

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SOCIAL WORK WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“At the end of the day, the yardstick that we should all be judged by is one and one only: and that is, are we, through our endeavours here, creating the basis to better the lives of all South Africans!”

(Nelson Mandela, 1994).

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The context of social work is changing rapidly. However, one fundamental element remains the same, namely that social work is located within some of the most complex problems and perplexing areas of human experience, and for this reason, social work is, and has to be, a highly skilled activity. (Compare Trevithick, 2000: 1 and Cree, 2002: 20.) Trevithick (2000: 2) wrote that the complex nature of social work is due, in part, to the fact that it involves working across differences of class, race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, culture, health, geography, expectations and outlook on life. Differences can be seen in the multiple ways that problems are presented, communicated and perceived by individuals and in terms of the solutions sought. Cree (2002: 27) referred to the words of Powell: “We live in a society defined by risk, polarisation, global markets, chronic change and fragmentation”. Tesoriero (1999: 11) agreed with this viewpoint and stated the following in this regard: “However, the world in which social work currently finds itself is chaotic, contradictory and one in which, amongst a myriad of competing and conflicting agenda, social work can easily flounder and stray from its central underpinning”. According to Cree (2002: 27) social work, is situated between the individual and society, and inevitably reflects the wider society within which it is located.

Social work is based on a foundation of social values, which include a commitment to social justice, equity and respect for diversity. Social workers are involved with individuals, families, groups and communities to realise their potential to experience full, active and creative lives. Social workers throughout the world assist people in dealing with loss and change, as well as creating social and environmental conditions to enhance the quality of people's lives. They offer support to people in obtaining services and resources. They assist people in understanding the social contexts within which they live and work. Social workers are important agents for social change, consistent with the values of the profession. (Compare University of East London: United Kingdom, 2002: 1-2.)

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) constructed a definition of social work at the General Meeting in Montréal, Canada in July 2000: "The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work". In its commentary on the definition of social work, the International Federation of Social Workers reflected on the fundamental basis for the definition and stated that social work in its various forms addresses the multiple, complex transactions between people and their environments. Social, political, environmental and economic factors influence a broad array of opportunities, exposures, decisions and behaviours that promote or threaten physical and psychological health. The links between physical and psychological health and well-being and factors such as income, education, living and working conditions, social support structures and networks and connectedness within a community are clear. The mission of social work is to enable all people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives, and prevent dysfunction. Social work is focused on problem solving and change. It is therefore recognised that social workers are change agents in society and in the lives of individuals, families and communities (IFSW, 2000: 1).

Shardlow (2002: 37) postulated that Davies offered a very persuasive argument; that social work is functionally necessary to modern society. Davies argued, from a humanistic perspective, that the function of social work is to help to maintain the fabric of society, a fabric that would otherwise be brittle and likely to fracture. Davies (in Shardlow, 2002: 37) stated the following: "In so far as there are common elements in social work they are best described by the general notion of *maintenance*: society maintaining itself in a relatively stable state by making provision for and managing people in positions of severe weakness, stress or vulnerability; and society maintaining its own members, without exception by commitment to humanist endeavour". Shardlow (2002: 38) also referred to the writings of Leonard, who is critical of the position and role adopted by social work within society. In Leonard's view social work should strive for social change. Shardlow (2002: 38) argued that in the past twenty years new ideas such as advocacy, consumerism, empowerment, participation, partnership and user involvement have influenced social work ideology. It is clear that despite this emergence of new ideas and values which are often concerned with challenging oppression, social work practice is likely to remain relatively fixed without organisational backing or very importantly, changed professional education.

In essence social work is an interrelated system of values, theory and practice. The International Federation of Social Workers (2000: 1), in a discussion of values in social work, stated that social work grew out of humanitarian and democratic ideals, and its values are based on respect for the equality, worth, and dignity of all people. Since its beginnings over a century ago, social work practice has focused on meeting human needs and developing human potential. Human rights and social justice serve as the motivation and justification for social work action. (Compare Clark, 2002: 38 and Tesoriero, 1999: 11.)

In solidarity with those who are disadvantaged, the profession strives to alleviate poverty and to liberate vulnerable and oppressed people by facilitating social inclusion. Payne, Adams and Dominelli (2002: 1) stated in this regard:

“Furthermore, social work has greater ambitions, because it seeks growth and empowerment as human beings for the people we serve, development and social progress for the communities we work in and greater justice and equality in the societies to which we contribute. It is not that every act of social work will achieve such large goals, but these values help to guide us in using our judgement about what is best. Critical thinking helps to implement these values by testing our practice against them”. Social workers commonly find themselves working with people who are marginalised and outside of the mainstream society. This constitutes a formidable challenge to social workers to intervene on different levels and to empower the individuals and communities to address their problems or those factors in society which impact on them.

Social work bases its methodology on a systematic body of evidence-based knowledge derived from research and practice evaluation, including local and indigenous knowledge specific to its context. It recognises the complexity of interactions between human beings and their environment, and the capacity of people both to be affected by and to alter the multiple influences upon them including bio-psychosocial factors. The social work profession draws on theories of human development and behaviour and social systems to analyse complex situations and to facilitate individual, organisational, social and cultural changes (The International Federation of Social Workers (2000: 1).

## **4.2 SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

Social work addresses the barriers, inequities and injustices that exist in society. It responds to crises and emergencies as well as to everyday personal and social problems. Social work utilises a variety of skills, techniques, and activities consistent with its holistic focus on persons and their environments. Social work interventions range from primarily person-focused psychosocial processes to involvement in social policy, planning and development. These include counselling, clinical social work, group work, social pedagogical work, and family

treatment and therapy as well as efforts to help people obtain services and resources in the community. Interventions also include agency administration, community organisation and engaging in social and political action to impact social policy and economic development (Prigoff, 2000: 104-105). The holistic focus of social work is universal, but the priorities of social work practice will vary from country to country and from time to time depending on cultural, historical, and socio-economic conditions.

Social justice is an essential component for the creation of a sustainable world. Sustainability speaks to the reconciliation of social justice, ecological integrity, and the well-being of all living systems on the planet. Sustainable development is an encompassing concept, a goal and a strategy. It requires all spheres of society to work together as an integrated whole in order to achieve sustainability of all living and non-living systems. Sustainable development allows people from different backgrounds and disciplines to come together and strategize for a better future. The challenge for sustainable development becomes reality in the eloquent words of Matube (in Lombard and Jansen van Rensburg, 2001: 232): “Sustainable development can be both easy and difficult... Development is about individuals, groups, organisations, families and communities. It refers to attitudes, relationships, partnerships, economics, environment and infrastructure. It refers to commitment, skills, capacity and ideas. It is about time, although timeless. It demands creative stretching of scarce resources and hope. It is a continuous learning process and not for cowards”.

Some disciplines emphasize environmental problems such as climate change and preserving biodiversity. For others the key questions focus on social justice, sound governance and structural changes within society to ensure a more equitable share for all people. The words of Elgin (in Sterling, 2001: 49) emphasized the interdependence of different spheres and facets of life: “If everything is intimately connected, then the quality and integrity of all kinds of relationships are of paramount importance”. It is fair to say that for development

to be sustainable, there is a pressing need for a clear understanding of the different approaches by different disciplines. The social work profession subscribes to a developmental approach where social development is the chosen route to promote the eradication of poverty, and address underdevelopment, unemployment and inequality.

### **4.3 A DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL WELFARE APPROACH**

“We need to steer away from attempts to cope with the conditions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the thinking and practices of the 20<sup>th</sup>.

In short there is a very poor fit”

(Sterling, 2001: 13).

#### **4.3.1 Social development**

Development as a concept includes physical, economic, social and political development. Development implies change for a more equal society and the creation of social and economic conditions that will lead to the eradication of poverty, ill-health, crime, illiteracy and social exclusion. It encompasses raising the standards of living for all people to include amongst other things the satisfaction of basic needs and enlarging people’s choices, in other words, improving the quality of human life. Of crucial importance is that development should include enhancing the capacity of human beings to maximize their potential and creativity.

According to Midgley (2001: 2) social development first emerged as a coherent approach to social welfare in the 1950s when it was adopted by several developing countries supported by the United Nations. The social developmental approach seeks to link economic and social policies and to promote social welfare, also known as social development, within the framework of a planned, dynamic, ongoing process of economic development. Estes (1998: 2) referring

to the writings of Jones and Pandey, Lowe, Meinert and Kohn, and Midgley, argued that social development is a multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral field of practice that seeks to improve the social and material well-being of people everywhere. Estes (1998: 2) emphasised that social development is practiced across all geographical and political borders and at all levels of social, political, and economic organization.

It is essential to look at Midgley's (2001: 2) interpretation of social development. He emphasised the fact that the social development perspective insists on the integration of economic and social policy and gives expression to two accepted principles, namely: it requires that economic development should be inclusive, integrated, and sustainable and bring benefits to all; the second principle is that the social development perspective proposes that social welfare should be investment oriented, seeking to enhance human capacities to actively participate in the productive economy. In the words of Midgley and Tang (2001: 246): "Social development cannot take place without economic development, and economic development is meaningless if it fails to bring about significant improvements in the well-being of the population as a whole". The underlying motivation for this perspective is the fact that the phenomenon of persistent poverty in the midst of economic affluence is one of the most problematic development issues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. All across continents, economic development has not been accompanied by the same degree of social progress. This phenomenon is often referred to as distorted development. According to Midgley (1995: 4-5) distorted development exists in societies where economic development has not been accompanied by a concomitant level of social development. Midgley further elaborated on this perspective and stated that in these countries, the problem is not an absence of economic development but a failure to harmonize economic and social development objectives, and to ensure that the benefits of economic progress reach all people in society. Midgley (1995: 5) emphasized that distorted development is manifested not only in poverty, deprivation, environmental degradation, low health status and inadequate

housing but also in the exclusion of sections of the population from actively participating in all areas of development. When significant sections of the population have failed to benefit from economic growth, an untold number of social problems emerge such as poverty, unemployment, crime, violence, family disintegration, drug use and social deprivation.

Midgley (1995: 7 and 1996: 14) emphasised that social development is in other words, an approach to promoting people's welfare that is well suited not only to enhancing quality of life for all citizens but to addressing the problems of underdevelopment. The integration of economic and social objectives is a key element of social development (Lombard, 2003: 2). Midgley (2001: 2 and 1995: 1) described this approach as transcending the residualist-institutional debates that have characterised social policy thinking for decades and offered a new perspective that may facilitate a renewed basis for state intervention in social welfare. Midgley (1995: 1) stated that the residualist approach has as a main recommendation that limited public resources is targeted on the most needy sections of the population. The institutional approach urges the extensive involvement of the state in all aspects of social welfare. Neither of these approaches is concerned with the way resources for social welfare is generated or with the financial difficulties that occur in times of economic adversity. Both approaches create social interventions that are subsidiary to the economy and both are passively dependent on the economy for funding. The Social Investment Research Group ([sa]: 1) stated that traditional approaches have done little to enhance people's abilities to participate effectively in the productive economy. (Compare O'Brien and Mazibuko, 1998: 140.) Mupedziswa (1996: 47) agreed with this statement and added the following: "The critics (such as Ankrah, 1987; Midgley, 1981; Osei-Hwedie, 1993) have accused the profession of a lack of engagement in economic development, and of perpetuating a remedial approach which maintains unproductive groups in a state of dependency. They have also argued that the social work profession has avoided economic development issues. Consequently social work has been portrayed as a consumer of scarce



resources needed for investment. It is often seen as a profession which detracts from the development process rather than promoting it". The social work profession needs to redirect its efforts, knowledge and skills towards promoting economic participation of the client population that they serve.

Prigoff (2000: 2) emphasized that social work is a profession dedicated to maintenance and enhancement of the social functioning and health of individuals, families, and communities. In her opinion, exclusion from access to material resources or from participation in productive economic processes are understood by social workers to be forms of structural violence, which result in both physical and psychological trauma. (Compare Narayan, 2002: 50.) In the words of Prigoff (2000: 2): "Programs of therapy and counselling are meaningless if basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter are unmet, or if social stigma and exclusion undermine the dignity and self-esteem of human beings". This statement does not imply that a social development approach rejects the place of remedial services, but rather places greater emphasis on strategies that restore the abilities and capabilities of people to enhance their functioning and be more self-reliant. A valuable contribution that supported the viewpoint of Prigoff was obtained from Tesoriero (1999: 15): "If social work is to contribute to social development and take on all that this entails towards the next millennium, then it must be more expansive in its visions and reach beyond individual change activities". Tesoriero further argued that social work is too often part of a process which tries to identify and address social problems that are named in particular ways, for example, child protection, and which tend to individualise and blame the victim, when in fact it needs to be investigating social, economic and political structures that fail to support families, communities and therefore, society. O'Brien and Mazibuko (1998: 140) made a valuable contribution in this regard: "In its interventions, social work has lacked the capacity for social analysis in order to examine the social environments of clients and the socio-political baggage brought by the client systems through the presenting problems. The person-in-environment approach has been lost somewhere in practice". They

argued that as a professional collectivity, social workers are often viewed by the wider society as part of a system that perpetuated discriminatory social welfare policies and failed to secure sustainable community development activities.

#### **4.3.2 Social development and community development**

Prigoff (2000: 262) wrote that community development is a new horizon for social work, a terrain that offers many rewards and helps to build a better world in a very real and concrete manner. According to Gray (1996: 11) community development is an intervention strategy, a way in which services are made available to the members of a community. This approach emphasises participation and real involvement of local people. It allows ownership of own development for communities. Empowerment through education and capacity building and community organising are the key components. The social work profession has, since its inception, been graced by values and vision that prepared social workers to contribute to social betterment. The development of skills, the engagement of community members in examining their needs and goals, the assessment of strengths and capabilities, and the development of strategies to create dependable income-earning opportunities forms the crucial elements of an overall plan leading to self-sufficiency for individuals, families and communities. The principle of self-reliant local development should be promoted and actively supported by all stakeholders. From the above discussion it is clear that community development fits into the parameters of social development.

Social development is an approach where social workers could actively assist individuals and communities in their quest to improve the quality of their lives. According to Gray (1996: 10) social development is a macro-policy perspective, primarily aimed at eradicating poverty in society. It is a multisectoral approach to poverty eradication and requires all sectors of society to work together towards social betterment. Gray (1996: 11) emphasized that within this context social workers will interact and liaise with primary health care workers, agriculturalists,

engineers and planners, concerned with infrastructure development such as roads, water, housing and sanitation, to name but a few players involved in development. Effective social development requires social workers to consult with teachers, educators, business developers and economic consultants to ensure that all aspects of community life is addressed.

