

**An investigation into the use of participatory communication
within the Expanded Public Works Programme: a case study of
the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality**

by

Lydia Batseba Ramaisela Maredi

Student number 28612282

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Supervisor: Dr Cecilia Penzhorn

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
Cosatu	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DFID	Department for International Development
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
GDS	Growth and Development Summit
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IDT	Independent Development Trust
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MIG	Municipal Infrastructure Grant
NEF	National Economic Forum
NPWP	National Public Works Programme
PWP	Public Works Programme
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
Salga	South African Local Government Association

CHAPTER 1

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to investigate the manner in which participatory communication was used to implement an Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), focusing on the construction of the D4100 road by the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality in Limpopo, South Africa.

It is generally acknowledged that many problems relating to unemployment and poverty in South Africa can be attributed to the apartheid system that deprived the majority of the population of their basic services and rights (Deegan, 2001:115; ANC, 1994:2). However, unemployment and poverty were listed as the most threatening aspect of our young democracy, mainly because about 40% of the working-age population was still unemployed in 1999, just five years after the democratic government was elected to power (Woolard & Woolard, 2006:1).

It is on this basis that the newly elected democratic government started introducing various policies and programmes as mechanisms to curb or reduce the levels of both poverty and unemployment in South Africa (McCord, 2004a). These policies and programmes started off with the well-known Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) that was meant to destroy the remains of the apartheid system and all its institutions while building and reconstructing democratic institutions and public infrastructure based on the principles of a non-racial and non-sexist society (ANC, 1994).

Unfortunately, the RDP did not last long as it faced numerous challenges and two years later, in 1996, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy (GEAR) was introduced with the purpose of improving the economic growth and redistribution of wealth through the promotion of exports and encouragement of investment (Cosatu,

1997). Again, GEAR failed to reach its intended objectives of enhancing economic growth and creating employment for over one million people within the five-year period between 1996 and 2000. On the contrary, a considerable number of jobs were lost in the formal sector during that period.

Due to the failures of these economic policies and programmes, the country still remained in a desperate situation to change its economic strategy and policies to curb the burden of persisting unemployment and poverty in the majority of the population.

A turnaround strategy was to focus on skills development and training, which would enable the majority of the unemployed to get employment in the labour market (McCord, 2004a). The turnaround strategy involved the introduction of the Further Education and Training Act (98/1998), the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (52/2000) as amended by the Education Laws Amendment Act (50/2002) as well as the Skills Development Act (97/1998) which were simultaneously aimed at ensuring skills development, education and training relevant to the workplace amongst the unskilled and uneducated people (and also amongst the workforce) (Mbuli, 2008:142). This focus on skills development and training was also motivated by literature suggesting that low levels of skills greatly contribute towards the high levels of unemployment and that skilled and educated people are more often employed than the unskilled and uneducated (McCord, 2004a).

As a further initiative, at its policy conference in Stellenbosch in 2002, the ANC passed a resolution to invest in infrastructure development by expanding the construction and labour sector through skills development and training (Altman, Mayer, Woolard, Du Toit, Zuma & Phakathi, 2004:63; Du Toit, 2005:665). Subsequently, in 2003, the Public Works Programme (PWP) was introduced by former President Mbeki (Altman *et al.*, 2004:63) and officially launched in 2004.

The main aim and objective of the PWP was to encourage all stakeholders to implement projects using labour-intensive methods so as to increase job opportunities for the majority of the unemployed (Du Toit, 2005:662; McCord, 2003). In its first five years of implementation, between 2004 and 2009, the programme had an

objective of creating one million jobs (Department of Public Works, 1999). Another objective of the PWP was to expand existing projects in such a way that they multiply themselves by creating new ones to ensure maximum absorption of new labour (Department of Public Works, 1999). These labour-intensive methods were meant to ensure the reduction of poverty and unemployment in the country, especially in semi-urban and rural areas.

The guiding principle of implementing the EPWP in South Africa is the Code of Good Practice, which demands consultation with relevant community-based organisations with regard to the selection or recruitment of workers to be employed on projects; it further allows for special conditions of employment for workers employed by contractors on labour intensive projects (Phillips, 2004). Such a participatory approach enables communities to determine and take control of the allocation of development resources and their priorities in their own areas, and prevents them from becoming passive participants (Theron, 2005:111). As an important aspect of the democracy in South Africa, community participation is perceived as a model for addressing the unjust system of the previous apartheid regime by contributing to the broad field of social and economic development (Raniga & Simpson, 2002).

In line with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), which clearly stipulates the vision for a developmental local government providing services using principles of democratic, accountable and responsive governance, municipalities or local authorities are also committed to work with citizens to find sustainable solutions to their material, economic or social problems. This commitment is captured in Section 26(c) of the Municipal Systems Act, (32/2000) which stipulates that an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) must reflect “the council’s development priorities and objectives for its elected term, including its local economic development aims and its internal transformation needs” (South Africa, 2000). The objectives provide direction to the planning and implementation process of all the projects undertaken by the municipality within a specified period. The IDP is a five-year strategic plan of the municipality that involves continuous consultations, informs all the budgeting,

planning, management and decision-making processes of the municipality and is reviewed annually to reprioritise the developmental needs and aspirations of communities.

The main aim of participation in developmental projects is to actively involve communities in identifying developmental problems, conceptualizing and formulating plans, implementing such plans and taking decisions to realise their developmental objectives; as well as identifying available resources for sustainable livelihoods of communities (UK DFID, 2002b). However, developmental projects are in many instances faced with a number of challenges, for example:

- Rural communities often lack the knowledge, understanding and literacy level to grasp the benefits of their participation in local government issues such as taking decisions for their own development (Akroyd, 2003:3).
- In some instances, development agencies themselves, researchers, and governments lack knowledge and understanding of the diverse ways in which rural or even poor communities sustain their livelihoods (Phillips, Bothell & Snead, 2002:176).
- Another challenge is largely attributed to the lack of commitment by government and development agencies to rural projects (Akroyd, 2003:3).

The importance of the involvement of all stakeholders is emphasised by the South African Local Government Association (Salga) in its assertion that development projects fail mainly because of the lack of community participation and decision-making in the project (Salga, 2010).

It is within this context that this study aims at investigating the manner in which participatory communication was used to implement the EPWP in the construction of the D4100 road within the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality, and the experiences and perceptions of the local villagers regarding the implementation of the project.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.2.1 Main research question

In the light of the above, the central question to be addressed is:

To what extent did local villagers participate in the decision-making and planning of the construction of the D4100, an EPWP within the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality?

1.2.2 Sub-questions

- What is the understanding and perception of local villagers regarding their involvement and overall participation in the D4100 construction programme?
- What were the effects of participation on the lives of local villagers during the construction of the D4100 road?
- How did the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality implement the public works construction programme?

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study followed a qualitative research approach as it aimed to fully engage and interact with participants (Mouton & Marais, 1992:160) with the aim of determining the feelings and opinions of local villagers during the construction of the D4100 road that cuts across their villages in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality. The EPWP in this case was assessed during its second phase, which took place between April 2009 and 2014, focusing primarily on the implementation thereof.

A case study research design was used to enable the study to focus on a single unit namely the construction of the D4100 road in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality.

1.3.1 Data collection

Collection of data for this study involved the use of three methods:

- Face-to-face interviews were conducted with participants in the project in order to determine their opinions, ideas, perceptions, experiences and an understanding of their participation in the project as well as the effect of the project on their lives.
- Focus group discussions were conducted with relevant stakeholders from the municipality and the Limpopo Department of Public Works to get an understanding of the implementation of the EPWP, its purpose, how communities participate in such programmes and the successes and failures of the programme.
- Analysis of relevant local and national government documents was undertaken. Policies, programmes, strategies and guidelines on the EPWP provided insight into and broader understanding of the programme, including its aims and objectives, successes, failures, challenges and so forth.

1.3.2 Selection of participants

A qualitative investigation does not necessarily require a large sample as one is essentially interested in whether the information is rich in data and not in generalizing the data (Cassell & Symon, 1995; Lemon, 1995).

This study used purposive sampling to select the villagers, i.e. the beneficiaries of the construction programme. Prospective participants were selected from a current database of jobseekers. The main criterion was that participants had worked or were still working on the project. Consideration was also given to issues of gender and age so as to relate to general participatory development requirements.

Names of local municipal workers and persons from the Limpopo Department of Public Works were obtained from a Community Liaison Officer working in the area. The few individuals who were willing to take part in the focus groups were all used.

1.3.3 Data analysis

Data analysis is an important step in research as it analyses and interprets the

findings of the research. For this study, thematic content analysis was used for analysing the data obtained from the face-to-face interviews and the focus group discussions. Information obtained from studying (analysing) relevant documents served to inform some of the questions asked during the interviews and the focus group discussions.

1.4 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

The empirical work presented the following challenges:

- The empirical study was conducted at the end of 2013 and beginning of 2014 and therefore some of the respondents associated the study with the general elections that took place in May 2014. As such, some of the potential respondents were scared to participate as they thought their names would be disclosed to the government officials who were closely linked to the project.
- Another major challenge, specifically in the timely collection of data, was the fact that the respondents from the province postponed the dates and changed the venues of the focus group discussions which led to delays.

1.5 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This research study is made up of six chapters which are outlined as follows:

Chapter 1, the introductory chapter, provides the context within which the research was conducted and discusses the purpose of the research project. The chapter describes the background to the EPWP in South Africa and how this programme is being used to deal with the challenges of poverty and unemployment. The chapter goes on to outline the problem statement, including the main research question and sub-questions, as well as its limitations and delimitations and finally discusses the research design or methodology.

Chapter 2 is a literature review of the use of PWPs across the world, including America, Asia and Africa, to address challenges of poverty and unemployment. The

discussion includes different ways in which the programmes were used, such as poverty relief, food for all, income generation, creation of job opportunities and skills enhancement. The discussion also includes the definition of public works programmes, its advantages and disadvantages or successes and failures. The chapter focuses on the EPWP in South Africa and the use of this programme to address inequalities.

Chapter 3 looks at the role of participation and participatory communication in the implementation of PWPs. The discussion covers the underlying principles of participatory communication in development projects and the background of the Lepelle-Nkumpi community which participated in such a project. Two case studies of successful EPWPs in South Africa are discussed as well.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology that was used to undertake the research. The chapter also outlines the population and sampling of communities who participated in the study, how they were selected and the criteria used. It further covers data collection methods.

Chapter 5 concentrates on how the data was analysed and interpreted.

Chapter 6 gives a summary of findings and provides some recommendations based on the lessons learned throughout the study and ends with concluding remarks and suggestions for possible future studies.

CHAPTER 2

2 PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMMES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will review literature on the concept of PWPs and provide an indication of how such programmes were used by many countries across the world to try and deal with the challenges of poverty and unemployment. It will start by defining the concept of PWPs, where they originated, their advantages and disadvantages, the South African PWPs and how they have evolved over time, how they have contributed towards reducing poverty and unemployment and whether the programmes were successful or not.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMMES

2.2.1 Background

The history of PWPs can be traced back to the early 1930s in which industrialised countries like the United States of America (USA) implemented and used the scheme as a provisional measure to address the challenges of high unemployment and poverty that were caused by the Great Depression (severe depression of the economic markets) (Romer, 2003). The depression spread throughout the world and affected other countries, particularly those in the nearest vicinity of the USA, the European countries and so forth (Eichengreen, 1992). The spread was made possible by the gold standard that was a commonly-used, worldwide, fixed-currency exchange that provided a viable environment for the depression to spread throughout the world, as the gold standard was the linkage and connector for all countries to one another (Eichengreen, 1992).

During the depression era, all the major economic drivers in a country, such as

manufacturing, mining and the financial sector, collapsed (Smiley, 2002). The severity of the depression in the USA was seen around 1933, when “about 25 per cent of all workers and 37 per cent of all non-farm workers were completely jobless” (Smiley, 2002). A significant number of families suffered from starvation, while others lost their personal belongings including businesses, farms and homes (Smiley, 2002). This prompted a migration to areas such as California where families began searching for jobs and a better life (Romer, 2003).

It is estimated that during this period, the public works scheme in the USA managed to absorb the majority of the unemployed by creating jobs, particularly for those who were in desperate need of being employed (Bordo, Goldin & White, 1998).

2.2.2 Public works programmes in the USA

As mentioned above, the large-scale PWP of the 1930s were used by the USA to address the problem of poverty and high unemployment facing the country as a result of the Great Depression (Garraty, 1978). Large numbers of men who participated in these projects had neither experience nor the know-how of their specific tasks and thus depended on learning on the job.

During the late 1930s, when the economy showed signs of recovery, the military became a strong element in the PWPs. Millions of young American men were drawn into the military work force as government increased the scale of the PWPs to create even more jobs for Americans (Romer, 2003). Government took the responsibility of subsidising all the employment opportunities, particularly those for unskilled and semi-skilled labourers so that they could work in industries and factories and undergo training and acquire skills while they were earning an income or wage for themselves (Smiley, 2002).

Although the military service was initially gender-based and targeted only men, this priority was given to men who had families, based on the understanding that they would support their families (Eichengreen, 1992). The scheme gradually targeted younger men with the expectation that they would grow in the military and, in

addition to economically providing for their families, also protect their country from external forces (Smiley, 2002).

