayan, 2000). However, the natural products of the country provide a large opportunity due to the available natural producers and their associated skills. The former South African President, Mr. Thabo Mbeki, alluded to the abundance of natural resources of this country and the entire southern region. Further, he talked about the ingenuity and enterprise of the people of this country which form the basic units of production that can be turned into tradable goods and hold a dream for a better future for all (Biodiversity, SA, 2002).

The above discussion shows how rural poverty and vulnerability in South Africa can be addressed through mobilization of natural assets that are available in or adjacent to these communities.

Physical assets – these assets comprise basic infrastructure and producer goods. Infrastructure is commonly understood as a public good that is used without direct payment e.g. community roads and bridges. Rural areas are often characterised by poor physical assets that are important in facilitating sustainable livelihoods. The types of infrastructure that are commonly found in rural areas are community halls, schools and churches and these play an important role in facilitating development in these communities.

However, a community with poor physical infrastructure can still find a way to sustain itself. For instance, a community that wants to improve its food security can consider subsistence farming activities to produce food at a small scale level. Subsistence farming activities do not require complicated technological infrastructure. However, there are other types of infrastructure that a community might want to have, such as roads and bridges; telecommunication infrastructure and power/electrical infrastructure.

The state of infrastructure in rural areas of South Africa is better as compared to rural areas of other parts of Africa. Even though infrastructure investment in the past was done mainly to support the commercial agricultural sector, it has also benefited some of the rural communities in the process. However, commercial farming was not the only factor that contributed to investment in rural areas. Most of the rural areas today have infrastructure ranging from electrical, transportation, housing, and telecommunication (Rapport, 2007).

It appears that one of the main challenges in as far as physical assets is concerned in most of the rural agricultural communities is irrigation and roads infrastructure. It is reported in Towards a Ten Year Review (2003) and Towards a Fifteen Year Review (2008) that there is a backlog in as far as rural infrastructure is concerned, however, these challenges do not stop rural people to start engaging in developmental activities using the assets that are available at their disposal in order to ensure their sustainable livelihoods.

The importance of physical assets as one of the bases for development is highlighted in the State of the Nation address 2009 by the former State President Mr. K Motlanthe when he indicated that the government's social programmes have improved the assets base of the poor, in the form of housing and land provision. One should remember that housing in South Africa, mainly in the form of housing units has been one of the main delivery focuses of government since 1994. Some rural communities are fortunate today because they have been the beneficiaries of housing as well as land redistribution and restitution programmes.

Financial assets – this denotes the financial resources that people have and use to achieve their livelihoods objectives. This might be the availability of cash or equivalent e.g. regular inflow of money, savings, pension or livestock. Financial capital is probably most versatile of the five categories of assets and it can be converted into other types of capital. For example, money can buy livestock or livestock (cattle or sheep) can be sold for money.

Many people in rural communities face the challenge of unemployment due to lack of opportunities in their areas. The majority of those who are employed are either working in the nearby farms or are migrant workers working in the cities such as Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. High unemployment poses a challenge in terms of cash inflow to the poor and those who are employed in the cities. They bring little money back home due to high cost of living in the cities. Some rural people own livestock. In the absence of hard cash at their disposal, these people have a financial asset in the form (of cattle, goats, sheeps etc.) which can be converted into cash when needed. Some communities in rural areas have social capital that allows them to mobilize cash for individual members through social clubs (such as Stokvels). This type of social capital is very common in South African communities where people who know and trust each other engage in this scheme and is one of the most reliable sources of security for the rural poor. In South Africa, the majority of poor people rely on government for financial support in the form of social grants. It is indicated in the report, Towards a Fifteen Year Review (2008) that the single most important contributor of the decline in poverty is government's social security assistance programme. The programme so far has benefited millions of poor people. It is recorded in the review document that the numbers of beneficiaries have increased from 2.5 million in 1999 to just over 12 million in 2007 (The Presidency, 2008).

The principles of SLA that emphasise building and strengthening of social capital are relevant in rural contexts because: (a) when people trust each other and are able to organize cash schemes to support each other, they can use these; (b) when people understand the value of livestock at their position they would be able to turn it into cash when the need arises; and (c) when people have built social capital they would be in a position to mobilize even the little income they get from government social security assistance and put it to productive use for their own sustainable livelihoods.

2.3. Sustainable Livelihoods.

Description and background on Sustainable Livelihoods Approach.

The concept of Sustainable Livelihoods evolved out of the work by Robert Chambers and others in the 1980s. It was developed into a specific approach to development by the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM) in 1993, followed by Cooperative for Assistance and Relief (CARE International) in 1994; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1995 and the British Department for International Development (DfID) in 1998. Other organizations that followed are International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) of Canada; World Bank and Khanya-aicdd (African Institute for Community-Driven Development) (Carney, Drinkwater, et al. and Hussein, 2002).

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach is based on a multidimensional understanding of people's livelihoods. Livelihoods are comprised of tangible (land, cash and livestock) and intangible (social relationships and networks) on which people can draw. The use of such assets is subject to a combination of institutions, regulations and cultural norms (Chambers and Conway, 1992). The concept of 'livelihoods' attempts to capture the complexities of ways of living as opposed to the narrower concept of 'employment' (Arce, 2003). A specific Sustainable Livelihoods approach evolved from debates over the need to create a people-centred and learning process in development. Therefore, a sustainable livelihoods approach consists of both this conceptual underpinning and a set of principles for action.

The conventional 'blueprint' approach which is characterised by top-down and little if not non-participation by beneficiaries to development management has been recognised for over 20 years as being ineffective in achieving socio-economic development goals (Rondinelli, 1993; Thomas, 1993; Bond and Hulme, 1999). In response to this, SLA was seen as being a possible solution to the rigidity of the conventional approach. According to Bond and Hulme (1999) SLA is a simple approach to development management and it combines beneficiary participation and management flexibility linked through processes of learning. It is presumably that, when the beneficiaries are participating effectively in all stages of development

including decision-making, planning and implementation, then the chances of attaining sustainability are high. SLA does not guarantee that all elements of the conventional approach will be eliminated in development programme, but it ensures that the irrelevant ones are minimized as much as possible.

According to Bryceson (2000); Farrington (2001); Ellis and Mdoe (2003) the discussion of sustainable livelihoods has evolved in three ways: as a normative goal, as a framework for conceptual analysis and as a set of principles for action. As a starting point, much of the SLA literature adopts Chambers and Conway's definition of a sustainable livelihood which is: a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhances its capabilities and assets both now and in future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Carney, 1998 and Ashley and Carney, 1999).

As expressed by Hussein (2002), a number of livelihoods frameworks illustrate the above conceptual thinking of livelihood. One of the most common is that developed by DfID (Carney, 1999), which views livelihoods a being the outcome of choices people make when drawing on their stocks of 'capital assets' (divided into categories of human, natural, social, physical and financial assets). 'Policies, institutions and practices' shape the extent to which people are able to draw on, or develop particular capital assets in order to sustain a livelihood. The interaction of capital assets with the limits and opportunities afforded by particular sets of policies, institutions and practices is expressed as livelihoods strategies and in turn lead to livelihoods outcomes (Carney, 1999 and Carney; Drinkwater; Rusinow et al,. 1999).

There was a consideration in building of social capital by the DfID, and this could be found in the description of the organisation's principles, especially those that are'people-centred'. According to this principle, sustainable poverty elimination will be achieved only if external support focuses on what matters to people, understands the differences between groups of people and works with them in a way that is congruent with their current livelihood strategies, social environment and ability to adapt. DfID also stresses the importance of community assets in changing the lives of

the people when appropriately managed for development purposes (Drinkwater and Rusinow, 1999).

SLA has gained support as an alternative development approach. However, some research shows that there continues to be organisational and institutional barriers to the successful implementation of its intentions. Further, it has been indicated that the simplistic treatment of the power relationships between donors and recipients in the aid/intervention relationship derails the realisation of SLA principles (Toner, 2003a). A practical example of development agency that has been forced to abandon its support for SLA has been DfID. According to the review done by Clark and Carney (2008), DfID SLA failure to reverse poverty was mainly due to its policies and institutional problems, difficulties in matching theory and practice and the lack of political support.

In the face of criticisms and its abandonment by one of the main international development agency (DfID), SLA is still relevant in South Africa because of the following: first, it has been implemented successfully in other countries that have similar characteristics with South Africa, such as the development of large-scale poverty eradication strategies (e.g. by Khanya-aicdd in the Free State, South Africa); policy process analysis (e.g. Soil Fertility Management and Sustainable Rural Livelihoods; New Approaches to the Policy Process, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe); Institutional analysis (e.g. Institutional Support for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods in Southern Africa) and many others (Carney, 1999); second, its failure in the DfID rural programme provide a learning opportunity for other organizations involved and those wanting to be involved in rural development programmes in South Africa; and third, the principles of SLA are accommodative as compared to those of the conventional approach. The most important principle of SLA is that of emphasising a bottom-up approach with the beneficiaries at the centre of development as active agents.

The evolution of sustainable livelihood principles can be seen as a continuation of the debate surrounding the most effective format for and management of development intervention. It is suggested that SLA has a potential role to play in improving the poverty focus of development assistance in whatever format - project, management or

policy support (Akroyd and Duncan, 1998). The core of the SLA is a set of principles which are regarded as elements of best practice. These principles are shared by many opinion makers and implemented by some development agencies/organizations, but there is some variation on emphasis among these players. Nevertheless, their similarities far outweigh their differences.

The following are types of Sustainable livelihoods principles:

Poor as focus – successful interventions start with a complex understanding of poverty and individual livelihoods. Individuals within the same community might have different modes of making a living, and as a result, it is important to ensure that all these dynamics are understood so that appropriate approaches are employed in the programme intervention. The danger of overlooking these community dynamics is that development might end up creating division rather than unity and even destroying the existing social capital. It is likely that when people see new programmes they might even abandon their existing mode of livelihoods for something unsustainable and that is likely to collapse and leave them more vulnerable (Toner & Franks, 2006).

People centred – people centred approach is premised on the principle that people should be the first and main focus of development and people rather than the resources, facilities or services they use are the priority concern. According to Carney (2008) supporting resource management or good governance is critical in people-centred approach, but the underlying motivation of supporting livelihoods should determine the shape and purpose of action.

Participation and empowerment – successful interventions aim to encourage and empower stakeholders to play an active role in development programmes. These principles advocate the recognition of all stakeholders and try to minimise barriers to participation, but show an awareness of its practical limits. Often, the involvement of beneficiaries in decision making processes is overlooked by development practitioners, leaving the entire process in the hands of the outsiders. This type of practice hampers sustainable development because at the end of the

programme/project, local people are left without relevant skills to drive development forward. According to Franks and Toner et al (2004) outsiders need processes that enable them to listen and respond to people's views and needs, and local people need skills/processes that will empower them to drive development on their own in future.

Again, citizen's participation in their own development enhances their chances of cohesion and unity within the community that would possible result in long lasting sustainable development. However, it worth noting that beneficiary's participation does not automatically translate into sustainable development.

Encourages broad partnership – Successful interventions work in partnership with other development partners but try to minimise the control and influence exerted by more powerful partners (Franks, 2004). Broad partnerships can draw on both the public and private sectors. Partnerships should be transparent and agreements should be based upon shared objectives. It is in this context that the role of all stakeholders in rural development is critical to ensure sustainable development, but this can only happen in the present of strong social capital. According to Franks, the more powerful may dominate the less powerful interests, unless the latter have resources to counteract these tendencies. Therefore, it is important that the interests of the powerful be limited to empowering the poor so that they benefit from partnership rather than being exploited.