Within the South African context, development in post apartheid South Africa is a challenge to restructure society so that poor people from all backgrounds and persuasions are empowered to actively contribute towards their own development. Under apartheid, economic development was not guided by concern for the sustainability of natural resources, nor for the social and economic welfare of millions of people. The implementation of “separate development” banished black communities to unsustainable homelands and this resulted in severe land degradation and vast underdeveloped areas as far as infrastructure was concerned. Human health and education suffered as a result of this policy (Roberts in Agyeman, Bullard and Evans, 2003: 191 and O’Brien and Mazibuko, 1998: 141). McGregor (2003: 2) added to the discussion when she stated the following: “The arrival of democracy in 1994 brought further stress. Then, unrealistic expectations of life turned to bitterness as thousands of jobs vanished through market liberalisation. Privatisation and the decamping of corporate giants hit employment figures. And the foreign investment that was expected to follow the opening of markets largely failed to materialise. Forty two percent of black people are unemployed”. South Africa today faces enormous challenges with regard to unemployment, addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic and restructuring education and skills development.

The failure of the previous government to create opportunities for all people, regardless of colour, political or religious persuasion, to fully participate in all spheres of life, will have many negative consequences for years to come.

### **4.3.3 Social welfare and economic development**

Hatton (2001: 33) contributed to the debate with regard to social welfare and economic development. Hatton stated the following: “Social work, as it is currently constructed in many countries, operates in the context of the growing poverty and social exclusion of service users and it is being recognized that social work can make a contribution to the process of social inclusion by empowering people to overcome their exclusion through promoting forms of social inclusion”. Hatton (2001: 34) also emphasized the three particular priority commitments, which emerged from the 1995 World Summit for social development in Copenhagen, namely: eradicating poverty, fighting unemployment and empowering disadvantaged groups.

From this discussion it is clear that the objective is the linking of social welfare more effectively with economic development. In Midgley’s opinion (1995: 1) the social development approach is relevant to all societies where efforts are under way to promote economic development. It indicates the importance for a wider commitment to economic development and emphasizes the need for social interventions that are compatible with economic development objectives. According to Midgley (1995: 2) social development is not only an approach, which recognizes the wider economic realities within a society but actively promotes development. A valuable summary of what social development has to offer was obtained from Midgley (1995: 8): “Social development offers a comprehensive macro-perspective that focuses on communities and societies, emphasizes planned intervention, promotes a dynamic change-oriented approach which is inclusive and universalistic, and above all seeks to harmonize social interventions with economic development efforts”. O’Brien and Mazibuko (1998: 149) contributed to this debate and offered a simple, logical interpretation when they suggested that a social development model implies that an improvement in people’s material conditions cannot be brought about only

through social measures. A social development model advocates a comprehensive and integrated socio-economic strategy.

Sanders (in Estes, 1998: 2) described development practice in social work as a movement, a perspective, and a practice mode. In the words of Estes (1998: 2): “As the “means” of “developmental social work,” social development refers to the processes through which people are helped to realize the fullness of the social, political, and economic potentials that already exist within them. As the “goal” of developmental social work, social development refers to the realization of new, but sustainable, systems of “interpersonal” and “inter-national” relationships that are guided by a quest for peace, increased social justice, and the satisfaction of human needs”.

Morales-Gomèz (2001: 4) in his discussion of the concepts of social development and poverty reduction stated that social development is a process of human growth. According to this author it does not depend only on getting the “fundamentals of macro-economic policy” right. It implies creating a supportive environment of integrated social policies and better distribution of the benefits of economic growth based on social equity. Morales-Gomèz (2001: 5) argued that there are two common dimensions underlying the concept social development: a descriptive dimension characterizing social development as the conditions of people and their quality of life, the quality and sustainability of their institutions, and the state of their education, health, and security. A second dimension refers to a normative, prescriptive dimension, placing social development as a goal to be achieved and a desirable end in itself. Morales-Gomèz (2001: 4) concluded that social development is a foundation upon which human development flourishes, political development provides a framework of rights, and economic development becomes sustainable. (Compare Midgley and Tang, 2001: 245.) The above descriptions of the social developmental perspective are in line with statements regarding sustainable human development. Mitlin (2000: 2) contributed to the debate with regard to sustainable human development and

suggested a model of poverty reduction that works through four critical components, namely:

- Supporting informal networks to assist members (particularly women) to address their multiple needs;
- Increasing incomes through micro-enterprise development and employment opportunities;
- Reducing expenditure on housing and basic services through community managed improvements; and
- Strengthening community organizations to enable them to negotiate with external actors and draw in resources which can be controlled by community members.

As previously discussed in this study, sustainable human development means improving the income, education and health of all segments of the population, and must be economically viable, socially just and environmentally sustainable (compare chapter 3). The emergence of the developmental welfare approach is of particular significance within the context of this research study.

#### **4.3.4 The emergence of developmental welfare**

Midgley and Tang (2001: 244), discussed the idea of developmental welfare, and stated the following: “Although the notion of developmental welfare is not new, it is only in recent times that its central premises have again attracted attention in social policy circles. Since developmental welfare offers an opportunity to challenge the neo-liberal claim that social expenditures harm the economy, and that economic development requires retrenchments in state, welfare, more information about this approach is needed”. According to these authors the notion of developmental welfare is rooted in beliefs about social progress, the desirability of change and the prospect of social improvement. These authors suggested that the intellectual framework for developmental welfare was stimulated by events in various European countries, the influence of political

parties representing the interests of workers and the popularity of Keynesian demand management policies in the Western industrial countries. It was in British colonial territories that social development ideas were first translated into practical programmes. In West Africa the existing remedial social services could not cope with the manifestations of urban need and were augmented with community-based programmes. This change in approach later moved on to other parts of the world. These programmes sought to promote popular participation in productive development projects in order to raise incomes and meet social needs. Unlike remedial social services, these programmes gave expression to the notion that social welfare could contribute positively to economic development (Midgley and Tang, 2001: 244 and Midgley, 1996: 15).

Midgley (1996: 14) reported that social work's extensive involvement in remedial practice has long been criticized. Many have argued that the remedial approach is contrary to the profession's historical commitment to eradicate poverty. Critics have claimed that the remedial approach is too limiting and ineffective as a method for promoting human well-being on a significant scale (Livermore and Midgley, 1998). Prigoff (2000: 189) stated in this regard: "While social work has recognized the utility of community organization as a source of strength for social advocacy, for many decades the focus in social work education has been on clinical practice for remediation of problems, rather than on prevention. The perspectives of the field are changing". O'Brien and Mazibuko (1998: 147) concurred and stated in this regard: "Its focus on remediation rather than development, on the individual rather than on social change, and on social control rather than poverty alleviation, has merited much comment".

Morrison, *et al.* (in Prigoff, 2000: 190) delivered a valuable contribution when they stated the following: "Most important, social work must increase its recognition of the importance of community influences in fostering a healthy environment for children and families. Practice in neighborhoods and communities should be based on the new social work perspectives and should focus on changing the

culture of what is seen as valued, possible, and appropriate in these communities, which in turn will modify the opportunity systems for children and families. Accepting the contextual environment and building on the strengths and abilities of these networks will endow each participant with the “power” to bring about change in recognition that it does “take a whole village to raise a child”. In a dated but still useful discussion of changes in social work practice, Macarov (1991: 4) noted: “Most professions have a tendency toward conservatism, and social work is no exception. Many practitioners continue to use the methods they learned as students – perhaps as long ago as 40 years or more – even when these methods are no longer relevant. For example, the psychoanalytic – or, at least, the therapeutic – approach to dealing with unemployed people may persist even during periods of mass societally induced unemployment, when social action or helping clients to organize as pressure groups is likely to be more effective”. O’Brien and Mazibuko (1998: 147) added to the discussion and asked why social work stands accused of being on the sideline of social development? The suggestion was made that social development theory has been too elusive and general to influence social work practitioners significantly. Another possible explanation offered was that the social work profession found it difficult to change course to fit in with the multidisciplinary nature of social development because of its blurred professional boundaries. Within the context of South Africa, the previous South African government’s policies of funding social work services, have worked against the profession becoming more developmentally oriented.

Manthorpe and Bradley (2002: 279) added to this discussion and claimed that the social work profession has an ambivalent relationship with poverty and despite social workers’ daily encounters with the poor and the severe consequences of the lack of basic needs, responses remained similar to those of earlier decades. Becker (in Manthorpe and Bradley, 2002: 279) concurred and was highly critical of social work’s attempts to “manage the poor”. He listed a collection of responses to requests for poverty assistance, i.e. advice on benefits, referral to other sources, and tight criteria for assistance. Becker stated that each



one of these responses has their failings. Coulshed and Orme (in Trevithick, 2000: 1) entered the debate and offered a most valuable contribution in this regard: "... there are no easy remedies in social work, especially when we are confronted daily with oppression and deprivation..."

It is clear from the criticism that if social work is to survive as a profession, it needs to move beyond a narrow concern with remedial practice and promote activities that make a positive contribution to social well-being. This viewpoint is decisive from many developing countries where the overwhelming need is for social and economic development. (Compare Gray, 1996: 13.) In this regard, Stevenson (in Manthorpe and Bradley, 2002: 283) contributed the following: "Social workers...have to engage with poverty in two ways. One involves a general response to its impact on their clients, with an obligation to describe and discuss for a wider audience whose concerns can be mobilized. The other...requires the social workers to consider the most effective ways of helping the individual in poverty who is a unique person in unique difficulty". Manthorpe and Bradley (2002: 281-282) stated that within social services there is a new interest in poverty and a recasting of it as social exclusion. Stevens, Bur and Young (1999: 2) stated that social exclusion has been defined as: "the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live". These authors emphasised that other authors lay greater emphasis on "multiple deprivation" as the defining feature of social exclusion: unemployment or an insecure job, poor housing, family stress and social alienation. Social exclusion is about the quantifiable, material conditions of being poor but also includes more qualitative, intangible elements such as depression, low self-esteem and isolation. The role of the wider community in determining quality of life needs to be considered in any discussion of social exclusion. There is a move to anti-poverty strategies justifying this renewed emphasis on combating poverty.

Midgley (in Midgley and Tang, 2001: 246) contrasted social development with institutionalized approaches to promoting human welfare such as philanthropy, professional social work and social service administration. Midgley wrote that unlike these approaches, which are primarily concerned with solving social problems and meeting needs through the provision of social services, the payment of social benefits and the intervention of professional personnel, social development seeks to promote human well-being in association with a dynamic, ongoing process of economic development. Social development views economic and social processes as equally important components of the development process. Social development advocates that a closer integration of economic and social policies can enhance the welfare of all. Three primary principles are important to achieve the abovementioned objective:

- The establishment of organisational arrangements at the national level that harmonise economic and social policies within a comprehensive commitment to sustainable and people-centred development are extremely important. Governmental organisations need to have regular contact with social-service agencies. The implementation of the social development approach requires that economic development and social-service agencies work more closely together.
- The advocates of the developmental approach urge the adoption of macroeconomic policies that promote employment and attain people-centred economic development outcomes. It is clear from this approach that economic development has a direct and positive impact on people's welfare. Programmes that foster the inclusion of people in the development process by creating jobs and self-employment are given priority. Investments in human and social capital and the provision of credit and other forms of economic assistance that facilitate maximum economic inclusion are emphasised. The emphasis on enhancing human capabilities through social investments is designed to facilitate and enable economic and social inclusion. This approach is sensitive to ecological concerns.

- Proponents of the developmental approach propose that social programmes be investment oriented or “productivist” by promoting economic participation and generating positive rates of return to the economy. A social programme is productivist if it focuses on material needs, promotes effective participation in the economy and contributes positively to economic development. The notions of social investment and productivism are at the core of developmental welfare theory.

According to Midgley and Tang (2001: 247) developmental welfare is concerned not only with increasing labour-market participation among welfare clients but with a variety of interventions that foster economic participation and raise standards of living. (Compare Social Investment Research Group: [sa].) Midgley (1996: 16) and other proponents of the developmental approach proposed that social workers use established forms of social work practice to create and enhance programmes that promote economic development. By doing this ordinary people can become involved in development and derive positive benefits from economic progress. (Compare Gray, 1996: 12.) Midgley (1996: 16) was concerned about the image of the social work profession and stated in this regard: “The adoption of a developmental perspective can enhance the profession’s image and help to dispel the belief that social work is only concerned with the provision of benefits to the “dropouts and misfits” of society”. In Midgley’s opinion this negative image of the profession is pervasive in both the industrial and developing countries. Very often social workers are regarded as a profession providing benefits to people who do not want to work and who is a burden on society. By actively promoting a developmental approach, the social work profession can position itself to make a tangible contribution to economic growth. Dependent and needy people need to be integrated into society in order to be productive citizens and raise their own self-esteem. By becoming actively involved in solving their material and social needs, social work clients are contributing to their own well-being. (Compare Gray, 1996: 12.) The social work profession has the improvement of the human condition, i.e. serving people in

need and making social institutions more responsive to all people as a central focus point. A developmental approach is therefore people-centred.

Prigoff's (2002: 2) contribution added to this discussion and according to this author the profession of social work has a unique opportunity to help communities respond effectively to the challenge of economic globalization. Community organization and community development are needed in all regions of the world. Prigoff (2000: 104-105) proposed the addition of international trade policy, economic development policy and corporate accountability to the social work profession's agenda for advocacy. She regarded social responsibility and economic justice crucial elements for national and community health. In Prigoff's words (2000: 105): "Their absence leaves the nation and its communities at high risk for rising incidences of addiction, violence and abuse, physical and mental problems, and criminal and self-destructive behaviors along with poverty and homelessness – all system-wide phenomena". According to Prigoff (2000: 175) violence has been redefined by social workers, based upon its harm to the lives of other human beings. In the words of Van Soest and Bryant (in Prigoff, 2000: 176): "[violence] as any act or situation in which a person injures another, including both direct attacks on a person's physical or psychological integrity and destructive actions that do not involve a direct relationship between the victims and perpetrators". Prigoff's (2000: 176) point of view was that a lack of access to material resources and social support is an example of structural violence especially destructive to children. Poverty and conditions of deprivation are both physically and psychologically damaging to dependent children, the aged, the disabled, and the unemployed. In a cash economy, poverty is life-threatening because human beings are unable to provide for their own basic needs and those of dependent family members. Prigoff (2000: 243) stated the following in this regard: "Very simply, the defining character of a prosperous economy, and the standard by which every economy must be measured, is the degree to which the economy achieves the production and distribution of a nurturing, healthy, rewarding, and sustainable quality standard of living for all of its people. Delivery

of anything less by either a national or a global economy is sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that “prosperous economy” is clearly not an accurate description – that is, in fact, an obvious distortion of reality”.