2.2.3 Public works programmes in other countries

Much of the construction work done across the world took the shape of PWPs. For example, the Great Wall of China was constructed by millions of unskilled and semi-skilled men using the limited construction machinery of the time. The pyramids of Egypt were constructed using a similar approach: applying unskilled labour and Giza is the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World that still stands today.

During the 1960s, India became well known and admired for using the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme (MEGS) that targeted unemployed people in the rural areas (Datt & Ravallion, 1994). The scheme provided a guaranteed minimum employment for workers on a continuous basis and within a specific time frame, i.e. three months in a year (Datt & Ravallion, 1994). This programme addressed poverty by ensuring that the poor gained sustained access to employment thus guaranteeing a regular minimum income. Like other PWPs, Maharashtra started very slowly and gradually extended its scope. For instance, during severe droughts the scheme increased employment for rural people in the agricultural sector to build infrastructure to alleviate the effect of future droughts and floods (Thwala, 2001).

Some of the key objectives of the Maharashtra employment guarantee schemes of India included that of turning subsistence farmers into small commercial farmers trading locally so that they could generate some income for themselves and their families, while creating employment opportunities for others in the short to medium term (Datt & Ravallion, 1994). The state, particularly at the local level, guaranteed employment for 100 days per household per year with a sufficient wage (Datt & Ravallion, 1994). As a long-term objective, the scheme aimed to strengthen infrastructure development as well as construction of productive assets for the use and benefit of future generations (Datt & Ravallion, 1994).

Unlike the American PWP that was predominantly subsidised by government, the

Maharashtra scheme generated its income from a combination of taxes levied from professionals, formal sector employees, motor vehicles, and a minimum amount contributed by the state (Datt & Ravallion, 1994).

2.2.4 Public works programmes in Africa

Some of the direct causes of poverty and unemployment in Africa have been political unrest, unemployment, under-employment and illiteracy levels that largely affect citizens residing in rural, peri- or semi-urban areas (World Bank, 2009:99). It is for this reason that the root cause of poverty on the African continent is, as stated by Nkurunziza (2006), the inability of governments to create enough decent jobs to cope with the increasing number of the labour force on the world economic market.

In responding to these immense challenges, PWP's were introduced around the 1960s to deal with the problems of poverty and unemployment on the African continent (Thwala, 2001).

Similar to the American public works and the Maharashtra employment guarantee scheme of India, the programmes were meant to deal with high unemployment and poverty on the African continent. Although these programmes were predominantly found in the North African countries, such as Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, they slowly spread towards the east and south where countries such as Kenya, Botswana and South Africa started using the programmes to address similar challenges of poverty and unemployment (Thwala, 2001).

The development of transport infrastructure across Kenya, particularly across the rural areas, relied heavily on using the public works concept to fast-track this process as well as to create sufficient employment opportunities for the majority of Kenyans (McCutcheon, 1995). Through this programme, around 12 000 kilometres of rural access roads were built, whilst employment opportunities for local villagers were generated as initially anticipated (UNDP, 1987). As advocated by the UNDP (1987), in respect of functioning and operation, the Kenyan public works project was under the auspices of the Ministry of Transport and Communication, while its implementation

phase was left in the hands of the district councils. The programme assisted with reducing unemployment and poverty as well as contributing to infrastructure development, specifically in the rural areas (McCutcheon, 1995).

Likewise, in building and constructing national roads infrastructure, Botswana adopted an approach of using and implementing labour-intensive methods (Teklu, 1995). Although the programme resorted under the Ministry of Local Government and Land, district councils were mandated to implement or replicate the programme in their various localities (McCutcheon, 1995). In this manner Botswana joined countries that implemented the PWPs as a mechanism to improve their infrastructure and thus create employment opportunities across the country (Teklu, 1995).

In contrast to other countries, such as the USA, where the PWPs were largely focused on men, the Botswana PWP was designed in such a way that priority was given to female-headed families (Teklu, 1995). A concern was that women's role in society was multifaceted, particularly their roles as mothers, child bearers, child caregivers, wives, etc. and that this might in some way pose a challenge to them to fully participate and concentrate on working within the PWPs (Teklu, 1995).

The largest PWP employer in Malawi is the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) which has been implementing this programme as far back as 1995 with an objective of providing income and employment opportunities that contribute towards longer-term economic growth for the country (UK DFID, 2002a). MASAF's main objective is to place the PWP within the social protection framework and thus ensure improved livelihoods for the marginalised and vulnerable through enhancing their productivity and thus increasing their self-reliance (World Bank, 2003).

The government of Malawi implemented a pilot project of the PWP between 2001 and 2005 through the support and assistance of Aurecon and through funding by the European Union (Malawi. Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, 2003). The programme was implemented in nine districts that were predominantly rural and where the majority of people depended on subsistence farming for survival. The projects included productive forestry activities, small-scale irrigation schemes, road

maintenance and rehabilitation activities. These projects served as sources of income and food security for local people while generating positive economic inputs for the villagers (National Construction Industry Council of Malawi, quoted in Chirwa & Mvula, 2004). As a result of its success and the benefits to the villagers and the country as a whole, the PWP of Malawi was acknowledged by the African Development Bank Review as a development success on the continent and later received additional funding from the European Union for extension to other areas or districts across the country (Chirwa & Mvula, 2004). As a result, the programme is understood to bring about more developmental and economic benefits for the villagers and the country at large. The implementing agent still remains the Aurecon with a similar mandate and responsibility of designing, implementing, managing and providing overall technical support and assistance (Chirwa & Mvula, 2004).

2.3 ADVANTAGES OF PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMMES

2.3.1 Skills development and training

Within the African continent where illiteracy, skills, and lack of training are major challenges for the majority of communities – particularly black communities – PWPs may be the solution for ensuring skills development, training and education for the majority of such needy communities (McCord, 2003). An important feature of the PWPs is that it creates an opportunity for those who are unemployed as well as those who are poverty-stricken to get temporary employment and therefore supply their families economically while mitigating poverty (Thwala, 2001). The programmes also have an element of imparting skills and training to those who are employed in them, thus offering them an opportunity to get employment elsewhere in future (McCord, 2003).

2.3.2 Use of local content

The fact that PWPs use local inputs such as simple tools or assets, physical labour or material rather than capital labour that requires foreign or imported technologies and

skills has ensured a direct investment in infrastructure development for local villagers (Thwala, 2001). The programmes are mostly implemented through the use of labour-intensive methods rather than capital-intensive ones, they therefore display a huge potential to create direct and indirect job opportunities and income for local villagers (McCord, 2003).

2.3.3 Economic growth and investment

Despite their short and temporary nature, PWP are still considered to be the best match – with economic growth, investment opportunity or infrastructure development – for many countries across the world (World Bank, 1994). No programme has been found that creates employment opportunities for the unskilled population at a faster rate than the PWP where physical labour is used rather than capital labour such as equipment and machinery (McCord, 2002).

2.3.4 Dignity and self-worth

PWP are thought to not only respond positively to the national requirement of infrastructure development but also to contribute to the idea of nation-building and patriotism by giving local people an opportunity to contribute to the development of their own villages or localities while significantly contributing towards economic growth and investment (McCord, 2003). For Nkurunziza (2006), employment income gives individuals a decent living and a sense of dignity as they can provide for their families while contributing towards nation-building, patriotism and economic growth. In this way, the ability to earn an income through participating in a PWP preserves the dignity of the poor as it pays for their efforts in a more sustainable and dignified manner.

2.4 CRITICISM OF PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMMES

2.4.1 Financial management and record-keeping

One of the main criticisms levelled against the implementation of PWP, especially

across the African continent, is that they are not fully accounted for in so far as their successes and failures are concerned. This is attributed to poor record-keeping, reports not being compiled, filed and updated correctly, and lack of financial management – making it very difficult to effectively monitor and evaluate progress (Nkurunziza, 2006). Many countries on the African continent still require skills, quality education and training as far as record-keeping, report-writing, financial management, monitoring and evaluation of developmental programmes are concerned (Nkurunziza, 2006).

2.4.2 Lack of sustainable job creation

Due to their temporary nature or short-term features, PWPs have often been criticised for not being focused and firm in their implementation, therefore, their potential to create employment opportunities or reduce poverty has always been questioned (Thwala, 2001). The other argument is that PWPs provide no opportunities to gain major skills or training in managerial, financial, engineering or technical fields that contribute greatly to the improvement of the economy and sustainable job creation (McCord, 2002). Labour-intensive methods are often criticised for lasting only for a period of four to six months, as compared to government internship or learnership programmes that last for a period of at least twelve months (McCord, 2002).

2.4.3 Saving on quality and cost

Others argue that the PWPs are used as a cost-cutting measure as they use manual labour which is cheaper but produces less goods of poorer quality than machinery or capital-intensive labour (Thwala, 2001). In addition, it is not always easy to measure the economic contribution made by the PWPs as in many instances they are small-scale projects done in villages and peri-urban areas, rather than large-scale projects done in big cities or towns (McCord, 2002).

2.5 PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMMES IN CONSTRUCTION

2.5.1 Introduction

A labour-intensive method can simply be defined as the economically efficient employment of as great a proportion of labour as is technically feasible. In the construction environment this is ideally attained throughout the construction process (McCutcheon, Croswell & Hattingh, 2006). In this way, labour-intensive construction results in the generation of a significant increase in employment opportunities per unit of expenditure compared to conventional capital-intensive methods (McCutcheon, Croswell & Hattingh, 2006). Cost and quality are critical elements of the labour-intensive construction process (McCutcheon, Croswell & Hattingh, 2006).

Other literature differentiates between optimal and maximum use of labour in the construction industry. Maximum labour simply refers to cases where the principle objective of any project would be to create job opportunities or to generate income, while optimal labour means the appropriate use of labour and equipment in a balanced manner for production of adequate quality in a cost-effective way (Tajgman & De Veen, 1998).

In situations where most of the work is done by equipment and only a small portion is supported by manual labour, equipment-intensive construction has taken place (McCutcheon, 1993). A combination of equipment and labour are often used in construction work. Similarly, construction methods can either be equipment- or labour-intensive, depending on the intensity of the one or the other. In a case where equipment is used more than labour and only a minimal amount of labour is applied to support the equipment work, the construction method will be termed conventional equipment-intensive, while in a case where labour is used more than the equipment, then the construction will be called labour-intensive construction (McCutcheon, 1993).

The technical feasibility and economic efficiency of labour-intensive methods are often queried, as in the research study conducted by the World Bank (1971). The study suggested that not only road construction is technically feasible, but also other

construction activities, without compromising the quality of the work. The economic efficiency referred to the manner in which the labour-intensive methods contributed to improving the economic condition, situation and status. Labour-intensive methods that are also economically efficient were welcomed by many developing countries that began to introduce these programmes in their countries as a means of dealing with the challenges of poverty and unemployment.

2.5.2 Factors relating to the concept of labour-intensive construction

- **Targeting**

Around the 1970s and the 1980s, there was no systematic mechanism in place for implementing labour-intensive construction projects. Even though the National Public Works Programmes (NPWPs) were meant to create employment for poor people in society, it attracted a majority of people with a high standard of living. Targeting must be more specific for labour-intensive programmes to realise their intended objective and reduce poverty amongst poor people in society.

- **Technology transfer**

The initial idea of developing countries taking responsibility for transferring technology from their own countries to developing countries proved to be complicated and difficult to manage. Another option is to develop appropriate technology for developing countries with their numerous challenges of poor education systems, insufficient training and lack of technical skills – all of which are important prerequisites for technology development or transfer.

- **Sustainability**

Labour-intensive construction is sustainable when a project or programme is able to run continuously without any interruption or disturbance, does not require external support, and can function and operate on its own. The use of capital-intensive construction methods is not sustainable in a community where there is a low level of technical skills. Labour-intensive methods are sustainable as they often generate

employment opportunities for surplus labour and are thus designed in accordance with the technical skills available in the society.

- **Design, planning and construction**

In many instances of labour-intensive construction work, factors such as design, planning and management become crucial in achieving success. The training of the workforce, including management, must give them a clear understanding of the construction method and its intended objectives. Proper planning, control and management of the workforce and the project always guarantee a good end-product and also ensure the effective running of the programme.

- **Training**

Training and institutional capacity-building programmes are often designed and developed to empower local people. The project management team must select employees to participate in the labour-intensive construction projects. To be able to do this, their character, technical competence and skills must be considered. (McCutcheon & Taylor Parkins, 2003). Trained project leaders should be readily available to train local people, introduce them to construction work, and familiarise them with the daily work requirements. Some training is designed to orientate people whilst other training is meant to create or enhance skills or just for sophistication and competency purposes. It is crucial to have trained project leaders to make local people more comfortable and skilled in what they do on a daily basis, and most importantly, to ensure production of a better-quality product (McCutcheon, 1993). Training also assists workers to optimally achieve the objective of an organisation.

As indicated by McCutcheon (1993) the other important person in the training process is the person who is on site every day and ensures that work is performed effectively, and through their supervision and guidance, ensures that both technical and organisational imperatives of the work are dealt with efficiently.

- **Community involvement**

Labour-intensive construction methods primarily make use of local resources and the local community. At various phases of the project interaction and involvement of the community become visible as community members begin to make crucial contributions to the project, set their demands and take a significant level of control. In this way the community becomes fully involved in the project and they can make the project fail or succeed. Factors such as time, skill and effort are considered to be crucial in ensuring community involvement throughout all the phases or levels of a project (McCutcheon & Marshall, 1998).