Holistic approach – Successful interventions seek to respond holistically to households and communities through a cross-sectoral and integrated approach. Sustainable livelihoods approaches acknowledge that people may adopt many and sometimes differing strategies to ensure their livelihoods. It is important to recognise and acknowledge that there is a diversity of cultures, norms, values and techniques within communities. The integrated holistic approach to development will ensure that there is a well coordinated system to development that will enhance cooperation among different stakeholders and ultimately bring about a desired transformation and sustainable livelihoods.

Policy and Institutional Linkages – According to Franks and Toner et al (2004) successful intervention must build on reliable linkages with policy processes and institutions to avoid replication and ensure sustainable impact. Linkages should connect to micro, meso and macro levels and ensure learning and information sharing at all levels. The sustainable livelihoods approach examines the influence of policies and institutions on livelihoods options and highlights the need for policies to be more informed by local circumstances. This principle is linked to the principle of partnership discussed above.

Build on strengths – Sustainable livelihoods build on people's perceived strengths and opportunities rather than focusing on their problems and needs. This approach is appropriate because it gives more emphasis to what people are good at (and build their capacity) as a starting point rather than criticising their weaknesses. This approach has the potential to build and enhance people's confidence because when their strengths are recognised and appreciated, they see a reason to remain equal partners and as beneficiaries in development. Most people in rural communities see themselves as sub-ordinates in development that is meant for them, rather than equal partners, a situation that has been created by conventional approaches.

Dynamism and flexibility – Successful interventions need to learn from other best practices and adapt to their experiences where possible. However, there must be a high level of caution given to avoid introduction of irrelevant practices in the local development conditions. According to Franks and Toner (2004) being dynamic and flexible is important in development programmes, and further, they indicate that being flexible can save time and avoid some organisational constraints that can decrease effective learning and sharing of skills and ultimately hinder the attainment of sustainable livelihood objectives.

Accountability and responsiveness – The principle of accountability and responsiveness can maximize the intervention accountability and continuous responds to a wide range of stakeholders. Those who are in management and leadership positions of the development programme should ensure that they account and continuously report to the stakeholders in an efficient and transparent manner. The same should happen with those not in positions of power to ensure that there is a balanced and equitable flow of information. This mutual type of a relationship is important because it will help minimise the chances of unexpected threats to development initiatives.

Long-term and flexible – in his argument, Toner (2004) indicates that poverty reduction requires long term commitments and a flexible approach to providing support, which can respond to emerging circumstances. It is in this context where short term interventions for poverty reduction should be integrated to the meso and long term developmental strategies to ensure sustainable livelihoods.

SLA acknowledges that sometimes there is a need for an immediate short term action to respond to disasters and vulnerability; however, the main focus should be ensuring that rural communities become sustainable and independent to deal with their challenges in future. SLA would not necessarily address the challenge of unseen or emerging circumstances, but will put communities in a better position to respond in a more effective and appropriate manner.

Sustainability - there are four key dimensions to sustainability:

a) Financial – financial sustainability is important for development interventions because it ensures that the systems continue to function without support from outside funding sources. Most development initiatives struggle to become financially sustainable and one of the reasons for this is poor financial management which is greatly exacerbated by the lack of human and social capital.

b) Institutional – institutional sustainability is core to achieving sustainable development. One way of ensuring sustainability is to ensure that the development initiative networks and integrates where possible with other existing institutions within and beyond its boundaries.

c) Social – social sustainability is important for development intervention because it ensures a continued unity and social cohesion. This type of sustainability is mainly based on the existence of strong relationships of trust and reciprocity as well as sound institutions.

d) Environmental sustainability – Development activities based on environmental sound practices are important for a continued community sustainable livelihood. The main principle of SLA is to maximize the sustainable use of natural resources and minimise waste and pollution for the sake of future generation

The significance of sustainable livelihoods approach.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach was born out of a need to shift from conventional 'top-down' approaches to a 'bottom-up' development approach. SL thinking has been successfully employed in many development-related scenarios including: the development of large-scale poverty eradication strategies (e.g. by Khanya-aicdd in the Free State, South Africa); policy process analysis (e.g. Soil Fertility Management and Sustainable Rural Livelihoods; New approaches to the policy process, (e.g. Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe); institutional analysis (e.g. Institutional Support for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods in Southern Africa) and many others (Carney, 1999). The above successes indicate how significant and relevant SLA is despite its priority in rural development being downplayed by DfID and others.

The following are some of the importance Sustainable Livelihood approaches:

First, SL thinking has informed a wide range of research projects, especially those funded by the Natural Resources Policy Research Programme of DfID's Rural Livelihoods Department. Most of these research projects aimed to improve livelihoods through making a contribution to policy change (Carney, 1999).

Second, Sustainable Livelihoods Approach focuses on community assets (namely - human, natural, social and/or cultural, physical, financial assets) that people draw upon to compose a livelihood and the degree of examining these assets in the context of the larger economic, political, and institutional environment. This is important in the context of rural communities that do not have readily available sources of income because they will focus on what they have as a starting point for development. Some of these assets are in abundance in many communities (like livestock, land and human).

Third, SLA focuses on an integrated approach to development in which an adequate asset mix can be created, sustained, and transferred from one generation to the next. For instance, a community with good soil, water and environmental conditions can mix these assets in agricultural production activities for its livelihood. However, for such communities to achieve sustainability and preserve the current environment for the future generation it should look at all dimensions of sustainability (financial, social, institutional and environmental) and treat them equally. One of the major problems in rural development is that conventional approaches in development often overlooked the issue of a comprehensive integrated approach. In most cases the focus would be on economic and sometimes environmental resources and largely overlook the social capital component of development.

Fourth, SLA puts people in the community at the centre and as the principal agents of development, acting through community based organizations to collaborate with various other agents such as local government, NGOs, and the private sector where possible (Drinkwater and Rusinow, 1999). This point is closely linked to the above mentioned principle of people-centred approach and it is in this context that the poor

should be empowered so that they are able to manage their development process with little or without any outside help.

Fifth, SLA implicitly recognizes the necessity for the investigation of existing relationships between different activities that constitute households, which in turn requires attention both to intra-household and to extra-household social relations prior to implementation. There are many dynamics within and between households in rural communities and as a result, it becomes important to investigate these relations in order to have a better understanding. Understanding these relations is important because it helps development practitioners to make informed decisions and more decisions that are informed chances are high for desirable outcomes (Khanya-aicdd, 2009).

Sixth, SLA seeks to understand changing combinations of modes of livelihoods in a dynamic and historical context. This will assist development planners to facilitate the initiation of development programmes that will not be destructive to the existing modes of livelihood in a community.

Concerns regarding SLA

SLA draws on a range of existing analytical tools that are not intended as replacements for other approaches. Nevertheless, SL thinking has been criticised for underplaying the importance of one or more critical factors including vulnerability, gender, markets, etc. In part, this may have been the case because of the existing viewpoints and experience of users, and it can be easy to overlook unfamiliar areas such as household financial flows, even though these are crucial to people's livelihoods (Carney, 1999).

Some of the main concerns about sustainable livelihoods approach and its implementation are summarised below.

1. Governance, power and rights.

While the SL principles put people first, some feel that they fail to emphasise sufficiently the need to increase the power and rights of the poor and to stimulate changes in social relations. A related concern is that the practice of SL can be extractive, for instance information may be gathered locally but is often processed, and decisions made elsewhere (Carney, 1999). Carney further argued that these issues have to do with the overall governance framework, how it is understood and the role that the poor people play. It is important that users of SLA place adequate emphasis on understanding how people relate to the institutional environment, where power lies how, and why change takes place.

2. Markets, private sector and economic context of livelihoods.

The use of SLA by some practitioners and researchers who do not have a background in economics or experience of working with the private sector has tended to result in a down grading of markets and economic issues. This is unfortunate as there is nothing mysterious about the way economics and economic categories mesh with SLA. Indeed, the origins of the asset vulnerability framework, from which contemporary SLA stem, is an economic literature concerned with famine originating in the early 1980s (Sen, 1981).

According to Carney (1999) the economic dimension is therefore as much a part of SLA and analysis as any other dimension. When individuals cultivate their land on one crop rather than another or decide to take up making bricks or brewing beer, they are making economic decisions, albeit set within social and cultural contexts and constraints. Economic decisions are critically affected by the structure and functioning of markets. How well markets function depends on factors related to trust, information, contract enforcement and application of the rule of law, freedom of

movement of goods and people and market structure. These factors and their causes often come to light during routine livelihoods analysis. For example, there may be no traders prepared to purchase farm outputs in remote locations. Reasons for this may include poor road access or police roadblocks that routinely fine traders under spurious pretexts. Markets that do not work well are typically characterised by high 'transaction costs' and lowering the transaction costs of achieving secure livelihoods at whatever level (from local, to district, province or national level) can be seen as a major aim of SLA (Carney, 1999).

It is also essential to recognise that the livelihoods of most of the poor take place wholly within the private sector. In conducting an SL analysis, planners and practitioners often treat livelihoods as somehow separate, and distinct from the private sector. However, most livelihoods in low-income countries (or anywhere else for that matter) are private-sector livelihoods (like brick makers, beer brewers, bicycle traders, street vendors and so on). Diverse livelihoods tend to span a range of different private sector activities while some also encompass public sector aspects (primarily when household members are government or local authority employees) (Ashley and Carney, 1999).

3. Missing the point of SLA.

SLA aims to achieve poverty reduction through inclusive, people-centred development. While users are encouraged to adapt sustainable livelihoods approach to their needs, this can result in them simply 'going through the motions' of using it for the sake of compliance, reducing the holistic perspective to a set of rules that render the approach ineffective. In the worst cases SLA analysis has been used (selectively) to justify existing development activities, rather than as part of a process of working with poor people to identify their strengths and build on these.

Kazi (2002) points out that it is essential to focus at the right level of detail and be strategic when gathering information in order to avoid missing the point of SLA. Sometimes this may mean sacrificing the minutiae for a greater understanding of

broad trends of areas where there is consensus (or not) about all levels of variation in livelihoods.

4. Language of ‘multiplier effect’.

It is very important to be cautious about the fact that communities are not the same and as a result, it is not guaranteed that where SLA is implemented there would be positive development. If these approaches are not carefully or appropriately implemented, they might as well result in a severe destruction of social capital and reduce the potential for improving livelihoods.

5. Participation.

The term ‘participation’ is now used so widely that it has almost lost its meaning. This term was introduced to emphasise the importance of people having control of their own development. This emphasis is based on the observation that well-being is closely linked to the capacity to act. However, we now see the term used in situations where people have little control, or where people are allowed to participate in only a limited way. In these situations we can say that the term ‘participation’ has been co-opted (Woost, 1997). Woost (1997:249) further gave an example of this when he writes: ‘The poor [are allowed to] participate in development, but only in so far as they do not attempt to change the rules of the game…[It is like] riding a top-down vehicle of development whose wheels are greased with vocabulary of bottom-up discourse.

This notion of ‘participation that dominates the discourse of development intervention – with typically unresolved tension or poor social capital within the communities can lead to unsustainable investment in community development initiatives by donor agencies or governments. It is most likely that the money can lead to division rather than development within the community especially when those with power to influence processes begin to think of enriching themselves in the expense of the poor (Khanya-aicdd, 2009).

2.4. Social Capital.

The discussion in this section will focus on the significance of social capital in facilitating community sustainable livelihoods programmes in rural communities. The relevance of social capital in development was discussed in development discourses by scholars and opinion makers and some are in support of the concept whereas others were critical of it. Among those who discussed it are Lin (1999) and Putman (1993) who have argued that the application of SLA in development programmes can lead to enhancement of social capital if appropriately implemented.