According to Prigoff (2000: 155) human society is now in an era of historic transition, and many institutional structures no longer match the needs of the population. Some institutions are even dysfunctional for the nurturance, development, and maintenance of wholesome, healthy social systems, from the family through the global community. In Prigoff’s opinion (2000: 174) social work examines the social phenomena of human behaviour and the group or institutional processes in the context of a macrosystem with economic, political, and cultural dimensions. This author argued that the impact of economic factors on mental health and on the level of violence in a society is studied and understood by social workers. Violence that takes place at the level of interpersonal relations between individuals reflects the institutional culture of a society and is also responsive to the tensions and pressures that are generated by economic and political factors.

The extent of poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment in South Africa and many other countries across the globe, provide more than enough reason for social workers to engage in economic development. Unfortunately there is still a great deal of uncertainty and lack of commitment as to how social workers should use their skills and knowledge and professional standing in dealing with this challenge. (Compare Gray, 1996: 9.) Midgley (1996: 16) reflected on this dilemma and in his opinion many social workers doubt that the profession has the experience and skills to introduce programmes that will be compatible with economic development activities. Social workers need a thorough understanding of economics and may be intimidated by the subject’s technical vocabulary. O’Brien and Mazibuko (1998: 150) emphasised that the economic element of the social development model requires social work to examine its relations to economic institutions, the concepts of work and economic productivity. Manthorpe and Bradley (2002: 286) added to this particular discussion and

stated that social workers displayed ambivalence to working with finance. There was a definite desire to avoid crossing the boundary into matters of income and expenditure. These authors (2002: 286) contributed valuable insight with regard to this dilemma: “New models of social care support combined with growing means testing mean that, like it or not, finance is central to the helping relationship. Similarly social workers’ role in managing budgets and contracts with service providers means that ignorance of finance is untenable and unprofessional”. In Manthrope and Bradley’s opinion (2002: 286) whatever new organisational structures arise for social work, managing to champion the interests of the poor and disadvantaged, may be the one distinctive and enduring contribution of social work. Coates (2000: 6) added to this very important role for social workers and emphasized that social workers needed to become involved in educational efforts, and be aware of and be involved with coalitions, which seek to create alternative social structures. Coates stated that social workers could support local credit unions and cooperatives, and similar efforts, which promote the local control of local resources for local benefit. In this regard Coates (2000: 6) stated the following: “In so doing social work can play a role in developing local resources which are more independent of transnational interests and which create opportunities for people and local communities to establish and maintain sustainable and more equitable practices”.

In Prigoff’s opinion (2000: 2) social workers need skills in organizing and political action; knowledge of the economic profile of communities in which they work; and knowledge of the tools, methods, and limitations of economic theory and practice. Prigoff (2000: 88) discussed the importance for social workers to participate actively in decisions on economic and trade policies, which have significant consequences for the lives of individuals, families, groups, communities, and nations. In this author’s opinion (2000: 155) the basic problem-solving methods of the field of social work are relevant to the solution of world crises because they address systems change. In pursuit of economic justice,

social work has many allies: women's groups, church groups, environmental and health organizations, trade unions and cultural communities (Prigoff, 2000: 245).

The most critical issues and decisions facing humanity today are centered in decisions about trade and economic policies. Midgley (1996: 17) argued that a tangible or workable set of prescriptions for social work's engagement with development activities, will alleviate many of the concerns and uneasiness that social workers experience with regard to their position in promoting a economic developmental approach. Midgley (1996: 20) admitted that much of the social development literature focused on abstract aspects of the subject in question. This author claimed that a developmental perspective was more likely to emerge if social workers focus on forms of intervention that promote the attainment of material welfare goals. In his opinion, by focusing on material welfare, practical developmental roles for social workers will be revealed. A materialist perspective is compatible with social work's responsibility to address the problems of poverty, deprivation and material need. Gray (1996: 11) added to this view and in her opinion developmental social work is a type of social work which affirms the social work profession's commitment to poverty eradication; acknowledges that there is a definite link between welfare and economic development; and, regards social welfare as an investment in human capital rather than a drain on scarce resources.

According to Sewpaul (2001: 309) there were several compelling reasons for social workers to understand how macro-economic policies impact on welfare. In this author's view, social work as a core human service discipline is often left to pick up the consequences of macro -socio-political and economic policies as they impact directly on people's lives at the micro-level. This view was supported by Prigoff (2000: 87), stating that for social workers, the goals of economic development included broad benefits to the population as a whole, especially to vulnerable population sectors not able to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter through active participation in the labour force. Prigoff (2000: 251) made a

valuable contribution regarding the position of the social work profession in addressing a number of economic issues. Tax structures, the political economy, health coverage for poor people, and investments are amongst many of the economic questions that come into play. In her own words (2000: 251): "Social workers have not often addressed such issues. The sense that economics is outside the boundaries of social work concern and expertise must change. Social workers are participants and leaders in community coalitions. The members of the profession can strengthen their work by recognizing that economic policy is an arena for social work action and by integrating content on economics into the knowledge base of the social work profession". In Nkomo's opinion (in Sewpaul, 2001: 319), if social workers are to develop new roles they need to understand the poverty-generating structures of society and identify what steps need to be taken to address poverty. He argued that social workers needed to facilitate the formulation of appropriate policies and identify concrete programmes, within a developmental framework, that deal with poverty more effectively. Sokalski (in Sewpaul, 2001: 320) concurred with this viewpoint and argued that in order to sustain development, social workers need to undertake distinct but carefully integrated actions at three policy levels: macro, mezzo and micro. Sewpaul (2001: 320) argued that given the vast amount of data that exists within social work service organizations, and the experiences of social workers at grassroots levels, they are in strategic positions to inform policy content and to ensure effective policy implementation and evaluation.

The development and support of entrepreneurs is an avenue towards creating improved economic circumstances for communities and individual clients.



#### 4.4 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

“By definition, innovation cannot be planned. Leading entrepreneurs... did not ascend a hierarchy; they created a new one. They did not climb to the top of anything. They were pushed to the top by their own success. They did not capture the pinnacle; they became it”

(George Gilder, in Godwin: [sa]: 3).

In the 1993 Peter Drucker wrote a new preface to his book “Innovation and Entrepreneurship” (1985) in which he stated that the 1990s have been a period of innovations in all areas – international affairs, politics, economics, technology, and business. In his opinion the most innovative area may well have been management itself – with “outsourcing” and “downsizing”, “economic value analysis” and “reengineering” sweeping the management world. Drucker predicted that even more changes, in all major areas of life, in most societies would occur from the year 2000. The implications of these changes could be profound and Drucker stated the following in this regard: “And in such a period of rapid change the best – perhaps the only – way a business can hope to prosper if not survive, is to innovate. It is the only way to convert change into opportunity”. These words also ring true for the way non-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations and social welfare services should approach business in the future.

There is little doubt that high and growing unemployment represents the most significant social and economic dilemmas facing South Africa today. Gaenor Vaida (2003) stated that the jobs gap had widened – figures suggested that between 1996 and 2001, only 600 000 jobs were created for more than three million new entrants to the job market. Vaida referred to data obtained from Statistics South Africa: 750 000 new job seekers enter the market every year, these included matriculants, university and technikon graduates, all of whom have no work experience. According to Statistics South Africa (in Vaida, 2003)

the following key figures reflected the current state of the labour market in South Africa:

- 33.7% of South Africans of working age (15 to 65 years) are employed. This consists of 26.8% of women of working age and 41.3% of men.
- 42.3% of South Africans of working age are not economically active, which includes students, homemakers, the disabled, those too ill to work and those not seeking work. Nearly half of women of working age (48.3%) are in this category, while men make up 35.7%.
- The province with the highest unemployment rate is the Eastern Cape with 54.6%, followed by Limpopo with 48.8% and KwaZulu-Natal with 48.7%.

There is a growing recognition from all stakeholders that every effort should be made to assist people to uplift their standard of living. Jobless and homeless people need more than survival strategies that pay very little or even nothing. Governments do not necessarily create jobs, private sector businesses do. Governments do play a crucial role in creating an environment conducive for growth and stability. Governments together with the citizens are responsible for building a foundation for a strong economy and a liveable community, including education, health care, infrastructure and public safety and security. In South Africa today, many political and economic analysts believe that the necessary growth in job creation and development may not be achieved in the near future. The reality of the situation is that millions of poor people, struggling to survive need mechanisms to support them to make ends meet. Macarov and Baerwald (2001: 1) provided an important contribution in underlining how crucial it is to provide opportunities for poor people to have a support system. They contributed the following: “When, during the depths of the Great Depression, President Franklin, D. Roosevelt discussed the proposal for a social security program in the United States with his social advisor, Harry Hopkins, he is said to have remarked that although the program would not solve problems immediately, it would prove itself in the long run. Harry Hopkins is said to have replied: “But Mr. President, people *eat* in the short run”.

The entrepreneurial approach represents the hopes and dreams of people who want to create new products and services. It is a way of problem-solving, and a way for working towards permanent long-term improvements to achieve a better standard of living for the individual and the community. The entrepreneur is a key economic actor in community life. Entrepreneurs have inestimable value in society. Gilder (1992: 7) described entrepreneurship rather eloquently: “The very process of creating wealth is the best possible education for creating more wealth. Every enterprise is an experimental test of an entrepreneurial idea. If it succeeds it yields a twofold profit: a financial increase and an enlargement of knowledge and learning...Like a tree or a garden, an economy grows by photosynthesis. Without the light of new knowledge and by the roots of ownership, it withers”. If economic growth with full employment and rapidly increasing living standards is to develop in a society, the following three factors must be present: capital, entrepreneurs and a supportive entrepreneurial environment. This last factor is by far the most decisive. If society is to function well the encouragement and support of entrepreneurs is of crucial importance. Governments are responsible for creating an investment climate that is conducive to the development of micro-, small and medium businesses.

Sanders (2001: 1) stated that micro-enterprise initiatives have both proponents and critics. Proponents suggested that micro-enterprise has the capacity to create jobs and businesses, revitalizing low-income communities and move people out of poverty. According to Sanders (2001: 2) critics of micro-enterprise suggested that, with a focus primarily on credit, micro-lending cannot seriously reduce poverty in the United States. Additionally, they suggested micro-enterprise initiatives were part of a larger trend toward reducing social safety net programs.

Slaughter ([sa]) defined entrepreneurship as follows: “The process of uncovering or developing an opportunity to create value through innovation and seizing that

opportunity without regard to either resources (human and capital) or the location of the entrepreneur – in a new or existing company”. It is within this context that the concept of “**social entrepreneurship**” finds a foothold. According to Johnson (2002: 1) the concept of “social entrepreneurship” has been rapidly emerging in the private, public and non-profit sectors over the last few years. Non-profit organisations are facing intensifying demands for improved effectiveness and sustainability because of diminishing funding and increased competition for these scarce resources. Social entrepreneurship is emerging as an innovative approach for dealing with complex social needs. Johnson (2002: 1) wrote in this regard: “With its emphasis on problem-solving and social innovation, socially entrepreneurial activities blur the traditional boundaries between the public, private and non-profit sector, and emphasize hybrid models of for-profit and non-profit activities. Promoting collaboration between sectors is implicit within social entrepreneurship, as is developing radical new approaches to solving old problems”.

Notable experts like Peter Drucker see management and innovation in the non-profit sector as the most vital challenges of the present era. The nonprofits are also seen as an ever-expanding source of possible solutions to issues that currently plague a vast number of communities, such as poverty, crime, violence and abuse. Within this sector, greater attention is being focused on those individuals who have a vision for social change, and use that in combination with business skills to bring about the betterment of a community (Schuyler, 1998: 1). Giddens (in Steyaert, 2000: 14) offered a valuable perspective on entrepreneurship when he stated the following: “Successful entrepreneurs, however, are innovators, because they spot possibilities that others miss, or take on risks that others decline, or both. A society that doesn’t encourage entrepreneurial culture won’t generate the economic energy that comes from the most creative ideas. Social and civic entrepreneurs are just as important as those working directly in a market context, since the same drive and creativity are needed in the public sector, and in civil society, as in the economic sphere”.

Social workers can be part of a force of entrepreneurs working towards economic change and growth in society.

Reis (in Johnson, 2002: 4) argued that deeply entrenched social problems were not solved through the fragmented, currently predominant, single-sector approach and emphasised that all sectors needed to work together exchanging and sharing traditionally accepted roles. Catford (in Johnson, 2002: 4) articulated this issue most effectively: "Traditional welfare-state approaches are in decline globally, and in response new ways of creating healthy and sustainable communities are required. This challenges our social, economic and political systems to respond with new, creative and effective environments that support and reward change. From the evidence available, current examples of social entrepreneurship offer exciting new ways of realizing the potential of individuals and communities ... into the 21<sup>st</sup> century". Catford (in Johnson, 2002: 8) further described that social and economic entrepreneurs shared the same focus on vision and opportunity and the same ability to convince and empower others to help them turn these visions into a reality. Within the social entrepreneur there is an underlying motivation for social justice.