- **Production**

It has always been doubtful whether labour-intensive construction is as productive as it is said to be, compared to capital-intensive construction. This comparison is often made in relation to the cost and quality of the end-product. However, as argued by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (1996), labour-intensive construction has been using techniques such as task-systems or rates to assess and measure productivity or to quantify the scope of work involved. These task-rates or task-systems often require time, skill and effort from the community to clearly understand and to utilise them effectively. Construction work uses productivity figures such as planning, design and control to effect its operation.

- **Distinction from drought or emergency relief**

Labour-intensive projects differ from drought- or emergency-relief programmes which require immediate interventions or solutions. Relief programmes require the majority of people who can work to complete the task speedily without paying attention to cost, productivity, quality or time. Labour-intensive work, on the other hand, involves intensive design, planning, documentation, monitoring and evaluation of the project over the medium- to long-term. Labour-intensive work strives to create a balance between cost, time and quality so that the outcome of labour-intensive projects is comparable to that of capital-intensive projects.

2.6 PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.6.1 Background

Two definitions for the unemployment rate are used in South Africa – the narrow and the broad definition. The narrow definition is a commonly-used one and implies that job searching is continuous. The broad definition is a more accurate indication of joblessness and includes those who have not looked for a job in the preceding four weeks (Kingdon & Knight, 2007). According to Du Toit (2005:6), the requirement for a strict definition is that an individual must have looked for work for at least four weeks prior to a given point. According to the strict definition, 4.6 million people were unemployed in South Africa in 2004 while 8.3 million were unemployed according to the broad definition (Phillips, 2004).

Although South Africa has policies meant to respond to the unemployment challenge and that do contribute towards employment growth such as the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (AsgiSA) and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE), these policies are not necessarily aimed at the existing unemployed (young people and the less educated), but focus more on transforming the labour market into one South Africa wishes to have (Levinsohn 2007:21).

Poverty is a phenomenon that refers to a situation, a condition or a state where a human being is unable to afford a minimum standard of living. Poverty often leads to all sorts of social tensions in communities, and these may include social inequalities between the rich and the poor, social ills such as crime, substance abuse, diseases, etc. Unemployment is perceived to be the biggest contributing factor to poverty as, in many instances, people who are unemployed find it difficult to afford the basic necessities of life such as water, electricity, food, clothing, shelter or housing and so forth (Kingdon & Knight, 2007).

Between 1980 and 1991, the level of unemployment in South Africa increased from 7% to 18% (Ligthelm & Van Niekerk, 1990; Riley, 1992). The Labour Force Survey of 2005 showed that the levels of unemployment increased drastically – reaching levels

of 30.5% in 2002. In 2004 more than a quarter of the potential labour force in South Africa was unemployed. The unemployment rate for the first quarter of 2010 increased by 0.9% to 25.2% and this trend has continued up to the present with South Africa’s jobless rate increasing to 26.4% in the first three months of 2015 – the highest rate since 2005. The current unemployment rate (in January 2016) is 24.5% (StatsSA, 2016).

Figure 1: South African unemployment rates



(<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/unemployment-rate>)

2.6.2 Development and aims of the SA National Public Works Programmes (NPWPs)

In the early 1990s, the civil engineering movement called the South African Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors proposed that, for the challenges of poverty and unemployment in South Africa to be addressed, a labour-intensive method of construction was required to fast-track and assist in the re-building of the public infrastructure as well as boosting the economy (McCutcheon, 2001a). This proposal was later put forward to other civil society organisations and the private sector, including the labour federation, Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), which led to the drafting of an agreement to maximise and intensify the use of labour-

intensive construction as well as linking payment to production in the PWPs (McCutcheon, 2001a).

The framework agreement was then established through the National Economic Forum (NEF) in which the industry committed itself to link payments to production in the PWP. Parallel to this process was the newly elected democratic government's involvement in the development of the RDP which similarly advocated that reconstruction and development should be linked to a comprehensive public infrastructure programme (McCutcheon, 2001a). The RDP further advocated for democratising the state, building human capital, building the economy and providing basic services to the majority of the population in the country (ANC, 1994).

As stated in the national guidelines for the PWP by the (Department of Public Works, 1999) the outcome of these partnership engagements together with the principles were later crafted as a temporary framework for labour-intensive construction called the Code of Good Practice for the Special Public Works Programme. The Code of Good Practice then culminated in a Ministerial Determination (R63) that was formally gazetted by the Department of Labour (2002). The Code of Good Practice set targets for the number of women, youth and people living with disabilities to be employed in large-scale construction projects. Community-based organisations were to be consulted regarding the recruitment and selection of contract workers, allowing for special conditions of employment for workers employed by contractors, agreeing on prices for tasks and the use of a task-based payment system. Workers had to have the opportunity to undergo basic training. An employment framework, based on the concept of the PWP, had to be established as a mechanism for providing unemployed people with a combination of work experience and training (Department of Public Works, 1999).

In taking this work forward, a technical committee (under the auspices of the NEF) was appointed by government with the primary task of identifying sectors of public works infrastructure in which labour-intensive methods might be successfully developed and implemented while making estimations around employment

opportunities that might be created out of the NPWP (McCutcheon, 2001).

Some of the key objectives of the NPWP that was launched in 1994 were as follows (Department of Public Works, 1994):

- To create and maintain physical assets such as schools, public libraries, crèches, roads, housing, clinics and hospitals that serve to meet the basic needs of communities but also go a long way to create employment opportunities for local communities.
- To strengthen the capacity of local government and other institutions to generate economic activities including empowering communities to manage their local affairs and to fully participate in the development of their local areas.
- To assist in the reduction of unemployment through the creation of productive labour absorption mechanisms for local contractors and construction workers.
- To train and educate those already involved in the programme for purposes of economic empowerment and sustainability.
- To target the most vulnerable groups in society such as women, the youth and persons with disabilities.
- To provide short-term delivery of employment opportunities and infrastructure, particularly in rural areas.
- To kick-start the NPWP by building capacity at both provincial and local level.
- To provide a demonstration of the sustainable manner in which infrastructure can be developed and implemented without use of large-scale machinery and without compromising on quality or cost.

2.6.3 Key principles underlying the NPWP

As stated by McCutcheon, Crosswell and Hattingh (2006), the most important principles of the NPWP can be summarised as follows:

- community empowerment;

- planning and sustainability;
- labour intensity;
- education and training; and
- monitoring and evaluation.

These principles were incorporated in two strategic thrusts of the NPWP that were marked as the key drivers of the programme from national level to provinces and district municipalities (McCutcheon, Croswell & Hattingh, 2006). The two strategic thrusts were:

- A programme to reorient the public expenditure on infrastructure and transform the institutional capacity of the functioning and operation of the national, provincial and local governments to ensure larger-scale skills development, capacity-building and job creation in years to come.
- A Community-Based Public Works Programme that was commonly known as the CBPWP and was meant to provide short-term funding to government or non-government organisations if they fell within the objectives of the NPWP.

The aim of these initiatives was to build short-term employment creation mechanisms with a view to alleviate poverty and build capacity using expenditure on infrastructure and public assets. In addition, the most noticeable outcome of driving and delivering the NPWP by the Department of Public Works was the development of policies and frameworks to guide the future development and implementation of the programme (Department of Public Works, 2005a).

2.7 THE EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME (EPWP)

2.7.1 Introduction

At its policy conference in Stellenbosch in late 2002, the ANC resolved that there should be a large-scale expansion of the use of labour-intensive construction methods

to alleviate poverty and to address the backlogs in infrastructure in the previously disadvantaged areas (ANC, 2003). In his State of the Nation Address in February 2003, former President Thabo Mbeki stated that the government had decided that an EPWP should be formally launched and implemented as a matter of urgency to deal decisively with the challenge of unemployment and poverty in the country (Mbeki, 2003). It was envisaged that the programme would create at least one million work opportunities in its first five years of operation (Altman *et al.*, 2004).

In partnership with other stakeholders such as the business sector, organised labour and civil society organisations, government convened the Growth and Development Summit (GDS) in 2003 at which it resolved that an EPWP would be established to ensure that R100 billion of planned government expenditure be targeted for an employment-intensive programme (ANC, 2003). At this summit, all participating partners agreed that a vision for growth and development be adopted, a set of priorities for joint action be identified and deadlines be set in place to ensure that the identified programme of action that was agreed upon be carried out by all in a more systematic fashion (Mubangizi, 2003).

Some of the resolutions passed at the GDS included the following (ANC, 2003):

- interventions to reduce household poverty and vulnerability through public investment initiatives;
- promotion of and support to small and medium enterprises (SMMEs);
- support for cooperatives and the EPWPs.

The GDS acknowledged that the EPWPs could provide poverty and income relief to the unemployed through temporary work and that they could perform socially useful activities to better themselves (McCord, 2003). The EPWPs were to be designed in such a way as to empower participants with a combination of training and work experience that would enhance their ability to earn a living in the future (ANC, 2003). The GDS agreement emphasised that relevant and targeted training should form a central component of the EPWP to ensure that workers attain relevant and marketable skills for future employment (McCord, 2003). It further suggested that training

programmes should focus on the following: Adult Basic Education And Training, HIV-AIDS awareness, health and safety, social entrepreneurship, industrial relations, vocational skills such as construction and agriculture, life skills and cooperative training (ANC, 2003).

Government strongly believed that expanding the PWP would ensure that a considerable number of the unemployed were drawn into productive work and that these workers would gain skills while they work (Altman & Hemson, 2007). This would assist the country to get a considerable number of the previously marginalised and poor out of the poverty pool (McCord, 2003) and increase the number of people who gain skills and employment (Altman & Hemson, 2007).

After the 2004 general elections, government implemented the electoral mandate of decreasing unemployment and reducing poverty. The mandate was premised on the principle of 'the people's contract' that defined the strategic objective and targets for the five-year period and the second decade of freedom (ANC, 2004). The ANC manifesto identified the key objectives and projections for the next ten years until 2014, namely reducing poverty and unemployment by half, providing the skills required by the economy, ensuring that all South Africans are able to fully exercise their constitutional rights and to enjoy the full dignity of freedom and compassion by providing effective and efficient services to the people (ANC, 2004).

2.7.2 Aims and objectives of the EPWP

The main aim of the EPWP was to draw a significant number of unemployed people into productive employment, at the same time ensuring that they were trained and acquired skills to be able to earn an income for themselves and their families or households (McCutcheon, Crosswell and Hattingh, 2006). The programme also aimed at creating employment and training for about one million job seekers in its first five years of implementation – between 2004 and 2009 (Department of Public Works, 2005a). This called for a realignment of government expenditure in such a way that a greater portion was focused on employment creation through the provision of public

infrastructure and assets. The majority of beneficiaries of such jobs would be people who were unemployed with no or low levels of skills and education, but who could perform labour-intensive tasks if provided with basic training and support (McCord, 2004b). Other objectives of the programme included the following:

- To increase the contribution of public sector expenditure, including goods and services, for the alleviation of poverty and reduction of unemployment.
- To deliver quality, cost-effective products and services using labour-intensive techniques.
- To provide unemployed people with a combination of work experience, training and skills.

2.7.3 Structure of the programme

According to McCutcheon, Croswell and Hattingh (2006), the EPWP cut across all three spheres of government i.e. national, provincial and district municipalities, and its scope of work ranged among sectors such as:

- the social sector: home-based care and early childhood development;
- the economic sector: small-business development, income-generating projects;
- the infrastructure sector: labour-intensive construction and maintenance;
- the environmental and cultural sector: environmental improvement projects.

As part of its structure, the EPWP had a flagship learnership programme called the Vuk'uphile programme. The learnership programme was earmarked to provide capacity-building and training for emerging contractors as well as previously unemployed people as a means to equip them with the necessary skills and expertise to undertake the activities and tasks of the EPWP in a more effective and efficient manner (McCutcheon, Croswell & Hattingh, 2006). Part of the training in the learnership programme involved on-the-job training for a period of two years as well as formal institutional or organisational training. The learnership programme was jointly coordinated, managed, funded and implemented by public and private sector

partners such as the Independent Development Trust (IDT), the Department of Public Works, the Construction Education and Training Authority, ABSA Bank and municipalities (McCutcheon, Croswell & Hattingh, 2006).

Training formed an integral part of the PWP, in the sense that workers on the labour-intensive construction projects were mainly those with low levels of education, training and skills, but who, when provided with basic training, vocational skills, hand tools, etc., could perform their tasks or activities efficiently and effectively (McCord, 2004b). The GDS agreement suggested that training programmes should focus on the following; Adult Basic Education and Training, HIV-AIDS awareness, health and safety, social entrepreneurship, industrial relations, vocational skills e.g. construction and agriculture, life skills and cooperative training (ANC, 2003). The training and work experience would be marketable even after the project had been completed, thus empowering workers to find employment in the future.

2.7.4 Funding for the programme

The EPWP is predominantly funded through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) that was formerly known as the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme. A consolidated and deliberate effort should be made by all government departments and municipalities to ensure that they spend a portion of their budget on goods and services to create employment for the unemployed or the unskilled through using the MIG funding guidelines (McCutcheon, Croswell & Hattingh, 2006).