There are different definitions of social capital, but they all encompass most if not all of the main characteristics of social capital and those include relationships of trust, citizenship, neighbourliness, social networks and institutions, and civic participation. One of the common definitions of social capital that is embedded in the political science, sociology, and anthropological literature generally refers to social capital as the set of norms, networks, and organizations through which people gain access to power and resources, and through which decision making and policy formulation occur (Grootaert, 1998). The other description of social capital put forward by Putman (1993) states that social capital is a set of "horizontal associations" between people and the key feature of social capital is to facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit of the members of association. There are different perspectives on social capital and three of those are discussed below.

The society-centred perspective – according to this perspective, the relationships of trust and reciprocity that individuals built through interactions with each others help them to secure benefits and rewards for themselves. Trust which is embedded in the institutions through individual interaction is the main form of social capital in this perspective. According to Putman (2000) communities with higher level of associational interaction due to established social capital have a better chance for socio-economic and ecological outcomes, and ultimately to sustain their livelihoods.

The institutional-centred perspective – in this perspective, social capital is a product of institutional context, consisting of routines, norms and values embedded in a society. In the institutional-centred perspective, social capital is dependent on the institutional environment or visa versa, whereas in society-centred perspective it is dependent on individual interaction (Bayat, 2007; Stole, 2003; Skocpol, 1996; and Newton, 1999). It is important that the poor in rural communities prioritise the building and strengthening of the institutions because they are pillars of development.

The network perspective of social capital – according to Bourdieu (1986) and Canada PRI, 2003) social capital in this perspective is the networks of relations that individuals have and resources they are able to derive from these networks. The size of an individual's network would give an idea of his/her stock of social capital. This perspective shows how important it is for the poor to network in development activities with wider institutions within and beyond their communities.

The following discussion will focus on social capital in the context of South Africa in order to get a brief local perspective.

Social capital in South Africa.

South Africa is divided mainly into urban and rural areas. The country has strong civil society organizations that are mainly located in urban areas but servicing rural communities. During the year 2006, it has been indicated that there were about 100 000 organizations representing civil society in South Africa, including community-based and self-help organizations (BTI, 2006). The civil society organizations contribute to social capital as well as being indicative of the stock of social capital within the country (Bryce, 2006).

A lot has been said about poverty in both urban townships and rural areas; however, the discourse and reports on poverty appear to indicate that poverty is worse in rural areas. There are also reports that attribute poverty in rural areas to the decline of social capital among other things, such as Towards a Fifteen Year Review (2008).

The studies conducted by The World Values Survey (WVS), Cape Area Study (CAS) and Afrobarometer in Cape Town provided some indications about the level of social capital in urban South Africa. The findings show that South Africans are characterised by low levels of general interpersonal trust (Mattes et al, 2004). CAS in particular has found that just over 50% of respondents in Cape Town responded negatively to the question of whether others could be trusted (Jooste, 2005). This picture shows how different life is in urban centres as compared to rural areas where trust and reciprocity seems to exist and this is presumably the result of traditional norms and values that people share.

Types of social capital.

The following are some of the common types of social capital:

Bonding social capital – this type of social capital describes closer connections among people who live in the same or adjacent communities and is characterized by strong bonds. Family members (or members of the same ethnic group), is a good example of bonding social capital. According to Bayat (2007) bonding capital in South Africa can mainly be observed among citizens belonging to the same ethnic group, race or political camp due to the country's history of segregation and injustice. However, it is important to note that the past government policies are not the only contributors to this type of capital in South Africa. Bonding social capital is seen by others as injurious to development as a whole because it looks after interests of the particular group in a given area. Conversely, one can argue that this form of social capital is critical because it emphasises building strong relationships of trust and reciprocity at an individual and household levels. Household sustainable livelihoods are important because they can serve as a starting point for community sustainable livelihoods. Rural communities traditionally have had strong bonding capital, and in the case of South Africa this capital has been affected badly by a number of things including 'in and out' migration and Apartheid policies. However, this capital does not automatically guarantee sustainable livelihoods.

Bridging social capital – this type of capital is characterised by more distant connections between people and is often distinguished by weaker, but more cross-cutting ties. According to Dolfsma and Dannreuther (2003); Narayan (2002); and Narayan and Pritchett (1999) bridging social capital describes vertical links between communities whereas bonding refers to horizontal links among equals within a community. Business associates, acquaintances, friends from different ethnic groups, and friends of friends are good examples of bridging capital. In as much as networking of businesses is important, this type of social capital is seen as weak within a rural community situation because the benefits of relationships tend to be biased towards those who are powerful due to disproportionate power relations.

Linking social capital – This type of social capital does not always appear with the other two form of capital mentioned above. It appears to be overlooked in some discourse of rural development and one could assume that is because it entails relationships at a higher level that do not always apply to the poor in rural areas. However, according to Halpern et al (2002) linking social capital describes social connections with people in positions of power and is characterised by relations among those within a hierarchy where there are differing levels of power. This type of social capital is weak because it is dependent on the power that people have while still in office and it is more likely to be sustained only if the same individuals remain in the same positions. Linking social capital often does not exist in rural communities or where it exists, it would be at a weaker level because most people in those areas do not belong to hierarchies of high positions.

Benefits and Importance of Social Capital.

There is a dominant view that when social capital is appropriately established and functioning, chances are high for a community to sustain itself. In support of this view, Adam and Roncevic (2003) state that ‘despite problems with its definition as well as operationalisation and despite its (almost) metaphorical character, social capital has facilitated a series of very important empirical investigations and theoretical debates which have stimulated reconsideration of the significance of

human relations, of networks, of organizational forms, of the quality of life and of the developmental performance'. Requena (2002) argued that social capital is important because it brings together several important sociological concepts such as social support, integration and social cohesion. This view is also supported by Rothstein (2003) who states that the real strength of social capital theory is the combination of macro-sociological historical structures with micro-level causal mechanisms, a rare feature in the social science. The above statements about the significance of social capital are very relevant in the context of rural development. It is important that where SLA programmes take place, the issue of social capital is taken seriously in order to ensure long lasting sustainability.

Some of the common benefits of social capital are as follows:

For any organization or institution to function properly and effectively in this modern time, it would need to have a free flow of information. Communities that have strong social capital are in a better position to acquire and share information and this may enhances their chances of strengthening trust and networks among each other. For example, a community that has a commercial farmers union and small farmers union has an opportunity to sustain itself if it has social capital that facilitate the flow and sharing of information between the two unions.

From an economic point of view, social capital built through the flow of information is important for the healthy functioning of the markets that might exist within and between rural and urban communities.

Strong social capital provides good coordination of activities within and beyond a given community environment. In most rural areas, there is a lack of proper coordination of activities, and in most instances, activities are coordinated by people from outside due to lack of human capital. For example, if there is a project taking place in a rural community, in most cases the project managers and administrators will be coming from elsewhere rather than from the community. Meinzen and Ostrom (1995) give an example of a farming community that has no social capital. In their argument they have given an example of a farming community whereby due to the

lack of integrated coordination of activities, some farmers may divert water from the main stream for their own benefit.

A community with wide networks is more likely to have active people who participate in development activities including decision making and implementation. The higher the participation the higher the level of consciousness in development and this ultimately enhances chances of sustainable livelihood. Decisions taken by a collective are important because almost everyone would abide by it and when there is a problem it becomes the collective issue that needs to be attended to by everyone without shifting blame (Boyte, 1995; and Sirianni & Friedland 1997).

Good social relations in a community can have an influence on the reinforcement, identity and recognition within and beyond a particular community. Being assured of one's worthiness as an individual and a member of a social group sharing similar interests and resources not only provides emotional support but also public acknowledgement of one's claim to certain resources (Lin, 1999). Further, Lin argues that these reinforcements are essential for the maintenance of mental health and entitlement to resources which in turn enhances the chances of sustainable livelihoods for the broader community.

A word of caution is necessary following this discussion. Social capital which is one of the major pillars of SLA cannot achieve everything without other forms of capital (natural, physical, human and financial). One important attribute of social capital is that it can make the other types of capital and their productive combination more effective (Grootaert, 1998).

Concerns regarding social capital.

In the event of widespread optimism about the usefulness of social capital for socio-economic advancement of the communities especially rural, Aldridge, Halpern et al (2002) say that some of the empirical evidence on the importance of social capital in improving socio-economic and ecological outcomes needs to be treated with caution because there is no evidence of reliability in the tools measuring its impact.

Again, the same characteristics of social capital that are presumed to facilitate better development outcomes have the potential to cause negative outcomes if not implemented and managed appropriately (Aldridge, Halpern et al. 2002).

Potential downsides of social capital include:

First, social capital in a community can be weakened or even destroyed if development ideas are imposed rather than negotiated by or with the people themselves. This foisting type of behaviour often worsens rather than improving socio-economic performance because there is a danger that a development initiative can destabilize or even destroy the already existing livelihoods systems in a community (Szreter, 2000).

Second, social capital can act as a barrier to social inclusion and social mobility. This view is confirmed by Hunter (2000); Morrow (1999) and Szreter (2000) when they argue that the kinds of groupings and associations which can generate social capital can play a role in excluding others in development processes because of their powers within the community. As a result, the development benefits are more likely to be acquired by those in power at the expense of the majority, and consequently the general community would continue to be deprived of sustainable livelihoods.

Third, social capital may divide rather than unite communities or societies. A good example of this is when a donor invests a lot of money into a community for development purposes without a prior assessment of needs and also without preparing or building the social capital within the community that will carry out development processes. The most likely outcome is that, those who are powerful will dominate development processes and that might lead to the abuse of available resources. The most likely scenario is that when the people realize that there is corruption, it may result in conflicts and ultimately development intended to uplift the people could be ineffectual.

Measuring Social capital.

As indicated above, strong social capital is perceived to be one of the backbones of sustainable development that could possibly lead to broader community sustainable livelihoods. Some researchers like Solow (1995) have questioned whether social capital is measurable. There is some consensus however from other quarters, that at least at this stage the measurement of social capital can only be done indirectly and by proxy. Depending on its definition, different proxy measurements are used. The problem with this is that it leads to conceptual confusion and makes comparison between research findings problematic.

Paxton (1999) for example, noted the wide gap between the concept of social capital and its measurement. This gap has led some researchers to question the reliability of measurement due to its spread across fields and the discrepancies in its measurement.

However, in most cases, the measurement of various levels and dimensions of networks, trust and associational activities are used (Stone and Hughes, 2002). One of the methods used to measure social capital is through questions as part of a survey instrument. The following are some of the areas that are generally probed when measuring social capital (Bayat, 2007):

- Community engagement – various types of social networks and volunteer effort that exist within the community with the intention to benefit the majority;

- Community efficacy – a shared sense of empowerment and capacity to effect change at the community level; it can also be seen by the level of confidence that the people have;

- Volunteering – typically understood as the voluntary commitment of unpaid time and effort outside immediate family for the benefit of others. A good example here is when a boy helps the neighbours to look after their livestock. This type of social capital is common in rural communities in South Africa;

- Political participation – patterns of active citizen engagement in socio-political activities during and beyond election periods. Beyond elections, this could be seen by people's active involvement in socio-economic activities driven by different political groupings where they exist.

- Norms of trust and reciprocity – mutual 'credits', expectations and obligations as well as sanctions against opportunistic or anti-social behaviour (also understood as the formal and informal social rules that guide how network members behave towards each other); and

- Relationships of trust in institutions – trust that exist within public institutions, the corporate sector and voluntary institutions.

(Bayat, 2007; Burt and Minor, 1982; Burt, 1984; Borgatti, Jones, and Everett, 1998).

In the economic literature, the extent of household membership in various groups has been used to assess the household's stock of social capital (Narayan and Pritchett, 1997 and Grootaert, 1999).