Johnson (2002: 4) stated that defining what social entrepreneurship is, and what its conceptual boundaries are, can be somewhat complicated. The reasons being: the concept is inherently complex and the area is new and little consensus has emerged on the topic. Peter Drucker (in Johnson, 2002: 5) argued that social entrepreneurs "... change the performance capacity of society". Boschee (in Johnson, 2002: 5) presented social entrepreneurs as "... non-profit executives who pay increased attention to market forces without losing sight of their underlying mission". Johnson (2002: 5) wrote that many authors define social entrepreneurship as bringing business expertise and market-based skills to the non-profit sector in order to help this sector become more efficient in providing and delivering services. In this category there is non-profits running small, for-profit businesses and channelling their earnings back into social service

problems as well as non-profits adopting private sector management techniques in order to get more mileage out of existing resources. These definitions put more emphasis on the “entrepreneurial” nature of activities and the creativity and innovation that entrepreneurs bring to solving social problems in unique ways. Gilber (1992: 8) argued: “In a sense, entrepreneurship is the launching of surprises”. Henton, Melville and Walesh (in Johnson, 2002: 6) identified the following key characteristics of the social entrepreneurship approach: “...like the business entrepreneur, the civic entrepreneur operates in a time of dramatic change, sees opportunity and mobilizes others in the community to work toward their collective well-being”. It is the innovativeness of the approach that essentially defines this conceptualization of social entrepreneurship. Johnson (2002: 9) stated that the ability to develop a network of relationships and contacts is a hallmark of visionary social entrepreneurs, as is the ability to communicate an inspiring vision in order to recruit and inspire staff, partners, and volunteers. Because social entrepreneurs often demand establishing credibility across multiple constituencies, and the ability to mobilize support within those constituencies, networking is a critical skill for social entrepreneurs.

Catford (in Johnson, 2002: 10) added to this discussion and summarized the distinguishing characteristics of social entrepreneurs as follows: “Social entrepreneurs combine street pragmatism with professional skills, visionary insights with pragmatism, an ethical fiber with tactical thrust. They see opportunities where others only see empty buildings, unemployable people and unvalued resources...Radical thinking is what makes social entrepreneurs different from simply “good” people. They make markets work for people, not the other way around, and gain strengths from a wide network of alliances. They can “boundary-ride” between the various political rhetoric’s and social paradigms to enthuse all sectors of society”. (Compare Steyaert, 2000: 9.) Slaughter [sa] agreed with this viewpoint, and stated that successful entrepreneurs know that opportunities are found where discontinuities exist in the marketplace or where they can create a product that is different from all other products.

It is clear from the above discussion that commitment and determination are important weapons in the arsenal of the aspiring entrepreneur. There may be incredible obstacles in the way of making a success of a new venture. Very often the lack of formal education and skills can be overwhelming. To overcome this, tenacity and the ability to stay committed and positive are essential attributes of the entrepreneur. Timmons (1999: 22), realising the significance of the positive spirit of the entrepreneur, referred to the words of President Calvin Coolidge, the 30<sup>th</sup> president of the United States of America from 1923 to 1929: “ Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan “Press on” has solved and solved and always will solve the problems of the human race”.

Young (in Bent-Goodley, 2002: 291) contributed to this discussion and defined entrepreneurship as “a process of putting new ideas into practice”. Bent-Goodley (2002: 291) characterised social work entrepreneurship (SWE) as “the creation of institutions through entrepreneurial thinking that are guided by social work ethics and based on the integration of social service, business, and public relation skills”. According to Cannon (in Johnson, 2002: 10) “recovering social workers” are often motivated to become social entrepreneurs because they are disenchanted with the existing social support system and looking for a more effective approach. Steyaert (2000: 9) emphasized that entrepreneurs do not necessarily predict a need and then proceed to construct a product or a service to solve that need. In his own words: “What entrepreneurs do, is to open a new space for human action”. Cannon (2000: 1) agreed with this perspective and stated that in the past generation, many of America’s most ambitious and creative nonprofits have concluded that handouts are no longer enough, that government and altruism can’t improve the lives of the poor.

It is within this paradigm that social workers need to recognise that they have a significant role and contribution to make. Social workers need to become entrepreneurial leaders, injecting imagination, motivation, commitment, passion, tenacity, integrity, teamwork and vision into partnerships with clients, individual or communities. Improvisation, resourcefulness and inventiveness are important factors when the development of enterprises is discussed. The entrepreneurial approach offers opportunities to social workers and their clients to reframe the helping relationship.

A clear picture emerged from the literature; it is necessary for social workers and people involved in non-profit organizations to master basic business principles and practices before starting and running small businesses. Reis (in Johnson, 2002: 12) echoed this sentiment, and commented that very often small and medium-sized non-profit organizations are missing useful financial expertise and basic bookkeeping skills. Lombard (2003: 7) added to the discussion and emphasised the development of human capital within the entrepreneurial endeavour. This author stated that the development of human capital encompasses the building of personal capacity through skills training in areas such as writing a business plan, preparing funding proposals, bookkeeping, business principles, marketing, advertising, finances, human relations, conflict management and negotiation. Cannon (2000: 3) described the viewpoint of Jim Thalhuber, president of the Minneapolis-based National Center for Social Entrepreneurs. Thalhuber made the following statement in referring to non-profit organizations that needed to master basic business principles and practices: "Before they try to operate an actual moneymaking enterprise, they need to run their non-profit as a business instead of a charity. In many cases, if they do that – if they do what they do smarter, more efficiently, and more effectively – they can stick with their core business". The success of ventures adopting the abovementioned approach is the direct result of combining business principles with a strong social mission.



In addition to the abovementioned business know-how, aspiring entrepreneurs need to consider the overall marketing strategy that will exploit the opportunity that has been identified, to ensure a competitive advantage. Business skills and true creativity need to come together to build an enterprise. An entrepreneurial mind-set can be learned, nurtured and encouraged.

Fowler (in Johnson, 2002: 13) described the underlying theme of social entrepreneurship very eloquently: "... the art of integration is to marry developmental agendas with market priorities and then manage them properly so they are synergistic, not draining". Bent-Goodley (2002: 292) concurred with this view and stated the following in this regard: "Although this new focus demands a shift in thinking, it does not denote a lack of professional ethics but can instead provide opportunities for social workers to create institutions that meet the needs of fragile communities". This author emphasized the value of social work entrepreneurship in that it may allow social workers to initiate institutions and to take advantage of opportunities to create new interventions that respond to the needs of clients. Young (in Bent-Goodley, 2002: 293) suggested that social work entrepreneurship can encompass the following solutions to presenting difficulties in practice for the social worker: "...a new kind of service, a new way of providing an existing service, a service provided to a new clientele, new financing or organizational arrangements for providing a given service, or even the revitalization of a program within an existing organizational framework". Bent-Goodley (2002: 297) defined entrepreneurial thinking, as the visualization of innovative opportunities, and social work entrepreneurs are therefore creators of options.

Cannon (2000: 1) contributed a valuable case-study to this discussion. Dianne Flannery, a social worker from San Francisco, started a number of small businesses, thereby providing job opportunities for young people from a homeless shelter. She founded "Juma Ventures", which boldly declares in its mission statement that it is one of a new breed of charities that "use business

and entrepreneurship as the vehicle for achieving our social mission". Cannon (2000: 2) summarized in eloquent fashion the motivation behind social entrepreneurial ventures. He stated in this regard: "That's the problem social entrepreneurship is attempting to solve. Traditional nonprofits, overwhelmed with the endless needs of the growing legion of poor Americans, are shackled by their dependence on money or goods contributed by people who give only after their own needs and wants have been met. The new social entrepreneurs insist that this is an inefficient way to do good. Their model combines the best methods from two worlds: hard-headed fiscal conservatism and soft-hearted liberalism".

According to Timmons (1999: 27) entrepreneurship is "a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting that is opportunity obsessed, holistic in approach, and leadership balanced". This author emphasised that at the heart of the entrepreneurial process is the creation and/or recognition of opportunities, followed by the will and initiative to seize these opportunities. Some commonality emerges from the varying definitions of social entrepreneurship: the "problem-solving nature" is prominent and the corresponding emphasis on developing and implementing initiatives that do deliver measurable results in the form of changed social outcomes and /or impacts.

Bent-Goodley (2002: 297) discussed the importance of "retraining thought processes" in the education of social workers whereby they become empowered and use social work to make a difference in their own lives and the lives of their clients. Brown (in Bent-Goodley, 2002: 294) argued that it is more important than ever to address the perceived division between traditional social work values and the economic focus of entrepreneurial enterprises. Segal (in Bent-Goodley, 2002: 294) added to this discussion and stated that social work must draw on business concepts to survive as a profession and learn to market human service products to improve the satisfaction of clients and to increase the effectiveness of service organizations (Bent-Goodley, 2002: 298). Social workers would need to master the fundamental components of entrepreneurship, namely: management,

marketing, financing and operational procedures, as a prerequisite to successfully operate as social entrepreneurs.

According to Bent-Goodley (2002: 300) social work entrepreneurship provides a unique opportunity for the social work profession to reinvent itself. This author stated the following in this regard: “Educators may be able to help future social workers create successful and effective opportunities that will benefit individuals, communities, society, and the profession”. What is needed in social work today are social work professionals with an abundance of enthusiasm to address in a creative and innovative way the vast unemployment faced by so many people in the world. Lombard (2003: 9) recognised this need and concluded with the following statement: “We need to believe that we will find the same kind of entrepreneurs amongst the poor as those who Gilder refers to in his book *The Spirit of Enterprise*: “... the movers and shakers, doers and givers, brimming with visions of creation and opportunity... the optimists who see in every patch of sand a potential garden, in every man a potential worker, in every problem a possible profit. They struggle, flounder, work day and night, sometimes succeed and often fail; but they are resilient and keep coming on”. What is clear from the discussion is the importance of a positive work ethic as an integral part of the successful creation of entrepreneurial activities. Within the entrepreneurial approach lies the potential to advance the interest not only of the individual or the community but also of the entire society.

#### **4.5 STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL PROGRAMS**

Midgley (1999: 9) provided a framework for revitalizing social welfare by adopting an inclusive developmental perspective with the main objective to integrate social welfare and economic development. Midgley (1999: 9) suggested the following valuable strategies for implementing developmental social programs: increasing cost effectiveness in social welfare, enhancing human capital investments,

promoting social capital formation, developing individual and community assets, expanding job training and placement to include the disabled, the mentally ill and drug abusers; facilitating economic participation through productive employment and self-employment, removing barriers to economic participation and creating a social climate conducive to development. For the purpose of this study the abovementioned strategies will each be discussed in more depth.

#### **4.5.1 Increasing cost effectiveness in social welfare: waste, inefficiency and corruption**

Good governance has increasingly been recognized as a crucial prerequisite for development effectiveness and the growth that it encourages. According to Narayan (2002: 2) effective governance is critical for ensuring a positive investment climate, and there is a two-way relationship with empowerment – that is, good governance promotes empowerment, and empowerment further enhances good governance. Efficiency of an institution is therefore a reflection of the quality of governance in that institution. Governments cannot address nor implement social development programs on their own. Social services providers and non-governmental organisations do need to contribute expertise, knowledge and dedication to support the government in implementing and monitoring the progress of all development projects.

**Corruption** is both a symptom and a cause of poor governance. It undermines the investment climate and development effectiveness. Ayee (2001: 2) provided valuable insight into the various descriptions of corruption. According to this author definitions of corruption often overlap in the following categories: (i) misuse of public office for private gain; (ii) inappropriate exchanges of money or favours for undue influence or power; and (iii) violations of public interest or norms of behaviour for special advantages or self-serving purposes. The catalogue of corrupt acts includes bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money and embezzlement.

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference Justice and Peace Department, drafted a paper called "Un-blurring the Vision – An Assessment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development by South African Churches" (2002: 20), where it is stated that the representatives from the major economic players in the world, namely, United States of America, Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Canada and the European Community, routinely argued that the single biggest deterrent to supporting Africa's development is endemic corruption on the continent. This paper acknowledged that corruption is indeed a major problem in many African societies and emphasised that the profitability of corruption must be removed by ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to prosecute those guilty of corruption. Good governance is undermined by a lack of transparency, weak accountability, poor organization and lack of technical capacity, lack of responsiveness, inefficiency and poor motivation. (Compare Girishankar, Hammergren, Holmes, Knack, Levy, Litvack, Manning, Messick, Rinne, and Sutch, 2001: 36.) These authors stated that poor governance and corruption could hurt poor people in many ways. When a corrupt government is in power, social interests and economic priorities receive much less attention in the allocation of public resources. In their own words (2001: 3-4): "As capital-intensive defense and infrastructure projects may offer more opportunities for kickbacks than, for instance, spending on primary education, government spending allocations may be biased away from pro-poor expenditure". Ayee (2001: 2) concurred with this view, stating that corruption ("or rent-seeking as it is euphemistically referred to") has for a long time been the most serious challenge to the public service in Africa. He wrote in this regard: "Corruption has not only eroded the public service's established principles such as merit, neutrality, equality, accountability and representativeness but also its legitimacy or public confidence. The importance of public confidence and trust in the public service cannot be over-emphasized". Continuing corruption whether in government or within the non-governmental organization fraternity has serious implications for public support and service delivery.

The maladministration and gross inefficiency of many government departments and non-governmental organizations concerned with uplifting the poor undermine the political, social and economic gains that have been made since 1994 in the new South Africa. Corruption, fraud and the mismanagement of funds intended for poverty relief projects have become so serious that the Gauteng Department of Social Services and Welfare had shut down almost all projects, as reported by the journalist Matuma Letsoalo in November 2002. Letsoalo (2002) reported that in one case a brick-making project that received R1, 2-million was forced to shut down after the project manager disappeared with the funds, according to a dossier called the "Exit Strategy Report". Letsoalo stated that the Gauteng Department of Social Services and Welfare was accused of not having management systems and monitoring mechanisms in place to exercise proper oversight over the projects. This journalist reported that the department has spent R50-million since 1997 to fund 336 community projects but 85 percent of the projects did not achieve the department's objectives because individuals empowered themselves and their families rather than their communities. Letsoalo listed a great number of projects crippled by corruption, fraud and mismanagement. Many of the individuals trusted with funds intended for various community income-generating projects, have absconded with the funds or are unable to provide any indication of expenses. Ayee (2001: 7) concluded that corrupt leaders and officials unquestionably deepen the poverty of their people.

Development effectiveness and growth depend critically on public action, including well-designed and effectively deployed public spending on development priorities; sound public expenditure management is a crucial aspect of good governance (Narayan, 2002: 4-5). Midgley (2001: 9) emphasised that like many other public-sector programs, the social services have often been accused of "waste", "bureaucratic inefficiency", and "mismanagement". The accusation has been made that social service programs function to fulfil political agendas and serve the interests of bureaucrats. Midgley (1999: 9) reported that because these

programs were not subjected to the discipline of the market, critics claimed that they continued to operate even if they were wasteful and did not attain their stated goals. Contained in this criticism are obvious implications for economic development. The transfer of resources from the productive economy to maintain wasteful social programs is hardly conducive to economic growth. Girishankar, *et al.* (2001: 7) argued that to improve the coverage, cost efficiency, and quality of services at a local or provincial level, governments need to allocate and deliver adequate and predictable flows of resources to all sectoral authorities, and implement the necessary auditing procedures that are responsive to public scrutiny. Structural arrangements, for example legal frameworks, are of the utmost importance. These authors (2001: 7) emphasized the crucial role of capable, motivated staff, recruited on the basis of merit and paid a competitive wage.

