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PREFACE

With the advent of this the first volume of the *Journal for Development Support* (*JDS)*, the Centre for Development Support (CDS) can truly be said, after 10 years, to have come of age. The main objective of the *JDS* is to provide a space for development scholars and practitioners critically to reflect on their development work. Learning from our mistakes and good practice, and sharing our reflections, are pivotal for improving development policies and programmes and are the *raison d'etre* for this journal.

It is in keeping with this desire to be an engaged player in the development community that the journal seeks, ideally, to go beyond simply carrying research outputs, and sees itself influencing development policies and practices. The vision of the *JDS* is to promote the scholarship of engagement. A scholarship of engagement is in essence concerned with policy-related, practice-oriented problem-solving, and implementation-driven research.

Gandhi urged us "to be the change we seek in this world". It is my hope that the *JDS* will contribute towards our continuing to meet this challenge.

Lucius Botes
Editor-in-chief

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Missing the Boat? Community Participation in the Integrated Development Planning Process in the Free State, South Africa

Frieda Human, Lochner Marais & Lucius Botes

Abstract

The level of community participation in the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process has not been well researched in academic writings. In this paper, community participation in development planning will be discussed on the basis of international and national theory of community participation. The discussion will focus on levels of participation, as well as approaches to and methods of participation. The factors affecting, and the preconditions for, effective community participation will also be considered. Finally, the process of community participation in Integrated Development Planning in three local municipalities in the Free State will be evaluated, with a particular focus on the dangers of the tendency to engage in community participation in the IDP process for the sole purpose of compliance with legislation, rather than for community empowerment. In fact, the impression is created that community participation takes place as institutionalised participation and not in terms of the requirements of communities themselves.

1. Introduction / Background

The subject of community participation has been well researched with regard to issues such as, inter alia, the principles and theory of community participation (Chrystalbridge, 2003; McGee, 2002; Rauch, 2003), participation in local governance (Ambert, 2002; Brynard, 1996; Davids, 2003; Jansen van Vuren, 2002; Nel, 2000; Pieterse, 2002a), participation in urban planning (Abbott, 1996; Cheema, 1987; Innes & Booher, 2000; Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; World Bank 2001), participation in development interventions (Botes, 1999; Hemson, 2002),

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and the participation of marginalised groups (Guerra, 2002; Hemson, 2002; Sowman & Gawith, 1994). In addition, there have been a number of attempts to evaluate integrated development plans (IDPs) (Adams & Oranje, 2002; Harrison, 2002; Meiklejohn & Coetzee, 2002; Rauch, 2003), but fewer attempts to focus specifically on the level of community participation in the IDP process in South Africa (a planning process through which municipalities develop a strategic, five-year development plan, see DPLG, 2002a). One exception is Rauch's (2003) assessment of issues such as community-level needs identification, ward committees, feedback mechanisms, stakeholder representation, the role of traditional leaders and the IDP representative forum.

This article aims to bridge the identified gap in the existing academic literature by analysing the community participation processes followed in three local municipalities of the Free State Province, South Africa, namely *Setsoto* (Ficksburg/Meqheleng, Clocolan/Hlohlowane, Marquard/Moemaneng and Senekal/Matwabeng), *Nala* (Wesselsbron/Monyakeng and Bothaville/Kgotsong) and *Mantsopa* (Ladybrand/Manyatseng, Hobhouse/Dipelaneng, Excelsior/Mahlatswetsa, Tweespruit/Borwa and Thaba Patchoa) (see Figure 1). The main aim of this paper is to highlight the relatively weak levels of participation in the IDP processes investigated in the study. Essentially, we should like to argue that community participation is incorporated mainly for the sake of compliance with procedural guidelines, without either a deep and intense involvement on the part of the community, or any attempts to enrich the IDP process through community involvement. Community participation thus takes place on conditions of the state and not on the conditions and criteria set by communities. To illustrate this argument, the theoretical paradigms behind community participation will firstly be considered. Attention will be devoted to aspects such as the definition of community participation, levels of participation, approaches to, and methods of community participation, as well as the preconditions for and factors impacting on community participation. The challenges facing community participation will also be considered. Thereafter, community participation during the IDP process in the three local municipalities of the Free State will be analysed on the basis of policy guidelines and the theory of community participation. Finally, a number of concluding comments will be made.

The methodology followed in this study comprises a number of methodological procedures. A literature review was conducted to analyse international and national experiences with regard to the use of community participation during development planning. The methodological procedures for the more empirical aspects of the research ranged from information obtained from the three municipalities under scrutiny, from the IDPs, to interviews conducted on the basis of a structured questionnaire. The interviews focused on consultants who assisted with the

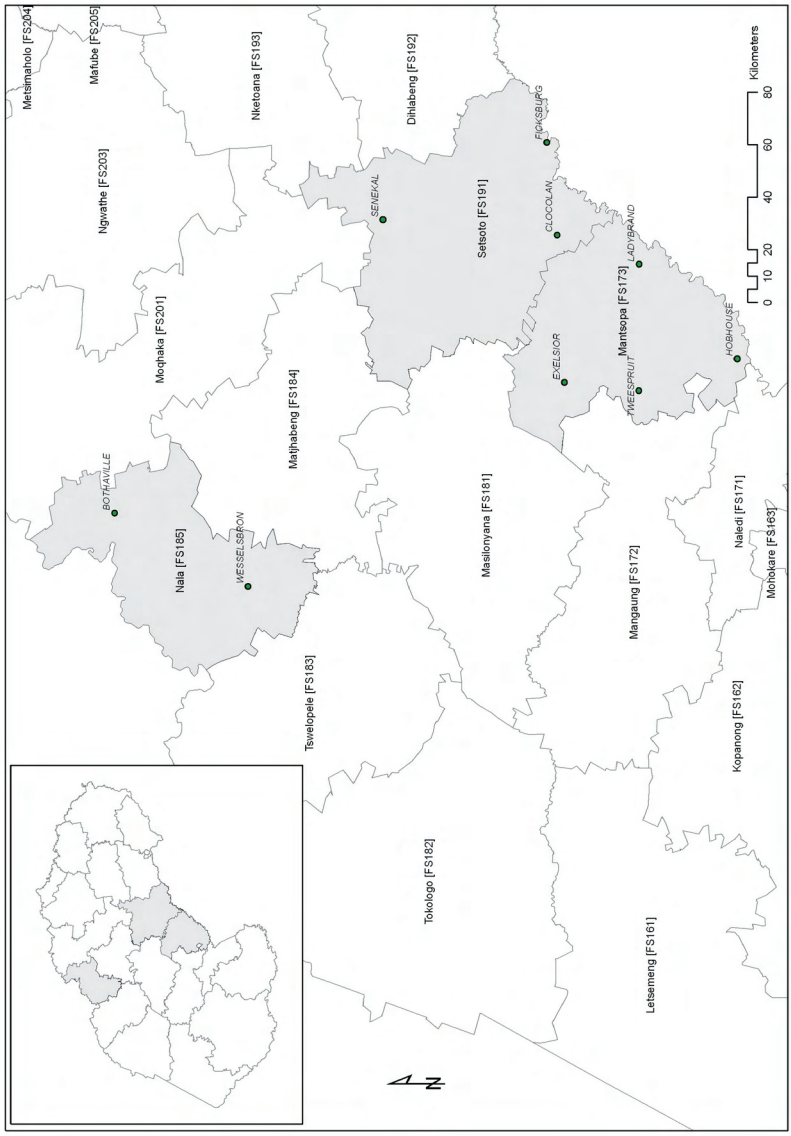

Figure 1: Free State municipalities, 2007

development of the IDPs, officials within the municipality, who are directly involved or responsible for the IDP process, council members from the municipality and also representatives from community-based organisations e.g. business chambers and women's groups. Although the consultants and IDP managers for the three municipalities were interviewed, interviews with councillors could only be secured in Mantsopa and Nala.

2. Defining Community Participation

Community participation is a concept that is glibly used by researchers, planners and politicians. Defining the concept of community participation is no easy task (Jansen van Vuren, 2002; Muller, 1994). However, McGee (2002) defines community participation as a process through which the community can influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them. The ability to take control over development is, according to Srinivas (1994), dependent on the willingness of both government and communities to accept certain responsibilities and carry out certain activities. Other scholars have emphasised the fact that participation is a political practice that promotes access to relevant information, influence over the allocation of scarce resources, awareness about the benefits of collective action and the increasing of social capital, and citizenship (Abbott, 1996; Nel, 2000; Pieterse, 2002a; Soneryd, 2004). From the various definitions, it seems that ones understanding of community participation is dependent on the context in which it is referred to. As this paper considers community participation within a development-planning context, a more detailed assessment of the approaches to development planning would be useful in order to understand community participation.

Schafft and Greenwood (n.d.) argue that approaches to development planning can generally be divided into traditional planning and participatory planning. The traditional approach is centralised, vertical and imposed on lower levels. In contrast, participatory planning is decentralised and horizontal and ensures synergy between the top and the bottom levels by being collaborative (Communications Initiative, 2003). The literature shows that traditional planning approaches are also highly technical, mostly driven by economic and spatial concerns, and are authoritarian and exclusive. In contrast, participatory planning is based on dialogue and is driven by local knowledge and concerns (Communications Initiative, 2003; Mabin, 2002). Furthermore, in traditional planning, outsiders are the experts, with local people being regarded as the beneficiaries (Communications Initiative, 2003). Participatory planning emphasises the consultation of locals as experts, with outsiders as facilitators (Schafft & Greenwood, n.d.). Participatory planning thus aims to ensure that people are not just passive pawns in development, but active "managers" of their own development. However, participatory planning is

not value-free or simplistic. Pieterse (2002b) is of the opinion that a participatory approach to development should not be viewed as the "alpha and omega" of development, since community participation is neither an unqualified moral prerequisite nor an absolute condition for successful development. Community participation may even be inappropriate at times, as the very poor and those that are not organised may lose out in cases where resources are limited (FAO, n.d.).

In view of the above discussion, the aim of community participation in development planning is to empower the least-developed segment of society by being both a knowledge sharing and a productive activity (Ceasar & Theron, 1999: Muller, 1994). In addition, Stein (2001) is convinced that community participation could also be aimed at sharing development costs, by mobilising community funds and labour. Nevertheless, in general, a distinction can be made between participation as a means and as an end (McGee, 2002; Theron, 2005). As a *means*, community participation is used to achieve what Theron (2005) calls a predetermined goal or objective, such as improving the quality of plans and increasing the likelihood of successful implementation (see also FAO, n.d.; Schafft & Greenwood, n.d.; Stein, 2001). As an *end*, however, community participation attempts to empower people by building beneficiary capacity and dismantling discriminatory, oppressive and paternalistic structures, replacing these with developmental, democratic and liberating systems (Ceasar & Theron, 1999; Schafft & Greenwood, n.d.; Theron, 2005). Botes (1999), however, is of the opinion that proper community participation should achieve both empowerment and project efficiency and effectiveness, through long-term active and dynamic participation. The aim of community participation determines the approaches and methods to be used in ensuring such active and dynamic participation. To examine this further, national and international experiences in this regard need to be considered.

3. International and National Reflections on Community Participation

This section will briefly reflect on a number of aspects in relation to community participation in development planning, based on international and national literature.

3.1 Levels of participation in development planning

There are significant variations in the quality and degree of participation in development planning, ranging from the mere collection of input via public hearings to total citizen control over development, planning, implementation and ongoing management of local initiatives (Arnstein, 1969; Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; McGee, 2002; Schafft & Greenwood, n.d.). The various levels of participation identified

highlight the fact that a variety of approaches, which amount to manipulation of the community, are camouflaged as community participation. Real participation, however, entails more than just informing communities of decisions already taken, or selling proposals (Botes & Van Rensburg, 2000). Kok and Gelderblom (1994) distinguish between four levels of participation. The first level, *information sharing*, is a low-intensity form of participation in which information is shared with the community, either to gain support for decisions taken or to facilitate collective action. Information sharing is an essential activity, but participation should not end at this level (Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; McGee & Norton, 2000). The second level, *consultation*, is a higher-intensity form of participation, with beneficiaries not only being informed of, but also being consulted on, certain issues (Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; McGee & Norton, 2000). According to Kok and Gelderblom (1994), during the third level of community participation, namely *decision-making*, decisions are made exclusively by beneficiaries, or jointly with others. In the fourth and highest level, that of *initiating action*, beneficiaries take the initiative in terms of actions or decisions (Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; McGee & Norton, 2000; McGee, 2002). However, it should be noted that the four levels of participation outlined above are not mutually exclusive, and that further levels can be distinguished, as exemplified by Arnstein (1969), with varied degrees of participation within each level.

3.2 Approaches to community participation in development planning

Abbott (1996) refers to four possible approaches to community participation, namely community development (aimed at satisfying the social needs of people), political empowerment (aimed at achieving a fundamental change in society), community management (aimed at satisfying the social needs of people, but targeting a clearly-defined socio-economic group) and negotiated development (aimed at achieving balanced development). Brynard (1996) and Chrystalbridge (2003) add advocacy planning as an approach to community participation, with planning being carried out on behalf of specified individuals or groups (the under-represented), rather than with a view to the broadly defined public interest, thereby ensuring that the goals and options of the specified beneficiaries are not neglected.

However, the approach to community participation (as outlined above) is influenced by various factors. Firstly, a number of researchers argue that the approach will be determined by the resources available, i.e. time, funds and personnel, as well as the capacity of the personnel, but – most importantly – also by the historical role of local government in the community (Jenkins, Kirk & Smith, 2002; Sowman & Gawith, 1994). Secondly, the community itself further influences community participation, in that the approach will depend on the educational level and socio-economic status of the community, as well as on the degree of homogeneity, gender

relations and the differential needs of the community (Abbott, 1996). Thirdly, the approach to community participation is influenced by organisational factors, in terms of the level of organisation in the community; for example, the presence of women in such organisations (Abbott, 1996; Sowman & Gawith, 1994). In addition, the presence of social or community development workers, the relationship between the community and CBOs and the roles and agendas of the concerned CBOs will also influence the approach to participation (Abbott, 1996; Sowman & Gawith, 1994). Lastly, the approach to community participation will depend on planning-related factors, such as the level of participation required (Abbott, 1996; Sowman & Gawith, 1994). Therefore, the goal and objectives of community participation, the scale and intensity of the project, as well as the appropriate type of interaction will ultimately determine the approach (Abbott, 1996; Jenkins *et al.*, 2002; Kotval, 2006; Sowman & Gawith, 1994).

3.3 Methods of participation in development planning

The literature on participatory methods suggests an array of principles and examples and recommends the use of a combination of participatory methods (Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; Sowman & Gawith, 1994). The methods of participation, each with their advantages and disadvantages, are linked to the level of participation (see Table 1 – this table was developed on the basis of the literature). At the level of information sharing, popular methods of participation include the distribution of information through documentation, exhibitions and/or media coverage, all mostly limited to a one-way flow of information and in many cases favouring the literate, with success being dependent on the accessibility of the population (Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; VicRoads, 1997). At the level of consultation, an "ideas" competition, referenda, questionnaires and/or in-depth and focus-group interviews are suggested by Kok and Gelderblom (1994). However, in terms of obtaining candid feedback from the community, in-depth or focus-group interviews are more successful, with questionnaires mostly being too time-consuming and costly (Brynard, 1996, VicRoads, 1997). At the level of decision-making, methods of participation include public meetings, as well as the Delphi and nominal group techniques, both of which require the participation of people with an above-average level of education, whereas public meetings, according to VicRoads (1997), can be attended by anyone. In the last level of participation, initiating action, the methods include self-help manuals, for example in respect of building precautions that should be taken against natural hazards. The use of such methods must be combined with either planning aid or extension services in order to assist the illiterate. However, Kok and Gelderblom (1994) recommend the *Charette* if the aim is empowerment, as it combines participation with self-surveying during a weeklong period of planning sessions.