This literature provides a wealth of information that pertains to this study, particularly to the research questions. This research is concerned with the issues of poverty in rural areas and the different approaches and strategies employed. It is clear from the literature that there are different views about these issues. However, it has emerged that social capital, which is the main focus of this study is considered one of the strong pillars in rural development.

Social capital features in most of the sustainable livelihoods programmes of the different development agencies, and one could assume that is because the theory of SLA emphasises building of social capital and mobilization of community assets. Some SLA programmes have been implemented, especially during the 1990s and some were successful while others were unsuccessful. However, the literature generally suggests that social capital is significant in reducing rural poverty and vulnerability. This conclusion is based not only on the theory, but also on the successful SLA programme that are regarded as best practice. It is of course true that

there have been some unsuccessful attempts at implementing SLA programmes by other development agencies, but the lessons suggest that there is still an opportunity for social capital in reducing rural poverty through SLA programmes.

The literature also provides some insights with regard to the implications of SLA programmes for social capital. The extent to which social capital can be strengthened or weakened through the application of SLA programmes in rural communities has also been discussed with possible mitigation measures. The issue of power dynamics that this study also seeks to understand has been discussed thoroughly and this has provided some positive answers to the question.

Not much has been reported about SLA programmes in South Africa. However, SLA programmes that were implemented in rural communities can serve as good case studies that South African practitioners can learn from. It appears that the role of social capital in poverty alleviation programmes in South African is significant. One could say so, because the literature reveals that social capital in rural areas of South Africa is declining and this is accompanied by high levels of poverty. Also, the poverty is reported in areas where there are development programmes that are not based on SLA.

CHAPTER THREE

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

3.1. Introduction.

The case study overview section of this research report gives a broad picture of the scale of poverty and challenges that are facing the Province of the Eastern Cape and the case study areas in particular. A brief introduction will be provided on Amathole District municipality, Great Kei Local Municipality and Buffalo City Municipality where the two case study sites are located. Also, brief information will be provided on Afesis-corplan which is the organization that was responsible for the implementation of livelihoods programmes in Mzintshane village in the Buffalo City Municipality and Ngxingxolo village in Mooiplaas region of the Great Kei Local Municipality.

Lastly, detailed information will be provided specifically on the background of the programme that Afesis-corplan implemented in the two communities mentioned above. This will be done in order to find out what were the intentions of the programme, the challenges experienced during implementation and, where possible, the outcomes.

3.2. Overview on the Eastern Cape Province.

The Eastern Cape Province is one of the nine provinces of the Republic of South Africa and situated in the south-eastern part of the country. It is clad with natural beauty including beautiful coastlines, temperate forests, large areas of rolling rural hinterland and semi-desert landscapes. The north-west part of the province borders on KwaZulu-Natal and touches the southern tip of the Drakensberg range. Mountains and hills are common in the southern parts of the province, with karoo exhibiting a flat topography (ECSECC, 2004).

As indicated in the introduction, the province has sis districts and the Metropolitan Municipality and they are: Alfred Nzo, Amathole, Cacadu, Chris Hani, OR Tambo, Ukhahlamba and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan. The two largest districts (OR Tambo and Amathole) have just short of two million inhabitants each (1.7 million people respectively). The Eastern Cape is the third most populous province after Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, with an estimated 6 436 763 million people, composed of approximately 55% female and 45% male (Stats SA, 2001; Stats SA, 2003a&b; ECSECC, 2004).

Poverty and inequality are severe and widespread in the province and this differs from one area to another. According to Stats SA (2001) the poverty rate was estimated to be 67.4% in the province with approximately 87% of the black population who are the majority affected. The majority of poor people are considered to be located in the rural areas of former homelands (Transkei and Ciskei). OR Tambo District Municipality, home of Transkei records 32% of the poverty gap in the province followed by Amathole District Municipality, home of the Ciskei which records 26%. OR Tambo and Alfred Nzo have proven to have the highest levels of unemployment at 77% and 76% respectively. This can be contrasted with Cacadu District Municipality and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality with the lower levels of unemployment (Global Insight, 2003 and Stats SA, 2001).

It has been indicated that in 2003 the Eastern Cape has contributed approximately 8.1% to national GDP, while 14.4% of the South African population live in this province (Stats SA, 2003a, 2003b). This has been attributed to many reasons including high levels of unemployment and the fact that a large proportion of households in the province are involved in farming activities, with 50% of the population residing in agricultural households. Few of the agricultural household members are formally employed in agriculture, which means agriculture does not present an important source of income to many (Elsenburg, 2005). According to Mabin (1989;1990) black South African households, living on the margins of the South African political economy, had been involved in a long and protracted struggle for access to urban resources. This has been the case in the Eastern Cape with high levels of poverty and unemployment in the rural areas which has resulted in urbanization and increased levels of unemployment in urban areas. The Eastern Cape

has seen high numbers of 'out-migrants' from rural areas to urban environment where people seek employment opportunities; some migrate to cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, while other migrate within the province mainly to Port Elizabeth, East London and King Williamstown (Elsenburg, 2005; ECSECC, 2004; Global Insight, 2001). The events of 'out-migration' have been described by Banati and Williams (2004) who indicated that the Eastern Cape shows a wide variation in migration practices, with the historical Transkei area in the eastern part of the province providing a large labour source to the Gauteng province.

HIV/AIDS continues to pose a major challenge to the people of South Africa and the Eastern Cape in particular. The Eastern Cape Province has seen an increase of the incidence of HIV/AIDS, which calls for a multi-sectoral response across government departments, civil society and other sectors in the province. The highest prevalence rate is found in the Nelson Mandela Metro (with a prevalence of 32.64%) followed by Alfred Nzo (28.25); Chris Hani (25.3%); Amathole (24.08); OR Tambo (23.62%); Ukhahlamba (19.4%); and Cacadu (16.8%) (ECHOH, 2004). However, one can assume that the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality which is predominantly urban is as a result of high numbers of 'in-migrants' from other areas including the rural areas. This situation presents a huge challenge in the rural areas where the sick go to be looked after by the relatives. The case of HIV/AIDS prevalence is a worrying thing for the province and rural areas in particular because it has a severe negative impact on sustainable livelihoods and the economy.

3.3. Brief Overview of Amathole District Municipality.

As indicated above, the two case study sites are located in the Amathole District Municipality. The district is made up of eight local municipalities (Amahlathi, Mbashe, Mnquma, Ngqushwa, Nkonkobe, Nxuba, Buffalo City and Great Kei). Mzintshane village is situated in the Buffalo City area, while Ngxingxolo village is situated in the Great Kei Municipality. The Amathole District Municipal area stretches along the coastline of the south-eastern part of the Eastern Cape Province taking in the former Ciskei and Transkei as well as the former Cape Provincial

Administration areas. The Natural environment is similarly diverse including moist mountainous, well-watered coastal and semi-arid karoo, thornveld, succulent and thicket areas (Amathole District Municipality, Review 2008).

According to Stats SA, (2007) the population of Amathole District Municipality was 1 635 433 in 2007. This was the second highest population after OR Tambo District Municipality which records 1 748 387 in 2008.
The population is unevenly distributed among the eight local municipalities and the number of households is approximately 458 582. The majority of the Amathole District population reside within the Buffalo City Local Municipality with 42. 8%, followed by Mquma Local Municipality with 16.4% and Mbhashe Local Municipality with 16.1%. The two Local Municipalities with the smallest percentages of the Amathole District population are Nxuba with 1.5% and Great Kei with 2.9%.

Poverty data from Global Insight (2004) show that, 70% of residents in Amathole District Municipality live in poverty, and a large number of these residents survive on pensions or grants from the government. However, Amathole has the second largest economy in the province, contributing 27% to the provincial economy. East London, Bhisho, Butterworth and King Williams Town are areas of significant economic activity in the district (Amathole District Municipality, 2009).

An average of 1.5% people residing in the Amathole District Municipality had moved there within the 1996 and 2001 period. This figure gives an indication of the migration rate in to the district. The local municipality that experienced the highest in-migration rate according to Stats SA (2001) is Buffalo City, with 3.5% of residents who moved to the city mainly seeking employment opportunities.
Household grant dependence is higher in the district (66%) than the average for the Eastern Cape (64%) as a whole. Only Buffalo City (53%) and Nxuma (59%) fall below the district and the province.

The following are some of the main demographic challenges in Amathole District Municipality:

- The region is challenged with a high demand for basic services as well as housing;
- There has been a growth in informal settlements in the district which negatively influences the health and environmental status of the population;
- Services such as education, reproductive health, youth development and development projects to address poverty remain a challenge for local government and government departments;
- The district is made up of a number of rural areas where limited or no development has taken place over a number of years. This has resulted in Amathole experiencing high levels of poverty across the district;
- The public sector dominates the region's economy, which indicates the challenge of a limited production base in the area, and limited private investment growth into the district economy;
- The economic situation in terms of lack of income and unemployment of the population is increasing (Amathole District Municipality, 2009).

3.4. Brief Overview of Buffalo City Municipality.

Buffalo City Municipality is situated relatively centrally in the Eastern Cape Province, which is bounded to the south-east by the long coastline along the Indian Ocean. The Municipality is estimated to have a total population of about 724 306 people. Buffalo City is the key urban centre of the eastern part of the Eastern Cape. It consists of a corridor of urban areas, stretching from the port city of East London to the east, through Mdantsane and reaching Dimbaza in the west. It is here in Dimbaza town where Mzintshane village is situated. Mzintshane village is one of the 280 rural villages located in the Buffalo City Municipality (Buffalo City Municipality, 2009).

The high levels of poverty are apparent, in the statistics from Census 2001. Approximately 70% of households have an income of less than R1500 per month (the household subsistence level) and 28% of all households have no income (Buffalo City Municipality, 2009; Stats SA, 2001). This situation has been exacerbated by migration forces especially with the people who come from other local municipalities of Amathole District Municipality flowing into the city for employment opportunities. HIV/AIDS is a large and growing threat to Buffalo City's ability to be a productive, inclusive, sustainable and well governed city. It is even worse in the rural areas that are already negatively affected by poverty, migration and weakened social capital due to migration and other socio-economic factors.

3.4.1. Overview of Mzintshane Village.

Mzintshane village is one of the 280 rural villages of Buffalo City Municipality which comprises a population of about 114 503 (Buffalo City Municipality, 2009). The village has not yet experienced meaningful development and in this respect is similar to many other rural areas in the Eastern Cape.

Unemployment in this area is said to be high and it has been exacerbated by the closure of Dimbaza industrial area during 1993/4 when the first democratic government came into power. Dimbaza Township is the nearest town to Mzintshane village and some people worked there in the factories. It is also the nearest shopping centre for the people of Mzintshane followed by King Williams Town, then East London (ECSECC, 2004). The main source of livelihoods for the people of Mzintshane is remittances from breadwinners who work in the cities. Government social security programmes are another source of livelihood. However, agriculture, mainly crop production at a small scale level provides some source of food for the villagers. The majority of participants in the agricultural activities are women and this is a common trend in most rural areas of South Africa. Most of the men in these rural communities have migrated to the cities.

Like many rural villages in the Eastern Cape, Mzintshane is spatially dispersed with the majority of people being elders and youth. This is a typical population distribution in most rural areas where the economically active group spend most of their time in cities that are mentioned above. The other group, the youth who have matriculated or are looking for employment, also form part of those who spend most of their time in the cities (ECSECC, 2004; SSA, 2003a & b).