In Midgley's opinion (1999: 9) new social programs are often established because of their political appeal or in response to the activities of interest groups, without the necessary research and scrutiny required of projects in many other disciplines. Midgley (1999: 10) argued that although evaluation research in social work is now well developed, relatively few social programs are properly evaluated and the findings are often neglected. In his opinion all social programs should be evaluated, and attempts to assess their rates of return, as well as contribution to economic development, should be given priority. Too often political and fiscal considerations in assessing the implementation of a strategy play a more important role than scientific information regarding a social problem. Prigoff (2000: 12) stated in this regard that social workers, and other health-service providers, in partnership with community organizations, can be effective in building public awareness and community-based coalitions which can hold economic and political groups accountable for their actions. In her opinion the bankruptcy of leadership should be exposed. In Prigoff's opinion (2000: 189) corporations and financial institutions need to be accountable, not just to investors, but also to the communities of people that sanction their licenses, or at

locations where they work. Social workers could be instrumental in building alternative systems that support sustainable human development. The social work profession needs to actively promote issues of accountability. There are no substitutes for honesty and integrity in delivering the services poor people desperately need.

#### **4.5.2 Enhancing human capital investments**

According to Midgley (1999: 10 and 1996: 20) social development advocates believe strongly in social programs that invest in human capital. Proponents of the social developmental perspective have been inspired by economic studies showing that investments in education produce high rates of return not only to individuals but also to the economy and greater society. Investments in social welfare clients can facilitate their participation in the productive economy of a community (Midgley and Tang, 2001: 248). Human capital is essentially the sum of knowledge and skills that people use to pursue their livelihoods. Building human capital is the key to maintaining economic progress and a more equitable and inclusive society. According to Lombard (2003: 7) it is through human development that members of the community achieve self-esteem and personal empowerment, so important for the building of social capital. (Compare Stevens, Bur and Young, 1999: 3.)

Sustained access to effective basic services – including health care, education, water, and basic infrastructure – is of primary importance in the lives of poor people. Improvements in the quality and consistency of these services will enhance the creation of human capital. Institutional and governance models need to be addressed to make them more responsive to the needs of the poor (Narayan, 2002: 231). Data gathered from the World Development Report 2000/2001, “Voices of the Poor” study, indicated that expanding the involvement of more and more people in a community, has led to marked improvements in education. This study further indicated that initiatives that expanded the access



of excluded groups to education have led to significant shifts in mindset among community members and government leaders regarding the contributions that those groups can make to society (Narayan, 2002: 79 and 231). According to Midgley and Tang (2001: 248) human capital programmes have previously been used in the social services. In the field of rehabilitation where people with disabilities are assisted to gain skills and knowledge, the creation of human capital has been significant. It is most important that the newly acquired skills of participants in such programmes are the skills and knowledge required in the job market. Midgley and Tang (2001: 248) cautioned however that often, instead of upgrading their qualifications and skills so that they can secure employment with sufficient wages, many programmes have done little more than place clients in low-paying jobs. These authors emphasised that there is a growing recognition in the social-welfare field that human capital investments are not only needed among children in general but more specifically among the children of poor families. These children grow up in conditions that are not conducive to optimal physical, emotional and social development. The establishment of pre-school programmes that raise nutritional standards, improve health conditions, inculcate beginning educational skills and promote positive social relationships among younger children should be actively encouraged. The management of the income-generating project “Homeless Talk” supported this perspective. The journalist Nawaal Deane (2003) reported that a group of concerned people started “Homeless Talk” as an outreach programme to empower the homeless and create employment. The pre-school was founded as a joint venture with a national radio station and a community organization. The school principal reported that the pre-school provided the children the opportunity to become familiar with a schoolroom environment. The children received balanced meals, and most importantly were kept in a safe and secure environment. This organisation regarded the education of illiterate mothers about the importance of pre-school education for their children as very important and took this task to heart. (Compare Midgley, 1996: 21.) The social work profession has a definite stake in strengthening the first stages of education by supporting effective

parenting during early childhood and improving the access and quality of preschool programmes.

The organization “People’s Global Action Against “Free” Trade and the World Trade Organization” issued a manifesto in 1998, stating the following: “Education as a tool for social change requires confrontational academics and critical educators for all educational systems. Community-based education can provoke learning processes within social movements. The right to information is essential for the work of social movements. Limited and unequal access to language skills, especially for women, hinders participation in political activity with other peoples. Building these tools is a way to reinforce and rebuild human values” (in Prigoff, 2000: 324).

Development implies increasing the freedom and capabilities of all people. Education, skills training and access to resources are of paramount importance to create conditions where poor people can have a stake in their future development. Improving the stock of skills available to an economy through investments in adult education and lifelong learning is an issue of strategic importance for any government. A mother from a highly underprivileged background contributed the following: “Knowing how to read and write means liberating oneself from shame. I’ve met three different types of teachers: those who have decided that nothing can be done with people like us; those who thought that something could be done with our children, but not with us, their parents; and those who sought to fight alongside us for the future of our children. The third type is the only ones who gave my daughters any appetite for learning” (ATD Fourth World Research Institute and the Futuribles group, 2002: 3). The question arises: What can be done to make schools, universities and colleges, real “learning organisations” accessible to the most disadvantaged members of society?

Unfortunately in the new South Africa millions of people are not enjoying their full constitutional rights to basic education. Real social and economic change in South Africa will come about as a result of massive efforts to open all educational facilities to benefit all people. Schools, colleges, universities and churches should become places of learning accessible to people of all ages to address the backlog in knowledge and skills. According to Macfarlane (2003) about half of South Africa's adults – 10 million people - have less than nine years of schooling, and three million have no education at all. In his opinion there has been no significant progress in adult literacy since the end of Apartheid. Adult basic education receives less than 1% of the national education budget, and most provincial spending in this area is less than 1% of education funding. Dr Peter Rule (in Macfarlane, 2003: 15), in an examination of adult basic education and training (ABET) argues that most illiterate and semi-literate adults are unemployed or informally employed and literacy campaigns have not worked effectively in South Africa over the past seven years. He emphasised that there is a strong link between poverty and illiteracy, particularly rural poverty. In the words of Rule: "Adult basic education is in a parlous state just at a time in our history when we need to engage all our human resources optimally. This is despite a strong enabling legislative framework for Abet" (Macfarlane, 2003).

The journalist Dikatso Mametse (2003) contributed a valuable article titled "Mastering their own fate". In 1999 a number of women in the rural district Giyani, in the Limpopo Province formed a cooperative. They raised money to send fifteen members on different courses, learning skills in brickmaking, candlemaking and the manufacturing of fruit juices. From this small beginning they branched out and included needlework in their activities. Specializing in African designs brought them business from far and wide. The group of women received training in pottery, silk screening, financial management and strategy planning. They succeeded in exhibiting their products in Portugal. Sarah Masunga, project manager for the cooperative reported the following: "It's not a question of money; it's about acquiring knowledge, having ideas and using

them”. They started a adult literacy programme, ranging from classes for people who needed to complete their secondary schooling to basic literacy classes for those who could not read or write. Their first group of nine computer-literate students graduated early in 2003. Masunga described her satisfaction with the outcome: “These are people who could never get into tertiary institutions and get a degree. I can’t explain how I felt when they graduated. My philosophy is never to dwell on something you cannot change, just adapt to the situations you find yourself in” (Mametse, 2003: 33). This positive approach and willingness to learn and to create opportunities are crucial for lifting people from despair to a situation where people develop the ability to change their lives.

In a dated but still useful discussion on women, work and literacy, Kerka (1989: 1) mentioned that the literacy levels of children are strongly linked to those of their parents. According to this author the greatest predictor of a child’s future academic success is the literacy of the child’s mother. As the numbers of families headed by low-literate women increase, the cycle of illiteracy is perpetuated. In her opinion, young women with below average skills and below poverty incomes are five times more likely to become teen parents. This alarming fact has significant implications for the future of any community and broader society. In Kerka’s view (1989: 2) linking literacy education to employment and training programmes can contribute significantly to an improvement of a woman’s basic skills therefore laying a stronger foundation for increasing her employability. People in need of both literacy and job training face numerous internal and external barriers. Among the internal barriers are low self-esteem, lack of family support for education, powerlessness and guilt about taking time from their families for self-improvement. According to Kerka (1989: 2) external barriers may include:

- Environmental instability (housing, domestic and community violence, health, financial difficulties)
- Need for support services such as child care, transportation, emergency funds, or personal counselling

- Inaccessible or inappropriate services – due to location, schedule, enrolment requirements, inflexible testing methods, or cost;
- Failure to set realistic goals.

Kerka (1989: 3) suggested the following core components for a comprehensive literacy programme coupled with job and work-related skills training:

**Table 5: Core components for a comprehensive literacy programme (adapted from Kerka, 1989)**

| Literacy components              | Employability components        | Life skills components          |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Individualized remediation plans | Job readiness                   | Problem solving                 |
| Small groups                     | Non-traditional skills training | Decision making                 |
| Incremental goals                | Job skills training             | Goal setting                    |
| Job related reading              | Internships                     | Personal and career counselling |
| Student-created materials        | On-the-job training             | Support services                |
| Computer familiarity             | Job search methods              |                                 |
|                                  | Job placement                   |                                 |

Kerka (1989: 4) concluded her discussion by emphasising that low-income, illiterate mothers face problems so overwhelming that they find it extremely difficult to focus on literacy as an isolated goal. Literacy must be one component of a comprehensive strategy that provides support services and employment training, all of which are necessary to enable women to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy. A number of authors (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2001; Kiirya, 2001; Lubyayi and Olinga, 2001) agreed on the importance of literacy and education for women in particular, and provided some answers as to the reasons why women with a basic education tend to have fewer children. The reasons range from the fact that women with a basic education may be more aware of family planning options; the exposure to education and learning provided some knowledge about health, hygiene and good nutrition, and therefore more of their children survive. Women with a basic education have a better chance of finding employment outside the home and earn money, and therefore they have more

options in life and may choose to start a family and have fewer, healthier children. According to Swarts (1998: 3) sustainability is at the heart of health promotion. Health literacy empowers people to have choices to live a healthier life. Swarts emphasised that health literacy enables people to participate in many other walks of life, such as the economy, education and politics, all of which affect public health in various ways.

The social work profession needs to actively support an approach where literacy and lifelong learning are core components of an overall strategy to empower poor people. Lifelong learning is critical for any community adjusting to changing social and economic circumstances. Education remains the key to training and developing individuals with skills and knowledge necessary to be part of a workforce, contribute to building society and fully develop as productive citizens. Adult education is an opportunity to provide alternate pathways and build bridges for millions of people unable to access education in the past. In addition to this, it is imperative that economic and social policies are coordinated at national, regional and local levels to overcome inequalities, create jobs, improve the overall quality of life for all people and guarantee sustainable economic growth.

#### **4.5.3 Promoting social capital formation**

As previously discussed in chapters two and three of this research report the promotion and creation of social capital is of the utmost importance as part of the sustainable development process.

According to Midgley (1999: 11) proponents of social development are in support of programs that actively promote social capital. Midgley argues that the concept of social capital is still poorly defined, but it is currently being used in civil society analysis to refer to the volume and intensity of cooperative social relationships in communities, in other words to social networks and institutionalised social relationships that promote community integration. (Compare Midgley and Tang,

2001: 249.) Midgley (1996: 21) pointed out that the concept of social capital formation is widely used to refer to the creation of economic and social infrastructure such as roads, bridges, irrigation and drinking water systems, clinics, schools and other facilities. Midgley (1996: 21) stated in this regard: “These community-held assets are important in that they provide the economic and social base on which development efforts depends”. Social capital encompasses community relations with the “outside world”, including other communities and formal institutions (Narayan, 2002: 368). Narayan (2002: 370) reported that during the World Development Report 2000/2001 “Voices of the Poor” study researchers discovered social capital to be concentrated among the more privileged groups in society, with inequalities favouring those in urban areas over rural areas, men over women, the non-poor over the poor, and the educated over the non-educated. Poor people do have strong connections within villages (bonding social capital), however they have little bridging social capital linking them to other communities or to formal institutions. Midgley and Tang (2001: 249) argued that there is a direct association between the degree of social capital in a community and its economic well-being. It follows from this that communities with low-income, high rates of social disorganisation, crime and violence have low social capital and therefore low levels of economic development. Social development advocates believe that creating social capital and directing it toward local economic development should form an integral part of all community social work practice. (Compare McBroom, 1999: 5.) Lombard (2003: 7) emphasised that within a community the connections between people are important to realise their potential and claim their right to be in charge of their own destinies. What is important is that people grow and develop as human beings to feel a greater sense of worth and personal control, which in turn has a positive impact on the strength and quality of social relationships.

Prigoff (2000: 154) argued that with the increasing breakdown of the traditional systems that have nurtured human growth and development, new nurturing systems will need to be created as intentional communities. In her opinion,

planning and organizing will fall to community self-help groups and community volunteers and dedicated professionals will serve as technical consultants. The main tasks of social workers and health professionals will be to work with communities to assist them in creating local service organizations, to mobilize resources, and to facilitate participation in problem-solving processes. Midgley (1996: 22) agreed with this view and stated in this regard: “But whatever approach is preferred, social workers can make a major contribution to the creation of social capital”. Prigoff (2000: 154) emphasised that communities need grassroots organizers and facilitators of community empowerment in order to protect communities from further risk to their quality of life and to assist in obtaining resources needed for community-based economic development. These community-building activities should be directed towards the creation and expansion of productive economic activities. (Compare Midgley and Tang, 2001: 249.)

In Prigoff's opinion (2000: 188) communities can benefit from community self-help groups in the healing and recovery process. Support groups are a potent antidote to rising levels of violence and social disintegration. Social workers can provide technical assistance for the formation and maintenance of self-help groups and for nongovernmental and social action organizations. A very important aspect of grassroots networks is that they facilitate mutual support and empower people by giving them recognition and opportunities for leadership. Prigoff (2000: 189) discussed the importance of community self-help and mutual aid as a way of achieving economic survival and the operation of a social safety net. In this author's opinion community economic development builds local economic security and a more equitable, stable, sustainable global economic system. Midgley and Tang (2001: 249) supported the view of Prigoff and argued that the development of social capital requires investments in programmes that mobilise local people around a variety of local economic development initiatives. These authors emphasised that better links should be established with local



planners and economic development agencies, and local job-referral systems should be promoted.