Table 1: Methods of community participation

Level	Methods/Tools	Advantages	Disadvantages
Information sharing	Information documentation*		Favours the literate and intellectually orientated section of the community One-way flow of information
	Exhibitions*	Reach a large number of people	Success depends on accessibility of dispersed population One-way flow of information
	Media coverage or audio/visual material*	Partly overcomes accessibility problems	Dependent on cooperation of others, e.g. newspaper editors One-way flow of information and costly
Consultation	Ideas competition	Good idea for mobilising public interest	Only a highly selective group of individuals become involved
	Referenda	Relatively inexpensive	Leading questions problematic
	Questionnaire*	Only statistically representative survey technique	May be costly and time-consuming Seen as technocratic if there is no supporting information as to the implications of certain answers
	In-depth and focus-group interviews*	Planners obtain the necessary contextual information Interviews provide a general idea of problems and social dynamics in the community Information can be used in the structured questionnaire, and/or to amend the questionnaire	May be costly and time-consuming

Level	Methods/Tools	Advantages	Disadvantages
Decision-making**	Public meetings and inquiries	Not just informing people but addressing need to discuss findings Meetings assist with problem-solving and consensus-building	Susceptible to professional control Alienating Dominated by the articulate
	Delphi technique# (Collection of independent opinions without group discussions)	Effective with non-interactive groups Ensures anonymity	Requires participants to have written communication skills Success dependent on the accessibility and acceptability of the convenor to the participants
	Nominal group technique# (2-staged process with small group starting with formal brainstorming session followed by structured decision making procedure)	Verbal skills not a requirement for participation	Not suitable for mass involvement Success dependent on accessibility and acceptability of convenor to participants Requires much organisation
Initiating action	Self-help manuals	Offer guidance to the community	Exclusion of the illiterate
	Planning aid	Planning services made accessible to poor communities	
	Task forces and extension services	Focused	May not entail true participation if people are not directly involved in task teams
	The workshop		Dependent on energetic group organisers motivated to work with the disadvantaged and poor
	The Charette (Group of diverse stakeholders work intensely with each other, learns about each others needs)	Empowering	
	Training and the building of organisational and management capacity	Empowering	Potentially costly and time-consuming

* All these techniques are hampered by a one-way communication approach and need to be supported by other methods

** An above-average level of education is required in order to participate

\# These techniques are useful in Third-World countries because they minimise dependence on verbal skills and allow a measure of anonymity

Sources: Andranovich, 1995; Brynard, 1996; Chrystalbridge, 2003; Jenkins *et al.*, 2002; Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; Pieterse, 2000; Sowman & Gawith, 1994; VicRoads, 1997.

In addition to the above-mentioned methods of participation, Beck *et al*. (1997) and McGee (2002) also refer to the usefulness of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), as well as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), in participatory planning in rural areas. While RRA is mainly aimed at extracting information from the community, PRA is a way of creating awareness by means of active development planning at a local level. PRA is therefore a way of enabling people to assess their own living conditions, problems and potentials in order to improve their situation. The successful implementation of any of the methods of community participation outlined above is dependent on certain preconditions, as various factors impact on community participation efforts.

The literature suggests that there are various preconditions attached to effective community participation. Firstly, according to Srinivas (1994), participation should be a gradually developed response to an actual and pressing collective need of citizens. The benefiting target group therefore needs to be clearly defined and informed of all the relevant features of the programme through a clear communication of the purpose thereof (Glicken, 2000; Srinivas, 1994). Secondly, it is crucial to decide on the proper approach to allow sufficient negotiation and consultation, as emphasised by Van Rooyen (2003), without allowing pressure groups to dominate the process (Brynard, 1996; Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; Raco, 2000). Also, appropriate information-elicitation methods need to be identified, used and documented (Glicken, 2000). Thirdly, cultural and community characteristics also impact on participation, as variations in age and literacy levels, gender relations, levels of organisation, multiculturalism, multilingualism, class and cultural barriers, ideological differences, historical power differentials and the accompanying economic and political power struggles complicate community participation, often culminating in mutual feelings of mistrust and suspicion (Bollens, 2000; Botes & Van Rensburg, 2000; Brynard, 1996; Jenkins *et al.*, 2002; McGee, 2002; Njoh, 2002; Pieterse, 2002b; Schafft & Greenwood, n.d.). Therefore, the existence of a strong community organisation within a community facilitates participation; and small-scale, informal, area-specific, community-based institutions need to be nurtured, in order to enable them to contribute effectively to sustainable planning, management and development (Bollens, 2000; Ndung'u, 2002; Srinivas, 1994).

Fourthly, as stressed by Pieterse (2000) and Mercer (2003), participatory governance is only possible when the necessary political will is present amongst decision-makers, together with enabling regulatory frameworks which stimulate and reward participatory decision-making between key stakeholders. Fifthly, Abed (1992) is of the opinion that one of the most telling factors impacting on community participation is the flexibility of the process. An important aspect in this regard is the involvement of development workers who believe in working with people rather than for people (see also Botes & Van Rensburg, 2000; Njoh, 2002). Sixthly, the

relationship between the community and government impacts on participation, as an attitude of distrust towards the government will hamper participation (Bollens, 2000; Nel, 2000; Pieterse, 2000; USN, 2001). Such distrust can often be attributed to historical interaction; but it may also arise from the fact that decision-makers are (more often than not) already committed to certain policies, plans and proposals, in respect of which it is difficult to compromise (Soneryd, 2004). Consequently, the attitudes and skills of local government officials comprise the seventh factor that impacts heavily on participation (Jenkins *et al*., 2002; Muller, 1994; Nel, 2000). This is especially so when professional technocrats view themselves as experts, and regard community participation as a costly and time-consuming activity which has to be incorporated merely in order to comply with legislation (Ambert, 2002; Botes & Van Rensburg, 2000; Brynard, 1996; Innes & Booher, 2000; Jenkins *et al*., 2002; Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; Mercer, 2003; Sowman & Gawith, 1994; Stein, 2001). This situation is worsened when planners are "attacked" in confrontational community meetings, breeding resentment amongst planners and often resulting in limited workshops being held merely in order to "rubber-stamp" decisions already taken (Jenkins *et al*., 2002; Mercer, 2003). However, it should be noted that community participation presents organisational, financial and human resource challenges to local government, requiring additional staff, particularly specialists in the social sciences (Davids, 2003; Innes & Booher, 2000; Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; Ndung'u, 2002; Phillips, 2002; Sowman & Gawith, 1994).

Seventhly, effective participation is dependent on the involvement of the relevant people or representatives without causing participation fatigue (Bollens, 2000; Brynard, 1996; Jenkins *et al*., 2002). This is especially important, since community participation will be influenced by whether or not community representatives have the motivation and resources to participate, and whether they are able to see that their contributions are having a meaningful impact, and that the municipality does not only endorse community participation activities that support (and do not disturb) its ideals and goals (Innes & Booher, 2000; Mercer, 2003; Muller, 1994; Nel, 2000). It is therefore important to prevent the domination of elite minorities, in order to ensure that the voices of what Jenkins *et al*. (2002) call the "silent majority" are heard (see also Bollens, 2000; Brynard, 1996; Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; McGee & Norton, 2000; Nel, 2000; Raco, 2000; USN, 2001; Van Rooyen, 2003). The inclusion of specific marginalised groups, such as women, the poor as well as people with the necessary technical skills, is an especially formidable challenge (Botes & Van Rensburg, 2000; Brynard, 1996; Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; McGee & Norton, 2000; Schafft & Greenwood, n.d.). The composition of committees 'representing' the community should therefore be monitored to ensure that these groups are not dominated by a limited number of people, for example, men only, and that the committees are not run according to class-related or political principles (Ackerman, 2005; Ambert, 2002; Botes, 1999).

Eighthly, proper communication is critical to community participation. Differential access to the various communication modes, as well as language differences, should be considered, in order to avoid mistranslations, miscommunications and misunderstandings (Ackerman, 2005; Brynard, 1996; Cheema, 1987; Glicken, 2000; Kok & Gelderblom, 1994; Mercer, 2003; Sowman & Gawith, 1994). Lastly, physical barriers also impact on community participation, since remote and dispersed populations are difficult to include in participatory processes due to e.g. the cost of transportation (Jenkins *et al*., 2002).

4. Community Participation in the IDP Process

Community participation as a principle is fully entrenched in South African legislation. Four main points should be made in respect of the importance of community participation, on the basis of relevant South African legislation.

Firstly, the Constitution (South Africa, 1996) indicates that one of the objects of Local Government is to encourage community involvement in matters of local government, thereby making community participation non-negotiable. Community participation is also essential to ensure that the Batho Pele Principles, as set out in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, are adhered to (South Africa, 1997). Secondly, in compliance with the Constitution, the White Paper on Local Government (South Africa, 1998) identifies four levels of active participation and emphasises that municipalities must establish forums, consisting of voters, citizens, consumers and organised partners, to initiate policies, influence policy formulation and participate in the monitoring and evaluation of activities. The White Paper on Local Government further recommends structured stakeholder involvement in issue-orientated committees with a limited lifespan. In addition, the White Paper on Local Government suggests that focus-group participatory action research should be undertaken in partnership with NGOs and CBOs, while supporting the organisational development of associations. Thirdly, the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) (South Africa, 2000) stipulates that municipalities must develop a culture of participation by encouraging communities to participate, and by creating conditions and contributing to capacity-building in order to enable them to participate. The MSA also prescribes mechanisms and procedures for participation and communication, in order to facilitate participation. Fourthly, the IDP manuals (DPLG, 2002b; DPLG, 2002c) indicate that community participation should be a focused and structured process that includes the relevant people at each stage of the planning process through ward committees and stakeholder associations. Essentially, community participation is viewed as a consensual bargaining platform between government and communities (DPLG, 2002b; DPLG, 2002c).

The level of community participation varies across stages of the IDP process, as suggested by the IDP guide-packs and as indicated in Table 2 (DPLG, 2002c). For example, the analytical phase is indicated as having a high level of participation (intense participatory sessions to determine the current level of development), while the integration phase (mainly comprising an administrative process of integrating plans and programmes) has a low level of participation. The White Paper on Local Government clearly indicates that the community participation process in the IDP should be a bargaining platform between government and the community, thereby requiring communities to be actively involved in decision-making (South Africa, 1998a). However, given that South Africa does not have a history of actively engaging communities in the affairs of local governance, as pointed out by Van Rooyen (2003), it is disconcerting to note that the MSA does not support the White Paper in this regard, since it goes no further than requiring information sharing and community consultation (South Africa, 2000).

Table 2: Level of participation in stages of the IDP process

Stage of IDP process	Level of community participation	Form of participation
Analysis	High	Community and stakeholder meetings, sample surveys and opinion polls
Strategies	Low-intensity	District-level workshops, or workshops held partly at district level
Project planning	Dependent on scope of planning	Low in municipality-wide projects, high in localised community projects
Integration	Low	Representative IDP forum
Approval	High	Broad public discussion or consultation, opportunity for comments from residents
Monitoring and implementation	Medium	Representative forum

Source: DPLG (2002c)

Throughout the legislation, a 'community management' and 'negotiated development' approach to community participation is supported, for example in the stipulation that "the central responsibilities of municipalities to work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives", with a view to achieving balanced development (South Africa, 1998a: 23). Possible methods for community participation prescribed by legislation include the use of structured forums, council committees, participatory budget initiatives, focus groups and supporting the development of community

organisations (South Africa, 1998a, 2000). The IDP guide-packs further suggest utilising stakeholder representatives, conducting public meetings, interviewing resource persons (professionals or specialists in specific areas of interest), and conducting public opinion polls and surveys as possible tools for community participation (DPLG, 2002d). The MSA further emphasises that community members with special needs, e.g. the disabled, must be taken into account throughout the process, and that all committees must be gender-balanced (South Africa, 2000).

Furthermore, the guide-packs (DPLG, 2002b, 2002c) indicate that the conditions for community participation must also be improved by, firstly, informing residents of meetings through public announcements; secondly, by involving the IDP Representative Forum (IDPRF) at least once during each phase, and ensuring that there is enough time for consultation; thirdly, by making draft planning documents accessible to every resident; fourthly, by informing representatives about the reasons for decisions; fifthly, by holding public council meetings for the approval of the IDP; and, lastly, by making a focused attempt to involve social groups that are not well organised, in order to encourage participation. However, we are of the opinion that the IDP process, as outlined above, falls short of ensuring community participation beyond the point of consultation. For example, guidelines could be provided to ensure both project efficiency and empowerment, or to ensure the participation of people across cultural boundaries.

Part of the dilemma is that the participation process has been described as a set of steps or procedures to be followed. Although some procedural guidelines are helpful, the literature review suggests that community participation should entail more than procedural steps. It should provide guidelines on approach mechanisms and even encourage creativity and experimentation to ensure participation, especially due to the diverse nature of our municipalities and communities. Even more importantly, there should be guidelines as to how community inputs could be structured to strengthen the planning process. Harrison (2006) attributes this procedural approach to IDP to the fact that the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, a historical 'hard-science' institute, developed the manuals. On the basis of these theoretical and legislative prescriptions, as set out above, the community participation process in the three municipalities in the Free State Province will be assessed.

5. Current Approaches to Community Participation in the IDP Process: Evidence from the Free State Province

A more or less similar participation process was followed in all three municipalities, which is probably the first indication of how the procedural guidelines were followed. During the development of the initial IDPs, an IDPRF was established, comprising councillors and officials, as well as members of ward committees and sector forums, to encourage community participation. These sector forums (focusing on infrastructure, as well as social and economic aspects) were established in each geographical area to ensure the inclusion of all stakeholders. Project task teams were established per priority area, in which service providers, such as other spheres of government, could participate. It should be noted that in Setsoto and Nala, most of the work was done by the IDP steering committee and not the IDPRF – an aspect that will be discussed in more detail later on (Nala, 2001; Setsoto, 2001). The municipality conducted the review of the Mantsopa and Setsoto IDPs, while the Nala Municipality continued to utilise consultants to review their IDP (Nala, 2004). During the comprehensive assessment that follows, some reflections will be made on the use of consultants.

Some innovation took place in Mantsopa, as sector forums were trained to follow a sustainable livelihood approach. In this process a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis was conducted. Additionally, a questionnaire-based survey was carried out to collect information in rural areas. The IDPRF was used for prioritisation and the development of the vision, mission, objectives and strategies. The project task teams were used to validate objectives and to develop indicators and set targets. The draft IDP document was advertised in the local press, to allow 21 days for the public to comment (Mantsopa, 2001).

The procedural similarities that are evident from the above overview are not surprising, considering the procedural guidelines provided by the IDP guide-packs. Furthermore, the above overview of structures to provide for participation in the IDP process also suggests that more emphasis has been placed on institutionalising community participation than on influencing IDPs through community participation.

5.1 Evaluating community participation processes in the IDP process

In evaluating the IDP community participation processes, a number of comments need to be made in respect of the interviews that were conducted, as well as against the literature background.

5.1.1 Community participation process

As already pointed out, the community participation processes followed by the three municipalities under scrutiny were very similar – which is already some confirmation that the legislative requirements were the main driver of the process. The community participation process of the Mantsopa Local Municipality was the most extensive process of the three municipalities, despite being consultant-driven (see Table 3). Even though the participation structures required by legislation, e.g. an IDPRF, sectoral forums and ward committees, were established, it was clear from the interviews that officials viewed these structures as an end in themselves rather than a means to an end. For example they commented that participation is aimed at improving planning and implementation. Virtually none of the interviewees made any reference to the fact that these processes were also aimed at supporting local capacity and the overall development of the people. Community participation also took place mainly through these organised structures; but the level of participation was limited to information sharing and consultation. This was especially evident in Setsoto and Nala, where both the IDP documents and the officials confirmed that most decisions were taken by the IDP steering committee (consisting mainly of officials), as delays in the commencement of the IDP process had resulted in time constraints (all aspects also noted in other research. See, for example, Adams & Oranje, 2002; Meiklejohn & Coetzee, 2003). The IDPRF was therefore only used for information-sharing purposes. Such an approach surely hampers the achievement of the goal of ensuring the empowerment of people, as well as project efficiency, as outlined earlier in the literature review. In contrast to Nala and Setsoto, the Mantsopa municipality, in the initial consultant-driven participatory process, did in fact involve the IDPRF and sectoral forums in decision-making through the setting of indicators and targets for the objectives developed, as well as the identification of outputs and activities, as outlined in the IDP (Mantsopa, 2001).

Table 3: Characteristics of the community participation process

Characteristic	Municipality		
	Mantsopa	**Nala**	**Setsoto**
Method of participation	Sectoral forums, project task teams, IDP representative forum and community meetings	Sectoral forums and IDP representative forum meetings	Sectoral forums, project task teams, IDP representative forum and ward committee meetings
Stakeholders actively involved	Councillors, marginalised groups, government departments and farmers	Government departments, councillors, women, youth	Councillors, marginalised groups, NGOs and CBOs
Level of participation	Information sharing and consultation	Information sharing and consultation	Information sharing and consultation
IDP available for public comments for 21 days	Yes	Yes	Yes

The relevant question in relation to the situation outlined above is: why was participation downscaled to information sharing, and why did so little innovation take place? Can the answer be found in the way in which the IDP guide-packs were interpreted? Possibly the problem is that the necessary skills to understand and implement innovative mechanisms for community participation are simply not available, as most innovations were initialised by consultants and did not continue once they left. Also that community participation is, after all, merely regarded as a necessity required by legislation, but not considered to be of significance for development.