3.5. Brief overview of Great Kei Local Municipality.

The Great Kei Local Municipality is one of the eight local municipalities located within the Amathole District Municipality and covers an area of 1 421 square kilometres (km²). The Great Kei Local Municipality is bounded in the east by the Great Kei River and Mnquma Municipality; in the south east it is bounded by the coastline between Kwelera and Kei Mouth, in the West by the Buffalo City Municipality and the Amahlathi Municipality, which is situated in the North.

The Great Kei Municipality encompasses a large area characterised by very different features and communities and is divided into six wards, which are the amalgamation of previously different communities and municipal entities, including Komga, Kei Mouth, Cintsa East and Cintsa West, Haga Haga, Mooiplaas and Kwelera. (Great Kei Municipality, 2008).

The forest reserves and moderately sub tropical climate of the coastal area represents a significant and largely undeveloped tourist resource. Within the area the small town of Komga constitutes the centre of institutional and business services to the adjacent farm areas. Other settlements comprise the Kei Mouth Resorts (Kei Mouth, Morgan Bay and Haga Haga), East Coast Resorts (Cefane, Cintsa East, Cintsa West, Glen Muir, etc), as well as the State Land settlements of Mooiplaas and Kwelera. These settlements are distributed according to historical factors and are functional in terms of their predominately outward linkages to the immediate farming and ‘aspirant metropolitan’ area (Amathole District Municipality, 2009 and Great Kei Municipality, 2008).

Great Kei Local Municipality has approximately 44 469 people compared to the 724 306 population of Buffalo City Local Municipality. The population makes up approximately 11 363 households. Over 81% of the population live in rural areas, villages and on farms. The population composition by gender is 47% male against 53% female. Only 21% of the population fall within the 20 to 34 year age group. This may be ascribed to the fact that (1) many of the economically active have left the municipality for further education, training and work; or (2) a distortion of the population pyramid through the possible impact of HIV/AIDS within this age group (Stats SA, 2001; Stats SA, 2003a; ECSECC, 2004 and Great Kei Municipality, 2008).

The service centres of Komga and Kei Mouth as well as the coastal settlements of Morgan's Bay, Haga Haga and Cintsa can be described as urban areas falling within the national definition of "an urban area administered by a local authority or municipality"(Great Kei Municipality, 2008). The population density within urban areas is estimated at185 people/km. This can be attributed to the diverse economic activity and higher level of social and physical infrastructure services to be found within the centres.

Urban centres within the area display a growth rate of around 1,5% per annum compared to a negative growth rate of –1,9% for the entire Great Kei Municipal area. This is believed to be the result of the steady exodus of families from farming areas and adjacent rural settlements, causing a population increase within local urban centres (DBSA, 2001 and Great Kei Municipality, 2008).

3.5.1. Overview of Ngxingxolo village.

Ngxingxolo village is one of the rural villages in the Mooiplaas region and is located in Great Kei Local Municipality as indicated above. This community also falls under Amathole District Municipality by virtue of being part of Great Kei Local Municipality. Ngxingxolo borders on the commercial farms of Mooiplaas which provide seasonal jobs to some of the local people in the area. Like other rural areas in the region, the village (Ngxingxolo) was neglected during the apartheid period and

also under democracy. It has never received much attention in terms of development. This community shares a poverty profile with its neighbouring villages.
The main subsistence activity to those who live in the village is agriculture at a small scale. During the interviews one could see that people plough the land in the precinct of their yard to grow food for household consumption. The agricultural activities (mainly small scale activities) in the community are carried out by women. This trend of women dominating this survival area of economic activities is mainly because women in most of these rural areas are in the majority as indicated above. This also reflects the provincial population spread according to gender 45% male against 55% female. This trend is similar to other rural areas in the province including Mzintshane. Some of the residents are labourers in the surrounding commercial farms of Mooiplaas. These farms provide seasonal employment opportunities which form part of some of the households' livelihoods in the area (ECSECC, 2004; Stats SA, 2003a & b; Global Insight, 2003).

Apart from other means of livelihoods mentioned above, many people in Ngxinxolo community are dependent on government social security programmes. Ngxingxolo village is experiencing migration patterns with most of the economically active men and women moving in and out of the community due to pull and push forces of economic activities (ECSECC, 2004; Stats SA, 2001).

Unlike Mzintshane, Ngxingxolo village households are close to each other and this is a rare settlement pattern that is found in the rural Eastern Cape Province. This type of settlement is rare in the Eastern Cape but is very common in some rural parts of the country like in the North West and Limpopo where the researcher has visited before. One could suspect that this village (Ngingxolo) was established as farm community because it is situated near the Mooiplaas farms.

The description above provides a good perspective on the province and the case study areas in particular. This information is important because it gives an idea about the historical background of the province including socio-economic and ecological information. The poverty situation in the province can be understood in the context of this overview.

The province is predominantly rural and characterised by high levels of poverty and unemployment. There is a high level of migration due to people moving in and out of the province because of the lack of job opportunities especially in rural areas. There is also a high movement of people within the province, especially from rural to urban centres. Most rural areas in the province and in Amathole District Municipality in particular are very dry and the rainy seasons sometimes are characterised by disasters like soil erosion and destruction of people's homes. Soil erosion is mainly caused by overgrazing and deforestation that is taking place at a high pace. The province has a huge backlog in terms of infrastructure provision, especially in the rural areas where the majority of the poor live.

The province is also faced with the problem of health, with HIV/AIDS one of the worrying disease due to a high infection rate across rural and urban areas.
All these issues pose a huge challenge to the province especially in the rural areas in terms of sustainable livelihoods. The challenges of migration, unemployment and HIV/AIDS continue to contribute to the destruction of social capital that previously existed.

The province is also affected by the problem of land redistribution, which is a national problem but the land that belongs to the traditional authorities provides an opportunity for the communities to engage in development activities that can sustain their livelihoods.

The province is fortunate because of the amount of attention that it gets from national government and other development agencies because it is regarded as one of the poorest provinces in the country. This attention has attracted many NGOs in the province wanting to provide services through rural development programmes. One could say that this attention will help the province and rural areas in particular to facilitate the strengthening of the dissipating social capital and ultimately lead to the much needed sustainable livelihood. The two villages, Mzintshane and Ngxingxolo have an opportunity related to location near East London which is the economic hub in the eastern part of the province.

3.6. Overview of Afesis-corplan and the programme.

3.6.1. Afesis-corplan.

Afesis-corplan came into existence in 1992 when it was registered as a trust and later in 1999 it changed its status to a non-for-profit section 21 Company. It falls under the category of non-governmental organizations and it is based in East London in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. This organization has contributed to rural community development in the Border-Kei (Amathole) region of the Eastern Cape ever since its inception in 1992.

Afesis-corplan has implemented many programmes in the Eastern Cape particularly in the Border Kei regions and amongst other projects are sustainable settlements; public awareness; local governance as well as development facilitation. Its main activities include: Technical support on land issues and physical development projects; capacity building in institutional development and various technical fields; and research and information dissemination relating to sustainable settlement development (www.afesis.org.za). The organization has implemented many projects and sub-projects under the above mentioned programme areas, and one in particular is the community-based capacity building project in Mzintshane and Ngxingxolo villages.

The following discussion will focus on the programme implemented in Mzintshane and Ngxingxolo. The discussion is very important because it will look at the background of the programme and its main objectives. The discussion will also consider the programme report prepared by Afesis-corplan.

3.6.2. Capacity building programme - background and conceptual plan.

The capacity building programme was started in July 2007 and ended in July 2009. The programme was financially supported by the National Development Agency. Afesis-corplan carried the full responsibility for designing and implementing the programme within the parameters of its development approach without any

interference or influence by the funder. The programme's overall objectives as outlined in the concept document were to ensure that targeted community based groups/projects run effectively and effectively and contribute to sustainable livelihoods; and to ensure that groups/projects access additional knowledge relevant to the development of their organisation.

The specific objectives of the programme were as follows:

- Situational analysis – to identify capacity building needs within existing community based groups/projects;
- Training – to provide training to groups/project leaders and representatives through study circle methods on topics identified during situational analysis exercise;
- Project facilitation/mentoring – to monitor, review and steer the implementation of the study circle processes within community groups/projects;
- Networking and lobbying – to facilitate opportunities for groups/projects and potential partners to meet and collaborate; and
- Research – evaluate the impact, success and lessons learnt from the programme (Afesis-corplan, 2006).

The programme was designed to incorporate six modules (needs analysis, organizational strengths/capacity, financial management, human resources and administration, project management and study circles) and at the end of the programme, the participants were awarded with certificates. The course content included the following: conflict management skills which were intended to capacitate participants to deal with conflicts/disputes and disciplinary issues; leadership skills to strengthen leaders' capacity to lead their organizations/groups in a more efficient and effective way; advocacy/lobbying and mediation and marketing skills which were intended to build or strengthen their capacity to negotiate for future sponsorships, business deals and networks establishment; business plan and development skills which were intended to capacitate participants to develop business plans for future leveraging of future funding; financial management skills which were intended to

build and/or strengthen their capacity to manage and account on financial issues; and office and human resource management skills which were intended to help participants to manage their day-to-day office affairs including managing people (Afesis-corplan, 2006)

The programme aimed to transfer the following skills: needs analysis; financial management; organizational strengths; human resource and administration; project management; meetings management; problem solving; information sharing; effective project planning, management and monitoring; team work; facilitation of learning activities; resolving group conflicts; personal development including presentation skills and self esteem development and lobbying and networking (Afesis-corplan, 2006).

The programme‘s method of implementation was based on the ‘study circle’ approach. Training was conducted through study clusters that were created within communities and this was done to ensure that participants were as close to home as possible. Afesis-corplan is of the view that the study circles approach empowers the participants to continue training each other without external support. Leaders from existing community-based groups/projects were identified and trained so that they, in turn, would impart information through training their respective group members. The programme runs for a period of two years (Afesis-corplan, 2006).

The targeted community-based groups/projects as highlighted in the project concept are as follows: small businesses; community gardens; HIV/AIDS awareness and support groups; youth projects and women’s groups. The community-based projects were chosen because of their demonstration of past involvement and commitment to community development. The groups were then assessed using a questionnaire that was developed to gauge and determine their willingness to uplift themselves. Groups/projects were represented by their leaders and in some cases a representative would be a group member who was forwarded (Afesis-corplan, 2006)

The programme’s monitoring and evaluation strategy was based on regular monitoring meetings with the projects during project implementation. The groups were also taught to conduct their own surveys so that they can participate in

evaluation programme. An external research consultant was contracted to undertake an independent evaluation processes. (Afesis-corplan, 2006)

3.6.3. The expected impact of the programme.

The overall objective of the programme is to ensure that targeted community based projects run effectively and are in a position to access additional knowledge relevant to the development of their organization for long lasting sustainable livelihoods. However, the specific expected outcomes are: representatives qualified to run study circles at their respective projects; to have each member of the project cascading information and knowledge to their respective households; and sustained community-based projects. Other expected outcomes include - to have projects running effectively with (active members, functioning board/management, proper financial and resource systems being used, managing workforce, sufficient production, good marketing and sales); to have projects running with at least three additional source of support without the support from Afesis-corplan; and at least project proposals developed. The last set of expected outcomes is biased to business groups.

3.6.4. Capacity building programme report.

According to the report produced by Afesis-corplan on community based capacity building programmes all training modules (needs analysis, organizational strengths/capacity, financial management, human resource and administration, project management and study circles) were conducted successfully. The report outlined the following as the skills transferred during and after the programme:

- Basic financial management tools;
- Effective project planning, management, monitoring and evaluation;
- Using human resource management tools;
- Conducting meetings, problem solving; and information sharing;
- Team work and leading discussion;

- Facilitating learning activities and resolving group conflicts; and
- Personal development including presentation skills and self esteem enhancement (Afesis-corplan, 2009).