Prigoff (2000: 191) in a discussion of coalition building, stated that if a task is too demanding to be accomplished by a single group, coalition building should be considered. This author listed key allies in community-based coalitions as consisting of members of local grassroots organizations (GROs), especially parents' groups and neighbourhoods associations; local school and social service personnel; local small business and trade union representatives; members of women's groups, church groups, civic organizations, environmental advocates; local politicians and agency administrators; academics and other health and legal professionals; seniors and physically challenged persons – "the full gamut of civic-minded individuals who care about the future of a community".

Although the emphasis in the above discussion falls on the local community and stresses the importance of local enterprises and initiatives, social problems affect all members of a community and in fact all people in a society, and therefore addressing these issues will benefit society as a whole. Within the South African context it is more important than ever for social workers to be at the forefront of addressing the burning issues in a society that is still very much an abnormal society. The social work profession needs to develop relevant solutions to current economic and social obstacles. It is fair to say that a change in outlook, in perspective, and a fundamental shift in the quality of thinking is required.

#### **4.5.4 Developing individual and community assets**

"Teaching people to fish may fill their plates for longer than simply giving them a fish, but the real issue today is who owns the pond"

(Lean 1995: 154).

According to Midgley (1999: 12) there has been a growing interest in recent years in the role of asset development in social welfare. An asset development approach generates the material resources people need to escape poverty. It also changes attitudes and behaviour so that participants gain confidence and a determination to be successful. Midgely and Tang (2001: 249) wrote that the idea that poor people should not only be encouraged to save but given incentives to do so has been popularised in recent times through the asset development approach. Poor people are actively encouraged to save by depositing their savings into accounts called “Individual Development Accounts” (IDAs). Governments or voluntary agencies match the amounts deposited and in this way people are encouraged to save. Accumulations may be withdrawn for socially approved purposes such as education or housing. Advocates of this approach are of the opinion that asset development programmes are more effective than traditional income maintenance services that maintain poor people at a subsistence level and do not promote self-sufficiency. Advocates of this approach believe that through this method poor people change their attitudes, values and work habits and become more self-reliant.

Prigoff (2000: 216) wrote that while the advantage of available financial resources for the upliftment of an area in economic decline cannot be denied, it is critical for the renewal of social cohesion in a poor urban or rural neighbourhood that the strengths and capabilities of community members be recognized in any assessment of community assets. The contributions of nature and unpaid human labour are vital aspects of the true wealth of nations or communities. They are the foundations of reciprocal economies, immensely valuable and productive assets for the accomplishments of many tasks of community reconstruction. “Asset building” may be defined to include all a community’s potential resources. This means that not only financial holdings are taken into account but also the talents and skills of community members. When a community lacks basic amenities – housing, sewerage, drainage, communications, electricity, running water, proper roads and transport, schools and hospitals, it is crucial to address

this issue. A clear example of this is that proper roads and transport facilities are needed to enable people to attend an education facility or visit a health clinic or deliver a child to a pre-school. These amenities are crucial components to build upon creating not only financial assets but also human capital in the form of skills development and training (Gannon, Gwilliam, Liu and Malmberg Calco, 2001: 1). Community assets therefore contribute to the creation and sustainability of individual assets.

Quality of life depends on opportunities to be part of a society. This is not possible when communities and individuals are locked in poverty, unemployment and illiteracy. Real empowerment and capacity building come from active participation in the economic, social and political life of any given society. Without individual and community assets, this is not possible. Besthorn (2003: 88) contributed a valuable perspective in this regard when he stated the following: "...and, social work must also begin to stand together with other professionals, community associations, grassroots organizations and global advocacy groups to facilitate collective empowerment – to assist marginalized peoples everywhere to gain access to needed change that refosters commitment to the health and wellbeing of human communities and ecological systems".

According to Prigoff (2000: 216), John McKnight and John Kretzmann were the leaders in the field of "Asset Mapping". Concepts and asset mapping techniques are valuable tools for the implementation of a strengths perspective. It is of equal importance as an approach to social work practice. In the United States, like in many other parts of the world, plant closings, corporate downsizing and the drastic reduction of industrial and construction jobs devastated many communities (Rifkin in Prigoff, 2000: 6). The asset mapping approach focuses on assessment of community capabilities and resources. This is an approach where low-income areas are not seen exclusively in terms of the social and economic problems and difficulties, but the asset mapping approach facilitates the development of strategies to build on the strengths within the community. In the

words of McKnight and Kretzmann (in Prigoff, 2000: 217): “The process of identifying capacities and assets, both individual and organizational, is the first step on the path toward community regeneration. Once this new “map” has replaced the one containing needs and deficiencies, the regenerating community can begin to assemble its assets and capacities into new combinations, new structures of opportunity, new sources of income and control, and new possibilities for production”.

Prigoff (2000: 217) stipulated that the primary building blocks for the rebuilding of neighbourhoods are the individual and organizational strengths within a specific community, which included the following elements:

- Individual Assets
  - Skills, talents and experiences of community members
  - Individual businesses
  - Home-based enterprises
  - Personal income
  - Gifts of identified people
  
- Organizational Assets
  - Associations of businesses
  - Citizen associations
  - Cultural organizations
  - Community organizations
  - Religious organizations

According to Prigoff (2000: 217) the secondary building blocks are assets located within the community but largely controlled by outsiders. Secondary building blocks are private, public and physical assets, which can be used for community-building purposes:

- Private and Non-Profit Organizations
  - Higher education institutions

- Hospitals
- Social service agencies
  
- Public Institutions and Services
  - Public schools
  - Police
  - Libraries
  - Fire departments
  - Parks
  
- Physical resources
  - Energy and waste resources
  - Vacant land, commercial and industrial structures, housing

McKnight and Kretzmann (in Prigoff, 2000: 218) urged that in any given community an existing organization should be found to lead the community-building process by facilitating the community involvement and by building bridges to outside resources. In their opinion social workers should take up this task. McKnight and Kretzmann (in Prigoff, 2000: 218) further stated the following in this regard: "It is clear that no low-income community can "go it alone." Indeed, every neighborhood is connected to the outside society and economy. It is a mark of many low-income neighborhoods that they are uniquely dependent on outside human service systems. What they need, however, is to develop their assets and become interdependent with mainstream people, groups, and economic activity".

Nader (in Prigoff, 2000: 218) commented that nations might be considered to have two economies. In his words: "The market economy, which the economists all analyze, and the household economy of family, neighborhood and community... Many of the serious problems our society faces come from the erosion of the second economy." Prigoff (2000: 218) concurred and in her

opinion the family economy, also known as the reciprocal economy, is not acknowledged as a source of value in the accounting systems utilized in the field of economics. The assets of the family are the foundations of the family or reciprocal economy and are extremely important sources of the kinds of investments that improve communities. Where there is a deterioration of the social fabric in a community, it often is as a result of the losses of the family assets.

According to Prigoff (2000: 188) communities can be rebuilt by “creating centers of alternative, life-sustaining culture”. In her opinion such centers can rebuild a local self-sufficiency. When communities are able to control their own land and protect it from destructive development, produce much of their own food and housing, care for and educate their own children, organize local transportation and health care, and negotiate contracts for water and electricity, it is the beginning of self-reliance that is sustainable. In the words of Prigoff (2000: 188): “Organization is the essence of survival and recovery in this historic era. Self-help recovery programs and a wide range of social services will be in demand”.

#### **4.5.5 Expanding job training and placement to include the disabled, the mentally ill and substance abusers**

Poverty, unemployment and disability are closely linked and have a detrimental impact on the level of inclusion in society and its overall development. In this respect Turmusani provided an important contribution in summarizing the links between poverty and disability. In the words of Turmusani (2003: 1): “Poverty leads to disability resulting in diseases and impairments. Equally true, disability leads to poverty in the sense that those with impairments will engender extra cost of living related to their specific needs”. Poverty, like other consequences of discrimination within a society, restricts disabled people’s rights and undermines their ability to fulfil their personal and social responsibilities. Poverty is not always the cause of disability but the symptom and the outcome of a disabling society,

by way of social exclusion and unemployment. The draft rural development strategy of the World Bank (2002) (in Turmusani, 2003: 2) recognized poverty as a factor causing ill health and disability especially in rural areas. It is clear that poverty affects people's health and can be the cause of an impairment and disability. Turmusani (2003: 2) referred to the data supplied by UNESCO (1995) and UNICEF (1998) where the relationship is shown between poverty and malnutrition, i.e. there are 100 million people globally with impairments caused by malnutrition and 200,000 children become blind every year as a result of Vitamin A deficiency. Iodine deficiency, which causes mental retardation, is widespread in rural areas of Jordan. In addition, weakened bodies can be prone to diseases, which in turn can lead to more impairment. This kind of deprivation is the everyday experience of millions of people in many developing countries.

Turmusani (2003: 1) emphasized that poverty alleviation is a key solution in preventing disability directly and indirectly, especially in countries with low resources such as in developing world where there is often very little in the form of welfare provision to cater for the needs of disadvantaged groups including those with impairments. Various measures can be considered as strategies in fighting widespread poverty amongst disabled people. This primarily includes different kinds of remunerated employment schemes as well as policies, legislation and welfare provisions. Turmusani mentioned that all these strategies together may facilitate the creation of an inclusive society, which allows disabled people to develop their economic potential and thereby enhancing their independent life. Unfortunately, although there is a growing awareness of the contribution disabled people make to life in a society, too often development plans do not include their interests with regard to education, training and employment. Turmusani (2003: 3) stated that because disabled people are seen as unable to contribute to the economy due to their functional limitations, they are being excluded from the market place and therefore suffer social and economic deprivation. This situation can be rectified by the provision of vocational training, placement services, and informing the disabled about the availability of aid. This

author (Turmusani, 2003: 9) suggested various economic strategies to assist the disabled:

- Self-employment: the development of a small business would involve training disabled people in small business development in order to plan their income generation activities in a structured, disciplined way; to assist disabled people in setting up their own income-generating activities, it is necessary for governments and non-governmental organisations to introduce loan and micro-credit mechanisms.
- Direct job placement: this involves helping disabled people find a suitable job opportunity and is most suitable for people who have vocational skills and experience in the form of technical or administrative skills.

Fadila Lagadien, a disability rights movement activist argues passionately for the rights of disabled people in the labour market. In her own words she states her case as follows: “My MBA dissertation is going to be to build a business case for the employment of disabled people. It’s not about charity, it’s not about social responsibility, it’s not about doing us a favour. It’s showing businesses you can make more money if you employ disabled people. I don’t want them to see it as their social responsibility, because then we never gonna advance. We might enter into the workplace, but we will never advance” (Rowland, 2003: 16).

Overcoming the problems of disabled people has to be addressed through two main types of action. The first is the improvement of the quality of training. The development of new employment skills and qualifications are extremely important. The second type of action includes job creation, in particular through new partnerships with all sectors of the labour market to ensure equal opportunities for suitably qualified disabled people. Self-employment schemes can be an important mechanism in fighting poverty among disabled people.

Individuals with developmental and physical disabilities can face enormous challenges. People with physical or learning disabilities have not only to deal with



a disability but the social and environmental barriers, which can prevent them from playing a full part in the economy. Unemployment, underemployment and exploitation and low pay are very often still the norm for disabled people and are changing too slowly. A valid argument is that employers have miscalculated the value of disabled workers. Another point of view is that disabled workers are an untapped source of labour. The organisation “Creative Research Education and Training Enterprise South Africa” (CREATE SA) ([sa]: 1) argued that in many ways the negative representations of disability have become more disabling than disability itself. CREATE SA stated in this regard: “For a long time, South African media and advertising agencies have perpetuated the stereotyping of disabled people, in the process fuelling prejudices and myths regarding disability that have resulted in the exclusion of some of the most gifted people from contributing to the necessary process of nation-building”. Negative perceptions of disabled people, based on fear, ignorance and denial can only harm the participation of disabled people as citizens and community members.

According to Thornton and Lunt (1998: 1) the last two decades have seen disability issues occupy an increasingly prominent place on the policy agenda. This included particular policy arenas – education, health, and housing, transport – as well as discussions around anti-discrimination and human rights legislation that embrace disability on a number of fronts. These authors stated that in recent years employment opportunities for disabled people have been elevated as a matter of policy concern. Work opportunities are perceived as central to an individual’s self-worth and are crucial in ensuring a person has sufficient income to participate within the wider society. In policy terms, securing appropriate employment for disabled people has become less of a welfare and health issue and more of a labour market concern. In South Africa unemployment for the able bodied and the disabled population has become a dire reality. Finding jobs for the disabled in a country where all those employed in the industrial and service sectors are facing problems, is naturally not easy.

Thornton and Lunt (1998: 4) pointed out that deinstitutionalisation and changing conceptions of work present new challenges. Individuals with learning or psychiatric disabilities often had services provided through sheltered employment workshops with the focus on manufacturing tasks. These authors stated that this type of work is disappearing and are only found to be well organised in a few countries, for example Sweden, Netherlands, Germany and France.

Thornton and Lunt (1998: 4) stated that supported employment is defined as competitive, employer-paid work and continuing on-the-job support to those that needed it to maintain employment. It was initially developed in the United States of America and followed in Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. Supported employment initiatives are also proliferating across the European Union. These authors emphasised that there is no single model of supported employment and often, different approaches operate side-by-side.

For many years social workers have served as rehabilitation workers, medical social workers, or case managers working with disabled clients to provide support and assist them to access resources and lead if possible more productive lives. The social work profession does offer community support services for people with persistent mental illness and disability. Services include: supported housing, vocational training and job placement, case management, assessment and treatment planning, crisis intervention, counselling, and development of interpersonal and life skills.

Midgley and Tang, (2001: 249) wrote that employment programmes also involve job creation, particularly for those who cannot cope in the open labour market. Sheltered employment facilities or special arrangements with employers have been effectively used in the past. Although these programmes are expensive and often operate at a loss, it is possible to make them profitable. Also, they have a positive impact on the self-esteem and work habits of clients. In addition, increasing use has been made of public-sector employment opportunities, and

recipients have also been assigned to work in various service programmes in exchange for income benefits.