5.1.2 Participants in the IDP process

Another aspect that requires attention is the question as to who did not participate. Rauch (2003), in his assessment, already asked the question: "How does one participate if you are not organised?" Although no direct evidence could be found in our case study that community participation actually demobilises structure, as claimed by Harrison, our research suggests that very little was actually done to bring community structures on board.

There seems to have been no participation on the part of organised labour, as well as the business and farming sectors (including farm-workers). Many people in these excluded groups regarded the IDP as a 'wish list', mainly reflecting the needs of the previously disadvantaged groups. The importance of ensuring the participation of the business and farming sectors in these mainly rural communities cannot be stressed enough, as most people are employed in these sectors. In 2001, for example, almost 40% of the employed people in Nala

were employed in the agricultural sector, with a further 17% employed in the manufacturing, wholesale retail sectors (StatsSA, 2003). This reality gives rise to a number of crucial questions. Do these municipalities want to have the farming and business communities on board? Surely, if the importance of these interest groups was acknowledged, they should have been involved. What have the IDPs lost in terms of content, by not taking account of the interests of agriculture, business and farm-workers? It could easily be argued that these interest groups do not represent the poor. But emphasis should undoubtedly be placed on a balanced participatory process, in which both the poor and businesses have a say. However, what has transpired in respect of the participation of farm-workers to improve their situation? (see for example Hartwig & Marais, 2005). Farm-workers have probably become the most marginalised interest group in the rural areas of the Free State, despite the fact that, through their labour, they make a fundamental contribution to local economies (Atkinson, 2007). How will the municipality know how to go about enhancing the possibilities of job creation, if business is not involved at all? Possibly a separate process of business participation (by both established and emerging enterprises) could assist in enriching IDPs with some insights from business communities.

5.1.3 Methods of community participation

As has already been pointed out, the methods of participation were limited to information documentation and public meetings for consultation purposes, with only Mantsopa making use of a questionnaire to collect information from the rural areas. The use of public meetings as an exclusive method of participation can be ascribed, in the words of one official, to "time and resource constraints". The fact that most officials did not have any experience or training in other methods, e.g. in-depth or focus-group interviews, probably also played a role. However, the training of sectoral forums in Mantsopa to conduct livelihood analyses can be regarded as an attempt to empower communities to assess their own situation and to initiate action to change their circumstances or satisfy their needs. Marginalised people were organised into homogeneous groups; e.g., women and the disabled were consulted separately, to encourage them to participate. Their participation became evident in the initial strategies developed for Mantsopa, with farm-workers, women, as well as disabled and homeless people clearly being targeted, especially in the economic development programme, as some of the programmes focused exclusively on these marginalised groups.

5.1.4 The role of consultants in community participation

The role of consultants and their interaction with officials should also be considered. To what degree were consultants left to their own devices, and to what degree is reciprocal learning taking place in respect of participatory processes and

methodologies? In Mantsopa, the IDP manager and other municipal officials admittedly did not participate in the initial participation processes, leaving the process in the hands of the consultant. The reason for this was the fact that the IDP manager was also the building inspector, health inspector and official in charge of stray animals. Given this reality of multi-tasking in the smaller municipalities, consultants were given a free hand to facilitate the process of community participation without necessarily capacitating the municipal officials or obtaining valuable input from them. This was definitely to the disadvantage of the municipality, as no skills transfer from the consultants to officials took place. It also leaves the impression that community participation is not regarded by officials as being important, and that it is only incorporated in order to comply with legislation and procedures. Furthermore, this lack of skills transfer also seriously hampers processes of integrating community perception and ideas into the long-term managerial approach at municipal level. Thus, despite detailed IDP procedural guidelines focusing on participation, the concept of participatory planning has not gone beyond IDP processes.

In Setsoto and Nala, the community participation was initially also consultant-driven; but with regard to the review of the IDP, the municipal officials managed the process. Ironically, the public participation process was more extensive during the consultant-driven process than during the process driven by the officials. Furthermore, municipal officials were not trained in, and had no previous experience of, community participation in local governance, since such participation had never occurred prior to the implementation of development planning. Generally, IDP training is focused on the IDP process, e.g. in terms of phases and technical requirements, with little reference to the importance of, and approaches to, community participation. It is therefore imperative that municipal officials and councillors should be capacitated with regard to both the IDP and community participation, to enable them to take part in the IDP process and to facilitate and encourage community participation.

5.1.5 Preconditions for public participation

With regard to the various preconditions for public participation discussed in the literature overview, a number of comments should be made. The absence of strong community organisation (an aspect mentioned specifically as a prerequisite for effective community participation in the literature) has, however, been highlighted by interviewees as a shortcoming, with marginalised groups in particular – such as women and the disabled – not being well-organised (see also Harrison, 2002; Rauch, 2003). It should be mentioned that this is, to a large degree, a problematic area in the Free State. The result is that very few community members have the ability, or the institutional backing, to challenge aspects of IDP contents or processes. At the same time, it also does not seem as if a sufficient amount of effort was devoted to developing a framework for community participation. Only Mantsopa specifically

attempted to ensure the participation of marginalised groups, resulting in substantial information with regard to, *inter alia*, the accessibility of services (household access to water, sanitation and electricity) to farm-workers and, as already mentioned earlier, the improvement of development programmes through the direct targeting of farm-workers and other marginalised groups in the economic development programme, amongst other programmes (Mantsopa, 2001).

5.1.6 Participation of sectoral departments

The participation of sectoral departments has a huge impact on the success of community participation endeavours as these departments also play a role in service delivery, which often needs to be clarified to the community. In all three municipalities, it was mentioned during the interviews that the poor attendance of sectoral government departments was hampering the process – once again not much different from the national experience (Meiklejohn & Coetzee, 2003). At the most, junior officials were sent to attend these meetings. The reasons given for this were, firstly, that National and Provincial departments mostly did not have sufficient staff to attend all the meetings organised by local municipalities; and secondly, that they preferred to attend District-level meetings. The non-attendance of the Department of Agriculture, in particular, is notable in municipalities where the economy is reliant on agriculture. This reality raises serious questions regarding aspects of intergovernmental alignment and the ability to effectively achieve such alignment. Should all government departments attend all meetings? Are there not other mechanisms to foster appropriate intergovernmental relations? If sectoral departments do attend these meetings, what should their role be, and how do the municipalities influence their budgets? Moreover, how do they explain the fact that they have limited budgets, and that these budgets are influenced by principles such as those outlined in the National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP) (South Africa, 2003)? Part of the dilemma in this regard extends much further than the involvement of line departments in the IDP process. However, what seems to be required is that line departments should be able to give attention to aspects at a local level and find pragmatic ways of allocating resources; but more importantly, they should surely be able to provide technical assistance to support project task teams in their work.

5.1.7 Gender insensitivity

Female councillors were expected to raise gender issues; and therefore, no real effort was made to ensure the participation of, e.g., CBOs or NGOs looking after the needs of women. Considering the importance of gender issues in development thinking, this is a definite shortcoming, which needs to be addressed effectively. Surely a gender-sensitive participation process should lead to a gender-sensitive

IDP, in which projects and programmes reflect this sensitivity. Similarly, participation by the disabled and other marginalised groups was limited, owing to the absence of transport and/or the inaccessibility of buildings.

5.1.8 Logistical arrangements

The logistical arrangements for community participation sessions posed a challenge – something also experienced countrywide (Adams & Oranje, 2002). The councillors who were interviewed noted that the continual rescheduling of meetings made it difficult for all stakeholders to attend. Moreover, even though transport was arranged, very few farm-workers and farmers, for instance, attended participation sessions, since the sessions were often held during harvesting and/or planting seasons. This problem was especially notable in the Nala municipality, owing to its large grain-producing areas. Furthermore, the fact that since 2000, municipalities have included more than one urban core, made the attendance of people from other urban centres fairly difficult. All of this seems to suggest that community participation is an *ad hoc* issue, and that it is not fully entrenched as a development approach, or viewed as being essential enough to development to overcome these logistical challenges.

5.1.9 Capacity of municipal officials

Another challenge relates to the lack of experience and capacity amongst municipal officials with regard to community participation. Such capacity is noted as a prerequisite in the literature, especially the capacity to facilitate community participation. As a result of this deficiency, officials either viewed community participation as an event, rather than a process, or were apathetic in their attitude to the process, admitting, in some cases, that they had not even read the IDP, and that they had left the process in the hands of consultants. Successful participation is dependent on a good relationship between officials and the community; and this relationship will never develop as long as officials distance themselves from the IDP process. Already, as a result of this state of affairs, higher levels of participation, e.g. decision-making or initiating action, were not considered, and methods of participation were limited. For example, IDP documents were made available for 21 days to allow community members to comment on the documents, as required by legislation, but no real efforts were made to make the documents more understandable to the general public. This could have been done by, for example, making an executive summary available, and even translating this summary into a local language. The outcome was that very few comments were received from the public, with the result that hardly any changes were made to the IDP. This creates the impression that the whole community is satisfied with everything that is contained in the IDP and that nobody had any suggestions for improvement, whereas it was clear from the interviews that this was not the case.

5.1.10 Information sharing

In addition, communities were not made aware of resource constraints, or actively involved in the prioritisation of projects, resulting in high expectations that could not be met. This, in turn, resulted in apathy toward the IDP process and even civil unrest in places (especially in the Free State) (See Marais, Matebesi & Mtombeni, 2006). The establishment of ward committees was a step in the right direction to ensure continued communication between the municipalities and the ward, through the ward councillors. However, apart from the attendance of some ward councillors in the IDPRF, most of the ward committees were not functioning during the time of the study, as none of the municipalities mentioned the ward committees as participants in the IDP process. Properly functioning ward committees could play an important role in ensuring accountability, with ward councillors reporting to ward committees on decisions taken by the municipal council, while also communicating the concerns of the wards to the municipality.

5.1.11 Realising the potential of community participation

The importance of community participation for community-building, generating cultural tolerance and sustainable development, is not recognised by everyone. For example, one official noted that "everybody wants to be heard and the community have some strange ideas". Most officials, therefore, by their own admission did not attend public participation sessions, leaving this to the consultants wherever possible. This lack of understanding of community participation resulted in the effectiveness of participation being measured in terms of the number of people attending, rather than in terms of the input into and output of, such interaction with the community. A positive sign was, that contrary to the other municipalities, both ANC and DA councillors of Mantsopa Municipality commented on the improved working relationships and unity in the area, owing to community participation – a certain catalyst for the realisation of agreed-on development.

5.2 Suggestions for improvement

It is clear from the above-mentioned challenges faced, and lessons learned, in respect of community participation in the IDP process, that the process has mainly been regarded as a necessary way of complying with legislation and procedural guidelines, and that the level and effectiveness of community participation efforts need to be improved. This could be achieved by, firstly, training councillors and officials in order to equip them with a proper understanding of the role and importance of community participation, as well as of the various levels of participation, and the methods and approaches that can be followed. Otherwise, using consultants to facilitate the community participation process should be considered in municipalities that lack the human resources to undertake such facilitation. Secondly, a concerted

effort should be made to maintain sectoral forums established during the initial, consultant-driven participation process for the purposes of future participation, as well as for use by other spheres of government in their participation efforts. These forums should also be encouraged to meet on their own to discuss matters that concern them, and to report on these matters to the municipality on a regular basis, for example through the IDP office. Similarly, ward committees must be supported to ensure optimal functionality and active participation in the IDP process. Thirdly, community participation should not be limited to the planning phase of IDP, but should be extended to project identification, prioritisation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Fourthly, in order to ensure the future participation of forum members, regular feedback should be given with regard to suggestions made at previous meetings and progress made with the implementation of the IDP. Local newspapers or radio stations could be used for this purpose, to reach people who do not attend IDPRF meetings. The District Municipalities should also improve the coordination of meetings at which national and provincial departments are required to give inputs. Also, budgetary constraints should be made known during the prioritisation of projects, in order to avoid creating expectations, which cannot be met immediately.

Fifthly, making an executive summary available, preferably also in an African language, for public comments, should facilitate broader community participation, as most IDP documents are too bulky and technical for ordinary citizens to absorb. Also, logistical arrangements for participatory sessions should be made, taking into consideration the economic and social responsibilities of participants, especially women. Furthermore, the actual implementation of the IDP is the most effective method of encouraging future participation, as apathy towards participating in the IDP process results from failure to implement the IDP. Once development, in line with community priorities, takes place, community members become more eager to participate. Community participation in the IDP process should be advertised to the broader public, in order to empower them to such an extent that they can actually insist on participating. This should be done to ensure that community participation is not treated as a mere legislative requirement for IDP, but as a right that is insisted on, and enthusiastically exercised, by civil society.

In addition to the above aspects, far more effort should be made to go beyond legislative requirements and to have systems in place to listen to people irrespective of formalised forums and subcommittees. The 'rules for participation' cannot be set only by state regulations. Surely, ordinary citizens should have the opportunity to participate in terms of what they view as appropriate?

Lastly, there seems to be a dire need for examples and case studies, providing an indication of how to creatively make use of community participation to improve plans, empower people and ensure project efficiency. Such guidelines should go beyond procedural steps, and should open up participatory possibilities for the benefit of municipal officials.

6. Conclusion

It is clear from the characteristics of community participation in Mantsopa, Nala and Setsoto that community participation in these Free State municipalities is still very limited. Although a number of structural constraints exist (for example, small municipalities with limited staff), the importance of community participation for sustainable development, as well as for nation-building, has not yet been realised. To a large degree, the nature of community participation in the IDP processes of these municipalities suggests compliance with legislation and procedures, rather than the use of community participation to enrich IDPs and address the problems of vulnerable groups, and create opportunities for a prosperous economy. Through its legislation framework, the state has set the tone for community participation on its terms, and in the process it misses out on listening to people on their terms. This situation will have to be addressed to avoid outbursts of civil unrest, such as those experienced in other areas of the Free State since 2004 (Botes *et al*. 2007). Moreover, if development initiatives are to be sustainable, municipal officials will have to realise that the benefits of community participation still outweigh the potential drawbacks in terms of time and money.

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Investment in the Tourism Industry: the Experience of Rwanda

Josephine Gatsinzi & Ronnie Donaldson

Abstract

Despite the economic progress Rwanda has attained since the 1994 genocide, the country has remained one of the poorest countries in the world. Although tourism has remained the third largest earner of foreign currency next to coffee and tea, before and after the genocide, very little Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is evident in this sector. The paper firstly discusses trends in tourism FDI in the developing world in general, followed by an overview of existing tourism investment policies of Rwanda. Lastly, empirical data on the nature of tourism related investments between 1999 and 2004 are presented and findings show that within a conducive investment environment (liberalization, privatization, integration and existing political stability) the hotel sector has benefited from local investments.

1. Introduction

At the World Investment Conference in Geneva 2005, Africa was identified as one of the continents with a significant potential for developing tourism. Indeed, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) recognises tourism as one of the key engines of growth in Africa. It is stated that tourism can generate significant spin-offs in terms of foreign currency, create employment opportunities and foster infrastructural development, a dire need for developing countries (NEPAD, 2004). In addition, tourism's potential can be realised through developing interregional integration, regional marketing strategies, developing partnerships through sub-regions and by providing African people with the capacity to be actively involved in sustainable tourism projects (Gauci, Gerosa & Mwalwanda, 2002; NEPAD, 2004). Countries such as Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya and Nigeria are singled out for economic reforms, privatization initiatives and liberalization. Although 50%-80% of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa is in natural-resource exploitation, investments in services are on the increase (UNCTAD, 2004).

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Despite the economic progress Rwanda has attained since the 1994 genocide, the country has remained one of the poorest countries in the world with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of US $ 258. Approximately 60% of the people are said to be living below the poverty line. The population of Rwanda is estimated to be 9-million, which makes Rwanda one of the most densely populated countries in Africa (World Bank, 2005). The Rwandan economy is dominated by agricultural production of small scale and fragmented farms. Tourism has remained the third largest earner of foreign currency next to coffee and tea, before and after the genocide (Grosspietsch, 2006; UNCTAD, 2001). To date, there is little FDI in this sector, yet, according to the government's new investment policies, there is great potential to attract more service FDI (AIPA, 2002). To what extent has liberalization of national economies over the past decade had an impact on tourism investment in poverty stricken Rwanda is the key question of investigation in the paper. In order to give clarity on this question the paper is divided into three parts. Firstly, as introduction the paper looks at the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in tourism in the developing world in general. Secondly, an overview of existing tourism investment policy in Rwanda is presented. Thirdly, empirical data on the nature of tourism related investments between 1999 and 2004 are presented.

2. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Concerning the global direction of FDI flows between countries it is documented that developed countries still surpass developing countries. According to Broadman and Sun (1997) developing countries are now commanding a steady increase in the World FDI flows. South-South FDI is expanding rapidly (Palmade & Anayiotas, 2004). FDI flows between developing countries are growing much faster than flows between developed countries and developing countries. It is estimated that by 2010, most of FDI flows will be originating from developing countries such as India, China, Brazil and South Africa.