The document further indicates that through monitoring and site visits, Afesis-corplan was able to have the following impact on the projects:

- Review progress on project capacity building activities such as bookkeeping and registrations;
- Identification of challenges and shortcomings in the implementation of the tools;
- Find solutions to problems encountered including conflicts; and
- Correcting any misunderstandings and errors; and advise project beneficiaries in general operational concerns (Afesis-corplan, 2009).

As far as networking is concerned, the events were conducted during the programme implementation. Other relevant local role players (including government and non-governmental organizations) were invited during the events to make presentation to the project members about their products and services that might be helpful to the projects.

The following are reported in the document to have been built from the exercise (networking):

- Awareness of the existence and purpose of the projects in the areas covered;
- Opening opportunity for open local engagements on development opportunities;
- Providing an opportunity to identify crucial challenges within the communities and in particular those faced by community organizations that were beneficiaries to programme;
- Enhancement of the confidence of the beneficiaries in their projects as they had to sell their projects through group and one-on-one presentations (Afesis-corplan, 2009).

It was also reported that at the end of the programme, exchange visits were organized between groups and projects to share their experiences. During these visits, 'study circles' methods were used and the following were some of the outcomes:

- The beneficiaries shared information on experiences, challenges and solutions;
- Beneficiaries in similar sectors shared information on available sector opportunities;
- Beneficiaries shared information on funding opportunities and approaches;
- Beneficiaries formed strategic partnerships resulting in the formation of umbrella structures for collective bargaining and joint problem solving; and
- They were able to implement the study circles methodology in information sharing (Afesis-corplan, 2009).

The descriptive overview of Afesis-corplan gives an idea of the organization itself in terms of the background and track record in addressing rural poverty. The overview on the programme document provides an insight in terms of the purpose of the programme and its intentions from the outset. The organization was established as an NGO focusing on rural and urban development. The focus cuts across various community issues with an emphasis on sustainability. The organization's development approach encompasses many principles of SLA that are discussed in the literature. The interventions are mainly based on training and facilitation and there is a high emphasis on building and strengthening social capital.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction.

This chapter focuses on the analysis of the data that was gathered from the case study areas in order to answer the research questions. The findings will help to confirm the relevance or non-relevance of the literature discussed above. There are three sets of questions that were developed and used during interviews (one for project managers from Afesis-corplan, one for community representatives and one for community household members). The two project managers that were interviewed represented both the villages of Mzintshane and Ngxingxolo. Four community representatives were interviewed from each community and that makes a total of eight respondents for both case studies. Ten community members from different households were interviewed from each community and that makes up a total of twenty different household members who were interviewed for both case studies.

The information was collected through interviewing the participants from case study areas, and a structured questionnaire was used. The researcher also used the observation method as an additional tool to collect some of the information that could not be captured through a questionnaire method and this, was done in order to enrich the findings. The interviews were conducted by the researcher personally and it took a total of three days, (one in Mzintshane village, one in Ngxingxolo village and one for the project managers).

There was a high degree of co-operation from the participants throughout the interview sessions. All the participants were able to finish the interview sessions and the length of the interview was between twenty to thirty minutes per respondent. One could conclude that the participants had an interest in participating in the research because the researcher was introduced to them by the project manager from Afesis-corplan. However, the researcher made clear to them (participants) the purpose of the

interviews upfront to avoid wrong expectations that would have influenced their responses.

The Afesis-corplan programme was socio-economic in design with a bias towards small entrepreneurial/business groups. This is seen through the course content that focuses more on developing skills for managing business like grading and marketing and financial management. However, the programme was characterised by elements geared towards building social capital. Due to the nature of the programme, one would expect building and strengthening social capital to happen in this socio-economic development context.

The following discussion will focus on the analysis of findings from both villages starting with project managers who represented both communities and then community representatives and lastly, household members. The conclusion will be drawn at the end of analysis.

4.2. Analysis of findings from Project Managers.

Two project managers from the Afesis-corplan were interviewed on a one-on-one basis. They were representing both communities (Ngxingxolo and Mzintshane), and their experiences in both communities were more or less the same. The questions for the project managers were designed to extract the information regarding the background of the programme; their knowledge and understanding of the concept of social capital and its significance in reducing rural poverty and vulnerability; the extent to which they link it (social capital) to SLA and also to what extent social capital was incorporated into the programme design.

Project managers demonstrated a full knowledge about the programme from the start to the end and this can be associated with their position of being the custodians of the entire programme processes from the concept stage to implementation. Their knowledge of social capital and its degree of inclusion in programme design was an element in the broader context of the programme. In their understanding, building social capital is not a stand alone process; it runs concurrently with other development

activities in a programme. The significance of social capital in ensuring sustainable livelihood as it is captured in the literature appeared not to be the main focus but a secondary focus of the programme. The programme focused more on building group strengths/capacities and business skills as the basis for running businesses in a sustainable way. Even though business skills are important, it was necessary perhaps to emphasise building the social capital component at the same scale, because training programmes like this one are not new in the Eastern Cape or in other parts of rural areas of South Africa. The experience is that these training programmes have never substantially produced anything different because they encourage people to be more dependent on outside help rather than mobilizing the available assets within their communities as a starting point for development.

It was clear from the conversation that the managers had limited knowledge and information about the communities they were serving. It was also clear that they did not know much about the community groups that participated in the programme prior to commencement. This suggests that they did not take time to investigate the community dynamics of the two villages as the concept document claims. This raises a question about whether the groups that were chosen truly represented the entire community and to what extent sustainability will be achieved if the geographic spread in choosing the groups was compromised.

The programme design excluded the beneficiaries and this was confirmed by the project managers themselves. However, they claimed that the groups participated during the initial phase of needs analysis as a process of introducing the programme to the people. One could suspect that the programme designer made an assumption about the culture and expectations of the community. One could also suspect that, people willingness to participate throughout was motivated by the expectation that perhaps there might be funding opportunities at the end of the programme.

One could understand the exclusion of the groups from programme design due to the nature of programme which was based on training through pre-designed modules. However, the danger of this type of programme is that people would participate not necessarily because they buy into the idea, but because they are curious and have expectations of getting some financial assistance. Once they do not see anything

financially at the end, it would mean that they whole exercise was a waste of time to them.

The project managers showed a high level of satisfaction at the overall group participation, more especially during the 'study circles and exchange visits'. One could conclude that this method was good because the participants had an opportunity to share experiences and network with each other. Networking is one of the major principles of SLA and as a result, one can argue that at this level Afesis-corplan has facilitated the creation of social capital to a satisfactory degree. What one would want to see is to what extent the groups continue to network and benefit out of this opportunity and most importantly to what extent the groups shall have access to the wider institutions within and beyond their boundaries.

The conversation with the managers revealed that the programme was intended to have a multiplier effect (in terms of training the few so that they are in a position to train others in future). One of the emphases indicated by the managers is their encouragement of the groups to keep visiting each other to share experiences and information. However, it was not clear to what extent this will continue given the fact that exchange visits require financial resources and time and this is not currently available to most of the poor groups in those rural areas.

What appears to be an interesting aspect was an attempt to create new umbrella structures in both communities with a view to integrating different groups within the same village, but there was no indication if the new structures are working according to the original plan. Possibly, there was no need to form an umbrella structure in those communities, and if there was a need, the newly formed structures will have to face a challenge because they might not have the mandate and authority to implement. And given that these are rural areas, it might be extremely difficult to sustain these structures in so many ways. There could be a danger that these new umbrella structures might contribute to the destruction of existing social capital within the communities if not properly defined and managed.

The biggest gap that one can identify is that the programme has concentrated on building capacity for small businesses and paid less attention to other groups of the

broader society like the youth forums, women's associations, traditional groups (such as dance clubs and so on). The other groups of the communities were also indicated in the programme concept document as target groups. As a result of this bias, one could say that networks and relationships between groups that attended and those that did not attend might remain more or less the same because the project was not extended enough to cover the broader groups of the communities.

In terms of measuring the long-term impact and sustainability, it appears that it would be difficult because the programme has ended and there was no indication from the project managers that these activities will be continued in future. The monitoring measures that were outlined in the conceptual document were limited during programme implementation period.

4.3. Analysis of findings from Community Representatives.

The community representatives from both villages (Ngxingxolo and Mzintshane) had separate set of questions from that of the project managers and household members. However, their experiences were more or less similar to those of the household members. One could conclude that the similar experiences were as a result of their position in the community because they themselves are members of the groups and also reside within the communities. The following discussion will focus on the analysis of findings from Ngxingxolo representatives first and then Mzintshane.

4.3.1. Ngxingxolo village.

Four community representatives were interviewed from Ngxingxolo village, and both were actively involved in the programme throughout. An interesting thing in this village is that all representatives were females, and this confirms the literature which says that women are more actively involved in rural project as compared to men. It also confirms the trend that was highlighted above about the migration patterns in the Eastern Cape whereby most men migrate to cities mainly seeking employment opportunities.

It was revealed by the representatives that their role was merely coordinating the groups especially in terms of information dissemination (mainly about training arrangements) from the project managers to the various groups.
The representatives demonstrated a good knowledge about their community (Ngxingxolo). They were in a position to tell even about other groups within their communities that were not part of the programme. It came out clearly that in their village there were many groups/projects either business or socio-cultural that existed, but business projects were many as compared to socio-cultural groups. The existence of few social clubs could limit the community chances of building social capital because social clubs tend to accommodate many people than business groups which tend to cater for the interests of the few. But at the same time, the picture that emerged is that this community is actively involved in economically related activities for its own livelihoods, and business groups are the basis for building and strengthening social capital.

Most of the representatives had little knowledge about the purpose of the programme, and also they indicated that the information about the programme reached them at a last minute before its commencement. According to them, they knew about Afesis-corplan programme through the Great Kei Municipality representatives and they were not involved in selection of the groups in their area.

All representatives who were interviewed indicated that they were representing their communities, not their groups, and were asked to coordinate groups from their areas by the project managers prior to the implementation of the project. However, they also indicated that broader community participation in the planning process was limited, and some indicated that consultation with the community groups was done at a higher level (group management teams) and that was for the purpose of introducing the project rather than seeking inputs. Given the nature of the project, one would have expected the training design to be biased towards business. However, it was also important to take cognisance of the nature and complexity of rural areas whereby people need to be consulted fairly to ensure that they understand what is expected of them and most importantly that they are empowered to carry out development on their own in future.

It appeared during interviews that their understanding of the project was in the context of business skills training and had little to do with building social capital. It was apparent from almost all of them that the concept of social capital was new to them. However, one could see that they understand some elements of social capital in the context of networking and institution building. Networking appeared to have been emphasized throughout the programme. But the challenge that the programme has created unintentionally is that it emphasized the need for networking in the context of seeking outside funding and help rather than networking through building social networks and relationships of trust and reciprocity that will help people mobilize assets within their community.

What came out also through the interviews is that most of the representatives agree on the importance of building social capital as one of the important pillars of sustainable livelihoods, but it never came out strongly that social capital was their priority. One could understand this because social capital to them was seen as small element within the broader programme, not as a stand alone component. To a great extent, they see social capital as part of the cultural norms and values that already exist and there is no fundamental need to emphasise it. However, they fully agree that there is a need for capacity building and institutional development that will enhance their strength to achieve their goals.

In terms of the programme achievements, one could say that from the representatives' points of view, the project achieved more at a group/project level than at a broader community level because of its bias towards business groups who operate for profit rather than for a wider community benefit. Ngxingxolo representatives appeared to be positive about the new structure that was created by the project but with little comment on how well it is doing. It was clear that the umbrella structure did not have a mandate and powers as there were no activities mentioned and there was no indication of how it will operate since it has no financial and political support.