Midgley (1996: 23) wrote that cooperative ventures are particularly well suited to special-needs clients such as the mentally ill or the physically disabled who derive strength from working in a mutually supportive environment. Job opportunities for substance abusers are particularly difficult. Chemical dependency is a diagnosable and treatable disease that affects not only the patient but also family members. Substance abuse, treatment and prevention programs have been the domains of social workers for many years. Social isolation, loss of self-esteem and dependence on family members are real issues in the lives of substance abusers.

Cannon (2000: 3) described the excellent work done by the entrepreneurial nonprofit organization called “Pioneer Human Services” in Seattle, Washington, United States of America. Since the early 1960s the organization has been providing the needy with training, employment counseling and most important, jobs in Pioneer’s machine shops and other businesses. The organization was originally formed to assist former prisoners in finding job opportunities after release from prison. It now serves some 6000 clients/customers a year on a budget of \$55 million. Its 10 business enterprises include a stylish cafe, two manufacturing plants, one of which produces cargo bays for the company Boeing. Pioneer has some 1000 people on its payroll, most of them ex-offenders or people with alcohol and drug problems. The President and Chief Executive Officer Mike Burns described their approach as follows: “We have a double bottom line. First, we run a surplus each year, which is important. And there’s our mission, which is to give a second chance to people who are on the margins of society, usually ex-offenders or those with chemical addiction problems who are in recovery. We give them this second chance by offering housing, counselling, jobs and training”.

Social workers in partnership with other disciplines, i.e. the medical profession, occupational therapy and psychology are in a position to play a supportive role in encouraging substance abusers to enter and re-enter the labour market. Working together as a multi-disciplinary team they could broaden and increase the job placements and locations for substance abusers and disabled people.

In summary it is fair to say that an overall objective should be to enhance the economic participation of the disabled and in every way possible support their access to training and to constructive, well paid job opportunities. Disability concerns should be incorporated into macro, socio-economic planning processes to ensure that disabled people's rights are taken into account.

#### **4.5.6 Facilitating economic participation through productive employment, self-employment and the creation of cooperatives**

The economic reality of the world has forced many governments, non-governmental organisations and social service providers to reconsider their role in development. Social workers can be instrumental in change and development by acting as partners, catalysts and facilitators in securing an improved economic environment for disadvantaged people.

Job opportunities and income-generating activities are extremely important for human productivity and self-esteem. The loss of job opportunities in commerce and industry has severely complicated the task of the social worker in assisting individuals and communities to better their own lives. In 1996 Jeremy Rifkin, author of "The End of Work" wrote that global unemployment has reached its highest level since the depression of the 1930s. Based on 1994 data more than 800 million people were unemployed or underemployed. In his own words: "That figure is likely to rise sharply between now and the turn of the century as millions of new entrants into the workforce find themselves without jobs, many victims of a technology revolution that is fast replacing human beings with machines in

virtually every sector and industry in the global economy...Already, millions of workers have been permanently eliminated from the economic process, and whole job categories have shrunk, been restructured, or disappeared” (in Prigoff, 2000: 5). Lombard (2003: 2) provided an important contribution in offering a perspective as to the reasons for the emergence of more entrepreneurs in the current socio-economic climate: “With retrenchment packages and corporate downsizing being facts of life, many entrepreneurs find themselves thrust into the role by default. Money from retrenchment packages is often used to start entrepreneurial activities. However, it is not those who lost their jobs that find themselves in the entrepreneur role by default. In Africa, specifically, there are socially excluded people who have no jobs or income because they simply have no access to job opportunities. These too, are entrepreneurs by default since they simply have no other choice but to find a way to make ends meet”.

Social workers need to acknowledge the economic realities of the new century and invest their time and knowledge in creative thinking and networking for strategies to deal with growing unemployment and the social costs of poverty.

Narayan (2002: 249), in a discussion of institutional innovations to support micro and small enterprises, stated that many governments of developing countries perceived micro, small, and medium enterprises (SMMEs) as engines of employment, poverty alleviation, and broad-based economic growth. Growth and development of SMEs in developing countries can increase poor people’s opportunities, security, and empowerment. (Compare Mupedziswa, 1996: 52.) According to McBroom (1999: 5) one of the pillars of Midgley’s “seven-point plan” for social investment is to encourage people to become self-employed by creating a micro-enterprise. This implies that the social worker could assist the client in obtaining a micro-enterprise loan, or support the person in becoming part of establishing a cooperative. Lombard (2003: 3) referred to the fact that often people do have the potential to become entrepreneurs, but do not have access to credit, knowledge and skills to put an entrepreneurial idea into action. (Compare

Raheim, 1996: 79.) Raheim (1996: 69) pointed out that micro-enterprise development among social work clients forms an important element in new thinking about social welfare. In her opinion, micro-enterprises created opportunities for clients to engage in productive self-employment which will restore self-respect, facilitate self-reliance and above all transform a condition of dependency to one of self-sufficiency in which clients no longer consume scarce public resources but instead contribute positively to their own and the community's well-being.

Midgley (1996: 22), drawing on his previous work (1984; 1989), stated that social workers have accumulated a good deal of experience in this field and many Third World countries have used social workers to assist special needs clients to participate in vocational educational programmes to find employment.

Social programs can contribute to economic development by assisting low-income people and welfare clients to find productive employment or self-employment. Rather than using scarce resources to maintain needy people on income transfers, the social development approach favours programs that help them to find employment or become self-employed. In this way, they not only earn money but also become self-respecting citizens who work, pay taxes and contribute to economic development. It is estimated that more than 500 million poor people worldwide operate profitable micro- and small enterprises, yet less than four percent receive financial services from sources other than moneylenders or friends and family.

Prigoff (2000: 195) emphasized that in the past, community development as addressed by social workers had focused primarily on the social and health needs of communities. In this author's opinion the recent decline of public commitment to the funding of social services in the United States of America, made it clear that community organizations in areas confronting reduced resources will need to develop income-generating projects in addition to the more

traditional forms of community service. Economic security is a priority need in every community. In Prigoff's opinion (2000: 201) social workers need to understand the critical role of economic assets in the physical and mental health of individuals, families, and communities with whom they engage. The involvement of the social worker in the economic development of a community and its members needs to be actively promoted. One aspect of community economic development would be to examine needs and goals, strengths and capabilities, and developing plans to turn potential assets into realistic sources of dependable support. Self-sufficiency for the family and the local neighbourhood are important economic goals. Pantoja and Perry (in Prigoff, 2000: 200) have extensive experience in community economic development in Puerto Rico. Their contribution to the discussion is extremely valuable: "Social work professionals, on the front line of community work, have to become knowledgeable about the economic processes that convert natural and human resources into the goods and services that can create business development and employment opportunities, equity capital funds, and physical infrastructure development. Although we may not be able to do all the work needed, we remain a profession vital to the processes of development, and the challenge is before us". Prigoff (2000: 200) emphasised that skills in program administration, training and supervision prepare social workers to function as managers, and therefore helping communities mobilize to achieve their own goals. There are a number of important tasks where the knowledge and skills of the social worker can be valuable. Social workers can facilitate the planning process for decisions on production schedules, production methods, and marketing campaigns; they can establish accounting procedures to measure anticipated revenues against fixed and variable costs and to generate wages and profits for the project; and, they can also contribute to community economic development as technicians and consultants.

From an entrepreneurial point of view, the challenge for community members who want to develop an income-generating project is to envision and then

develop a product or service that meets unmet needs of present and future populations (Prigoff, 2000: 209). All income-generating opportunities need to be considered by and for members of a community that does not produce sufficient income. In Prigoff's opinion (2000: 222) adults and young people without income-generating roles are at risk of becoming marginalised and abandoned unless networks of mutual exchange, which are features of a reciprocal economy, are activated and well established. Lombard (2003: 5) emphasised that the entrepreneurial route of community economic development is not only restricted to income generation, but it is also about developing people and their environment, alleviating poverty and thus creating improved circumstances for all involved.

The motivation for social workers to become involved with income-generating activities is obvious. The implications for human development because of an absence of food, shelter and other life-sustaining resources are extremely negative. Economic needs are essential to human existence. Economic participation via employment is also important because of the social value attached to "making your own way". Social workers are in a position to facilitate processes of participatory problem-solving, through planning and action. Social workers could assist the entrepreneur in marketing his or her merchandise, analyse the position of competition in a particular area and support the entrepreneur with maintaining a balanced approach to the business. Health and safety aspects of any new entrepreneurial venture are important for the individual concerned as well as for the community where the business is situated.

Livermore (in Prigoff, 2000: 222) provided a valuable perspective on the contribution that social workers could make to the promotion and development of micro-enterprises as a social development strategy. In the words of Livermore: "Social workers are uniquely placed to assist in micro-enterprise development programs targeted at low-income people because the profession has extensive experience of serving impoverished populations and the skills required to



implement the components of these initiatives....On the psychological level, social work assessment skills are invaluable in assisting client and program staff to identify assets and limitations to successful functioning in a business environment. Once a clear assessment is made, social workers can act as case managers, assisting clients to utilize their strengths and remediating their weaknesses by fostering the development of goals and plans of action.... Although economic development is foreign to many social workers, the profession has a number of skills that can also contribute to this task. In the initial effort to begin a micro-enterprise development program, for instance, social workers can be used to advocate for legislation favourable to the operation of such businesses.... Another role for social workers during the preliminary stages of program development could involve building relationships with financial institutions so that they are aware of the program and more disposed to provide financing". It is clear from the discussion that social workers can adopt a number of roles to assist clients in participating in the labour market as well as initiating their own income-generating ventures.

Authors like Livermore, Midgley and Prigoff emphasised that micro-enterprise development is not the sole solution to the dilemma of poverty, but it can serve as a component of a strategy to promote social development within the context of economic development efforts to better the lives of all people in a community. Raheim (1996: 80) supported this view and stated in this regard: "The idea that micro-enterprises offer a panacea for poverty and deprivation must be dispelled. Indeed, social workers need to emphasize that extensive social supports are needed to improve the well-being of the poor through micro-enterprise development". Sanders (2001: 2) concurred with this perspective and added to the discussion by stating the following: "This is not to say that micro-enterprise may not play a vital role in community development initiatives. However, the role should be carefully examined. Additionally, income gained through self-employment may play a critical role in the income package of poor families. Faced with limited economic opportunity and poor job prospects, poor families

commonly combine multiple sources of income to make ends meet”. It is important that the development of micro-enterprises form part of an overall economic development package.

Nancy Rose is another social worker calling for more content on economics in social work education. Together with Prigoff their reasons were the following: “..analysis of the implications of economic globalization and recognition that few social workers possess even a rudimentary knowledge of economics..” (Prigoff, 2000: 256-257). Prigoff emphasized that many social workers have contributed to the profession’s readiness to shift towards reframing the professional role as that of a helping agent, including a focus on economic development. In her opinion there is growing awareness that the traditional focus on interpersonal issues in work with clients is not necessarily the client’s priority when there is a lack or total absence of basic requirements to keep a family fed, safe and warm. In the United States a change in the social work curriculum occurred after federal legislation replaced the entitlement program of Assistance of Families with Dependent Children with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. Social workers are now expected to help families and communities mobilize and develop their own economic resources (Prigoff, 2000: 258 and Macarov, 1991: 112).

In Prigoff’s opinion (2000: 76) social work education in social policy has sometimes failed to prepare students to understand the rather decisive differences between different political perspectives within societies and which differentiate the goals and agendas of political opponents. The study of interest groups, the resources available to them, goals, and objectives, and the outcomes of their political struggles can provide answers to questions about who benefits from policies and who loses.

Prigoff (2000: 223) stated that, based on the values, concepts and training of their profession, social workers are uniquely prepared to organize and facilitate the renewal of a reciprocal economy and to mobilize financial resources to

strengthen that endeavour through creation of new collaborative community-business partnerships with high standards of ethical conduct. In her opinion social workers function well as partners with communities in projects of economic development because they invest their time, energy, and creative thinking in the tasks required to protect and to promote healthy life.

Mupedziswa (1996: 52) added a very important dimension to the debate on the establishment of income-generating activities with regard to people living with AIDS and HIV. According to this author, in Zimbabwe emphasis is placed on removing people infected with the HIV virus from hospital settings into their homes, and promoting the home-based care of such patients. He emphasised that often people with HIV lose their jobs, not only because they are too weak to work but because of prejudice. Social workers have played a significant role in helping these people start income-generating projects, which enable them to be self-reliant.

According to a World Bank research report HIV/AIDS causes far greater long-term damage to national economies than previously assumed. (Compare Beresford, 2001: 1 and Fourie and Schönsteich, 2002: 17.) The disease is robbing the children of AIDS victims of one or both parents to love, raise and educate them, and so undermines the basis of economic growth over the long haul. The suggestion is made in this report that a country like South Africa could face progressive economic collapse within several generations unless it combats its AIDS epidemic more urgently (World Bank Group, 2003: 1). According to the report "The Long-run Economic Costs of AIDS: Theory and an Application to South Africa" most studies of the macroeconomic costs of AIDS, do not pay enough attention to the way in which human knowledge and potential are created and can be eroded. Shanta Devarajan, co-author of the abovementioned report and Chief Economist of the World Bank's Human Development Network, stated in this regard: "Previous estimates overlooked the impact of HIV/AIDS on children if one or both parents die, how they suddenly become orphans, how they

become vulnerable to dropping out of school, and how in this way, the disease weakens the ability of today's generation to pass on skills and knowledge to the next" (World Bank Group, 2003: 1). Kofi Annan (2002: 1) agreed with this sentiment and stated in this regard: "But today, as AIDS is eroding the health of Africa's women, it is eroding the skills, experience and networks that keep families and communities going. Even before falling ill, a woman will often have to care for a sick husband, thereby reducing the time she can devote to planting, harvesting and marketing crops. When her husband dies, she is often deprived of credit, distribution networks or land rights. When she dies, the household will risk collapsing completely, leaving children to fend for themselves. The older ones, especially girls, will be taken out of school to work in the home or the farm. These girls, deprived of education and opportunities, will be even less able to protect themselves against AIDS".