It is not only the direction of FDI flows that has changed but there has also been change in the FDI initial focus from natural resources, manufacturing and infrastructure to services such as banks, retail construction, insurance, tourism and telecommunication. In particular, tourism FDI is indicated to originate from developed countries. Developed countries are the main source of outward FDI stock. Kundu and Contractor (1999: 303) suggest that 65% of international investment in the hotel industry has taken place in developed countries. However, developing countries share of FDI in services is indicated to have increased from 1% in 1990 to 10% in 2002 (UNCTAD, 2005). Some of the main reasons cited as to why FDI has shifted to services include the following: an increased role of services in the economic activity, because of the advantages that are derived from these services, competitive pressures, liberalisation, privatization and the non tradable nature of

these services (WAIPA, 2005). As mentioned above, one significant feature that has made the tourism sector more appealing in attracting FDI than other sectors is the non-tradability of the core services offered. Investors are compelled to invest their resources close to the market or the consumer in contrast to other services such as banking and insurance where advances in technology have made physical proximity less important. Service FDI is more prone than manufacturing to follow the client abroad (Kundu & Contractor, 1999: 302).

2.1 FDI trends in developing countries: panacea for tourism development?

Over the past 25 years the service sector has globally experienced growth at an average rate of 5% per year in the last decade and it is projected to persist for some time (Gauci, Gerosa & Mwalwanda, 2002; Kundu & Contractor, 1999). Tourism, as a key service sector industry, is said to be one of the world's largest industries accounting for one third of the global service trade. In the developing world the hospitality and accommodation sectors have been the biggest beneficiary of FDI in the tourism (Benavides, 2001a, 2001b). However, the percentage share of FDI in hotels has remained low with 3% inward stock, and 1% outward stock in 1990, 2% of inward stock and 2% of outward stock in 2002 (Endo, 2006).

The steady growth of the tourism industry in recent years and development of the investor-friendly services in many African countries such as Zambia, Mozambique; Malawi has helped to attract foreign investment in the tourism sector (Brown, 2000: 236). Brown (2000) noted that the percentage share of FDI in tourism is still low particularly in African countries compared to increasing business services, utilities and telecommunication services. Although hotels and restaurants represent the major portion of tourism, FDI data shows that there has not been much FDI in tourism especially in hotels and restaurants in developing countries (Endo, 2006). The only exception is in China (probably not considered a developing country) where a lion's share of FDI is noticed in real estate sector especially in hotels and other tourism related services (Broadman & Sun, 1997).

Developing countries are competing to attract FDI to their local hotel industry and as such many have already changed their policies on foreign investment in order to compete effectively. In order to increase investments and to attract more FDI in various sectors, tourism inclusive, Africa is trying to create a friendly investment environment. This follows the identification of tourism as the key engine of growth for African countries. Eighty percent of Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) in Africa target FDI in tourism (UNCTAD, 2004). With investor confidence, more African countries stand to benefit from FDI in the hotel industry.

This, of course, depends on the kind of business involvement that is undertaken by the investor concerned. Table 1 summarises the advantages and disadvantages of international investment types in the hotel industry to host countries.

Table 1: Advantages and disadvantages of hotel investments to host countries

Form of investment	Benefits to host country	Costs to host country
Total ownership 100% of equity by a foreign subsidiary; may be for an unlimited time or a specified period.	No financial risk to host economy	Large outflow of income ('leakage') Difficulty to reflect government policy for tourism
Joint venture Partial ownership by foreign capital; an unlimited time or a specified period.	Access to capital Access to international marketing Reduced income leakages	Requirement for the level of base capital Risk more widely spread Possibly unfavourable contracts due to limited bargaining power
Franchising The right to do business in a prescribed manner under an existing brand name sold to a local firm	Transfer of managerial and marketing skills Assured standard of quality Brand image	Management risk is with host country's firms
Management contracts Business is controlled and managed by a foreign firm, but without ownership	Possible transfer of knowledge, skills, and technology (e. g , GDS) through a co-operation agreement	No control over finance, management, or planning of firm
Hotel consortia Independent hotels pool resources to compete with integrated and franchise chains	Joint national and international marketing efforts	Small hotels may not be considered attractive to consortium Initial lack of brand recognition
Full national ownership Domestic investment without foreign links	Reduced international leakage Independence in corporate strategies	Lack of International reputation Higher marketing costs

Source: UNCTAD, 1998: 9-10

2.2 Role of the Rwandan government in providing a conducive FDI investment climate for tourism development

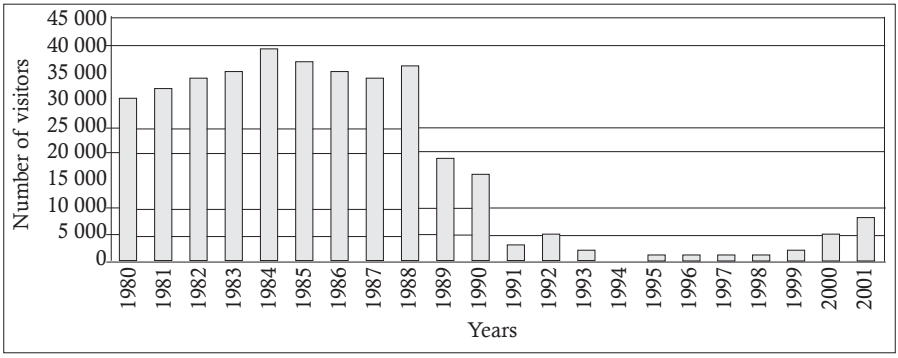
The Rwandan government adopted a number of investment programmes that are designed to attract both FDI to the country and increase local capital investment. These programmes include: Improving the country's image abroad, supporting and financing tourism projects, development of infrastructures, imposing environmental

restrictions to hotel development, improvement of human resources and keeping economic, social and political stability. Some of the governmental structures dealing with these investment programmes are discussed in the next section.

In order to achieve in the aims of attracting tourism development investment, equally government policy has to be geared towards attracting visitors to the country and to create an economic climate conducive for investment. Rwanda's principal international attraction is found in its natural environment, specifically within the country's natural parks. The rainforest covered slopes of central Africa's highlands of Rwanda and its neighbours Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda are home to endangered mountain gorillas (Scheyvens, 2002). Given the unique appeal of mountain gorillas in Rwanda, it is no wonder that the overwhelming majority of international tourists who visited Rwanda during the past decade were mainly those who wanted to engage in gorilla trekking (AIPA, 2002: 53). In the same way, Mazimhaka (2007) noted that the popularity of mountain gorillas has brought great international attention to Rwanda as a country. Rwanda's attractiveness in terms of wildlife and unspoiled wilderness lies in its national parks; the Volcano National Park, Nyungwe Forest and Akagera National Park. Other tourist attractions in Rwanda are Lake Kivu which is renowned for its beautiful scenery and sports attractions, Lake Muhazi, Bolera, Ruhondo and Rusumo waterfalls. Rwanda is also infamous for the genocide of 1994 and in Kigali, the capital city, the Gisozi genocide memorial is a major attraction.

Rwanda's tourism sector was at its peak in the 1980s (Figure 1). However, like other sectors of the economy, Rwanda's tourism was gravely affected by the 1994 genocide and war. For instance, tourist numbers decreased from 39 000 tourists in 1984 to none in 1994 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Tourist arrivals in Rwanda 1980-2001



Source: Adapted from MINICOM, 2002

Since 2000 tourist numbers have picked-up albeit very low compared to the boom period of the 1980s. Based on the statistics from MINECOFIN (2005) tourism was one of the best performing sectors in the economy in 2004. Tourists to the national parks increased by 63% with tourist numbers rising from 15 000 in 2003 to 26 900 in 2004 (Table 2). The year saw domestic tourists increased from 5 880 to 12 061 while international tourists increased from 10 658 to 14 397 (MINECOFIN, 2005). This strong growth was as a result of the adoption of Rwanda's Tourism Strategy and the designation of tourism as a priority sector (MINICOM, 2006).

Table 2: Selected tourism indicators

Visitors to national parks	2003	2004	% Change
Foreign	10658	14397	35.1
Rwandan	5880	12601	114.3
Total	16538	26998	63.2
Air passengers			
Rwanda Air	27360	48484	77.2
All airlines	116638	132504	13.6
Tourism receipts			
USD (Millions)	30.1	43.5	44.5

Source: MINECOFIN (2005)

In line with the government policy of promoting tourism, the government of Rwanda branded the image of the country abroad by launching Rwanda as a tourist destination at the WTM in London in November 2003. The aim of this re-launch was firstly to promote Rwanda throughout Europe and to boost the image of the country that had been tarnished by its tragic history. Secondly, it was to show that Rwanda was back in business and ready to offer world-class experiences. Lastly, it was to act as an indication that Rwanda was ready to offer unique tourism experiences to tourists (Mazimhaka, 2007; MINICOM, 2002). In order to promote brand Rwanda as a tourist destination, offices have been opened up in numerous countries. The Rwandan government has further contributed to provision of tourism infrastructure more especially in government owned hotels. In order to develop a tourism sector according to international standards, the government of Rwanda has engaged foreign renowned companies in the management of some of the hotels in order to transfer hotel management skills to the tourism industry. The government does the provision of a favourable investment climate together with other offices such as the Rwanda Private Sector Federation (RPSF), the Rwanda Investment and Export Promotion Agency **(**RIEPA), and the Rwanda Office of Tourism and National Parks (ORTPN).

The government of Rwanda changed its economic direction by opening up its economy to foreign investors and allowed local investors opportunity to benefit from privatization programmes. Privatization of public enterprises took effect in 1998 with 90 public enterprises earmarked for privatization. While privatization was carried out in all economic sectors, current efforts have been directed to tourism. All former government owned hotels have been either renovated or privatized. This could increase the role of the private sector and foreign investments in the tourism industry (OECD, 2006: 438).

With respect to regional integration, Rwanda's membership to some of the economic blocks has widened its market and export opportunities. The country has access to European and American markets through the provisions of the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA), Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) and through the Everything But Arms (EBA) arrangements respectively. The country is also a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and has recently joined the East African Community (EAC) (UNCTAD, 2006). In terms of tourism development, Rwanda's membership to the above mentioned blocks provides the potential for promoting Rwanda with the neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Kenya as a single package instead of promoting Rwanda as a single tourist destination. This can promote Rwanda's tourism as well as regional tourism.

3. Structures and Policies for Tourism Marketing and Investment

There are essentially three core bodies in Rwanda that are responsible for the promotion and economic investment of tourism and these are discussed below.

3.1 Rwanda Office of Tourism and National Parks (ORTPN)

The Rwanda Tourism Board is divided into a conservation and a tourism agency: Rwanda Wildlife Agency (RWA) and Rwanda Tourism Agency (RTA) (MINICOM, 2006). Rwanda Tourism Board performs several roles such as the tourism promotion and development as well as conservation, development of Rwanda Tourism Strategy so as to ensure that the country's tourism objectives are achieved, promotion of Rwanda's tourism both within and outside the country, coordinating priority investments with Rwanda Investment and Export Agency, and the dissemination, monitoring and coordination of tourism activities.

3.2 Rwanda Private Sector Federation (RPSF)

The RPSF office was formed in 1999 replacing the former Rwandan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Some of its main responsibilities are promoting and development of businesses. It also represents the interests of the business community and discusses with the government on matters concerning business improvements. Other services offered include training of business people by giving them business information, consultancy and helping them to access loans through provincial Business Development Services (BDS) centres. The BDS specifically target Micro and Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) enterprises. The RPSF office advertises and promotes individual business services nationally and internationally. Nationally, it promotes community involvement in tourism projects. For instance, tourism projects in Ruhengeri are among the projects that have benefited from business development services. As far as coordination is concerned, RPSF office organises meetings and workshops where ideas and views are exchanged on how to improve the existing investments and also to attract new investments in the sector (Kalisa, pers. comm., 7 December 2005).

Though Rwanda's private sector is still weak, it is important to note their critical role in the development of the tourism industry in Rwanda, particularly in hotel investments. Given that the majority of the hotels in Kigali are privately-owned, the Private Sector Federation office has helped to encourage both local and foreign investors in the tourism sector. Most of the government hotels in Rwanda are listed for privatization; some have been privatized though it is taking place slowly. It is expected that the change of ownership and management of these hotels will assist in improving the quality of tourism services and increasing the contribution of tourism to the national economy.

3.3 Rwanda Investment and Export Promotion Agency (RIEPA)

RIEPA is responsible for investment promotion in Rwanda and tourism has been identified as a key sector for investment development. Tourism is also among the sectors that have benefited from the streamlined application process of RIEPA. It is said that it only takes a maximum of three days for an investor to acquire all certificates and approvals required for setting up a business. The start up procedures for investors in Rwanda seem to be well designed. The licensing procedures at the municipal level do not appear to be a problem to investors in Rwanda since it is seen as a business tax to contribute to the municipal budget. Furthermore, obtaining work permits for foreign workers is straightforward and assistance in this regard is provided by RIEPA. A work permit can be obtained within a couple of days (FIAS, 2005; Kamanzi, pers. comm., 5 December 2005).

Regarding the provision of incentives, investors in the tourism industry and particularly hotels are offered concessions on hotel-imported equipment such as building materials, television sets and kitchen stoves. Political risks such as expropriation and war are covered by the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).

3.4 The Rwanda National Tourism Policy

The Rwanda National Tourism Policy was adopted in 2006 from the Rwanda Tourism Strategy of 2002. For investors interested in the development of quality tourism, the potential for investment lies in the way in which the government has created a conducive investment environment, aimed at attracting both local and foreign investment. Following are the strategies for investment and finance:

(1) Disseminating information on the tourism investment opportunities available in the industry to potential investors within and outside the country.

(2) Promoting tourism as priority sector for development, streamlining investment procedures in collaboration with the Investment and Export Promotion Agency and advocating for incentives in the tourism sector.

(3) Promoting tourist projects and ventures by way of joint venture arrangements with local partners.

(4) Advocating for a favourable fiscal, legal and regulatory framework in order to attract finance.

(5) Allocating the necessary public funds to enable the effective development and marketing

(6) Facilitating in loans, equity and technical assistance for medium- and long-term tourism financing.

(7) Supporting a concession policy where beneficiary concessions are granted for entrepreneurs and developers to undertake development of natural and cultural resources with local communities in a sustainable manner (MINICOM, 2006).

The next section will provide some background to the position of tourism investments, more specifically hotel investments, in the Rwandan economy.

4. Tourism Investments, 1999 to 2004

There has been a substantial growth in the development of hotels since 2000 (compared to the 1990s) with a number of hotels privatized, and, the construction of a five and four star Intercontinental Hotel in Kigali and Kivu Sun in Gisenyi respectively (Nsekanabo, 2005). Investments in the hotel and restaurant sub-sector of tourism are indicated to have attracted more investments than other sub-sectors such as travel agencies and tour operators. No wonder, it is one of the rapidly growing sectors of the Rwandan economy (Jeyakumar, 2005). In terms of distribution, almost all top range rooms and hotels are situated within Kigali and these form 65% of all the hotels in the country (OTF Group, 2002).

According to the Rwanda Investment and Export Agency (RIEPA, 2005) Investment Report for 1999-2005, investments are classified into three categories: 'new investment', 'restructuring' and 'rehabilitation'. Most of the investments between 1999 and 2004 were 'new investments' and almost all were non-FDI (Table 3). Of the 31 'new investments', hotel projects account for 23 (74%).

Notwithstanding the formal structures, policy guidelines, and financial incentives in place, the Rwandan government has, since 2000, been fairly unsuccessful in attracting FDI (considered as essential for sustainable economic growth) to the tourism sector. This has resulted in the country having one of the lowest FDI inflows in Africa (OECD, 2006: 435). This is attributable to Rwanda's being a land-locked country with an international image that is still poor, especially regarding security, poor infrastructure and transaction costs (specifically transport and energy). Since 1999, South Africa and India were the only countries that invested in the hotel sector contributing to 11% of the overall employment generated in the hotel sector.

Overall, in terms of all investments in the tourism sector (e.g. hotels, restaurants, etc.) a total of 1766 jobs were created between 2000 and 2004 (Figure 2). As a percentage of all jobs created between 2000 and 2004 the tourism sector's contribution remained relatively very low. With the exception of 2000 where the contribution peaked at 29% it declined by 2003 to 8% but has since then steadily improved.