4.3.2. Mzintshane village.

Unlike in Ngxingxolo, there was one male in the team of the representatives. An interesting thing is that there was a high degree of similarity in the pattern of responses by community representatives from this village compared to Ngxingxolo representatives. As in Ngxingxolo, all community representatives were members of the community and also they were members of the participating groups in the programme, and their experiences were more or less similar to those of the household members especially with regard to the groups' day-to-day activities. All the community representatives were involved in the programme from the beginning to the end. It emerged that their role was merely coordinating the groups, a similar situation to Ngxingxolo village. Their role, however, was critical because there was a need to coordinate but most importantly, it was a capacity building process to them because their leadership capacity has been strengthened through the process.

The representatives had some understanding about their community but it was limited as compared to those of Ngxingxolo because they were not in the position to talk confidently about their community dynamics, especially the level of social capital. The other thing is that their knowledge was more or less limited to the few existing business groups.

When asked about the general groups' participation during the planning process, they indicated that community participation in the planning process was limited to groups' leadership and that was to introduce the project rather than seeking inputs from them. This was similar to Ngxingxolo village. Most of the representatives had some knowledge of the purpose of the programme. They indicated that they got to know about Afesis-corplan programme through the Local Municipality representatives who introduce them to the project managers. This confirms the representatives' limited influence in terms of ensuring the geographical spread when choosing the groups to participate in the programme. It also appeared that their understanding of the project was in the context of business skills training and had little to do with building social capital. It was apparent from almost all of them that the concept of social capital was new to them. However, one could pick up from the conversation that they understand

the elements of social capital in the context of networking, similar to the representatives from Ngxingxolo.

As in Ngxingxolo, most representatives from Mzintshane village agreed with the importance of building social capital as one of the important pillars of sustainable livelihoods, but it never came out strongly that social capital was their priority. To a great extent, they see social capital as part of the cultural norms and values that already exist and there is no need to emphasise it. However, they fully agree that there is a need for a capacity building and institutional development that will enhance their operations and maximize their production.

One of the programme objectives was to integrate and network the groups' activities to empower them to have a single voice on issues of common interest. However, it appears that unlike in Ngxingxolo village, the representatives of Mzintshane were sceptical that the new umbrella structure will work. The sentiments from almost all of the representatives point to the fact that there was a leadership problem. There was a high level of distrust among the new structure members. One of the things indicated by some representatives was that because all the representatives belong to community groups, there was fear that the opportunities created through the new umbrella structure will benefit the groups where the leaders belong instead of the broader community.

It therefore clearly shows that Afesis-corplan's intention of building and strengthening trust among and/or between these people and groups so that they are able to run the new structure was not fully realised. However, it is important to indicate that Afesis-corplan programme did not actually destroy existing social capital. In terms of the programme achievements one could say that from the representative's point of views, the project achieved more at a group/project level than at a broader community level. This can be attributed to the fact that the programme target was biased towards business groups without any plan to ensure that, in turn, this would benefit others who are not business oriented. However, it was clear that they expected more in the form of financial assistance from the programme as they kept diverting from the topic towards explaining how they are struggling with raising money to run their day-to-day activities.

4.4. Analysis of findings from Community Members.

The last set of questions was for the household members. Ten members from each village were interviewed. The individuals who were interviewed were a combination of those who attended the training workshops and those who did not attend. This group had many questions as compared to others because the focus of the study was on them as compared to other groups. The discussions below will analyse the findings from Ngxingxolo village first and then Mzintshane village.

4.4.1. Ngxingxolo village.

As indicated earlier in the introduction, the participants were keen to participate and they participated throughout the interview sessions. It was clear from the interviewees that they were not aware of the purpose of the project except that it was about training on community projects (especially business projects).

None of the household members from this village (Ngxingxolo) participated in the planning of the programme. This shows a similar pattern with the community representatives where all of them said that they did not participate in the planning stage. It was not a surprise because the programme was pre-designed and the people, including the community representatives were only informed about it precisely because their participation was required only during implementation.

There was little evidence that those who attended the training sessions had capacity to report back to their respective groups in an efficient and effective manner. This means that one can assume that only those who attended had benefited. The other thing is that most of the attendees were old people whom some of them could not read and write, and one might suspect that most of them could not understand some of the concepts and terminology that might have been used during the training.

It came up during interviews that most participants had single membership in community groups before the project started. This shows how the community was organized before the programme and it also appeared that most people did not join any new groups as there was no indication of newly established groups apart from the umbrella structure that was formed as a result of the Afesis-corplan programme.

When asked, some participants indicated that they do not know of any new group in their areas and are not interested in joining something new as they are happy where they belong at present. There was also no indication of new members joining the old groups as a result of the project. This shows that the Afesis-corplan programme concentrated on the existing groups without extending the invitation to the general public to attend the training workshop that could result in new members wanting to join existing groups or establishing new groups. But also there was no indication that there is a demand from the community to join existing groups. Again, there was no indication of existing members leaving their groups after the programme. One could say that the programme did not destroy what existed in the community before.

One could also observe that most group members were protective of their own groups because most if not all were business orientated. It also came up that most groups suffered the loss of members during formation and, as a result, those who remained and were still involved indicated that they would be suspicious about new members wanting to join because they see them as opportunist who want to join because things are shaping up well. It shows how the programme had a challenge in building trust amongst the people and groups, but on the other hand it shows how business oriented projects differ from non-project ones.

Apart from all business groups that participated, there was only one group in Ngxingxolo village that was involved in helping elderly and disabled people. In that area people are united and assist each other to help the elders without any apparent need for material benefit. This reciprocal type of social capital is rare in most rural areas where elders are a full responsibility of the extended family rather than a community organization.

The other factor that came up very strongly is that most people have strong relationships at household level. This was indicated by almost all participants who said that in their community they help each other during times of need. It appeared that the kinds of relationships that exist at household level were there long before the commencement of the programme and it was not necessary to concentrate on building it. It was, of course, necessary to build and strengthen bridging and linking social capital that would enhance their interactions even beyond the current limited boundaries. These types of networks were necessary because these areas are typical rural areas and access to information is not easy and also learning from others even outside their immediate boundaries is important.

There was little indication of improved economic and material conditions of the participants as a result of this project. However, one could notice when interacting with the participants of the programmes that their perception towards development has changed. People could see the importance of being agents of development rather than recipients of donations and grants.

4.4.2. Mzintshane village.

As in Ngxingxolo village, all the participants were keen to participate throughout the interviews. The participants showed the same sentiments as their counterparts (Ngxingxolo) about their limited knowledge of the purpose of the project except that it was about community projects.

As the Ngxingxolo people, the Mzintshane interviewees did not participate in the planning phase of the programme. This is the same as with the community representatives where none of them participated. This was not a surprise as indicated above. What is interesting is that there was no indication that these communities wanted this type of a programme; hence it was introduced without them being consulted.

Unlike in Ngxingxolo, the Mzintshane people demonstrated some evidence of their capacity to report back to their respective groups in an efficient and effective manner. Among the old women who were interviewed, there were ex-teachers and nurses who demonstrated a full understanding of issues and a capacity to transfer the skills and information to others. This type of human asset is very useful for the sustainable livelihoods of the people of Mzintshane.

The majority of people who were interviewed indicated that they belonged to more than one group before the Afesis-corplan programme started, which is different as compared to Ngxingxolo where most people belong to one group. This pattern is associated with their active involvement in other social activities such as community burial clubs, family clubs etc.

However, there was no indication of newly established groups apart from the umbrella structure that was formed as a result of the Afesis-corplan programme. When asked, most participants indicated that they do not know of any new group in their areas and are not sure if they would join something new because they are already members of other groups in the community. There was also no indication of new members wanting to join existing groups after the programme.

The respondents did not indicate any sign of destruction of existing social capital as there was no mention of members who left groups after the training or some conflict within and between the groups as a result of the Afesis-corplans' programme.

Most group members showed a high degree of being protective of their respective groups and it appeared that the groups were business orientated, and this is similar to the other village. It also came up that most groups suffered the loss of members during establishment and as a result those who remained were suspicious about new members wanting to join. It shows how the programme had a challenge in building trust amongst the people and also it shows how people put financial benefits first.

The other finding was that in Mzintshane village, the groups sent more representatives as compared to Ngxingxolo village where groups sent one or two delegates. An explanation given was that the Mzintshane groups were few and that gave them an

opportunity to send more representatives to the training workshops. One could assume that this maximises their chances to build strong social capital because of the number of people who attended per group, but this does not automatically translate into a positive result.

Participants in Mzintshane showed a higher level of awareness about the existing social groups in their community than the participants in Ngxingxolo village. There was an indication of strong bonds within and between households and this has been demonstrated by the number of groups like stokvels and burial societies that people belong to apart from business projects. The situation was slightly different in Ngxingxolo village where the interviewees seemed not to know much about other social groups in their community. The findings demonstrate how Mzintshane had a high chance of building networks and relationships that could benefit the broader community by capitalizing on the existing social bonds as a start.

There was little indication in terms of a change in the quality of life of the participants and the broader community as a result of this project. However, one could notice from the interaction that most of those who participated in the training workshops have benefited a lot in terms of personal interrelations and their perceptions have improved which is a similar experience to Ngxingxolo participants.

4.5. Conclusion.

The findings from the case study reveal some interesting patterns and trends in as far as rural development is concerned. Comparatively, the findings from both case study areas were more or less similar and this was an interesting discovery given the fact that two case studies were used in order to compare similar or dissimilar patterns. The findings confirm the main arguments in the literature to a larger extent because most of the things discussed there were experienced in the study. There were issues that were raised by the respondents, especially by the household members, that point directly to the lack of social capital, networks in particular, within and between the communities and groups. Most of the groups had a history of receiving financial help

from outside donors but still they have not achieved any substantial sustainability; and when probes one finds out that most of the principles of SLA were not applied.

The literature on SLA tends to advocate more positive outcomes from SLA programme because the approach is characterised by principles that have been overlooked in conventional approaches. However, the caution that was raised in the literature about being optimistic about the result of SLA on development programme was confirmed to be relevant from the findings because it was clear that communities are not the same, and as a result they cannot be treated the same way. There is a strong view in the literature that social capital is one of the most important pillars of sustainable development. The findings confirm this view. However, building and/or strengthening social capital is not seen as a first priority by rural people of the Eastern Cape. One could conclude that the culture of being recipients of donations for development has negative consequences because rural people show little interest in programmes that are based on building social capital without any promise for funding at the end of the day.

The findings also show that many rural people do not understand the concept 'social capital' and as a result they do not see it as important. However, one could see that when it is appropriately explained to them, it becomes important. This means that for social capital to be effective in reducing poverty, its incorporation into programmes should be carefully done and managed, taking cognisance of the history of development programmes in rural communities.

The findings also point to the fact that participants had not been involved in the design of the programme and also that Afesis-corplan had little knowledge of the existing groups in the communities and of how they functioned before the programme was implemented. This finding is in contrary to what Afesis-corplan had mentioned as one of the objectives of the programme, which is situational analysis. This point to the argument that the programme somehow ignored some elements of Sustainable Livelihoods that advocate that beneficiaries should be made aware of the assets bases within their communities through participatory processes. One can conclude that Afesis-corplan has made assumptions about the expectations/culture of the community and its levels of social capital. Some of the Sustainable livelihoods

assessment tools/techniques include: Leaky bucket – this approach provides a useful framework for identifying the various categories of community assets and the possible socio-economic opportunities for linking some of these assets together; Transect tool – this is also a good Sustainable Livelihoods Assessment tool which allows the beneficiaries/participants to jointly walk across their community on an identified transect to mark all the assets that they come across; and participatory approach as a means of encouraging people to participate in decision making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases of development (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003).