It was further suggested that about R15 million be spent on the infrastructure development sector over a period of five years. According to McCutcheon, Croswell and Hattingh (2006), some of the infrastructure development activities that were prioritised in this budget included low-cost, storm water drainage systems, low-volume road surfaces, trenches, cycle paths and pedestrian sidewalks.

Importantly, the funding model for the EPWP also allows for participation or contributions by other partners, such as in the case of the Gundo Lashu (Our Victory) project in Limpopo where partners such as the British International Development Fund

made a significant contribution towards the road construction project across the province (Phillips, 2004). Private donors such as Absa Bank and the IDT also contributed towards the learnership programme of twelve months that is meant to empower participants in the programme with basic training and skills. This learnership programme is offered across the country (McCutcheon, Croswell & Hattingh, 2006).

As indicated by McCutcheon, Croswell and Hattingh (2006), the financial support and technical training offer beneficiaries opportunities to build their track records in terms of experience and personal finances. The latter is required if they would like to start their own businesses or if they would like to get employment elsewhere after completing or exiting the programme.

According to McCutcheon, Croswell and Fitchett (2006) contractors of the labour-intensive construction projects have serious difficulties in tendering on these projects. Many tenders are higher than the tenders using conventional methods of construction and this was mainly due to the contractors not being able to make accurate estimates. For example, some contractors were charging at least 30% more than it would cost using conventional construction methods. This is difficult to manage since the cost of labour is an important element of labour-intensive construction projects. Projects must be cost accurately; failure to do so can jeopardise the success of the project or compromise the quality of the product (Croswell & McCutcheon, 2000). To mitigate this problem, a calculation method called 'team-balancing' was introduced to assist contractors to make accurate estimates and tender correctly. The team-balancing method, as explained by (Croswell & McCutcheon, 2000), simply means that the resources used to do labour-intensive construction are organised such that all requirements, tasks, labour and other resources are optimally utilised throughout the lifespan of the project. This method also assists in making sure that project design, planning, implementation and monitoring are not negatively affected or constrained by lack of proper budgeting or financing of the project throughout its lifespan (McCutcheon, Croswell & Hattingh, 2006).

2.7.5 Successes of the programme

According to McCutcheon (2003), evidence suggests that large-scale PWPs can generate a significant number of employment opportunities as well as quality infrastructure if properly managed and well coordinated. Communication with all stakeholders, in terms of their expectations, roles, responsibilities feedback systems and monitoring of projects, is vital to ensure the continuity, effectiveness and sustainability of the projects in the long run.

Since PWPs are implemented through using labour-intensive methods rather than capital-intensive methods, they are said to generate direct and indirect employment opportunities and income for local people (McCord, 2003). By using local inputs such as simple tools, physical labour and local material, these projects ensure investment in local people rather than in foreign or imported technology (Thwala, 2001).

2.7.6 Challenges of the programme

According to McCutcheon (1999), there were many challenges facing the labour-intensive methods as per the evaluation studies conducted in South Africa. Some of these are listed below:

- The lack of good management and monitoring systems could be a threat to the success and effectiveness of the programme.
- The programme did not have a tracking system in place which made it difficult to collect data on the number of people placed in employment, and this could lead to under- or over-reporting.
- Projects were poorly designed, planned, coordinated, implemented, and monitored.
- There was a lack of institutional, managerial, technical and organisational abilities amongst project coordinators, supervisors and managers.
- People were unable to multitask when dealing with short-term projects and normal, daily work activities.

- Poor targeting of beneficiary communities often led to confusion and misunderstanding.
- Little social or physical infrastructure was created.
- Too few permanent employment opportunities were created.
- No long-term job opportunities were created.
- Projects were not integrated with the long-term development plans or programmes.
- There was no common understanding of the conceptual framework of the EPWP.
- There was a shortage of accredited training providers for the programme.

In order to deal with these challenges comprehensively, a stakeholder workshop was held in September 2004 to determine whether the EPWP was implemented according to set criteria as pronounced by the State President in his 2003 State of the Nation Address (McCutcheon, Croswell & Fitchett, 2006). The workshop was organised and coordinated by the Department of Public Works as the custodian of the programme, in partnership with other relevant stakeholders. Many of the challenges raised during the workshop by provincial representatives arose from insufficient reporting by provinces as a result of poor data-collection methods that made it difficult for provinces to produce progress reports on the programmes. Other challenges included a lack of sustainable opportunities after learners and contractors had qualified from the programme (McCutcheon, Croswell & Fitchett, 2006).

The most critical driver and convener of the PWP – the Department of Public Works (which is the state landlord) – seemed to lack the capacity and skills needed to handle large-scale construction and maintenance projects that required physical infrastructure (McCutcheon, 2001b). Neither did the Department of Public Works possess any comprehensive database of small contractors, nor a concrete plan of how to develop and empower small contractors who operated under their ambit. Even though it was required by international standards on PWPs to have a development programme for small contractors, the department did not have one.

However, as stated by McCutcheon, Croswell and Fitchett (2006), the only way for the country to realise a significant increase in the number of people employed per unit of expenditure is through the intensification of the PWP and its support, both financially and otherwise, by various role players. The main drivers of the labour-intensive method should be that of rebuilding the civil engineering and other engineering industries that are still predominantly using machinery and equipment to build infrastructure and other public assets, to enforce the legislation and policies that are available to support the call for restructuring these critical industries to support labour-intensive methods so as to contribute towards increasing the number of persons employed in those industries (McCutcheon, Croswell & Fitchett, 2006). On-site supervisors who play a critical role in ensuring that the labour-intensive construction methods are executed optimally and efficiently, should receive adequate training to enable them to create such an environment.

2.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined a road map of the PWPs across the world and in South Africa using the literature to provide an overview of the programmes in relation to the concept, context, the principles and elements, the aims and objectives, successes and challenges, advantages and disadvantages, and finally the criteria for selecting workers to participate in the programme.

The chapter has to some extent argued that PWPs are thus far the only mechanism to create a large number of job opportunities and reduce poverty and unemployment. Although the South African government has a number of poverty reduction strategies and policies to address the question of poverty and unemployment, PWPs still seem to be the best option for addressing these challenges.

In conclusion, it is important to note that the failures of the South African labour-intensive methods are not unique (McCutcheon, Croswell & Fitchett, 2006) – similar problems occur in other African countries and worldwide. Many of the challenges facing the PWPs across Africa and elsewhere seem to be persistent and date back to

decades prior to the democratic government of South Africa and no improvements have been made to correct the situation. Unfortunately in the context of South Africa, many of the key programmes have only been evaluated on a more social level through social impact studies taking into account issues such as types of assets produced, cost per project and number of job opportunities created, rather than technical aspects taking into account the quality of the products produced and the maintenance of such products in the medium to long term (McCutcheon, Croswell & Fitchett, 2006).

CHAPTER 3

3 PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMMES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As was seen in the previous chapter, PWPs in South Africa were introduced in the early 1990s as possible solutions to address the triple challenges of inequality, unemployment and poverty in the country. In his State of the Nation Address in February 2003, former President Thabo Mbeki stated that the government had decided that an EPWP should be formally launched and implemented as a matter of urgency to deal decisively with the challenge of unemployment and poverty in the country (Mbeki, 2003).

In South Africa, the apartheid system deprived black people of basic services such as quality education, healthcare facilities, housing, proper infrastructure and public assets that resulted in many of them being uneducated, without the level of training and skills that are prerequisites for formal employment or starting a viable business (McCord, 2004a). South Africa is predominantly rural in nature and geography with many citizens residing in rural and semi-rural areas that are underdeveloped with no basic services, inadequate infrastructure, poor facilities and public assets (Thwala, 2001). Expanding the PWPs was meant to raise a considerable number of the previously marginalised and poor out of the poverty pool and to increase the number of people who gain skills and employment (Altman & Hemson, 2007; McCord, 2003). Labour-intensive construction programmes are said to generate more employment opportunities without compromising on time, quality and cost, than conventional capital-intensive methods (McCutcheon, Croswell & Parkins, 2005).

This chapter looks at the role of participation and participatory communication in the

implementation of such programmes. The development of and the underlying principles of participatory communication in development projects are covered and the background of the community where this study was conducted, is provided.

3.2 SUCCESSFUL LABOUR-INTENSIVE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.2.1 Introduction

Since labour-intensive construction methods are mainly implemented through using labour-intensive methods as compared to capital-intensive methods, they are often seen to generate direct and indirect employment opportunities and income for local people (McCord, 2003). Two of these successful labour-intensive projects, the Gundo-Lashu programme and the Zibambele road maintenance programme, are outlined below.

3.2.2 The Gundo-Lashu programme

One of the most important programmes in the NPWP in South Africa is the Gundo-Lashu programme. This programme was launched in 2001 by the Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) as a mechanism to improve transport infrastructure across the province and particularly in rural areas (Phillips, 2004). The project had an objective of providing cost-effective and good-quality rural roads using labour-intensive construction methods. The aim was mainly to increase access to basic services such as healthcare, education and transport that form part of the basic services for realising the aspirations and the needs of the poor people of Limpopo (Phillips, 2004).

According to Phillips (2004), Gundo-Lashu was the first long-term, labour-intensive PWP in South Africa through which emerging contractors were given practical, on-site training in labour-intensive road works over a period of 21 months as well as extensive formal training. The project mainly targeted and prioritised poor households without an income to ensure that a wider net of poor families benefited

from the project (Phillips, 2004). For example, about 24 local contractors were trained under this project and this benefitted 2 400 people who were remunerated for about 320 000 workdays – all created through the programme. This means that about 60 to 100 households were employed on each contract on a task-based payment system in which each worker received R30.00 per task.

This also meant that the contracted households were paid in relation to the amount of work completed within their assigned section of the road. As a result of the occasional nature of the roads-upgrading project, each worker was employed for a period of at least four to six months. During this period workers received on-the-job training while the Department of Labour also provided and funded formal training for workers on aspects ranging from life-skills and basic agriculture to road maintenance which are prerequisites for development elements in Limpopo (Phillips, 2004).

The main objectives of the Gundo-Lashu programme as outlined by Phillips (2004) were to:

- strengthen the capacity of the RAL to manage, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Gundo-Lashu project in accordance with the best practice of corporate governance;
- engage rural communities to generate one million workdays for targeted men and women whilst improving the livelihood of communities participating in the programme;
- develop and train about 24 local contractors using labour-intensive methods and to build 300 km of rural roads measuring up to the RAL's standards.

Estimates suggest that by 2004, the Gundo-Lashu project attained a 600% increase in employment compared to the conventional machinery-intensive road works projects.

However, many of the PWPs in South Africa, including the Gundo-Lashu project, have only been assessed or evaluated on social aspects through social impact studies. These studies have looked at issues such as the number of jobs created by each project, rather than at technical issues such as the quality of the products produced

by each project and the maintenance of such products over the medium to long term (McCutcheon, Croswell & Fitchett, 2006).

3.2.3 The Zibambele road maintenance programme

The second example of the NPWP that is equally considered to be a success is the Zibambele maintenance programme in Kwazulu-Natal. This programme was an initiative by the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government under the banner of the Department of Transport, Roads and Works (Taylor Parkins, 2006). The initiative was aimed at improving and maintaining the road networks of around 14 000 km across the province, particularly those cutting through the rural areas. The programme involved maintenance, while contributing to the national priority of alleviating poverty and creating employment for the majority of rural communities (Taylor Parkins, 2006).

The project was intended to employ at least 40 000 households or contractors with an estimation that it would cover at least 17 000 km of rural access roads that required maintenance but would ultimately assist participating families to alleviate poverty within their own households (Taylor Parkins, 2006). The responsibility of nominating destitute households to participate in the project was given to community members in the villages. The majority of households nominated were headed by women and this promoted the principle of the empowerment of women within the Zibambele project and others in KwaZulu-Natal (Taylor Parkins, 2006).

Some of the tasks that were included in the project contracted households to maintain rural access roads, drainage systems and verges, including the removal of litter and weeds (Taylor Parkins, 2006). Each household was responsible for a specific length of road for a period of 12 months. Households were only allowed to work for two days a week, and they were provided with hand tools and basic training to perform their tasks. Each household or contractor received a monthly payment of R370 for the successful completion of the specific length of road allocated to that household. However, there were project restrictions on the specific length of road as a measure to allow households to work for at least 60 hours a month, but also that they should

be given a chance to be involved in other important household activities. Households were paid per completed task and not for the time spent on each task (Taylor Parkins, 2006).

It is estimated that about 500 000 destitute households across Kwazulu-Natal benefited from this project by generating an income, creating self-employment, acquiring skills and ultimately stabilising poverty in their households (Taylor Parkins, 2006). The programme has also provided training and skills that will in future enable families who have participated, to start their own businesses, generate an income or even start cooperatives and setting up savings clubs within their communities. In relation to cost effectiveness, the programme is said to have succeeded in transferring resources and skills from government to ordinary citizens (McCord, 2002). A social impact study conducted by Strebel (2004) confirmed that the needs of the majority of participating households were satisfied by affording them basic education, healthcare, nutrition and transport.