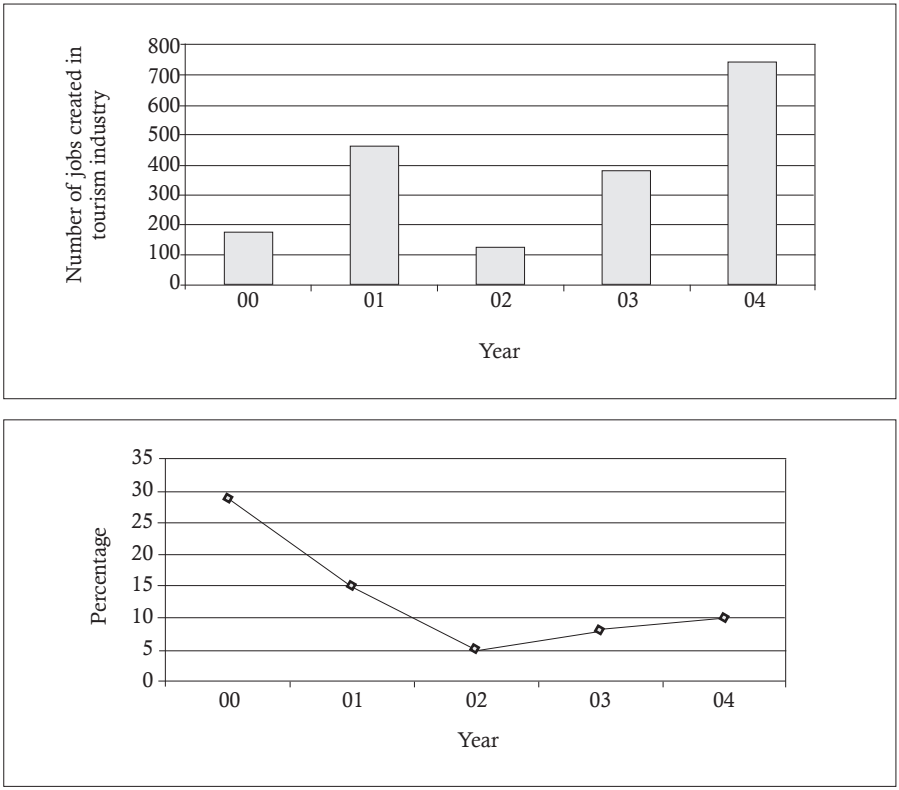
Table 3: Operational and non-operational hotels/resorts/restaurants in Rwanda

Source of investment	Name of project	Investment type	Year established	Jobs	Nature of investment	Est. invest in US $ (1 US Dollar = 570 Rwf)
Operational						
India	Indian Khazan Limited	New Investment	2004	48	FDI	289,421.05
Rwanda	Hotel le Bervedere	Expansion	2004	49	Local	673,463.43
Rwanda	Hotel Credo	New Investment	1999	40	Local	482,456.14
Rwanda	Gorillas Hotel	New Investment	2000	50	Local	438,596.49
Rwanda	Novotel	Rehabilitation	2000	169	Local	406,504.59
Rwanda	Muhazi Beach Resorts	New Investment	2001	65	Local	315,789.47
Rwanda	Alma Mater Lodge	New Investment	2001	26	Local	152,213.68
Rwanda	Hotel Alpha Palace	New investment	2001	78	Local	329,824.56
Rwanda	Golden Head/ Intercontinental	Restructuring	2001	250	Local	17,879,473.68
Rwanda	Hotel Castel	New Investment	2001	23	Local	403,508.77
Rwanda	Hotel Paradise Ten to Ten	New Investment	2001	50	Local	526,315.78
Rwanda	Okapi Hotel	New Investment	2001	8	Local	177,094.49
Rwanda	Guest House 'Chez Rose'	New Investment	2002	10	Local	87,719.29
Rwanda	Hotel Chez Lando	Restructuring	2002	100	Local	1,026,652.77
Rwanda	Trust House Building	New Investment	2002	20	Local	1,749,879.22
Rwanda	Akagera Game Lodge Sarl	New Investment	2003	78	Local	1,515,789.47
Rwanda	Imorex Chez Robert	New Investment	2003	18	Local	243,396.49
Rwanda	Le Petit Prince Hotel	New Investment	2003	38	Local	600,175.43

Rwanda	Lighthouse Resort	New Investment	2003	20	Local	477,192.98
Rwanda	Mountain Gorilla Nest Hotel	New Investment	2003	28	Local	410,526.31
Rwanda	New Blue Sky Hotel	Expansion	2004	31	Local	144,720.05
Rwanda	Sky Hotel	Expansion	2004	50	Local	74,024.56
Rwanda	La Palisse Club	Expansion	2004	29	2004	963,731.57
Rwanda	Le Printemps Hotel	New Investment	2004	35	Local	380,627.97
Rwanda	Amigo restaurant	Expansion	2005	46	Local	175,438.59
Total				1359		29,924,536.83
Non-Operational						
Rwanda	Oasis Hotel	New Investment	2000	unknown	Local	3,076,578.94
Rwanda	Dreamland Towers "DT"	New investment	2000	60	Local	1,540,296.77
Rwanda	Royal Prince Hotel	New investment	2000	30	Local	736,842.10
Rwanda	Te Deum Apartments	New investment	2001	8	Local	526,315.78
Rwanda	Hotel Olympia	New investment	2002	unknown	Local	1,052,631.57
South Africa	Mickor Hotel Holding	New Investment	2002	130	FDI	9,122,807.01
Total not operational				228		16,055,472.17

Source: RIEPA, 2005

Figure 2: Number of jobs created in the tourism sector between 2000 and 2004 and percentage of jobs created in the tourism industry as percentage of jobs created in all industry types



5. Conclusion

Investment in tourism has been identified as a key engine of economic growth for many African countries. There is no question that tourism growth contributes to economic development through increased foreign currency, employment opportunities, increased government revenues, increased incomes, improvement in infrastructure and alleviating of poverty. There is evidence in developing countries that FDI in the service sector, more so in the tourism industry, is growing more than ever before (albeit still low in comparison to other sectors) despite problems such as poor infrastructure (roads and airports), inconsistent government tourism policies and stringent regulations, small markets for tourism services, lack of human resource, constant political instabilities, poor image abroad and lack of adequate financial institutions to support investments.

With respect to the case study Rwanda, despite being one of the poorest countries in the world, the country's economy has shown a lot of progress after the 1994 war and genocide. In terms of tourism the industry is slowly enticing visitors back to the country. Although the government of Rwanda recognizes the role of tourism and increased investment in economic development, it has failed to attract sufficient FDI. However, it has made a significant contribution in terms of invested amounts and subsequent revenue increases, as well as infrastructural development and has at the same time created both direct and indirect jobs. Within a conducive investment environment (liberalization, privatization, integration and existing political stability) the hotel sector has between 1999 and 2004 mainly benefited from local investments.

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Deconstructive, Dialogical and Developmental Practices as the Cornerstones of an Approach to Community Development in Vanuatu

Peter Westoby

Abstract

This paper presents and reflects upon an approach to community development that is underpinned by the three cornerstones of deconstructive, dialogical/elicitive and developmental practice. The author presents a case that this approach is particularly appropriate as a guide for outsiders working in post-colonial contexts. The approach has emerged from practitioner reflection on an intervention, the '*kastom* governance partnership'; an initiative of the Vanuatu National Council of Chiefs, the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS), and AusAid. The partnership aims at building capacity for peaceful community development within Vanuatu. The paper presents firstly the background on Vanuatu and the 'intervention' of the partnership, and secondly, observations relevant to community practice around the spheres of 'a life-project', community, conflict, governance and livelihoods. Finally the paper outlines the approach of deconstructive, dialogical/elicitive and developmental practices.

1. Introduction

The key goal of this paper is to present and reflect upon an approach to community development underpinned by three guiding cornerstones of deconstructive, dialogical/elicitive and developmental practice. This approach has been developed within an action-reflection process embedded within a three year development co-operation partnership within the Pacific nation of Vanuatu. I will present the background, describe the work that was covered, outline the observations on our intervention and then articulate the practices key to our understanding of community development work.

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As with many other post-colonial states, Vanuatu is facing intense pressures of change in virtually every dimension of social organisation and experience, from the most intimate to the most collective. The country's people and institutions are negotiating the complex push and pulls between what remains a reasonably rich subsistence (or exchange) economy and the market economy (both legitimate and shadowy), and between what are still vital customary governance processes embedded in that subsistence economy (*kastom*) and the institutions and processes of a liberal state.

Vanuatu is thus in the midst of a dense and difficult dialogue of differences concerning the shapes of cultural, economic and political life. For ni-Vanuatu (the people of Vanuatu), and across the Pacific Islands, individual and collective identities are at stake in the most fundamental ways in this exchange. This 'dialogue' is marked by a lively history of accommodations and creative interpretations as well as conflict; it is certainly not a simple replacement of indigenous with introduced political, cultural, social and economic systems. Rather, ni-Vanuatu people and institutions are grappling with the deeply challenging, conflictual, but also potentially generative processes of reshaping the way social, economic and political community is lived and institutionalised.

Community development discourses can sit either comfortably or uncomfortably within such settings. Some approaches to community development can intensify the pressures and actually undermine a generative 'dialogue' of differences required to shape a sustainable social, economic and political life. They can be also closely associated with the 'foreign' interventions of the International NGO 'community', state and multilateral actors (such as the Asian Development Bank). Community development then becomes part of the agenda of 'development' agents and for many local people there is discomfort with such an agenda.

With full awareness of this kind of local discomfort the development partnership outlined and reflected upon within this paper attempted to do things differently. This paper presents an approach to community development that could fit more comfortably with a generative 'dialogue' of difference taking place within this nation of rapid and complex transitions. The approach is theoretically underpinned by the broader works of development theorists Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2003) which is oriented towards providing space for people to contribute to enlarging their choices and thus improving human development. It is an approach that has been tested within three years of the partnership and continues to provide a space for people to shape their own social, economic and political responses to change.

2. Background

Vanuatu as a nation is a string of more than 80 islands once known as the New Hebrides (in the South Pacific Ocean, east of Australia) but which achieved independence from France and Britain in 1980. Figure 1 shows where Vanuatu is in relation to other nations of Oceania:

Figure 1: Vanuatu in relation to Oceania

The struggle for independence and the formation of Vanuatu was not without difficulty. The newly emerging nation experienced a war of succession and some of the conflicts within that formation process still have an impact on national and community life today. For many policymakers the Vanuatu political system is at best a fragile state and at worst a potential 'failed state' – often described as "unstable and fragmentary" evidenced in no fewer than sixteen changes in government in the 13 years leading up to the 2004 elections (Cox, Alatoa, Kenni, Naupa, Rawlings, Soni & Vatu, 2007: ii). However, considering the length of time that the nation has been independent there are many positive things to consider particularly in relation to the resilience of community life and customary mechanisms of order.

The country has a population of about 221,000 with most people still living in rural island contexts (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2007). However, there are increasing processes of urbanisation with population growth within the two main centres of Port Vila (the capital on the island of Efate) and Luganville (on the island of Santo).

The recently published document *The Unfinished State: Drivers of Change in Vanuatu* (Cox *et al.*, 2007) presents many of the successes and challenges of the nation. Economically, whilst Vanuatu has experienced strong growth (estimated at nearly 7% in 2005), this growth is not making any impact on the lives of most ni-Vanuatu (Cox *et al.*, 2007: i). It is focused on urban-oriented investment and tourism which supports 15% of the people employed within the formal economy. Many powerful institutional agents such as the Asian Development Bank, AusAid and the Vanuatu State see the primary policy goal as that of economic growth. This is considered the key to alleviating poverty, although institutions such as the Asian Development Bank include social protection activities alongside its growth strategies. It should be carefully noted that whilst most rurally based ni-Vanuatu communities have poor human development indicators, acute poverty is virtually unknown. It is because of this that ACPACS' primary policy orientation is that of development within a conflict prevention framework which surely entails economic activity, but within a broader analysis of Pacific lives and aspirations. We therefore locate our analysis primarily with the social resilience of Pacific peoples, building on the strengths of their customary and community life and recognising that this must be the starting place for engaging with the challenges of transition (ACPACS, 2006).

However, the pressures to increase economic activity are driven by various significant forces. There are state revenue needs, increased urban population pressures and an increased uncertainty around the long-term sustainability of a 'subsistence plus' economy. An urban and peri-urban population explosion resulting from rural-urban drift leading to the particular pressure of youth unemployment reinforces the need for economic activity (Storey, 2006). Many times within this partnership leaders of rural communities have told us "there are no young people left in the village – they have all gone to Vila". Linked to this has been the recent debate around the limitations to what has been called the 'subsistence plus' economy. Historically rural economies have flourished on a subsistence and exchange economy with only the minimal cash input (from someone in the village working in a job such as a teacher). This is now being challenged by increasing financial needs and rising aspirations. The key needs for cash arise from peoples need for more consumer items (such as salt, clothing and kerosene) and also several policy changes in which schools and health care are now subsidised by a user pay system (that is, the need for rural and urban people

to pay for services such as school and education), (Cox *et al.*, 2007: ii). However, people's aspirations are also changing, particularly young people, wanting to own more 'luxury consumer items'.

3. The Work Already Completed

In 2004, the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS) was approached by the secretariat of the national organisation of customary leaders in Vanuatu, (the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs (MNCC)), to support them in looking for ways to assist customary leaders to respond to some of the intense change dynamics touched on above. After a year of conversation, ACPACS and the MNCC entered into a 12-month Community Partnership Program with AusAID (the Australian Government aid agency) as partner and funder. For ACPACS, as a centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, and for the MNCC, as a body bridging customary and national governance, our focus was supporting customary leaders to work with the conflictual processes of rapid, chaotic change in ways that reduced the potential for violence. The focus on violent conflict prevention, however, entailed work across a range of themes, including enhancing local governance and community development processes, around which all three partners concurred.

The initial pilot program consisted of three workshops held in Port Vila (the capital), and two other islands. The workshops were understood as structured contexts for facilitated conversations around questions that customary and community leaders regularly faced but rarely had an opportunity to work through with each other in a reflective context (that is, they were understood as 'difficult conversations'). Under the heading of community development the workshops provided an environment for customary leaders and members of grassroots councils (often the same people) to reflect on, discuss and plan around:

- Challenges and pressures facing communities and their role in working with these pressures.
- How to support good development processes.
- Peace-building and working with conflict.
- The interface between 'traditional' and 'introduced' governance systems.

The workshops were organised by the MNCC Secretariat and were facilitated by members of the Secretariat and by ACPACS. After evaluation and review, AusAID funded the next phase of the Partnership, which built on and extended the pilot. It included:

- Undertaking research that takes customary governance systems seriously, with topics worked out by the partners and also includes the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and the University of the South Pacific.
- More in-depth workshops on community development, community governance and conflict resolution – now renamed 'storytelling' (*storians*) – and follow up.
- Supporting the organisational capacity of the MNCC.
- Training local facilitators to work with ACPACS in the *storians.*

This process now continues into the next phase of partnership currently being negotiated between the different organisations.

The rest of this paper is structured into two parts. The first part will present observations about the intervention of the '*kastom* governance partnership' and the pilot project that preceded it. The second part will outline the approach of community development that ACPACS has developed for guiding our partnerships in post-colonial contexts.

4. Some Observations about the Intervention

As inferred within the introduction and background, it is into this complex space that ACPACS is attempting to learn, along with the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs and the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, how to forge a way forward. ACPACS has have been tasked to facilitate dialogue within the spheres of *kastom* governance, community development and conflict resolution. The rationale behind the initiative is that whilst the Vanuatu State receives most of its recognition in terms of governance capacity building – with a corresponding investment in administrative, judicial and financial arms of the state – over eighty percent of the country is still governed within the realms of customary authority (presiding over or within the customary subsistence and exchange economy, and customary social and cultural lives) where the 'reach' of the state is minimal, spectral and shadowy. For example, in terms of the administrative arm of the state, the lowest formal level of government is instituted within 63 Area Councils which only have a single employee each (focused on tax collection); in terms of the political arm the state is connected to communities through 'representatives' driven by patronage (Cox *et al.*, 2007: ii-iii)

However, as would be clear from my brief overview of Vanuatu above, community life has certainly not remained separate from modernity's expansion despite the state's shadowy absence – there have been significant changes and challenges to customary authority. Non customary agents such as churches, political parties, other religions, local business people (who have entered the cash

economy successfully), outsider entrepreneurs (such as loggers, tourist operators, and plantations owners), NGOs, INGOs, State actors and other multilateral actors (such as regional training teams of UN agencies) are active within each level of ni-Vanuatu life (local, provincial and national). Each of these agents has their own agendas that contribute to accelerated transition.