South African rural development experience is not different from that in other countries. The findings confirm this point. However, the only difference is that in South Africa, rural people have a tendency of wanting to get everything from government. This culture of receiving has resulted in people being lazy and believing that for them to do anything they need outside help. In some cases, these people do not understand why they should go through vigorous training and workshops before they could get funding and other form of assistance that they used to get freely. This culture poses a challenge in as far as SLA is concerned in development programmes and for a change to be effected in South African rural areas, people need to have a shift of mindset and become agents of development rather than recipients. It is also a responsibility of development practitioners to explain the need to focus on building and strengthening social capital to the rural people in language that they understand.

The programme that Afesis-corplan has implemented in Mzintshane and Ngxingxolo villages reflected the organization's approach to development. The organization implemented the programme itself, and attention was given to ensuring that individual projects achieve sustainability. This was ensured largely by emphasizing building and strengthening social capital during the training and this has even happened by default in some cases during the programme.

The programme intentions were good and relevant for the rural communities that need to be empowered to handle development on their own. However, it is important to note that programmes like these are important but do not automatically guarantee positive change that could lead to households and community sustainability in rural communities.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from the study provide valuable information about the status quo of rural communities in the Eastern Cape and also provide good lessons for future rural development programmes in the province and South Africa as a whole. The findings also show how the concepts of 'sustainable livelihoods' and 'social capital' are new in the rural communities of the Eastern Cape. This is confirmed by the respondents' insistence on the need for financial donation as a priority to fund their projects rather than on training and institution building that capacitate them to initiate and implement development using the available assets in their communities.

During the course of the interviews, one could see how the respondents regarded the significance of building and strengthening social and business networks and trust when this is appropriately explained. However, there was always an indication from them that financial support is a priority in ensuring sustainability. At this stage, one could say that the Afesis-corplan's SLA programme has facilitated the building and strengthening of some elements of social capital, especially networks in the communities where the programme has been implemented. However, the feeling of the people is that in as much as the SLA programme is important, there is still a gap because the organization did not facilitate funding for the existing projects in the communities.

The importance of social capital in poverty alleviation was never seen as crucial by the communities of the Eastern Cape, and it is presumed that this has been caused by the history and culture of people who are used to receiving donations for development projects that are not based on sustainable approaches. There was an indication that most projects in both communities do not perform or operate effectively. When they were asked about the reasons behind projects' poor performance, the participants indicated that the main problem is the lack of funding.

It was clear that there was a lack of networks between groups and the wider institutions of the society and obviously Afesis-corplan has helped to fill this gap, but it remains to be seen if the effects will be sustained. Even though the programme has emphasised the building of trust within and between groups, one could still see that some members do not trust each other, especially members of the newly established structure in one of the villages.

At this stage, one could argue that Afesis-corplan has achieved some of its objectives especially the transferred of skills like project management; financial management; networking skills; conflict resolutions and problem solving; human resource; personal development including presentation skills and self esteem development and leadership skills. There was evidence of the newly established coordinating structures in the communities that were created as a result of the programme. The findings point to the fact that the newly established structures are not functional which raises the question about the need in the first place to establish such a structure. This point to the fact that already Afesis-corplan's objective of integrating the groups could not be realised. However, the programme did not actually destroy existing social capital in the communities.

The Afesis-corplan experience can be useful in assisting development planners in building and strengthening social capital through SLA programmes in rural communities of the Eastern Cape. What is critical about this experience is that in as far as social capital seems to be important, there is a need to take into cognisance that rural communities are not the same and as a result SLA programmes that emphasise building and strengthening social capital should not be perceived as an automatic answer to rural poverty and vulnerability. It would be very useful for development planners to do a thorough situational analysis case-by-case so that they have a clear understanding of the communities that they want to do development with.

Since this study was undertaken to look at the issues and dynamics facing rural development, it is important that recommendations are given in order to inform future programmes in the same field; and most importantly that the development planners are informed when planning rural development in future. The following are some of the recommendations emanating from the findings of this study.

It has been indicated in the literature as well as in the findings that poverty eradication needs a holistic approach. However, it is important that development planners and practitioners either from government or non-governmental organizations acknowledge that social capital by definition is broad, and as a result they should not perceive all rural communities as lacking all types of social capital because some do exist. The fact is that there is a high level of social capital in rural communities of the Eastern Cape that is usually embedded in traditional norms and values. The question is how to ensure that rural people use tradition to sustain their livelihoods. But also it should be noted with caution that traditional systems cannot automatically facilitate sustainable livelihoods in Eastern Cape rural communities. There is also some level of socio-economic networking and relationships that exist between the rural communities and institutions beyond their boundaries, but to a lesser extent.

Second, there is a need for a mindset shift of people in the Eastern Cape rural communities from being receivers of services and goods to becoming agents of development. The conventional approaches to development have for many years indirectly and directly transformed rural people' mindsets from being hard workers to becoming lazy because they believe that there is nothing they can do without outside help. This situation has been worsened by a government that does not do enough to encourage people to initiate development in their own localities; rather it keeps pouring money into communities through unsustainable programmes that do not change people's lives. One of the comments from the respondents was that the government has abandoned them because it is no longer giving them funds for projects like before and as a result their projects have stopped operating. This problem can be managed through SLA methods that encourages people to acknowledge what they have and use that as a point of departure for their development.

Third, capacity building programmes (mainly through training and practice) that are provided to community organizations and groups in the Eastern Cape should strike a balance between strengthening groups in business skills and building and strengthening social capital. This is important because training in business skills have been provided in the rural communities of the Eastern Cape and other parts of rural South Africa but there is still little change in terms of development. Training should not concentrate on how to make a good funding proposal. Rather it should concentrate

on how to mobilize assets already available in the communities. To avoid disjuncture, training that is provided to the community groups should cover all types of socio-economic formations/groups in the community and it should at least be linked to some practical activities on the ground to ensure continuity.

Fourth, people's participation in development processes (from decision-making to implementation) should not be about satisfying a process. It should be a process with genuine value that is carried out through intimately involving people in all relevant aspects of development. There was an indication that most individuals who participated in the training programme did not understand the objective of the programme and also people did not participate in the design of the programme. There is a need for the project managers from the NGOs and other developmental organizations to make time before the design and implementation of the development programme to do a situational analysis to inform themselves about the local dynamics, including power relations within the community.

Fifth, development practitioners should not always consider rural people as illiterate and lacking information. The reality is that some communities have strong human assets in the form of retired nurses, teachers etc., and these people know exactly what they want to happen in their communities. Undermining these people through introducing things that they do not want in their communities might result into rendering the development programmes unsuccessful. In Mzintshane village there were some elders who are retired teachers and nurses and these people were very insightful during the interviews.

Sixth, rural development should not be treated in isolation because rural people are part of the global community. For example, a community that aspires to be involved in agriculture for trade or export will need proper road infrastructure and services. Road infrastructure in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape is in bad condition and needs serious attention from the government. However, what is important at this point in time is that rural people of the Eastern Cape should prioritise food security first and this does not necessarily need huge investment from outside. It is achievable through applying the approaches of SL that emphasise building social capital and mobilising of available community assets.

Overall, the application of SLA in rural development programmes should not be seen as an automatic guarantee to sustainable development. It is entirely a combination of many factors and players who collaborate through a common purpose to ensure sustainable livelihoods for the broader community.

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ANNEXURE A: QUESTIONNAIRE

A. Questions to Project Managers

1. How would you define the concept of social capital? What role does social capital play in the programme?----------
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2. Was the programme designed to build/strengthen community networks and relationships? Explain how and why? ----------
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3. What do you think community/people/groups understood and expected from this component of the project? ----------
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4. Did the existing groups participate in the programme preparatory processes? And what was their role?----------
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5. To what extent did the community have different socio-cultural groups like stokvels, youth/women clubs, etc?----------
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6. How did you get the information about the community social dynamics, including social networks and relationships?----------

7. How far have you understood the extent and depth of social formation in the community at the outset of the programme----------

8. How did the existing groups get involved in the implementation of the projects? And what was their role?----------

9. Which specific groups were involved during implementation, and who were the people who represented those groups?----------

10. To what extent did the participating groups collaborated with each other and the project management during implementation?----------

11. How did you feel about the group's level of participation during implementation? ----------

12. To what extent did the programme unite or divide the groups? Explain how?----------

13. How did the project monitor the project's impact on social networks and relationships amongst the people?----------

14. Did the project given rise to new groups or did it build on existing ones? Explain how----------

15. To what extent do the groups network with the wider institutions of the society like NGOs and business forums? Has the programme assisted them with this?----------

16. Did the programme experience the challenges of in and out-migration? And how?----------

17. To what extent has the programme achieved its goals of building/strengthening social networks and relationships and why?----------

18. What are the lessons that other initiatives can learn from this programme?----------

B. Questions to the Community Representatives

1. What was the aim of the programme?----------

2. Before the programme started, was there much local activity by community networks and social groups? To what extent did the community organized itself according to different socio-cultural groups like stokvels, youth/women clubs, etc?----------

3. Did some groups have access to other community structures like NGOs, Business forum etc. before programme commenced, and why?----------

4. In general what were the relationships between people in the community like – were they characterised by trust and sharing, or were households isolated from each other and fearful or suspicious of each other? Give examples----------

5. Did the project managers make an effort to understand community dynamics, including networks, groups, access to social institutions and the extent of trust and reciprocity? How did they do it?----------
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6. How did you and your constituency react to the programme's approach to building social networks and relationships? ----------
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7. To what extent do you think building good social relationships was a priority to the community? Why was this a case?----------
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8. Did the community groups participate in the planning and implementation of the programme?----------
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9. If yes, which groups participated and what was their role?----------
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10. Which groups were not so involved? And why not so involved?---------
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11. To what extent did the programme unite or divide the people? And how?----------

12. Did the programme experience the challenges of in and out-migration? And how?----------

13. Do the community have incidents of HIV/AIDS that are affecting the programme and how?----------

14. If yes, to what extent and how is this addressed?----------

15. What can other initiatives can learn from this programme?----------

C. Questions to the households

1. What were the goals and objectives of the programme?----------
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2. What were your expectations from the programme?----------

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3. How had the community organized itself according to different socio-cultural groups like stokvels, youth/women clubs, etc?----------
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4. Did you belong to any group before the commencement of the programme?----------
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5. If so, how long have you been a member of a group?----------
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6. How often did you attend the group meetings and activities?----------
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7. How did you benefit from being a member? If not why not?----------
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8. To what extent did you trust each other within and between groups and other people who were not part of any group?----------
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9. Did households help each other during the times of need?----------
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10. Were you involved in the planning of this programme?----------
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11. If you were involved, in what capacity?----------

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12. What issues did you raise during the planning phase?----------
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13. Were the issues incorporated in the programme design?----------
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14. If not, why not?----------

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15. Were you involved in the implementation of the programme and what did you do?----------
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16. If not, why not?----------

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17. What households were involved?----------

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18. Which ones were not involved and why?----------

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19. Have you experienced any changes in your quality of life as a result of this programme?----------
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20. If there are other factors contributed to the change, what are those factors?----------
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21. Are you part or member of the new groups/organizations and what is your role?----------

22. If not member of new groups, why not?----------

23. How are you benefiting from the programme?----------

24. Are you still involved in the older groups?----------

25. If not, what happened to those groups?----------

26. Did the programme experience the challenges of in and out-migration? And how?----------

27. Do the community have incidents of HIV/AIDS that are affecting the programme and how?----------

28. If yes, to what extent and how is this addressed?----------

29. What can other initiatives can learn from this programme?----------