3.2.4 Basic principles underlying labour-intensive construction

When studying the literature on construction programmes, a number of principles underlying successful programmes come to the fore. Some of the most common of these are:

- Capacity building and training – a critical requirement of a programme is that beneficiaries undergo approximately two days’ training for every 22 days’ work. Managers of the programme also undergo training to sharpen their managerial skills and to ensure that the work of the programme is executed with maximum efficiency and quality (McCutcheon, Crowell & Hattingh, 2006).
- Use of local tools and expertise – labour-intensive construction methods prioritise the use of tools and expertise that are readily available in a given community or village. This encourages villagers to take pride in and ownership of the project and its intended objectives.

- Social impact – many of the labour-intensive construction methods have indicated a level of satisfaction in participants. This includes the opinions and feelings of the participants about the general performance and outcomes of the project (Taylor Parkins, 2006).
- Participation – active participation of communities play an important role in the success of programmes (Taylor Parkins, 2006). Participation is best described by Roodt (2001) as an active involvement of local communities in civic, political and local government issues and structures so as to contribute and influence decision-making with a view to change their lives for the better. Mikkelsen (1995), however, simply views participation to be a sensitisation of people to increase their potential in responding positively towards developmental initiatives in their locality.

3.3 PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

3.3.1 Background

Participatory communication is considered to be one of the fundamental approaches to development, suggesting the adoption of an approach that seeks to collectively solve a common developmental problem to achieve the set goals or objectives of a specific community. It can thus be regarded as a planned activity that is based on elements such as participatory processes, media and interpersonal communication to facilitate dialogue amongst various stakeholders (Bessette, 2004; Servaes, 2003).

The underlying goal of participation is to empower communities, groups and individuals to take action for social change, make informed decisions about their developmental aspirations, determine their own directions, options and objectives for developmental reasons and thus take collective actions to achieve and realise such developmental goals (Bessette, 2004). In essence this means that development represents a progressive socioeconomic and cultural change in a given community with the ultimate goal of involving, empowering and capacitating communities to take

collective action to better their lives (Todaro, 1994:16).

The interest in the discourse of development began in the 1940s, and increased its momentum when the famous “Truman Doctrine of 1949” became popular amongst researchers and development agents across various disciplines (Craig & Porter, 2006). The basis of this development interest comprised two major components namely the modernisation and dependency theories.

The modernisation theorists largely base their argument on the idea that societies move from traditional to modern through a series of stages (Graaff, 2003:16). With the help of foreign aid, rural areas could be developed/modernised by transferring resources from developed societies to “traditional” societies (Servaes, 1995:40). However, the main weakness of this approach is that it was planned in urban centres without consulting the people concerned which often resulted in the wrong solutions being implemented (Yoon, 1997:2).

The “father” of the dependency theory was Paul Baran (Servaes, 1995:41) who was the first to express the view that development and underdevelopment are interrelated processes. The dependency theory suggests that countries have a core peripheral relationship amongst them, i.e. the advantages (core) or opportunities of one country are sometimes equal to the disadvantages (periphery) or weaknesses of another country and this notion suggests that countries are interdependent (Graaff & Venter, 2001).

Due to some inherent problems in these two theories, a people-centred theory emerged with a view to facilitate human development and promote good quality of life (Chambers 2007; De Beer & Swanepoel, 1998; Estralla, Blauert, Campilan, Gaventa, Gonsalves, Guijt, Johnson & Ricafort, 2000; Green, 2007; Rahman, 1993). Four fundamental questions can be asked in relation to the development process: From what? By whom? From whom? In what way? These questions deal with the issue of development in a holistic manner by applying the humanistic aspect that not only addresses the question of economic growth, but includes numerous other aspects such as transformation of institutional, socio-cultural and political systems (Theron,

2009). As a result, developmental projects and their funding are moving towards people-centred and humanistic approaches that are centred around the involvement or participation of local communities in projects, rather than basing their efforts on conventional approaches (Van de Fliert, 2007).

3.3.2 Principles underlying participatory communication

Participation implies activities undertaken by people to assume greater control over their own life situations. Freire (2004) insists that true participation occurs within a context of five values namely: humility, hope, love, faith in the development partner's capability and the application of critical thinking by all involved in the dialogue.

On a practical level a number of principles should be in place in order for such interactive dialogue to proceed. These include:

- Communication between equals. The emphasis here is that there should be equality amongst participants who are engaged in a dialogue. Dialogue becomes a two-way interaction between the change agent and the development partner; these partners can exchange roles in a mutually beneficial manner (Freire, 2004).
- Conscientising. People are given the opportunity to set their own goals and take their own decisions. In this state, participants willingly become party to social change despite the risks that may be involved; they do this based on their deeper understanding of the realities and also through a conscious decision to engage, no matter how uncomfortable the situation may be (Freire, 2004; White, Sadanandan Nair & Ascroft, 1994:24).
- Sharing of knowledge. This moves away from the idea that the creation of knowledge should come from academics or the well-educated. A new model is developed where needs and the indigenous knowledge of locals are taken into consideration, resulting in knowledge exchange and thus true dialogue (Freire, 2004; White *et al.*, 1994:26).

- True participation thus addresses the idea of power and control (Servaes, 1999; White *et al.*, 1994). Within this context, participation means not only the sharing of duties and decisions, but also of power and privileges.

It is evident that participation presents a fundamental shift for development communicators from serving as translators, conveyers, transmitters and disseminators of relevant information to that of facilitators in the process of social change, capitalising on human learning at both the individual and community level – the notion that development is a self-determined and a self-initiated process (Freire, 2004; Quebral, 2001).

3.3.3 Pre-requisites for successful participatory communication programmes

From the above one can see that, underlying the successful implementation of a participatory programme, there are a number of conditions that have to be met:

- Participation in implementation. This form of participation encourages local villagers or communities to actively partake in the development of their own locality, whereby each takes responsibility in undertaking their tasks and activities as part of their contribution towards the implementation or completion of the local project. In some instances villagers even contribute resources towards the actualisation and realisation of the objectives of the project at hand (Servaes, 1999).
- Participation in benefits. Communities or villagers are encouraged to take part in enjoying the fruits of their involvement and participation in a specific project in their locality. These may include a sports facility, a hand-pump for water, a tarred road, school, clinic or community library.
- Participation in decision-making. This is a critical phase of participation where villagers or communities actively participate in a project from the initial or conceptual phase up to the decision-making phase. In this instance, decision-making can be short-term or medium-term to long-term. Villagers

therefore acquire problem-solving skills and take ownership and pride in local projects as they would have fully participated and made their contribution towards achieving their developmental objectives.

- Participation in evaluation. In this phase, communities or villagers are mobilised to take stock of the project from conception until completion to indicate whether it succeeded or failed in achieving its intended developmental objectives.

3.4 THE LEPELLE-NKUMPI MUNICIPALITY

3.4.1 Introduction

South Africa is divided into nine provinces, one of which is Limpopo – the main focus of this study. Limpopo has five districts and twenty-five local municipalities, amongst which, Lepelle-Nkumpi, is situated in the southern part of the Capricorn District and covers about 3 454.78 km² of land that represent about 20.4% of the district (StatsSA, 2007). Most importantly, the biggest part of the land – about 95% of the municipality – is in the hands of traditional leaders who form a critical part of the stakeholders in the municipality. It is predominantly rural in nature and about 95% of its population live in rural villages spread across the municipality (Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality, 2012).

The municipality is divided into 29 wards and has around 110 settlements with a population of 241 414 people with a total of 58 483 households with an average household size of 4.13. (StatsSA, 2007). According to the Community Survey (StatsSA, 2007), about 70% of households within this municipality have an income of less than R1 300 per month in relation to the household subsistence income level or in some cases no income at all.

However, the municipality has initiated several poverty-alleviation programmes and interventions to address this challenge. These initiatives include the IDP programmes and projects, the local economic development projects, the EPWPs, income-generating

initiatives and free basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity for qualifying households.

Like other municipalities in the country, the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality was established in terms of the Municipal Structures Act (117/1998) (South Africa, 1998b) on 05 September 2000. The Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality is a Category B municipality as determined by Chapter 1 of the Municipal Structures Act (117/1998). Lepelle-Nkumpi is a municipality with a Collective Executive System as described in section 2(a) of the Northern Province Determination of Types of Municipalities Act (2/2000).

Similarly, the white paper on Local Government (Department of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, 2008) reinforces the mandate of municipalities by introducing the concept of “developmental local government” defined as: “local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs, and improve the quality of their lives.” (Department of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, 2008).

It is for this reason that the municipality has introduced the EPWPs to implement its projects and also as a mechanism to ensure alleviation of poverty and unemployment.

3.4.2 Why Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality?

The Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality is an interesting case for this study due to its social and economic activities, proximity, and how the municipality has tried, since its establishment, to use EPWPs as a mechanism to tackle the challenges of poverty and unemployment in the area. It has the third largest economy of the five municipalities in the Capricorn District. Limpopo has identified key economic priorities within the province and some of these priorities are under the jurisdiction of the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality. These economic priorities are:

- Land and agricultural development, such as government irrigations schemes, broiler farming, subsistence farming, horticulture and livestock. These opportunities can be turned into vibrant factories that could create

employment for local communities in the production of meat and the processing of hides that could involve slaughtering, processing, packaging and marketing to local or outside communities. Large areas of land within the municipality (almost 95%) form part of the former Lebowakgomo homeland that is entrusted to the community or tribal authorities who have a say in how land is distributed between individual settlement and commercial use. Unfortunately some of this land has been subject to land claims that are still being considered and hinder development efforts and investor confidence.

- Mining activities that have great potential for small business enterprises in the local communities. The revitalisation of the diamond mine in Zebediela, the soon-to-be-opened mine shaft in Makurung and the platinum mine in Hwelereng are just some of the mining activities taking place in the municipality.
- Eco-tourism provides many opportunities for employment and small businesses since the municipality has beautiful mountains, nature reserves, clean, running rivers and streams, indigenous forests, wilderness areas, etc.
- Manufacturing could contribute to the economic growth in the municipality.
- Lebowakgomo is the seat of the provincial legislature as well as the Sekhukhune and Capricorn District Councils and thus provide an opportunity for retail in goods and products.

As mentioned the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality has a high rate of unemployment (43%) that has decreased slightly compared to the 2001 census as the provincial and local economies have created more jobs. The municipality has also initiated some projects to boost the economy and to contribute to uplifting the lives of the local villagers. The majority of villagers in Lepelle-Nkumpi derive their income from the public sector and the informal sector. Many households earn an income from hawking in the streets, peddling wares from door to door, starting spaza shops in their own yards, etc. Many households trade at certain times such as month-end, during

holidays and on pension pay-out days. The majority of these traders are women who are heading households and therefore try to make a living for their survival and that of their families.

3.4.3 The Expanded Public Works Programme at Lepelle-Nkumpi

This programme was developed in line with section 26(c) of the Municipal Systems Act (32/2000) which stipulates that an IDP must reflect, “the council’s development priorities and objectives for its elected term, including its local economic development aims and its internal transformation needs” (South Africa, 2000). The objectives provide direction to the planning and implementation process of all the projects undertaken by a municipality within a specified period. The IDP is a five-year strategic plan of the municipality that involves continuous consultations, informs all the budgeting, planning, management and decision-making processes of the municipality and is reviewed annually to reprioritise the developmental needs and aspirations of communities.

According to the Lepelle-Nkumpi IDP (Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality, 2012), development of infrastructure, in particular construction of roads and storm water structures, was highlighted as the second priority for the municipality. This included projects like the construction and maintenance of access roads in and around the municipality. Important to these projects was the construction of the D4100 road, commonly known in the area as the Mamaolo Tooseng Road, which connects villages such as Tooseng, Malekapane, Dithabaneng, Makurung 1 and 2, Mamaolo and Seleteng. These villages are led by indunas under the leadership of Kgoshi Mphahlele and they also form part of the Ga-Mphahlele village that is led by Kgoshi Mphahlele. This road connects all the villages with economic hubs in the Sekhukhune and Capricorn Districts (namely Jane Furse and Lebowakgomo) via the R597 to Polokwane, the capital of Limpopo. The project was implemented mainly as a partnership between the municipality, Capricorn District and the Roads Agency Limpopo.

Lonerock Construction was contracted by the municipality and had in turn subcontracted small local contractors from the area who then employed local villagers for a short period to participate in the project (Lepelle-Nkumpi IDP, 2011–2016). The D4100 road was constructed using labour-intensive methods as a short-term measure to alleviate poverty and unemployment in the municipality.

The D4100 or Tooseng road construction in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality was conceptualised in the 2007/2008 financial year and kick-started in the 2009/2010 financial year. Unfortunately, due to financial constraints on the municipality and the province being put under administration due to its financial mismanagement, the construction of the road was put on hold until late in 2013 when it was restarted.

The construction of the road was implemented as a public works project that involved employing workers on a short-term basis within a period of three to twelve months to work on the construction of the road that cuts across their villages (Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, 2014). Workers or contracted households were contracted for three to six months as a way to provide them with an income during that period. Workers were paid an hourly rate of at least R22.75 for their general labour on the project. Workers were also offered double payment for extra hours performed on the project such as working on public holidays, weekends or just putting in extra hours during the week. Workers were using a task performance base as they were expected to clock in at the Community Liaison Office to get their daily activities or tasks. To allow for income to be spread more widely and for households to have time for other activities, contracted households were given a specific length of the road to work on. Workers were allocated an estimated time of at least 60 hours per month for the duration of the project (Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, 2013–2014). Contracted households were given protective clothing such as gloves, overalls, suits and gumboots.