ACPACS has had to pause and reflect on where we are positioned within this complex array of agents and agendas whilst listening deeply to the people we are working alongside. This part of the paper outlines some observations on the development co-operation intervention. This is not in any way meant to be self promoting in the sense that ACPACS has worked out an approach that works. We are on a steep learning curve, are making progress in our thinking and acting, making mistakes, shifting directions.

The first observation is the value of what could be termed a *'life-project'*. Chiefs have wanted to make explicit a vision and develop strategies to engage with development, which they have often experienced as negative. This process of envisioning and strategising can be conceptualised as the development by chiefs of a life-project. In *In the Way of Development,* Blaser *et al.* (2004: 54) defines a life-project as the process by which a "group develops its own vision and strategy for cultural and community life that engages with the broader hegemony of neo-liberal development". This vision and strategy is a mixture, often contradictory, of responses that include accommodation, assimilation, negotiation, and resistance within the 'grey sites' of the 'glocal space'. Following Marshall Sahlins (2000: 48) it could be understood as the indigenisation of modernity.

One of the rationales for using this concept is that at each workshop the notion of 'development' was considered, by the participants, to signify forces of change that people did *not* want. At early stages of every workshop chiefs stated "development is bad". Whilst most chiefs recognized that change was inevitable there was still a sense that 'development' was problematic and possibly antagonistic to community values, and therefore required strong engagement and strategies for self-reliance. Self-reliance was central to participants' notions of a way forward for themselves at the community but also at national level. There was deep concern about a lack of critical reflection from most state actors (ministers and departmental personnel), and NGO/INGO actors who they considered had 'bought into' an economic development model imposed by outside actors/institutions, often with serious and damaging local consequences.

For ACPACS, this work required us very consciously to locate actors' capacity to collectively determine their own futures – to create a 'life-project' – at the heart of our approach to community development. Participants consistently returned to

this as their primary goal – to develop a collective vision for their communities that is theirs, determined by themselves, within a confusing and disorienting context of transition.

The second observation was the complexity of engaging with the multiple understandings of *community* within the rapidly changing social and political context. Workshop participants were invited to talk about their own (*emic*) meanings for community. For the chiefs, the starting point in conceptualising community was both within the familiar geographical site of village but also within a more complex socio-cosmological relational space known as *nasara* and *nakamal* (Huffer & Molisa, 1999). *Nakamal* and *nasara* signified the whole interconnected web of relationships between people past (ancestors), present and future and other realities of life – flora, fauna, weather, spirits and so forth with the primary goal of harmony.

Participants were then asked to re-consider 'community' within the context of the nation-state, development, migration, access to the cash economy, and so forth – in which people now relate to multiple kinds of geographical spaces. Many participants could see emplacement (Turton, 2004), defined as the process of making place home, as no longer only local, occurring within the geographical site of the village or the relational site of *nakamal* and *nasara*. People increasingly identified with other places and spaces. They had family on other islands or in urban centres. It was clear that many chiefs and other workshop participants were struggling with the disorientation of being members of new multiple communities beyond the village and reaching into island, regional, national and international spaces which also has important implications for thinking about citizenship. There was recognition of the need for a more complex life project that encompassed a vision, strategies and organizational forms enabling community leaders to engage with the multiple levels of community within which different kinds of development needed to be engaged.

The third observation was our considering of the value of bringing *conflict resolution* approaches into interaction with community development**.** Within partner meetings and workshops there were many discussions about the increasing difficulty of managing conflict peacefully across the multiple levels of community. From the beginning participants were clear that there were many contemporary challenges to customary conflict resolution. Rapid social change is introducing new pressures to which customary systems are still adapting: changing gender roles, the emergence of unemployment, aspirations of young people, inter-island migration, growth of foreign tourism, outlawing of some traditional sanctions, mixing of clans and so many more. Some participants noted that the strength of customary conflict resolution processes is maintaining calm and cultivating harmony, but their corresponding weakness in not dealing with the root causes of

conflict, so undermining people's capacity or willingness to work co-operatively. During one of the workshops the paramount chief of Vanuatu made the comment that "our customary systems often maintain peace but are not so strong on justice thereby leaving people aggrieved and unwilling to co-operate with others". Many other participants also suggested that communities might be at peace – maintained by chiefly decisions (usually a process of chiefly arbitration achieved after listening to all parties and considering the web of relationships/obligations) to enforce custom fines (for example, because someone's pig destroyed someone's garden) and initiate reconciliation ceremony (usually an exchange of some items such as mats or pigs) – but that this peace has often left people scarred, aggrieved or withdrawn.

Rapid social transition which displaced cultures and groups while bringing them increasingly into interaction with each other often left chiefs, as traditional peace-makers, feeling confused and disoriented as to how to deal with escalating conflicts. Within this complex space the workshops explored how customary and other models of conflict resolution could be utilised in new ways to deal with these challenges. Whilst all discussions started through eliciting (Lederach, 1995) an understanding of customary conflict resolution models, they then moved onto exploring other approaches. People debated the strengths and weaknesses of each of these models for various situations. As one chief put it "We have five arrows, ACPACS might have two or three more and theirs might be sharper, so let us try them out".

The fourth observation, clearly linked to the previous discussion, involved the importance of nurturing new forms of *governance***.** Whereas in the past the order of village life was ensured through customary forms of governance with a chief wielding considerable authority, this is no longer the case. Legitimacy was based on various ontologies (ancestry, ceremony), but was usually also linked to capacity and performance. Chiefs now increasingly have to earn authority within a social context in which others in the community – successful entrepreneurs, government workers, NGO workers or educated women or youth – might be more knowledgeable and capable in various areas. Increasingly order is only elicited through chiefs working co-operatively with others to develop a 'public mandate' to govern legitimately. Facilitators rapidly learnt that whilst some chiefs, at least early-on within the workshops, might have wanted to re-assert some customary methods of governance that were increasingly considered to be illegitimate (for example, forcing young people from urban centre perceived to be troublesome back to their islands), there was usually a movement towards acknowledgement of needing to govern more co-operatively with others such as state agents, civil society and Church leaders. The governance challenge was to build cooperative governance structures where all actors can participate, structures which ideally bring customary and introduced governance processes into hybrid forms. For the purposes of community development, the ways

in which introduced forms of governance (a health centre's committee, for instance, or a women's association) interact with the customary governance structures needs to be better articulated and innovations sought to ensure their complementarity. Hybrid governance structures that fit into local dynamics (and are oriented towards "people feeling able to grasp their contemporary environment" (Huffer & Molisa, 1999: 11)) need to emerge.

The fifth key observation was the centrality of sustainable *livelihoods* within any community development approach. Once the workshop participants had discussed their sense of the 'problem of development' they moved onto a process of defining what 'development' might mean within their life-project. Whilst the cornerstone goal was people's ability to collectively determine their own directions, the secondary goal was that of social-economic-cultural well-being underpinned by workable livelihoods.

In the context of discussions about livelihood, participants were able to discuss a range of concerns such as food security, natural resource management, access rights (to beaches to ensure people could continue fishing), or transport to markets to sell or exchange produce. One of the overarching concerns from workshop participants was that current livelihood pressures were resulting in more conflict with the connected challenge of innovating new governance structures. This analysis certainly resonated with the partner concerns and their analysis. Whilst the partnership has not yet reached the point of exploring livelihood options in more depth (this is central to the workshops planned for years 2008-2010) we have learnt afresh of how central it is to work in sustainable development.

The final observation was that of continually reflecting on the dynamics of the community development work through the following three axes. These axes have helped ACPACS facilitators make sense of many of the dynamics embedded within the community development process. Part of the task within the partnership has been to make some of these processes more explicit to workshop participants:

- Endogenous – exogenous resources
- Insider – outsider agendas
- Bottom-up – Top-down pressures

Within the first axis there is recognition that within all of the above community development processes: developing a life-project, re-thinking community, understanding conflict, innovating governance structures and developing livelihood strategies there are both exogenous and endogenous resources to draw on. The livelihoods of most communities within Vanuatu are sustained by both endogenous resources embedded within the customary economy of subsistence and exchange, and also the exogenous cash economy. The analysis we brought

to the partnership and to the process of community development is that we must support participants in understanding, nurturing and strengthening both, neither at the expense of the other. Customary forms of conflict resolution, governance, livelihood and community building are all critical to the social resilience of Vanuatu community life. However, new (non customary) approaches to conflict resolution, governance, community building and livelihood development can be useful.

Within the second axis there is an analysis that needs to examine the source of agendas that are driving community development. Are they insider or outsider oriented? If they are both, and usually they are, where is the locus of control/ motivation and where is the locus of participation/support? Linking this analysis to the previous paragraph it is central to community development that the choice of exogenous vs. endogenous is left to insiders. Outsiders have a role – and that is often about resourcing people with new information, new ideas, new resources, and training – but outsiders should be supportive participants within a process whereby insiders have control and the key motivation.

The third and final axis, the analysis of bottom-up or top-down pressures invites participants and practitioners to consider where the pressures for change are coming from. Are they coming from the bottom, that is, from aspirations and needs of community members, or are they coming from actors at the top – from government, NGO or other globalizing forces? For example one of the key community development processes is that of peace-making or conflict resolution. In preparation for one of the workshops it was identified that the action plans should focus on initiating reconciliation ceremonies within Port Vila town. Such actions would certainly be drawing on endogenous resources (that is, customary dispute resolution mechanisms) and insider energy (they would be initiated by local people). However, the idea was developed at the top – initially by the State in 2006 and then again in 2007 by leaders of the National Council of Chiefs. This is not to say that top-down led initiatives are a bad thing - it is simply to say that we need to develop an analysis of this dynamic to ensure we understand why things sometimes do not work according to the plan or there is resistance.

5. Three Practices that Underpin our Approach to Community Development

While the previous discussion identifies the observations about the partnership intervention this part of the paper identifies the practices that have guided ACPACS approach to 'intervention' as an outsider agency. These three cornerstones have been developed through our interaction with leaders from partner organisations in many meetings, and also with chiefs and other community leaders participating in the community workshops. They provide a set of contours in considering the

complex terrain of community development work within a context such as Vanuatu. It is posited that these cornerstones could be useful to consider for other organisations working in the Pacific region and other post-colonial contexts. The cornerstones are named as deconstructive, dialogical/elicitive and developmental practices.

5.1 Deconstructive practices

The term deconstructive is associated with the work of French literary theorist Jacques Derrida. The term is used to describe the "process of identifying and undermining oppositions through which discourses represent things such as knowledge, identity and other social phenomena" (Healy, 2005: 204). Derrida showed the dangers we court when we assume that the meanings of words are self-evident and that they represent (rather than construct) what we call 'the real world' or 'reality'. He also demonstrated the degree to which we reply on binary oppositions in a hierarchy of value and he unfolded the processes of every opposition's construction and revealed its unsustainability. Building on the work of Derrida, Caputo (1997: 73) describes deconstruction as a "self revising, self-questioning mode of openness to the 'Other'". He implies that fostering a healthy scepticism, a realisation that the world might not be as our own worldview suggests, enables us to bring more of the world into view than our blinkers normally allow (Caputo 1997: 73).

So what has this meant in our community development approach to working with a partner within Vanuatu? Firstly, it has provided some guidance working within the complex terrain of binaries in which oppositions such as undeveloped-developed, strong state-weak state, traditional-modern, customary-introduced, constitutional-customary, freehold land-customary title and transitional-stable abound. Clearly many agents come with agendas in which either one or the other is placed higher in the associated hierarchy. Within our approach, such oppositional constructions are unsustainable. The practice is to make explicit the un-sustainability of such oppositions.

Secondly, deconstructive practice actually challenges some of the foundations of community development in that it undermines the binaries embedded within most contemporary community development discourse. Consider the following: practice-theory, process-outcome, remembering-forgetting, recognition-redistribution, doing-being, public-private, strong-weak, resilient-vulnerable and so forth. Deconstructive practice invites us to consider the shifting ground resulting from the Derridian move of undermining these binaries. This forces us to be more reflexive in our approach and even invites us to be careful using the chosen binaries of exogenous/endogenous, insider/outsider and bottom-up/top-down. Whilst these axis of analysis are useful and illuminate certain dynamics they can blind us to potential others. Using an example that is particularly relevant in a context such

as Vanuatu one could argue that the binary of strong state-weak state, in which Vanuatu would be identified as having a weak state when contrasted with a strong state such as Australia's makes us blind to the possibility of seeing some 'Other' kind of Pacific-like hybrid state (Boege *et al*., 2007). Such an 'Other' state, neither weak nor strong within the typology of a Western 'ideal type', but emerging from local historical cultural processes, needs to be created.

Thirdly, deconstructive practice challenges any meta-narrative that is becoming too stabilised as 'orthodoxy' – whether that be 'democracy' or 'rights' as often exemplified within Western nations, or '*kastom'* as articulated within many Pacific contexts. They are important meta-narratives that community development must engage with; however within our practice we must de-stabilise any ossified versions of them. The destabilising process in turn then creates a space for people to construct new meta-narratives around these signifiers that provide meaning within their own social space.

Some might consider the advocating of such practice within an already uncertain context of transition as dangerous or too risky, however it is important to understand that immersed in the concept of deconstruction is the idea of two movements - 'de' and 're'. The first movement, 'de', invites an evaluation (of binaries and meta-narratives and their un-sustainability) and a potential 'letting go'. There is an invitation to increase uncertainty. But, there is a second movement, a 're', requiring a [re]construction – of something new. In this approach deconstruction is an orientation, a stance or sensibility that invites opening up of new "possibilities of arrangements or assembling" (Smith, 2005: 10). It is potentially generative rather than destructive. This something 'new' or what is constantly referred to in the writings of Derrida as alterity is the considering of something 'Other'. Within this partnership we have started to imagine something 'Other', other than strong or weak states, some emerging new form of state; something other than *kastom* or introduced, but rather some 'Other' hybridity; something other than the traditional or modern condition, other than underdeveloped or developed; something we have signified as a 'life-project'. This 'other' can be a new practice or meta-narrative of *kastom,* democracy and human rights emerging from people's engagement with those ideas in their own local and historical context.

5.2 Dialogical and elicitive practice

This second idea is closely connected to the first. The notion that there is something 'other', something 'new', requires a space or platform to create one. Such a platform needs to enable people to facilitate or nurture movement away from debates based on either/or binaries or essentialized meta-narratives. Dialogical and elicitive practice does this by facilitating structured conversations. At the heart of dialogue

is conversation – a conversation that requires deep listening and a willingness to let go of pre-desired or designed agendas. It is conversation that is willing to enter into an understanding of one another's *emic* worlds of meaning and resources. Within this partnership the conversation has entailed processes of deep listening between ACPACS project staff and the national staff of the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs. This listening has enabled us to start moving beyond reified notions of either *kastom* or foreign that can distort discussion and freeze creativity. Within community workshops, the same processes of dialogue have enabled participants and facilitators to have conversations around the meanings and modalities of community, 'development', respect, *kastom*, governance, conflict and so forth. For us such practice is critical in our aspirations for 'development as freedom' (Sen, 1999) and our alignment with a genuine capabilities approach (Nussbaum, 2003).

Dialogue also challenges those with 'power' to enter into the possibility that they might need to step out of their comfortable practices. For example, during the course of the project ACPACS staff have had several discussions with high ranking chiefs in which they articulated their concern that some people practising "introduced forms of governance" (in this case they were referring to people working within the justice/courts system) need to work with them (that is, chiefs practising *kastom* Law). In principle, the chiefs had no problem with that. However, the chiefs often discovered that when people said "we should be working together" what they really meant was that "the chiefs had to learn about the introduced system" while the legal people did not take the time to learn about the *kastom* system. This lack of willingness to engage in genuine dialogue (that is, a mutual experience and reciprocal activity) undermines the possibility of forging creative new ways forward and creating 'Other' forms of governance or 'development'.

Within this dialogical practice we have institutionalised the 'workshop training events' as *storians,* a Bislama word for story-telling. This part of the process of community development requires us to create platforms for participants to tell their stories – stories of how conflict is resolved using *kastom*, how customary conflict resolution processes are struggling within new socio-political-cultural-economic contexts, stories of concerns about community life – the loss of young people, the fault-lines of rapid changes manifest in gender and generational conflicts, the pressures of food security, exploitative tourist operators and so forth. Within the dialogue ACPACS facilitators have been able to bring stories of some 'outsider' approaches to community conflict resolution, or approaches to governance and development being used in other contexts.

The dialogue platform then creates space for eliciting new stories. It is posited that the elicitive stance of dialogical practice is central to community development work. This stance is theoretically underpinned by the work of Lederach (1995)

who works in the field of cross-cultural conflict transformation. The assumption behind the approach is that there is an agonistic conflict (Mouffe, 2005) between the *kastom* world and the new introduced systems. An elicitive stance of facilitation sees the primary mode of work as a mutual co-creative 'journey of discovery' between the community development practitioner and local participants in which the cultural, communal and political resources available to local people, albeit disrupted ones, are re-constituted, re-invented, recycled, re-patterned and re-structured in the new context. It is elicitive in that, new models of cultural practice, communal participation, community governance, and conflict resolution have to be developed for the purposes of building and sustaining a life-project. The role of the worker/trainer is as catalyst for the thoughtful rebuilding of these models that constitute the life-project and avoid the either/or pitfalls of ossification/reaction to new or assimilation into the new.

5.3 Developmental practice

The third and final idea that has guided our work is a commitment to developmental practice. At the heart of developmental practice is awareness of building a particular kind of relationship. Whilst the second idea signifies a dialogical relationship, the idea of developmental practice signifies a relationship that is purposeful in bringing 'private' concerns into the public arena, not only for dialogue or conversation, but for community and public action with the intention of achieving social justice outcomes.

In other words, a developmental relationship is focused not only on the sociability of communal life – the sociality of kinship, friendship, sharing, dancing, loving and caring – but about the sociality of developing a shared concern, a shared analysis and a shared action that enhances the life-project of a community. The developmental relationship is then a purposeful public relationship that is understood as occurring when people make agreements to do something in relation to their powerlessness, transforming it through action.

A key dimension of developmental practice looks to 'make' visible potential relationships that enhance local people's chances of being involved in decision making processes that affect their lives. These kinds of relationships are usually oriented towards the vertical structures and systems of the state or large organizations whereby people within communities need to build connections with other people within these vertical structures and systems that have particular authority, skills and resources. Again, the purpose of these relationships is the same as described earlier – to 'bring' people within these structures and systems into the process of developing a shared concern, analysis and action with people within communities. That is not to say that some of these connections would

not be agonistic – there is often a clear structural disjuncture between the life-projects of communities and the agendas of state and other non-state actors, but it is to say that often there are at least some people within these vertical structures who also share the hopes of communities 'life-projects' and are happy to work in genuine partnership with community leaders.

Finally, at another level, the '*kastom* governance partnership' has also linked chiefs and ACPACS together in a developmental relationship. As we build a community-shared analysis of concerns and potential ways forward ACPACS personnel are also challenged to take this analysis into the vertical structures within Australia that we are connected to. Developmental relationships orient us to tackle some of the causes of Vanuatu suffering that are initiated within Australia or the wider Region.

6. Conclusion

As well as endeavouring to be a partnership amongst three very different organisations and across different cultures, for ACPACS our work in Vanuatu is understood within a framework of dialogue and mutuality. Mutuality, conversation and respect require acknowledging others. There can be a tendency to approach the Pacific Islands as if the task of development was to teach them 'how to do' our institutions better. The idea of life-projects is one way of naming and recognising communities and customary leaders' efforts to be self-determining – to negotiate ways through the currents of rapid change that enable them to hold what they value.

Customary leaders are engaged at the most basic level in working and experimenting with new, hybrid forms of community and governance in Vanuatu. This is conflictual and chaotic, but also potentially profoundly generative work that could complement efforts to support state and other governance structures.

The 'dialogue of differences' in which ni-Vanuatu and other Pacific Islanders are engaged in occurs not only within the Pacific Islands themselves – whether we (writing here as settler Australians) are conscious of it or not – 'the West' is utterly part of this exchange. Yet Australians (and the 'West' more broadly) seem scarcely aware of the extent to which our histories and contemporary realities are entwined, and operate instead from a gulf between 'us' and 'them' (as indigenous peoples).

At a fundamental level, ACPACS is endeavouring to help build the confidence of workshop participants and others in working with 'introduced' systems and structures and with each other, whether they are from customary governance, NGOs or churches, or provincial governments. But the partnership is also an

opportunity to undo some of our own deafness and defensiveness as Westerners and engage in conversations across differences of culture and of power, to get to know our neighbours better and to learn to listen more.

ACPACS feels incredibly privileged to be working in partnership with two institutions within Vanuatu – namely the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs and the Vanuatu Cultural Centre – that are at the centre of visioning a life-project for ni-Vanuatu people. Neither institution's have 'bought into' the agenda/s or orientations of the Vanuatu state, or bilateral or multilateral actors. They are working with these agendas, but they are doing it in ways that reflect the multiple modalities of accommodation, assimilation and resistance. They are actively looking for 'an-Other' way – one that neither marginalises nor reifies *kastom* and one that is re-thinking development, community, governance, conflict resolution and livelihoods. From an outsider's perspective we are learning that our contribution to this process is to support dialogue, engage in developmental relationships and nurture on-going deconstructive movements. These practices are the cornerstone to an approach to community development within such settings. We still have a long way to go and much to learn.

Disclaimer: *this paper does not reflect the views of ACPACS, but the views of the author as training practitioner and researcher within the Vanuatu team within ACPACS.*

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Rural Women and Water Scarcity: Challenges and Strategies in the Eastern Cape, South Africa

Kholisa Sigenu & André Pelser

Abstract

This article reports on the experiences of and the traditional strategies used by rural women in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa in the event of water scarcity. Conditions of water scarcity imply that there will be an increased burden on rural women, as they are forced to travel longer distances in search of water, which in return negatively impacts on their time and energy for other duties. It is argued that traditional strategies in water management are important mechanisms towards sustainable development in rural areas. These traditional strategies help improve women's socio-economic conditions and their confidence in their own ability to influence development in their respective communities. If decision makers take cognizance of practices at the local level and properly consider women's water needs and experiences, they will be able to develop specific, relevant and needs-based policies or coping strategies.

1. Background and Introduction

The past 20 years or more have seen a considerable increase in global fresh-water consumption to meet the needs and demands of growing human populations and expanding economies. In several parts of the world, water consumption already exceeds annual average water replenishment. If consumption per person remains steady, by 2025 humans could be using 70% of all available fresh water because of population growth alone (Engelman, Halweil & Nierenberg, 2002: 132; UNFPA, 2001: 5). Despite all the efforts made in the water sector to serve an ever-increasing human population and the impressive results that have been achieved over the past few decades, there still remains a backlog of more than 1.1 billion people worldwide without access to improved water supply (WHO/UNICEF, 2000: 7), while a further estimated 2.6 billion are still left without improved sanitation

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facilities (UNEP, 2007). By 2025, as many as 4.2 billion people – that is more than 50% of the projected global population – will be living in countries unable to meet the World Health Organisation's requirement of 50 litres of water per person per day to meet basic human needs (PRB, 2007; UNFPA, 2001: 12).

Of all the world regions, Africa's water supply is currently the most vulnerable (Leonard, 2003: 3). Although sub-Saharan African countries have a high annual average of available water per capita, some of them already face, or will soon face water stress or water-scarcity conditions (Ambala, 2002: 1). South Africa is no exception; in fact, projections show that South Africa too counts among those African countries that are expected to experience water-scarcity problems by 2025 (Pelser, 2001). Further aggravating the situation is the fact that the demand for water is expected to grow by at least three percent until 2020 (National Population Unit, 2000: 18; UNFPA, 2001: 24; World Global Trends, 2005: 4).

It is estimated that all conventional water resources in South Africa will be fully utilised by the year 2026 (National Population Unit, 2000: 33). Because of climate change, for instance, summer rainfall is expected to decrease by up to 25% in the Eastern and Southern Cape in the years to come (DEAT, 2001: 60). The rapid growth in the number of households in South Africa, brought about by a combination of economic prosperity, population growth and a decrease in household size, outstripped the provision of clean water to households to such an extent that by 2005, some 7.8 million households had no access to water inside their dwellings (SAIRR, 2007: 376). By 2005, only 41.6% of households in the Eastern Cape had piped water in the dwelling or on site – the second lowest proportion of all provinces. Only 59% of poor households in the Eastern Cape (i.e. households with incomes of less than R1000 per month) had access to free basic water in 2006 – the smallest proportion of all provinces (SAIRR, 2007: 391). In these circumstances it is the poor who tend to suffer the most, and in the developing world the ranks of the poor are disproportionately made up of rural inhabitants. More specifically, the intertwined realities of climate change, drought, pollution, poverty, growing water demand and increased water scarcity all point to an increased burden on particularly rural women in developing countries (UNFPA, 2001: 5; WRI, 2002: 2).

The expected growing pressure on freshwater resources will, in future, require more efficient management of the resource. It has been widely demonstrated that the effective management of water resources for economic and social development and also for environmental protection, decidedly requires an integrated approach (DWAF, 2001: 14). To achieve this, appropriate management approaches have to be developed at a number of levels, starting locally with water users, moving on to the catchment level, and then to the national and the regional level. The traditional knowledge, coping strategies and participation in water management structures of

those who directly depend on natural resources for livelihoods – including rural women specifically – can therefore assist in ensuring sustainable development. Women, in particular, are seen to have considerable knowledge and experience in managing and conserving natural resources, including water, as they are left in rural areas to fend for themselves while their fathers, brothers and husbands migrate to urban areas in search of employment. Facilitating the active involvement and participation - in both decision making and development programmes - of those who depend on natural resources for livelihoods, is therefore rightfully emphasised by Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (The Earth Summit) in 1992. In this context, Agenda 21 specifically emphasises participation in water management structures by indigenous peoples, and especially by women in rural areas.

Emanating from the above, the aim of this article is to report on the experiences of and the traditional strategies used by rural women in Ndonga (located in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa) in times when they experience water scarcity. It is argued that, by documenting and communicating such traditional strategies, a contribution can be made towards building on and improving local strategies for sustainable development in rural areas. If policy-makers are to develop water-management strategies that are relevant and needs based, then the indigenous knowledge, practices and experiences of people at the local-scale level should be recognised and reflected on as parts of such interventions. Such reflection should certainly also include reflection on the role of rural women in traditional water-management practices.

2. Rural Women, Water Scarcity and Access to Fresh Water

In most regions of the world, men play a greater role than women in the exploitation of natural resources for commercial use; in Africa, however, women are substantial users of environmental resources (PRB, 2001: 1). According to UNFPA (2001: 37), the direct and critical relationship between women and natural resources draws its strength not from biology – that is, not because women are born female – but from gender, and the consequently created roles and responsibilities that continue to fall on women in households, communities and ecosystems throughout the world. Traditional gender roles have resulted in women having responsibility for domestic activities such as food preparation, water and fuel-wood collection, child care and maintaining family health. In the rural areas of developing countries, women are also the main managers of essential resources like fresh water for the household and fuel for cooking and heating. In times of water scarcity these rural women often have to rely more heavily on traditional water-management practices

to mitigate the impact of water scarcity on the household. Men, on the other hand, mostly benefit from water use via irrigation and its economic value. Through their roles in production, reproduction and community management, women – more so than men – have responsibility for environmental use, for the redistribution of environmental resources and, potentially, for the destruction or conservation of these resources (Barrett & Browne, 1995: 32; UNFPA, 2001).

Women account for more than half (51%) of the world's agricultural force. In Africa, agriculture is the main basis of the economy, and it contributes to the raising of the living standards of the majority of people in developing countries. Of the total economically active female population in Africa, about 80% are engaged in agricultural tasks. Shrestha (2001: 112) noted that women are major producers of food in terms of the value, the volume and the number of hours worked. They grow vegetables, fruit and grain for home consumption, often, as in much of Africa, producing most of the staple crops. African women therefore spend a great deal of their time in agricultural activities for income and for food supply. Yet, they still do not own much land and do therefore not have adequate access to water. Men, on the other hand, have primary responsibility for harvesting and storing crops and maintaining equipment. Despite rural women being substantial users of the environment, and even though cultivatable land and adequate water supply are the basic resources for meeting food needs and often also for servicing livelihoods, they (women) hold not more than one percent of all land (Davidson, 1993: 5; Neuschler, 2001: 19; UNFPA, 2001: 39). Considering rural women's responsibilities in respect of water-resources use, the looming water crisis in the world will decidedly have a negative impact on their lives.

Further aggravating the plight of rural women is the fact that water-related disasters affect the poor to an overwhelming extent, and that rural women in Africa moreover count amongst the poorest in the world (PRB, 2007). It is the poor who usually severely experience the loss of life, property, livestock, livelihoods, crops; they are also the ones who are predominantly affected by the diseases that often result when water is scarce. African rural women are further also the most suppressed and impoverished sectors of society. They are therefore proportionately more vulnerable to the impact of water scarcity than are the men. According to Onyango (2003: 1), rural women in developing countries are proportionately more impacted by the hazards of weather and climate because, as has already been demonstrated above, women's daily interactions with the environment to meet household needs are endless (PRB, 2001:1). This is because water sources in rural areas are often situated far from where most women live, and an average of 5 km is travelled to reach the water source. This distance increases during the dry season when most springs and wells dry up, thus leaving women with no alternative but to walk longer distances in search of water.

The amount of time and energy women spend on household duties can increase dramatically as water resources become depleted (PRB, 2001: 3). During the dry seasons, women's nights are shortened as they have to wake up in the small hours to go in search of water (particularly drinking water), i.e. while the water is still clear – as they usually share water with animals that the men lead to the very same resources as those used for household purposes. They also have to wake up early because other members of the family, especially the elderly, usually require tea/coffee and porridge in the early hours of the morning and because they expect fresh water (water that did not 'sleep' in the house overnight). *Oomakoti* (a Xhosa name for brides) are usually forced to do these duties. Unfortunately, in the dry season, water sources are unreliable and the water supply is limited to late in the evening or the early morning. When women have to travel farther distances and they thus take more time to collect water, girls are often taken out of school to assist, while the adult women moreover also have to abandon other duties.

While some of the problems – like seasonal change and the coming of the dry season, together with the subsequent water shortages – are explicit enough to be understood, most communities neither acknowledge nor recognise them as difficulties confronting the women and thus as things that call for adjustments to the time taken to fetch water. In most rural areas, married women and young girls are often battered by their husbands and male kin whenever they come back late – past the 'normal hours' for collecting water. The reason for their being late is often mistakenly ascribed to sexual adventures with other men, rather than merely being necessary adjustments to the changing environmental conditions in order to meet their prescribed gender roles (Lubisi, 1997: 315).

3. Research Design and Methodology

The study primarily targeted women residing in the Ndonga area - a rural settlement in the former Transkei Homeland. Ndonga is situated ±70km from Queenstown in the Eastern Cape. It falls under the Chris Hani District Municipality and constitutes Ward Six of the Emalahleni Local Municipality. Ndonga comprises nine villages: Maqhubela, Hala 1, Hala 2, Lamoen, Cegceyana, Ntlalontle, Greyspan, Trust and Percy.

Understanding the role of the women of Ndonga in mitigating water scarcity was important for several reasons. Firstly, Emalahleni Municipality (like, in fact, most rural areas in the Eastern Cape) has significantly more women than men (Emalahleni Municipality 2003: 20). Secondly, the women are also still largely responsible for domestic water and they collect their water from untreated water supplies. Thirdly, most rural black women in African countries are also functionally illiterate and not open to outsiders. As a result, they find it difficult to voice their opinions when they are in a setting where their male counterparts are present

(Hemson, 2002: 25). The latter two facts have also prompted the decision to use an ethnographic research design that allows the researcher to observe the participants instead of the participants having to read or write, as is the case in surveys and other quantitative designs. The ethnographic research design further allows the researcher to be in the natural field setting and therefore to have in-depth insight into the rural women's situation. Data collection was facilitated by employing a multi-faceted approach comprising:

- a literature review in order to understand both water scarcity issues and research regarding rural women and their experiences;
- personal interviews with key informants and officials in the water sector in the Chris Hani and Emalahleni Municipalities to highlight some of the challenges they are currently facing with regard to water scarcity and to identify a relevant research site;
- focus-group sessions with a selected number of local women;
- an interactive workshop with all women in the community to confirm the results before making recommendations; and
- personal observations.

Focus group participants were selected from three of the nine villages, i.e. Percy, Hala2 and Ntlalontle. These villages were selected on the basis of convenient sampling, taking into consideration the fact that their water supplies differed significantly.

4. Social and Environmental Conditions that Foster Water Scarcity

Although the Eastern Cape is said to have abundant water, it is seen as one of the worst-off provinces regarding access to fresh water. The Eastern Cape, of which some parts were in the former Transkei Homeland, has inherited a massive backlog with regard to water supply and sanitation. Although some progress has been made to alleviate the situation over the past few years, only 59% of the poor population in the Eastern Cape – i.e. households having incomes of less than R1000 per month – had access to free basic water (comprising 6 000 litres per household per month) by March 2006 (SAIRR, 2007:391). Most of the municipalities in this area have experienced problems regarding water provision in that they lack the financial and institutional resources necessary to implement the Free Basic Water Policy (Mehta & Ntshona, 2004: 9).