3.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the underlying principles of labour-intensive construction

programmes and highlighted the potentially important role of participatory communication and community participation in successful development projects. The underlying principles of participatory communication were discussed as well as the prerequisites for successful participatory communication programmes. An overview of the community targeted for investigation in this study was also provided.

The practical implementation of the research project is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research study is to investigate the level of participation of a community in a public works construction programme undertaken in Limpopo. This chapter provides an overview of the research approach followed in conducting the investigation, the choice of participants in the study, the data collection and analysis methods employed.

4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

4.2.1 Introduction

With the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the participation of local villagers in the implementation of a PWP, a qualitative research approach in the form of a case study focusing on the construction of the D4100 road in the Lepelle-Nkumpi municipal area, was followed.

Various authors have tried to define qualitative research such as Creswell (1994:1) who proposed that a qualitative method can best be described as “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem while building a complex, holistic picture that is formed with words to report detailed views of informants and conducted in a natural setting”. Leedy (1997:155–156), on the other hand, simply argues that qualitative research is a broad term and that it is an interpretive method that encompasses a considerable number of approaches and aspects including education, politics, history, sociology, etc. Babbie and Mouton (2001) suggest that qualitative research design involves studying human action in a natural setting and through the eyes of the actors themselves; thus putting emphasis on giving a detailed description

and understanding of the phenomena within the appropriate context.

4.2.2 Why qualitative research for this study?

It is within the above framework that a qualitative approach was chosen for this study.

In the first place a qualitative approach provided the researcher with the opportunity to fully engage and interact with the respondents (Mouton & Marais, 1992:160); a matter of the utmost importance for conducting a successful investigation into the rural community chosen for this particular study.

Another characteristic of the qualitative method is that it promotes and encourages flexibility throughout the process of conducting research (Cassell & Symon, 1995:7). Flexibility was an important aspect in this study as a flexible style of interaction with participants allowed the researcher to engage with them in a manner that helped her to gain meaningful information on the implementation of the PWPs and the importance of local villagers participating in such programmes. Apart from making sure of flexible and comfortable interaction, flexibility was also used during data collection procedures, for example, when some of the dates and times were changed or moved to best suit the researcher and especially the participants.

Another important element of qualitative research is that of linking behaviour and situation to former experiences, which persons like Creswell (1994:1) and Lemon (1995:33) refer to as a "natural setting". Participants in this study were approached in their natural environment and circumstances. They understood and interpreted their involvement and participation in the project as important, not only to themselves, but also to their families, communities and generations to come as the new tarred road would improve the overall standard of living and the livelihoods of the villagers in many ways.

4.2.3 Case study

There are different qualitative research designs, each with its own merits (Creswell,

1994; 12), but for the purpose of this study the most useful design to apply was that of a case study. When using a case study, one or more persons, programmes, events, processes, institutions, organizations, social groups or phenomena are investigated within a specified time frame, using a combination of appropriate data collection devices (Creswell, 1994:12; Halonen, 2009).

In this instance only one unit was extensively researched, namely the Lepelle-Nkumpi community and the construction of the D4100 road, thus focusing on “understanding the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of a particular case” (Welman & Kruger, 2001:183). A case study becomes useful and primarily important when it provides an opportunity to learn and explore ideas, opinions and perceptions (Stake, 1994:244). Therefore, a case study enables and assists the researcher to investigate the expected outcomes of the research.

4.3 Population and Sampling

4.3.1 Defining the population

The population targeted for participating in this particular study came from villages in and around the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality through which the D4100 road cuts, as was discussed in the previous chapter. These villages include Dithabaneng, Malekapane, Makurung 1 and 2, Mamaolo, Seleteng and Tooseng. Participants included local villagers with whom interviews were conducted, and officials from the local municipality as well as persons from the Limpopo Department of Public Works, who participated in focus group discussions.

4.3.2 Choosing the participants

A qualitative investigation does not necessarily require a large sample as one is essentially interested in whether the information is rich in data and not in generalising the data (Cassell & Symon, 1995; Lemon, 1995). However, it proved to be somewhat complicated to get access to the names or identities of a suitable number of possible

participants for this particular study.

- **Local villagers**

Purposive sampling, selecting a group of people with a definitive purpose in mind, was used for the selection of the villagers taking part in the study. As the beneficiaries of the road works project, the overall input of the villagers concerned was crucial and would contribute immensely towards enriching the study.

When the road works infrastructure programme was initiated, persons in the area who needed jobs were expected to write their names in the jobseekers' book of their respective indunas. These books are kept by the indunas, and in some instances by councillors, and for any project that may arise in the area the interested parties would be contacted. This list of jobseekers currently contains more than 300 names.

Prospective participants had to be selected from these lists. Unfortunately the researcher was not permitted to photocopy the list for immediate use or for future reference. She was allowed to physically copy (write down) the names of only ten participants. These selected persons later privately referred her to five further participants. In choosing participants, a number of specific selection criteria were employed:

- Potential participants had to have worked for/been beneficiaries of the public works road project for a period of between 3 and 12 months.
- The researcher needed to purposefully ensure the selection of a representative sample of females, males, and persons with disabilities.
- Another selection criterion was the age of beneficiaries in order to ensure a balanced age distribution.

Out of the 15 participants who were selected, four were women, seven men, and four young people, male and female. Due to the physical nature of the construction of the road, the number of male beneficiaries on the job seekers' list exceeded the number of women and this was reflected in the selection of study participants. Unfortunately

there were no persons with disabilities on the job-seekers' list, probably due to the physical nature of the project.

- **Municipal officials**

The names of local municipal workers were obtained from a colleague working as a Community Liaison Officer in the area. Although contact was made with most of these persons, a number of them cancelled at the last minute and only six eventually participated.

- **Limpopo Department of Public Works officials**

The researcher experienced difficulties in getting any co-operation from these individuals as they kept on postponing dates and venues. In the end only three came to the group discussions.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION

4.4.1 Introduction

Three methods of data collection, namely face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, and analysis of relevant documents were employed in this study. Data triangulation (including multiple sources of data collection in a single research project) was applied here to increase the reliability of the results and to compensate for any limitations thereof (Mouton & Marais, 1992:91; Lemon, 1995:33).

4.4.2 Interviews

Qualitative interviewing is an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer or researcher has a general plan of inquiry, aimed at investigating the opinions, ideas, and perspective of the interviewee (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Semi-structured interviews involve the use of open-ended questions as an interview guide and this method is crucial to a qualitative study in order to gather in-depth information relating to the research problem.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with beneficiaries or participants in the D4100 road construction project in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality. Interview schedules were developed covering many areas relating to the project, ranging from determining the participants' understanding of the purpose of the PWP through to their individual experiences, feelings and opinions with regard to its implementation, their own participation, and the effects of the programme on their lives (see Appendix A).

After selecting the participants for the study, they were called on their cellular phones for individual appointments.

A car was used to drive to the areas/homes of respondents. Areas covered included Dithabaneng, Makurung 1 and 2, Malekapane, Mamaolo and Tooseng. In some instances the interviews took longer than anticipated. Some questions, for example, the ones on how and when they became aware of the programme, caused difficulties as they could not remember the exact date they had heard about the project since they learnt about it from talk amongst the villagers.

The area and villages where the study was conducted are deep rural and therefore the illiteracy level amongst some of the participants was a challenge. This is the reason why face-to-face interviews were chosen instead of questionnaires that would have had to be completed. The face-to-face interviews provided an opportunity for translations in Sepedi during the sessions, which is the local language in the area and one of the official languages of the country. Fortunately the researcher is also conversant in this language as it is her mother tongue. This was an added advantage to the interviews as most participants were comfortable and free to express themselves and engage with each question in detail. Interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the participants.

4.4.3 Focus group discussions

Focus group interviews involve a gathering or a meeting of six to twelve people with a researcher or a facilitator in a room to engage or debate one or more issues

(Neuman, 1997:253). It is recommended that the group should be homogeneous and not include friends or relatives to eliminate confrontation.

In this study, one focus group was conducted with six colleagues from the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality. They were chosen because of their natural and expected involvement in matters relating to communities under their jurisdiction; in this case the public works project.

Another focus group was conducted with three colleagues from the Limpopo Department of Public Works who had knowledge of the implementation of programmes in the province and the way in which communities get involved in such projects.

An interview schedule consisting of open-ended questions to solicit the opinions, perceptions, ideas and attitudes of people was developed. Questions covered a fairly wide range of issues, from the aim and purpose of PWPs, to identifying successes and challenges in implementing such programmes (See Appendix B).

The focus group discussions were held at the Lepelle-Nkumpi municipal offices in Lebowakgomo and at the Department of Public Works in Polokwane. These locations provided familiar and informal settings making the participants feel comfortable enough to focus on the topic at hand (Berg, 1998).

Both of the discussions were tape-recorded and notes were also taken during the deliberations to support the tape-recorded information (Neuman, 1997:253)

4.4.4 Analysis (review) of documents

Document analysis is defined as the review or evaluation of documents, both printed and electronic (Bowen, 2009:27). Analysing documents requires that the data collected be studied and interpreted in order to draw out meaning, gain in-depth understanding of the subject matter and develop empirical and useful knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

For this study, the following documents were analysed:

- the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality's IDP document of 2012–2016, as it serves as an official document for consultation, budgeting, planning, management, and the overall decision-making processes of the municipality in relation to its developmental priorities for a five-year period;
- the Community Survey (Stats SA, 2007);
- the Municipal Structures Act (117/1998);
- the Northern (i.e. Limpopo) Provincial Government Notice (275/2000); and
- guidelines and policies of the Department of Public Works – both national and provincial.

These documents provide more information on the PWPs in South Africa in relation to how it was initiated, its aims and objectives, its successes and failures, and its advantages and disadvantages. They furthermore prescribe and give guidance to various stakeholders, including municipalities, on how they should implement the PWPs in their areas and the importance of the participation of communities in developmental projects.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The information obtained from the interviews and the focus group discussions was tape-recorded and then transcribed and the basic principles of content analysis was applied to the data. Content analysis can broadly be described as a technique for gathering and analysing the content of a text (Neuman, 1997:272). A distinction can be made between two basic content analysis methods, namely conceptual or thematic analysis and relational analysis (Writing@CSU, 2005). Conceptual analysis establishes the existence and frequency of concepts in a text, while relational analysis takes it a step further by examining the relationship among concepts in the text. In this study, the basic method of conceptual analysis was used.

Content or data analysis portrays a process of presenting meaning, structure and order into the collected data (De Vos, 2002:340). In conducting content analysis, a text is coded, or broken down into manageable categories on a variety of levels; such

as word, word sense, themes or phrases. For the purpose of this study, thematic analysis was employed by analysing the data according to the main themes of the study, which were in turn grouped into (manageable) categories and sub-categories.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the qualitative approach followed in the study, discussing the selection of participants for the study, the data collection methods – semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and analysis of relevant documents – and the manner in which these were practically employed. It concludes with a short description of the manner in which the data was analysed.

The next chapter presents the results of data analysed.

CHAPTER 5

5 ANALYSIS OF DATA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis of the data obtained from the individual interviews and the focus group discussions as described in the previous chapter. The aim of these two methods of data collection was to acquire information on and gain a deeper understanding of the participation of local villagers in the planning and implementation of the D4100 road, a public works construction project in the Lepelle-Nkumpi municipal area in Limpopo.

Data analysis is one of the important elements of research that contributes towards a meaningful and structured presentation of the findings (De Vos, 2002:340). In this study, the researcher constructed instruments for data collection and analysis according to the themes that have assisted in achieving the objectives of the study.

For analysis of the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the tape recordings and the researcher's notes were transcribed. The different transcription reports were electronically filed in two different folders. After all the data was collected, it was analysed through thematic analysis. A six-step thematic analysis framework by Braun and Clarke (2006) was applied in order to extract the themes that were vital in evaluating the construction of the D4100 road in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality. Thematic analysis assisted in answering the questions more accurately and extensively. Information contained in the documents studied informed the analysis of data obtained from the focus group interviews.

5.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with local villagers who were beneficiaries of the road works project. Following are the responses to the relevant questions asked.

5.2.1 Question: What do you understand by Public Works Programmes?

The reason this question was asked was to find out what the perception and understanding of the participants were with regard to the PWP.

5.2.1.1 First category of answers – job creation

- PWPs are for the people who are not working and are looking for jobs.
- PWPs are meant to create jobs for people.
- Government is trying to give the people of South Africa work through the PWPs.

5.2.1.2 Second category of answers – poverty reduction

- PWPs are meant to reduce poverty.
- The households that cannot afford food or other things are assisted through the PWPs.
- People who are hungry and cannot afford food or clothing for themselves are helped through the PWPs.

5.2.1.3 Third category of answers – training and skills development

- The EPWPs are meant to give students an opportunity for experiential training.
- The PWPs are meant to develop technical skills in the young people of South Africa especially those who are at tertiary education level.

5.2.1.4 Fourth category of answers – development

- PWPs are a government programme of developing South Africa.
- PWPs are for the people of South Africa and not foreign nationals.