In Ndonga, water scarcity is a result of both environmental and human-induced causes. Water scarcity in this area is a result of climate, drought, desiccation, inadequate water supply and of the silting of dams. The DWAF (2002: 17) indicated that the climate in this municipal area varies from arid to very cold highveld. The arid climate of Ndonga means that there is a normal, long-term shortage of water in the area resulting from a dry climate. In consequence of the high summer temperature in the area, surface water evaporates rapidly. The high temperatures – often exceeding 40°C – are also expected to increase by 5% as a result of climate change (DWAF, 2002: 16).

Ndonga comprises mainly of female-headed households and is characterised by poor socio-economic conditions. Water supply to the area is poor and most wards do not have access to formal water supply. Most people draw water directly from service reservoirs supplied by boreholes or from natural water resources (rivers and springs). Some of these resources are either not currently working or are inadequate (Emalahleni Municipality, 2003: 20). These conditions are exacerbated by climate change, poor access to social services and a reduction in respect of water resources during droughts (Emalahleni Municipality, 2003: 17). All these variables, together with the culture of this area, interlock to determine the role and experiences of Ndonga women when it comes to water management.

The water situation in Ward Six (i.e. Ndonga) of the Emalahleni Local Municipality is summarised in Table 1 below, which indicates that, of a total population of 20 148 in Ndonga, 6 102 people (30%) had no formal supply of water in 2002 (DWAF, 2002: 9). Some of the human-induced causes of water scarcity in Ndonga as reflected in Table 1, are also striking: The inadequate and/or poor water supply to the area is, amongst others, reflected in the discrepancy between the population numbers (demand), on the one hand, and the availability (supply) of communal standpipes, on the other. No correlation exists between the size of the population of a village and the number of available standpipes: Table 1 shows that a village, like for example, Lamoen, with a population of 318 has six standpipes – the same number as in Ntlalontle, which has a considerably larger population of 3 000. Similar discrepancies also exist between some of the other villages. This situation points to either a lack of planning in water management or to poor maintenance of infrastructure or probably to a combination of the two.

Table 1: The water situation in Ward 6 (Ndonga) of Emalahleni Municipality

Village name	Population	Water source	Bulk supply	Final supply	General
Hala1, Hala2	5700	Spring		Direct supply	Poor quality, below RDP standard
Cegceyana	402	Borehole			Poor quality, below RDP standard
Lamoen	318	Borehole	Reservoir	6 Communal standpipes	Equal to RDP standard
Greyspan	2440	Borehole	Reservoir	7 Communal standpipes	Equal to RDP standard
Ntlalontle	3000	Borehole		6 Communal standpipes	Equal to RDP standard
Percy	2520	Borehole	Reservoir	26 Communal standpipes	Equal to RDP standard
Maqhubela	3368	Spring	Reservoir	4 Communal standpipes	Equal to RDP standard
Trust	2400	Spring	Reservoir	5 Communal standpipes	Equal to RDP standard

Source: DWAF (2002)

As may be anticipated in South Africa, a trend of rural-urban migration exists in Ndonga. This trend is largely attributable to the fact that men are often migrant workers, a trend that began under the former regime and that further appears to be set to continue. This has resulted in the presence of a disproportionate number of women and women-headed households in the Ndonga area, which is moreover carried forward in the skewed gender distribution of the population of the Emalahleni Municipality: 55% female, compared with 45% male. The migration trend is further compounded in times of water scarcity: men seek jobs elsewhere, leaving the women behind to cope with the situation. This leads to the existence of a disproportionate number of 'socially-created' female-headed households. Female-headed households are said to be at a disadvantage in comparison with male-headed households. According to Schreiner and Naidoo (2002: 3), women, and women-headed households, are among the poorest of the poor. These women also suffer when men are not available for traditional 'male' tasks – previously taboo to women – such as repairing water infrastructure in the community. Although there has been progress in terms of training women in technical skills, women are still in some instances sidelined. For example, in Ntlalontle, women were not part of the implementation process when pipelines were installed, and therefore they missed out on technical training.

Another reason for women's vulnerability in Ndonga is their socio-economic status. The Eastern Cape is one of the poorest provinces in South Africa, with 65% of the population living in poverty, and having a predominantly rural population (64%), an unemployment rate of 37%, and poor access to social

services (SAIRR, 2007). The majority (51%) of the population in the Emalahleni Municipality is unemployed – mainly because of the nature of the district, namely communal land and rural settlement land. The Emalahleni Municipality has relatively few economically significant resources to boost economic activities. The major economic sectors are the government and the social service sectors, with government grants constituting an important source of income. Whilst the agricultural sector has been identified as the sector with the greatest potential for future economic development, fewer than three in every hundred of those employed are engaged in this sector (Emalahleni Municipality, 2003: 16).

Unemployment makes it easy for women to be vulnerable to water scarcity, as it influences their capacity to cope. For example, when there is water scarcity, there is a reduction in the water for chores, other than domestic chores. In these instances, women usually hire a cart or car to transport water from distant rivers. However, being unemployed, most women at Ndonga cannot afford either to have water transported or to pay for repairs to existing infrastructure. They are also not able to use the government-supplied water as they have to pay extra money in order to use water to irrigate, to build, or for livestock.

5. Findings: Strategies for Mitigating Water Scarcity

When there is a hazard such as water scarcity, societies are affected in different ways, but rural women have been proven to bear the greatest burden because they are usually poorly equipped for a disaster of this nature. Ndonga is no exception. In Ndonga, the women's challenges, as in other rural areas, are challenges regarding economic failure, health problems, time spent searching for water, and their inability to afford to pay for water. Despite the fact that these women have received some form of assistance from government to mitigate water scarcity, they still have their own strategies to cope when there is a scarcity of water. This section serves to document such traditional strategies used by rural women in Ndonga. According to Pelser (2001: 54), these strategies can be powerful measures for protecting and conserving water resources. These strategies can also help to improve women's socio-economic conditions and their status or their confidence in their own ability to influence development in their community.

5.1 Strategy 1: *Ubuntu* as a management strategy

The participants strongly believe that what is missing in their communities is the spirit of *ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* is a concept found in a number of African cultures and it concerns values that contribute to the well-being of others and of community.

It points to a spiritual foundation associated with the African world-view – an orientation or inner state that motivates, challenges and makes one perceive, feel and act in a humane way towards others. The practice of *Ubuntu* is, therefore, fundamentally inclusive, involving respect and concern for one's family and for one's neighbours (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005). According to one of the participants from Hala2: "People do not work together anymore, but instead each person is pulling in their own direction". For many years *ubuntu* meant that neighbours could get together and invest their combined energies in a single project.

According to the participants, communities traditionally used to share fields to plant crops. What this meant was that if one neighbour had seeds but lacked cattle for ploughing, or even a field, they would come together, with neighbours each bringing whatever they had. This strategy had several positive impacts on such communities. Firstly, it meant that a group of households could use common land. Secondly, rather than irrigate three large fields, these families would instead irrigate one field, thereby saving water and energy. Lastly, they planted crops that could be stored and then used when there were problems of water scarcity.

The ploughing, protection and harvesting of the fields enhanced community participation. The whole community came together during the ploughing season. The participants indicated that female labour contribution was usually directed at field preparation and ploughing, including sowing, weeding, harvesting, irrigation, crop protection, hauling produce to the threshing floor, threshing, cleaning and drying, and storage. Harvesting (*Umthabatha*) was a social event. During these events, women also cooked and prepared the traditional beer. The whole community was invited. Everyone who contributed to the process received a bag or two from the yield of the harvest. Households competed regarding the number of bags produced, which encouraged the community to work harder.

The women noted that the community spirit that existed in the past is currently deteriorating: "People would rather buy their staple food from the shop." During an interview, one of the key informants stated that the deterioration of the culture of *ubuntu* has resulted in greater poverty in rural communities (*Ndamane*). The women participants also claim that a lack of respect for one another is causing a rift between community members.

Women in Hala2 are trying to rekindle the spirit of *ubuntu* by having community gardens. These gardens are on a micro-irrigation level, thereby saving the community water. Their community garden is also situated close to water sources so that the women need not travel long distances to irrigate their gardens.

Women in Hala2 and Ntlalontle have been trained in other water-saving techniques such as the use of 'tower gardens'. Tower gardens reuse domestic water. Considering the fact that government has only supplied the villagers with water for domestic

consumption, reusing this water can be of much value. A group of women are currently trying this technique with good results. The women claim that the only problem slowing down the progress of this strategy in the area is the fact that local women are sometimes not open to new techniques.

While men are able to migrate in times of water scarcity to find a source of income elsewhere, women remain behind and have to survive on what they have. This is evident in Hala2 where women have community gardens. Women therefore use strategies that Pelser (2001: 59) refers to as 'social networks of support'. In this case, social networking implies working together to mitigate water scarcity and to secure food.

5.2 Strategy 2: Storing crops for when water scarcity is experienced

Another system mentioned by the women of Ntlalontle as helping to secure food in the community during drought is that of planting and storing crops. The community usually plants crops that can be stored and then used when water is scarce. According to the women, crops such as maize, sorghum and wheat are more resistant to water scarcity than are vegetables, and that they therefore last longer in that they can be stored for future use. The crops are stored in a hole called *Isisele.* The round-shaped hole is dug inside a kraal. The inside of the hole is then dried by making fire inside, and the drying of the hole is called *ukugqwagqwa.* The stored crops typically survive for about six months. The participants report that, even when it rains, it is difficult for water to seep into this hole because cattle compact the soil in the kraal.

Sorghum is more resistant to water scarcity, and it can be used for several dishes that are able to sustain a person. These dishes include porridge *(inconco)*, bread *(isonka samazimba),* a mixture of sorghum and beans *(iqhumatana/umbadavu),* and the famous *umqombothi* (traditional beer). According to the women, the red type of sorghum is "the healthiest". Women are also able to use other types of crops – like maize – for different dishes. The only problem with planting crops is that, in times of drought, there is greater loss because fields require large-scale irrigation.

5.3 Strategy 3: Using indigenous plants that are resistant to hot climate

Women in rural South Africa are not only responsible for collecting water; they are also the main collectors of fuel wood from forests for domestic energy requirements and for cooking. These women have a large reservoir of knowledge about forest resources and about the potential uses of these, e.g. as fuel wood and fodder and

for magic rituals, building, household utensils, baskets, mats and medicinal herbs. They are, after all, the main collectors of these products. According to Prasad (1998: 82), the knowledge of the habitats of wild vegetation can be regarded as a cultural and natural heritage, one that is becoming endangered. By documenting this knowledge, women's livelihoods would improve and the environment would also be protected.

Since the condition of forests has deteriorated over the past few decades, considerable time is currently spent on fuel collection. While out collecting firewood and looking after livestock, women in Ndonga spend long hours far from safe sources of drinking water. Obviously, this situation is aggravated when there is a scarcity of water. One strategy these women use to quench their thirst in the absence of water is the flower of the Cape Aloe *(Imvomvo)* The Cape Aloe *(Ikhala) is* also known as Aloe Ferox, Bitter Aloe and Red Aloe.1 There are over 100 species of aloe in South Africa, but Aloe Ferox is the one that has been used by the indigenous peoples since long before the arrival of Europeans (De Jager, 2006: 1). It is a tall, single-stemmed aloe, which has a wide distribution, ranging over 1000km from the South-Western Cape through to southern Kwazulu-Natal. It is also found in the south-eastern corner of the Free State and in southern Lesotho. It is common on rocky hill slopes, often in very large numbers, where it creates a stunning winter display. In the Eastern Cape it is found on the edges of the Karoo (Aubrey, 2001: 2).

Ikhala is indigenous to South Africa (and Lesotho), and is found nowhere else on earth (De Jager, 2006: 1). Although this plant is famous for its leaves and its healing powers, women in Ndonga have discovered that it has another important function: its flowers quench their thirst. These flowers are carried in a large candelabrum-like flower-head. There are usually between five and eight branches, each with a spike-like head of many flowers. *A. candelabrum* has six to twelve branches and the flowers have their inner petals tipped with white. The women usually pick a branch and smash it against a bowl-shaped stone. They then drink the nectar that comes out of the flowers. The only precaution they take is not to drink too much of this nectar, which will result in what they call *Ukudola-* their knees go weak. The nectar from the flowers quenches their thirst for a long time.

The natural Cape Aloe from South Africa is gaining a reputation as one of the top natural remedies for a variety of skin conditions and various medical conditions (De Jager, 2006: 1). The products have helped the women of Ndonga with a variety of complaints ranging from arthritis, skin cancer, burns, eczema, psoriasis, to digestive and blood pressure problems and many more. There is more than enough of this renewable resource to ensure that it does not need to be cultivated. Seven to eight leaves are harvested from the bottom of each plant without damaging the growth tip of this spiky, succulent plant.

Since the Aloe Ferox grows naturally and in large numbers without any need for water, it is an ideal plant to be used for commercial purposes. By extracting just enough of the plants to allow them to renew themselves, these plants can also be used sustainably.

5.4 Strategy 4: Indigenous traditions and beliefs as mechanisms in mitigating water scarcity

5.4.1 Traditional beliefs

In all focus groups, the worshipping of a supernatural being featured prominently as a traditional strategy used by women. The women believe that water is a gift from the ancestors or from God. They believe that water comes from a supernatural power and that they are being punished when there are water problems such as drought or water scarcity. The women further believe that they are being punished because of the decline of traditional values in their society. They agree that people should try and remember their value systems. In this strategy the women again demonstrate the importance of working as a community with one goal in mind. As a result of this belief, the Ndonga community have for many years practised what they call *ukungqungqa***.** This is a dance performed by the whole community, and the women consider it as key to ensuring that they have water. They ceremoniously beg for forgiveness for all their transgressions and then ask the gods to send them rain. According to the women, they usually go to a dam to sing, dance and pray to the ancestors or God *(UQamata)* to ask for rain.

The women believe that their prayers are always answered. Sometimes, on their way back to their villages, clouds are already visible. A recipe for their prayers to be answered is "to pray with one accord as they share common problems". They go to the dam or mountain with one goal or purpose in mind, namely, to get rain. What the women also consider to be very important is that they should return to the dam or mountain to thank these supernatural beings once rain has been received.

Community beliefs are an important tool in dealing with environmental problems. According to research, how we treat one another affects the way in which we treat the environment (Biggs *et al.*, 2004: 37; Neuschler, 2001: 8). Women in Ndonga associate the availability of water with their value systems and their belief systems. The women strongly believe that when they work together, they are capable of achieving more for their community. Moreover, the women believe that their disrespect towards their God, the ancestors and their community leaders can result in reduced rainfall. This is why they regularly come together and pray.

5.4.2 Myths

The tendency to encourage women to wake up in the small hours of the morning (sometimes as early as 03:00), is embedded in the culture of the Xhosa. According to the women, this means two things: firstly, that they complete all their daily chores (domestic and agricultural); and secondly, it ensures that they can access clean and fresh water, before animals get to it, before the water subsides, and before they have to stand in a long queue.

As part of their daily chores, *Oomakoti* (brides) usually wake up before dawn to collect fresh water for their new families. The bride and her biological family are ridiculed if the new *Makoti* fails to do this. She is considered very lazy and said not to be worth the *lobola* (bride wealth) that was paid. The availability of water in some areas (communal taps), has however made this practice less popular.

There are myths that discourage the collecting or carrying of water after sunset. According to Xhosa women, the Xhosa people believe that bringing water into the house after sunset is a bad omen. If you do this, you bring evil spirits from the river with you, and you then have to light a match and throw it into the bucket of water to chase away the evil spirits. This, in turn, ensures that there will always be water in the house.

6. Conclusion

Women, especially those in the rural areas of developing countries, have to bear the brunt of increasing water scarcity because they are proportionately more dependent on natural resources, and thus also water resources. Despite all this, and despite the fact that women are knowledgeable about water resources, they remain largely uninvolved at certain levels of policy formulation, decision making and in the monitoring of water resources. Yet, because they share their knowledge regarding strategies they have depended on in coping with this phenomenon, their involvement could be of great value in enhancing sustainable development.

In developing responses to the impact of changes in the water environment, national and local governments face a major challenge. They need not only to develop new approaches, but also to facilitate the implementation of existing international and other agreements, policies and targets. Both continuous monitoring and evaluation are required to secure the sustainable development of the water environment for the benefit not only of humans but particularly of poor rural communities, and for the maintenance of life-supporting ecosystems over the long term. The strategies and experiences documented in this article serve as a voice for the women of rural Ndonga in the hope that it will improve not only their lives but also those of many who share similar environments. These

strategies also raise awareness with local authorities that women's knowledge can help to build on and improve local strategies for sustainable development in rural areas. If decision makers are prepared to take cognizance of practices at the local-scale level and if they properly consider women's water needs and experiences, they will be able to develop specific policies or coping strategies that are both relevant and needs based.

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