5.2.2 Question: What do you think is the purpose of Public Works Programmes?

This question was asked to determine whether the respondents understood what the overall purpose of a PWP is. This was important to find out whether the purpose (i.e. their own participation) was achieved during the construction of the D4100 road.

5.2.2.1 First category of answers – opportunity for jobs/work

- PWPs are meant to ensure that all people in South Africa are working.
- PWPs are meant to introduce people to a workplace environment, hence every morning we were supposed to clock in to show that we were at work, and in the afternoon we clocked out to show that we were off work.
- PWPs are for labourers or people who can work with their hands and feet, using tools and not for people who have gone to school or university.

5.2.2.2 Second category of answers – targeting potential workforce

- PWPs are for the municipalities to give work opportunities to people in their areas.
- PWPs are government projects where officials employ their relatives, friends etc. Sometimes those officials themselves benefit out of the project and not the community.

5.2.3 Question: What do you think are the criteria for selecting people who work in the Public Works Programmes?

Criteria for selecting people to work in the PWP are clearly outlined in the national guidelines for PWP. This particular question was included to find out whether the participants were aware of these criteria or whether they had their own perceptions about the criteria that were applied.

5.2.3.1 First category of answers – selection by persons ‘higher up’ and biased selection

- The criteria for selecting people to work on the project benefit the municipality and not the communities.
- The local indunas and magoshis (chiefs) select people to work on the programme. This leads to corruption as these people only consider their relatives, friends and cousins to work on the project and not the community members who need work opportunities.
- The ward councillors select people who are supposed to work on the programme.
- The indunas, magoshis and councillors select their relatives and family members to work on the project.

5.2.3.2 Second category of answers – current procedures

- People nominate themselves to work on the programme by writing their names in the job seekers’ book.
- People select themselves to work on the project by attending community meetings.
- Other people simply register their households as indigent and that is how they get selected to work on the project. The indigents’ register is used to determine who in the community are supposed to work on the project.

5.2.3.3 Third category of answers – unfair selection procedures

- There is a lot of crime in the public works projects; people are selecting their own people, and some are bribed to select people. Some people stand a better chance to work on the project than others.
- Getting work on the project depends on who you know in the community and what that person does in the community; if he or she is well known, you will always get a chance to work.

- Some people are paid more money for working on the projects than others. It really depends on who you are and who you know in the community.
- The indunas, magoshis and councillors share the money from the project and do not give it to the people. This is why they are wealthy; they have big houses, big cars, and their children are in good schools.

5.2.4 Question: How did you get to know about the Public Works Programme in your area?

This question was meant to determine how the participants got to know about the project and to find out whether the community was involved from the conceptual or initiation phase of the project.

5.2.4.1 First category of answers – from friends and family

- I heard about the project from my brother's friend.
- I heard about the project from my neighbour.
- I heard about the project from my friend.

5.2.4.2 Second category of answers – community meetings

- I saw people going to a community meeting and just followed them, and that's where I heard about the project.
- I only heard about the project during a community meeting somewhere in 2009 because people were complaining about the road in that meeting, and we were told that the road would be tarred soon. The next meeting a different person came and said he would inform the municipality about our concerns. We always get different people at the community meetings and they say they will come back with answers but they never do.
- Some people were making loud noises about the community meeting, and I joined to hear about the project.
- I have lost trust in the project because I heard about it many years ago, then it was quiet, then it came back and nothing was done about the road.

- I heard about the project since 2011 when I attended my first community meeting and people were complaining about the road.

5.2.4.3 Third category of answers – general engagements

- I was at the clinic and heard some women talking about the road project and that it would bring work for people.
- I was with my granny at an old-age pension payday and heard about the project of tarring a road from my granny's friends.
- I heard about the project during a school meeting at my child's school.

5.2.4.4 Fourth category of answers – snippets of information over the years

- I don't really remember when I heard about the project, but there were talks about it some years back, maybe as far back as when the new government started in 1994. Every time an election was approaching, people would be talking about the project and how it would bring jobs to the area.
- I don't know exactly when I heard about the project, people were just talking about it a long time ago. Sometimes there was more talk about it than at other times.
- There were lots of rumours going around regarding the tarring of the road in this village; no one knew exactly when the tarring was going to start or who was going to tar the road. Community members were always complaining about the road at all the meetings.
- I remember someone talking about it around 2007 when my child was doing grade 11, she has finished matric and is now working in Polokwane as a cleaner in a hospital. She did not pass matric well and had a baby so she could not go back to school. She now has two babies and someone has paid lobola for her.
- The road has been terrible for a long time, I don't even remember when I heard about the project but there was a lot of talk about it in this area. I wish government can give us more jobs and not just for a short time and

then we are hungry again. Our government is giving us work after a long time and when you work you don't know where to start anymore because you are short of many things.

5.2.5 Question: When did you become aware that there is such a programme in your area?

This question follows on from the previous question. The time when community members, particularly those who took part in the project, became aware of the project was of interest. This was mainly because the study set out to investigate the participation of local villagers in the project, and being aware of the project at an earlier stage would afford community members a better opportunity to participate.

- I became aware of the programme only when I attended a community meeting and it was announced that there would be a project of tarring the road. Those who wanted to work on the project had to write their names in the job seekers' book so that they could be considered for employment on the project. Those who were not selected would be given a chance on future projects.
- Many people became aware of the project when they saw the construction workers moving around, starting to clean up the road and bringing lots of construction machinery, then a community meeting was called to announce that the project was starting, and people who indicated that they required jobs were considered.
- I became aware of the project when I saw people working on the road, then I went to the induna to find out if my name was amongst those who were supposed to work on the project and fortunately I was given a chance and I worked for three months.

5.2.6 Question: Did you have any say or contribution in the planning of the Public Works Programme in your area?

- No one contributed to the planning of the project; the project was planned by the municipality and then they came to the community to inform us that there was money for the project and people could soon start working on the project.
- The indunas and chiefs planned the project with the municipality and then told the community about it later. They wanted to eat (sic) a portion of the project's money before people could start benefiting from the project.
- Community projects are a business of municipalities and in many instances they plan, implement and conclude projects on their own, sometimes even use people from outside of the area to come and work on the project. We were just lucky to be employed on the project, God was on our side.

5.2.7 Question: How long have you worked on the programme?

The duration of employment on the PWP is normally three to six months, this question tried to find out if this was the case with participants in the construction of the D4100 road of the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality.

- For me I don't think is important to remember when I started in the project. Our government is playing games with us because it gives us work and then takes it away. What can you do if you are a man of four children and don't have anything to give to your family. Why is government not giving us jobs so we can work for ourselves and our families; we don't want piece jobs we want full-time jobs.
- I worked on the project for almost six months, as a single woman I don't think it is fair to work for such a short period of time. I have children to take to school, food to put on the table, funeral covers to pay every month, stokvels to pay every month and if I am not working all these things suffer. I

want a full-time job and work for my children so that they can be educated and start working for themselves as well.

- I worked for three months on the project. I am thankful for this piece job because I managed to cover some of my household necessities but going forward we are still going to suffer with my children.
- The project was too short to learn any kind of skill. No one can learn anything within such a short period of time. Government should just give us long-term jobs.

5.2.8 Question: Can you please share your experience or lessons of working in the programme?

- I appreciate the skills that I learned on the project, even though it was for a short period of time, I wish they can employ us again so we can learn further.
- I was able to do my experiential training through my temporary employment in the project.
- I learned a lot and wish that the contractor can employ us again on other projects so we can learn further about the construction of roads.

5.2.9 Question: What would you like to do after completing your work on the programme? Please give some examples of what you would like to do.

This question tried to find out what the participants' future plans were. One of the main goals of the PWPs is to provide income and training to people to enable them to move from short-term employment to permanent jobs, and to provide infrastructure and services (Department of Public Works, 2009).

5.2.9.1 First category of answers – use of skills for future work

- Being employed on the project has opened my eyes to the world of work, it has instilled a sense of discipline and commitment, time management and

being able to share tasks with other team members. I hope I will be able to use these lessons in my future employment.

- I will use the certificate that I got from the project to look for other jobs.
- At least the contractor has also given us letters of our experiential training so that will go a long way to assure other employers that we were once employed in the construction of a road.

5.2.9.2 Second category of answers – start own business

- I really want to start my own business after the experience I got from the project. I will talk to other women in this village and then we can start a business of paving around households and businesses in the area. The experience from the project has given me more confidence to start something and I know I will succeed.
- Most women in this area are poor, and do not have anything to survive on. I will talk to some of them so we can start a brick-making company, then we can sell bricks to households or businesses in this area. We must just get a site where we can do our business, and maybe the municipality can assist us with water supply.

5.2.10 Question: Do you think working on the programme has changed your life in any way? If so, please say why and if not, please also say why not.

- The project has changed my life for the better as I am now able to use the experience and lessons learned to seek other employment elsewhere, even in bigger cities like Gauteng.
- I will look for another job as government has just played games with us once more; how can you work for such a short period of time and expect to be an expert in anything.

- I don't know what I am going to do after this, since I only have matric which I did not pass well. I will look for other jobs in the mines around or go to Polokwane and look for jobs in some of the factories.
- I will start my own business of paving, together with other women and I know we will succeed. The business will create jobs for other people in this area and we will defeat hunger as well.

5.3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Focus group discussions were conducted with municipal officials and with officials from the Limpopo Department of Public Works. The answers to the questions below have not necessarily been quoted *verbatim*. Answers from the various individuals, grouped into themes where applicable, have been paraphrased.

5.3.1 Question: Can you define Public Works Programmes?

- The PWP is a nationwide programme used by government to try to deal with the issues of poverty and unemployment. It creates short-term or temporary employment opportunities for local people.
- PWP is meant to provide local people with skills and training so that they can use those skills to get permanent jobs elsewhere in future or so they can start their own businesses based on the skills or training they acquired from participating in the programme.
- PWPs are meant to create employment opportunities for people who are unskilled, uneducated and have no training. Most people who work on these projects are staying in the areas where these projects are occurring, therefore local employment and investment are enhanced.

5.3.2 Question: What is the purpose of the programme?

- The main purpose of the PWP is to create employment opportunities for the unskilled labourers who can use their hands and feet to work.

- To provide unemployed persons with an income.
- To provide unemployed people with education, skills and training.
- To help contracted workers to set up their own business/service or become employed once they exit the programme.

5.3.3 Question: How do you think Public Works Programmes should be implemented?

- This question was answered mainly by referring to the relevant policies and guidelines for such programmes, for example the National Department of Public Works' municipal policy and implementation framework which outlines inter alia how grants such as the MIG should be utilized.
- It was also pointed out that provinces and municipalities generally try to follow the same institutional arrangements as those established at the national level.
- Respondents felt some municipalities have serious financial management and administration challenges therefore they are not always able to meet these implementation criteria.
- Mention was made of the incentives ordinarily paid to public entities to incentivise their efforts in job creation through the PWP.

5.3.4 Question: What are the criteria for selecting people to work on the programme?

The target for Phase 1 of the EPWP, set by the Department of Public Works, determined that 40% of job opportunities created by public sector bodies should be for women, 30% for the youth and 2% for persons with disabilities (Department of Public Works, 2009:15).

Participants were in agreement that the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality had tried to adhere to the Department of Public Works' Phase 1 target with regard to women and youth, but not with regard to persons with disabilities. This was mainly due to the

physical nature of this particular programme that involved hard physical work and prevented persons with disabilities to participate.

5.3.5 Question: Can you share successes of the programme?

- Participants pointed out the major job opportunities created in both phases of the project.
- The importance of skills development, especially that of the youth, was highlighted.
- The additional advantage of this programme was the fact that accreditation certificates were provided that could possibly be used for future job-seeking. The training served to make the workers more marketable.

5.3.6 Question: Can you share challenges of the programme?

Participants did not seem to find this an easy question to answer. When prompted with examples from official policy documents, they agreed with issues such as:

- lack of commitment from officials and political leaders;
- lack of adequate reporting and other administrative skills;
- lack of optimum co-ordination within municipalities and achieving targets;
- some misuse of funds.

5.3.7 Question: Can you propose elements that can be brought in to improve the programme?

- The need for specific persons/committees to manage the programmes was one of the first suggestions/needs expressed.
- Better financial management was also high on the “wish list” of the participants. It so often happened that targets could not be met, often because of lack of adequate budgeting and financial planning. This then impacted on the long-term sustainability of the programme.

- More programmes so that more people could be employed as the unemployment rate is very high in this municipality.

5.4 SUMMARY

- Data becomes useful when it has been properly analysed (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004:198). In this study, data was analysed thematically or as per the main categories based on questions in the interview and focus group schedules.
- The following chapter provides a discussion of the data analysed as well as recommendations based on the findings and the discussions.

CHAPTER SIX

6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to investigate the use of participatory communication during the implementation of the Tooseng or D4100 road, a public works project in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality, Limpopo, South Africa.

This chapter discusses the results obtained from data collected by means of individual interviews with beneficiaries of the project and focus group discussions with municipal and provincial officials responsible for overseeing the implementation of the project. Recommendations with regard to the implementation of similar Expanded Public Works Programmes will also be provided.

6.2 DATA INTERPRETATION

6.2.1 Questions pertaining to the understanding of the Public Works Programme

Both groups of participants were asked three similar or overlapping questions that touched on their general understanding of what the PWP entails.

The first question "What do you understand by the PWP?" asked in the individual interviews, and "Can you define the PWP?" asked during the focus group meetings, are similar and were both aimed at finding out what the participants' perceptions of PWPs in general were.

The responses of the individual participants were interesting as they indicated a very practical understanding of the programme that is not based on literature or any other

type of “official” information or knowledge. Their answers also clearly show the importance of the PWP to the villagers, specifically with regard to job creation and economic support.

The understanding of the municipal and provincial officials seems to be primarily based on literature about the programme and is also informed by their educational backgrounds, qualifications and experience.

The second questions focused on the participants’ understanding of the overall purpose of the programme. Notable answers to these questions indicated a clear link to the first answer where the villagers and the municipal and provincial officials indicated that PWPs were a job-creation mechanism. The logical sense of these answers clearly indicated that the Lepelle-Nkumpi community understood that the purpose of the PWP was to provide job opportunities for the many South Africans who have never worked before or are in dire need of employment.

The third questions concerned the participants’ ideas about the criteria used for selecting people to work on the programme and the procedures followed in this regard. The individual participants indicated that their opinions of criteria employed were to a great extent based on what they had seen or heard people talking about during community meetings or elsewhere in their villages. General remarks pointed to feelings of mistrust and of misunderstanding of the criteria; the process was perceived to be corrupt, not transparent, and prone to nepotism. Differences in remuneration and the perception that indunas, magoshis and councillors shared the money from the project and did not necessarily give it to the people, also came to the fore.

The criteria described by the municipal and provincial officials were largely based on the prescribed criteria contained in the guidelines of the PWPs.

6.2.2 Other questions relating to the general implementation of the programme

The officials and the villagers were asked questions concerning the general

implementation of the PWP.

The specific question on how they felt PWPs should be implemented was asked only of the municipal and provincial officials. The two questions put to the individual beneficiaries of the programme, although different to the one put to the officials, were related, as they were aimed at understanding the time of involvement in and the actual experiences of the villagers regarding the implementation of the programme.

The answers obtained from the officials indicated that in the implementation of PWPs, provinces and municipalities were guided by the Municipal Policy and Implementation Framework developed by the National Department of Public Works. The general feeling was that the project was well implemented in spite of a couple of initial challenges such as poor workmanship, changing of contractors and delays. During the implementation phase, workers were clocking in and out of work, they were given payslips to indicate the number of hours and days worked and how much they would earn, they were even paid extra money for extra time or working on holidays and over weekends. In addition they were given the necessary protective clothing, the women were trained for four days on general labour-intensive construction activities and so forth.

The one major “complaint” offered by the villagers about the implementation of the programme was that they felt the period of employment was too short. Although the participants seemed to understand the meaning and the purpose of the PWP, they were frustrated by the high rates of unemployment and poverty in the villages where they lived, and subsequently felt it was the responsibility of government to not “play games” with them – providing work and then “taking it away” again. The need for fulltime employment in order to sustain families came to the fore very strongly.

A number of further questions that were asked concerned the effect of the programme on the lives of the villagers.

In spite of the above-mentioned feeling of discontent, many of the individual participants appreciated the opportunity of being involved in the project and said it

made a difference in their lives: new skills were learnt, confidence was gained, a sense of discipline and commitment was instilled, time was managed, and tasks were shared with other team members.

The majority of the beneficiaries, particularly women and the youth, were optimistic that they would use these experiences and skills to better their lives and those of their families by either looking for permanent employment elsewhere or even starting their own businesses or cooperatives.

6.2.3 Questions focusing on participation

As seen in the literature study, participatory communication is considered to be one of the fundamental approaches to development. The underlying goal of participation is to empower communities, groups and individuals to take action for social change, make informed decisions about their developmental aspirations, and generally take collective action to achieve and realise such developmental goals (Besette, 2004). This approach is embodied in official directives for PWPs where, apart from their general aims and goals of job creation and poverty alleviation, municipalities are required to foster participatory democracy in the delivery of services and adhere to *Batho Pele* (people first) principles.

In this regard questions were formulated that focused specifically on determining the extent or nature of participation of local villagers in the construction of the Tooseng or D4100 road. Questions covered two main areas, namely: how and when participants became aware of the planned project, and whether they had any say in the planning and implementation of the programme.

Most of the participants indicated that they heard about the project from their friends, neighbours, relatives or family members. Unfortunately, due to the prolonged period of the project as a result of poor workmanship, changes of contractors, etc., some respondents forgot exactly when they heard about the project as it was planned and discussed many years prior to its initiation.

Others revealed that they had heard about the project at one or many community

meetings over time where the intended road-tarring project was announced and interested persons were asked to put their names on the job seekers' database.

Some people only became aware of the project when they actually saw construction workers and people from the community working, after which a community meeting was called to ask for (further) interested parties to come forward.

Overall, it seemed as if the participants felt there was a lack of information and transparency about the projects.

No one seemed to think that they (the community) had any real say in the planning or in the eventual implementation of the project. Some were of the opinion that indunas and chiefs planned the project with the municipalities and only informed the community later (in order to benefit themselves first).

Others were of the opinion that community projects were the sole responsibility of municipalities and they should therefore do all the planning.

6.2.4 Other issues raised

In spite of some indications that there was an attempt by the authorities to involve the community at an earlier stage of the project, for example, at community meetings where they were asked to add their names to the job seekers' database, the inconsistency in terms of information shared seemed to have produced a lot of confusion. For example, community meetings were addressed by different stakeholders and different people were reporting on different issues promising answers that were not forthcoming which created confusion and mistrust among the community members.

Other respondents complained about a form of favouritism by some community leaders and government officials. For example, people were not treated equally, resulting in a decline in participation. Some respondents indicated that the indunas, magoshis and councillors selected their relatives and family members to work on the project.

Such negative assertions about a project can lead to the demotivation and demoralisation of community members and result in them not actively participating in the development projects taking place in their locality.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above, the general conclusion drawn from the data obtained in this study is that members of the Lepelle-Nkumpi community were not offered satisfactory opportunities for participating in the road construction programme that directly affected them.

A distinction can be made between pseudo and genuine participation (White, *et al.*, 1994:17). Pseudo participation refers to involvement of people in development projects in which the control and decision-making powers of a project rest with the researchers, planners, administrators or community elites, whilst genuine participation “touches the very core of power relations in society” (Servaes, 1999:198).

Taking into consideration the broader pre-requisites for successful participatory communication programmes, the recommendations in the following sections can be made with regard to current and possible further phases of the Tooseng road construction project.

6.3.1 Encourage community participation and participation in decision-making throughout all the phases of the project

Participation and active involvement of communities from the initial planning phase of a project up to the stage of decision-making is critical for accomplishing a successful development undertaking.

Participation in the actual implementation of the project and being part of the decision-making process encourage local communities to actively take part in the project, taking responsibility in undertaking tasks, and working towards the completion of the project. If community members feel excluded at any of the stages

of a project this can have negative consequences for the overall project deliverables (Everatt, 2001:33; Cohen & Uphoff, 1997).

6.3.2 Promote ownership of community projects and participation in benefits

Involving the community in all the processes of a project will enable them to not only be active participants in the project, but will also result in the community taking full ownership of all projects taking place in their villages (Huesca, 2003). In this way the effectiveness of an externally introduced programme through the active involvement of the local villagers is increased (Cleaver, 1999), leading to the community enjoying the fruits of their involvement and participation in a project.

One of the main objectives of the EPWPs is to reduce unemployment and poverty. Matters relating to economic growth and capacity-building such as socioeconomic opportunities, livelihoods, social mobilisation and advocacy are therefore essential for making participation in development projects a reality.

6.3.3 Strengthen communication channels and information-sharing

Communities should be involved in the evaluation of projects, taking stock of the project from conception until its completion, in order to indicate whether it was successful or whether it failed in reaching its intended developmental objectives.

The importance of better communication channels and information-sharing amongst communities and development agencies in accomplishing this cannot be over-emphasised. The flow of information between workers, supervisors, project leaders and the affected community is important in ensuring that there are no information gaps that may result in misunderstandings. Monitoring and feedback systems should be developed so as to ensure consistency and reliability of information between stakeholders.

6.3.4 General recommendations

Some recommendations pertaining specifically to the Mamaolo-Tooseng (D4100 road) PWP in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality are listed below:

6.3.4.1 Improve management and coordination of the programme

Guidelines for the development and implementation of EPWPs on national as well as provincial and local levels are available (Department of Public Works, 2005a). Municipalities often lack the financial, managerial and institutional capacity to handle or even deal with technical projects that are meant to create job opportunities through labour-intensive mechanisms.

It became evident that the project under investigation in this study, due to poor planning, design and management, experienced several challenges prior to its initiation and during its implementation that ultimately delayed and interrupted the project.

It is therefore recommended that the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality strengthen their coordination mechanisms, institutional arrangements, financial standing and management skills so as to increase their ability to tap into the incentive grant and effectively implement infrastructure development projects in the municipality.

6.3.4.2 Strengthen infrastructure development and maintenance

As with the Gundo-Lashu project discussed in Chapter 3, the aim in undertaking the construction of the Mamaolo-Tooseng road was to provide a cost-effective and good-quality rural road using labour-intensive construction methods (Phillips, 2004).

The road is important in that it connects villages such as Tooseng, Malekapane, Dithabaneng, Makurung 1 and 2, and Mamaolo, all of which were previously disconnected. The road also connects all these villages with the economic hubs of both the Sekhukhune and Capricorn districts, namely Jane Furse and Lebowakgomo, through the R597 road, which ultimately goes straight to Polokwane, the capital city of Limpopo.

Although villagers appreciate the road in that it has changed their lives for the better in many ways, for example, by enabling provision of ambulance services and access to faster policing, they raised numerous complaints and concerns to the municipality and the province regarding the bad condition of the road.

Within this context it is recommended that the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality, in collaboration with communities from all these villages, ensures that this road is taken care of and maintained.

6.3.4.3 Create exit opportunities for the participants

The Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality should endeavour to create employment opportunities for participants exiting the EPWP.

The municipality can encourage companies that have submitted tenders to the municipality to give preference to the expanded public works participants, encourage and help participants to partner with other reputable organisations so they can tender on other available contracts, and link the training projects offered to participants in the expanded public works projects with any of the jobs available in the municipality.

The municipality can furthermore establish relationships with external companies requiring individuals who have received certified training in fields such as bricklaying, trenching, plumbing and pipe-fitting. This will ensure that participants exiting the EPWP obtain medium- to long-term jobs that will enable them to earn an income, and also accumulate assets which are important in the fight against unemployment and poverty.

6.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has interpreted the data that was collected from individual villagers, municipal and provincial officials. This was done by categorising ideas and views of these groups and providing observations or findings for each category. Finally, taking into consideration the gaps and shortcomings identified, a number of recommendations pertaining to community participation in projects as well as some

general recommendations were provided.

With the focus on the use of participatory communication, findings of the study indicated that the majority of the community project participants were not of the opinion that they fully participated in the planning, development, and implementation of the Mamaolo-Tooseng road, a public works project in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality, Limpopo, South Africa.

Shortcomings in the management and coordination of the project by officials and politicians, lack of information and transparency, and lack of commitment were some of the challenges that hindered active participation by communities during the construction of the road. The study makes strong recommendations that community participation should be strengthened within the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality in order to promote community ownership, empowerment and sustainability of community projects.

Although these recommendations pertain to this study and community specifically, they can be of value to many other similar public works projects undertaken in the country.

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APPENDIX A

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. The study is a partial contribution to the fulfilment of a Master's degree in Community Development at the University of Pretoria.

The aim of this study is to learn about your feelings, opinions and ideas about the EPWP in your area. We would also like to find out about your personal involvement in the PWP and whether the programme has since made your life different in any way.

Confidentiality is guaranteed; the information will remain with the researcher, her supervisor and the Research Committee of the University of Pretoria. No outside person will access this information without permission.

Please feel free to express yourself or share as much information as you want to. There is no right or wrong answer.

We also ask for your permission to tape-record the discussions.

Questions asked:

- What do you understand by public works programmes?
- What do you think is the purpose of public works programmes?
- What do you think are the criteria for selecting people who work in the public works programmes?
- How did you get to know about the Public Works Programme in your area?
- When did you become aware that there is such a programme in your area?
- Did you have any say in or contribute to the planning of the Public Works Programme in your area?
- How long have you been working on the programme?

- Can you please share your experience of working on the programme?
- What would you like to do after completing your work on the programme?

Please give some examples of what you would like to do.

- Do you think working on the programme has changed your life in any way?
If so, please say why and if not, please also say why not.

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. The study is a partial contribution to the fulfilment of a master's degree in Community Development at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of this interview is to get your opinions, ideas and feelings about the public works programmes and their contribution to reducing unemployment in your area.

Confidentiality is guaranteed, the information will remain with the researcher, her supervisor and the Research Committee of the University of Pretoria. No outside person will access this information without permission.

Please feel free to express yourself or share as much information as you want to. There is no right or wrong answer.

We also ask for your permission to tape-record the discussions.

Questions asked:

- Can you define public works programmes?
- What is the purpose of the programme?
- How do you think public works programmes should be implemented?
- What are the criteria for selecting people to work on the programme?
- Can you share the successes of the programme?
- Can you share the challenges of the programme?
- Can you propose anything that can improve the programme?

Thank you for your participation.