The implications of the HIV/AIDS pandemic for the process of sustainable development and in particular for economic development are far-reaching. The South African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (2002: 1) added to this debate and described HIV infection levels in Southern Africa as the highest in the world. In Sub-Saharan Africa, HIV infection levels in the young adult population are in the region of 20%. The SARPN and the HSRC further emphasized that in Southern Africa, the rates of infection are considerably higher. One in three adults in Botswana and one in four adults in Zimbabwe and Swaziland are believed to be HIV positive, while one in five adults are infected in South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia and Zambia. AIDS is now increasingly the main cause of death of people between the age of 15 and 45 in these countries. According to the SARPN and the HSRC (2002: 2) virtually half of the populations in all southern African states are under the age of 18. Infant mortality, malnutrition and poverty indicators in countries such as Angola, Mozambique and Malawi are some of the highest in the world. These two organizations (2002: 2) further stated that the high levels of rural and urban poverty in these countries would be exacerbated by sharply rising adult mortality

and a declining capacity of the state to provide social services. In many countries already burdened by huge socio-economic challenges, AIDS/HIV threatens human well-being, developmental progress and social stability. Fourie and Schönsteich (2001: 4) echoed this sentiment and emphasized that the HIV/AIDS pandemic destabilizes societies in profound ways. (Compare Beresford, 2001: 1-4.) According to Loewenson and Whiteside (1997: 40) HIV/AIDS will have a severe impact on social development, organisation and culture. The negative impact will include losses of key people at household and organisational level who play important roles in those organisations (parents in socialisation of children, elected leaders, people with experience) while placing increasing stress on survivors. Loewenson and Whiteside (1997: 41) and Fourie and Schönsteich (2001: 4) emphasised that stresses in social systems in areas such as education and health can undermine social development at all levels and may have a strong negative impact for the future. These authors argued that economic stress has in itself created marital instability and domestic violence and undermined social cohesion.

The importance of job creation by means of micro- and small enterprises by, and for families living with HIV/AIDS cannot be overstated. This approach can provide valuable learning opportunities for the children of families facing this kind of crisis. An example of an organisation directing their time and efforts in this way is the Topsy Foundation. The Topsy Foundation in South Africa is a private and corporative initiative with its core response being to provide a multifaceted approach to HIV/AIDS. It has a holistic approach to fighting the AIDS pandemic. The Foundation has secured a large property in Grootvlei, Mpumalanga (South Africa) as the first Topsy Sanctuary. The Foundation grows its own vegetables on the land adjacent to the Sanctuary. Vegetables and fruit are for the consumption of those at the Sanctuary and also for the surrounding communities as supported by their various outreach programmes. The area surrounding the Sanctuary is a traditionally poor area. Compounded by the fact that work is scarce, the disease prevents people from gaining access to employment when opportunities are

available. When a person affected has progressed to full-blown AIDS, looking after their immediate families in terms of food and basic health care becomes challenging. The home-based care workers provide food to those in need, ensuring that those most vulnerable are able to build up their strength and resistance to other opportunistic infections through proper nutrition. Providing food also alleviates the burden of worry with regard to children being fed.

The Topsy Foundation promotes an economic approach to caring for people living with AIDS and this includes a series of training programmes, designed to help alleviate poverty and increase skills development and education. These projects have also been designed to assist the Topsy Foundation to become self-sustainable. Skills training workshops at the Topsy Sanctuary include pottery, glassware, ceramics, candle making, beadwork, and sewing. Commercial capacity brick-making machines, as well as thousands of tons of crusher dust, the raw materials required to make the bricks, have been donated to the Topsy Foundation. Bricks of a high quality are currently being made and contracts for the manufacturing of over 3,5 million bricks have been secured by the Foundation. The bricks are used in the development of low-cost housing schemes in the area, providing a steady income for the Foundation. The men involved in this initiative hail from the local community and gain valuable marketable skills as well as having an income. The Food Gardens Foundation in partnership with The Topsy Foundation has provided training to families in order to empower them to start their own vegetable garden to supplement their nutritional needs. The Topsy Foundation, through its innovative and creative approach, has secured a safe haven for those living with AIDS and HIV, as well as establishing a sound economic enterprise (The Topsy Foundation document, 2003).

Bell (in World Bank Group, 2003: 2) made a valuable contribution in this regard and stated the following: "Keeping infected people alive and well, especially parents, so they can continue to live productive lives and take care of the next generation, is not only the compassionate thing to do, but it is also vital for a

country's long-term economic future". Kofi Annan (2002:2) supported this viewpoint and in his opinion large-scale, innovative ways are required to care for families with specific measures that enable children in AIDS-affected communities to stay in school. He stated emphatically that education and prevention are still the most powerful weapons against the spread of HIV/AIDS.

From the above discussion it is evident that social workers will need to be open-minded regarding the different options for clients in creating income-generating opportunities. Social workers will need to be more actively involved in the protection and promotion of poor people's rights and interests in all aspects of daily existence and respond appropriately to the ever-changing context that they are working in.

#### **4.5.7 Removing barriers to economic participation**

Economic empowerment is critical for poor people's well-being. Freedom from hunger, adequate income, and security of material assets are central issues in poor people's lives. Poverty and vulnerability will not be reduced without broad-based growth fuelled by private sector activity. Economic growth cannot be sustained if poor women and men, who may be 50 percent or more of a country's population, are excluded from optimal engagement in productive activities. Involvement of such large numbers of poor people in more productive livelihoods can only happen when a country's overall domestic investment fosters entrepreneurship, job creation, competition, and security of property or benefit rights. When a person's opportunity for employment is compromised as a result of discrimination, unfair hiring practices, or labour law violations, workers are often powerless to oppose the system. Their inability to protect their rights is often due to a lack of language skills, a low level of education and a lack of resources. These are reasons for social workers to be involved in advocating for better bargaining positions for their clients.

In Narayan's opinion (2002: 78) understanding the investment climate for micro, small, and medium enterprises is a central part of poverty reduction strategies. It is true that while the overall business climate for investment is important, micro and small enterprises face constraints and exclusion that are not automatically corrected by improvements in the macro investment climate. There is a need for "liberalization from below." Poor people are often excluded from equal access to economic opportunity, because of regulations, because they lack information, connections, skills, credit, and organization, and because of discrimination. (Narayan, 2002: 50). The barriers that prevent poor people from entering new markets need to be addressed by various stakeholders, the social worker being one that has a significant stake in this.

Understanding the business investment climate for farmers, micro-entrepreneurs, and the small and medium business is all important to inform policy change that supports economic development, and therefore increases productivity, security and empowerment. According to Narayan (2002: 52) in many developing countries, poor people work primarily in the informal sector. They manage to scrape together an existence by surviving through a patchwork of economic activities or employed by small and medium enterprises (SMMEs). The informal sector is responsible for 83 percent of new jobs in Latin America and the Caribbean and 93 percent of new jobs in Africa. In Durban, South Africa, 60 percent of the estimated 20,000 street vendors are women. (Compare Narayan, 2002: 55.) Micro, small, and medium enterprises often lack information from two sides: in information regarding their own access to markets and business-related information; secondly, a lack of information as providers of services to poor people. Narayan (2002: 52) further emphasised that the informational costs of isolation and low volume could be reduced through the formation of groups, associations, business clusters, and franchising.

Regulations, corruption, and complicated business licensing and property registration procedures limit and add costs to poor people's entrepreneurial



activity. Poor people with limited information, contacts, and cash are the least able to pursue property or business registration, or buy protection. They remain excluded or vulnerable to high levels of exploitation and harassment.

Narayan (2002: 55) suggested various ways of improving market access of the poor:

- Diagnose and discuss overall domestic investment climate through surveys, including poor people's micro-entrepreneurial activities.
- Understand the constraints felt by poor entrepreneurs and their associations and networks.
- Understand the constraints felt by private providers in targeting the poor.
- Identify strategies for overcoming disadvantages of small size and distance from formal institutions.
- Promote dialogue between poor people's organizations, government officials and policymakers, and the private sector to initiate pro-poor regulatory change and encourage innovation in the private sector.
- Provide graduated subsidies to broker new linkages between poor people and their organizations, on the one hand, and markets and formal financial systems, on the other hand, with provision primarily by private sector actors.
- Consider ways of increasing poor people's access to information technology.

Narayan (2002: 57 and 78) also proposed certain key steps to overcome the barriers of small size and the isolation of micro-entrepreneurs, namely:

- Clarify property rights
- Strengthen membership-based groups, organizations, and networks of poor people: one of the most important and most overlooked development assets is the capacity of poor people to mobilize and organize for collective action. Membership-based organizations and networks of poor people have emerged in many places in response to the common needs of specific groups: rural producers, home-based workers, slum dwellers,

indigenous people, and landless workers. Poor people's organizations have the potential to play important roles in improving and expanding access to markets and opportunities.

- Educate and link groups with formal financial systems and service providers
- Support the creation of business clusters: In order to better compete in the marketplace, micro-enterprises in the same or related industries can form business collectives. Partnerships among businesses in geographic proximity are called "clusters", while businesses that team up to work on a joint development objective are called "networks." The term "networking" characterizes the overall process of building business relationships, whether through clusters or networks. Partnerships can reduce costs for individual enterprises when for example raw materials are purchased.
- Use information technology to connect people to each other and to markets
- Support changes in regulatory framework to encourage the sector to provide services to the poor
- Create incentives for the private sector to develop new products and organizations to "downscale" services; upgrade semiformal institutions and create new microfinance institutions; and franchise services and innovate to reach large producer organizations.

Prigoff (2000: 251) emphasised that social workers do understand that low-income individuals and families need constant care in order to be contributing members of society. In Prigoff's own words (2000: 252): "But they, along with the middle-income recipients of dismissal notices do need genuine opportunities to be productive, and that often means that they require training and education, childcare, affordable housing, transportation, youth programs, health insurance, realistic job placement, and a living wage". Macarov (1991: 114) wrote that increasingly social workers would have to deal with people ready, willing and able to work but for whom there simply are no job opportunities. These people

will live their lives with part-time or temporary jobs, and more often than not, unable to find secure, full-time, decent-paying employment at all. Social workers will need to view unemployment and the ways of addressing this, from a new perspective. Macarov (1991: 116) further provided valuable insight in this regard: “Meeting that challenge will require social workers to undergo a wrenching reorientation concerning the meaning of work and life – a reorientation that will necessitate use of all the instruments of socialization currently used to prepare social workers for their profession”. (Compare Buthelezi, 2002: 18.)

South Africa has made a commitment to a developmental social welfare approach, the aim of which is to build a self-reliant nation in partnership with all stakeholders. This will be achieved through an integrated social welfare system which maximises its existing potential, and which is premised on principles of equity, sustainability, access and people-centeredness (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997). As previously stated in chapter 3, a broad definition of poverty extends beyond income or consumption to include inequality, health, education, and vulnerability. These dimensions of poverty in turn impact the elements of well-being: security, empowerment and opportunity.

#### **4.5.8 Creating a social climate conducive to development**

According to Midgley (1999: 15) many economists recognize that economic development does not only depend on conventional economic inputs such as capital, labour, and human skills, but also on the wider social and political context in which development takes place. It is quite obvious that political instability, civil conflict, and institutionalised corruption have been a major cause of economic stagnation in many parts of the world. Many economies have been devastated by conflict. In Africa today, Zimbabwe, Burundi and Liberia are sadly examples of such devastation. Midgley (1999: 15) referred to Yugoslavia as a case in point. Economically viable regions of the former Yugoslavia have been desolated and reduced to poverty by social disintegration. Midgley continued to elaborate on the

destruction of local economies in the United States of America, where crime, violence and social disintegration have succeeded in destroying communities. Midgley wrote that the extraordinary degree of crime and violence in the United States of America is expensive both in human and economic terms. The costs of wasted human resources associated with crime, drug abuse, violence, and the other manifestations of distorted development that characterize the country's economic growth are huge and a major threat to sustained long-term progress. Unemployment not only carries high social costs but also reduces consumption among the unemployed that in turn depresses demand with resulting wider negative economic effects. Palmary (2001: 2) emphasized recent international research, highlighting a few identifiable risk factors that contribute to high levels of crime. These include:

- Poverty and unemployment deriving from social exclusion particularly from the youth.
- Dysfunctional families with uncaring and incoherent parental attitudes, violence and parental conflicts.
- Social valuation of a culture of violence.
- Presence of facilitators such as firearms and drugs.
- Discrimination and exclusion deriving from sexist, racist or other forms of oppression.
- Degradation of urban environments and social bonds.
- Inadequate surveillance of places and availability of goods that are easy to transport or sell.

According to Palmary the youth should be a primary and essential focus for crime prevention. Many of the factors that lead to crime are ones that require early intervention.

Roopa [sa] wrote that South Africa's struggle for freedom before the watershed elections of 1994 was predominantly a struggle for civil and political rights. After 1996 with the adoption of the country's Constitution and Bill of Rights, the

struggle for freedom has largely shifted to a struggle for socio-economic rights. According to Roopa [sa] the extent of unemployment in South Africa and elsewhere is such that its negative externalities call for going beyond basic needs satisfaction, to considerations of the broader association between employment and human dignity. Sen (in Roopa, [sa]) made a strong case for the negative externalities of unemployment to be addressed through coordinated government action and states that: "There is plenty of evidence that unemployment has many far-reaching effects other than loss of income, including psychological harm, loss of work motivation, skill and self-confidence, increase in ailments and morbidity, disruption of family relations and social life, hardening of social exclusion and accentuation of racial tensions and gender asymmetries". Roopa [sa] emphasised that a lack of employment is a major contributing factor that gives rise to insecurity and vulnerability, the latter itself seen as a form of poverty. South Africa's notoriously high crime rate may to a large degree be due to high and rising unemployment, especially since the South African population is a predominantly young one.

The need for a strategy that reduces the high social costs and enhances economic participation is only too obvious. Creating a social climate conducive to development seeks to achieve a number of important objectives, namely:

- Promote entrepreneurship.
- Encourage innovation.
- Foster a commercial and regulatory environment in order for business ventures to flourish.
- Improve the financial environment for businesses.
- Improve the access to markets.
- Promote the cooperation between enterprises.
- Through education and life-long learning seek to develop entrepreneurship as a life skill.

In conclusion, Keeton (2001: 3) provided a very valuable perspective on sustainable development, namely: “ Development is not about solving problems and eliminating need. Rather it is about helping tap new resources and direct energies to better address existing problems. Poverty cannot be engineered away or eliminated by direct assault. It is chipped away slowly by people themselves rather like the Berlin Wall, the focus of decades of military investment, that was simply taken down brick by brick when ordinary people sensed they had the space, the confidence and the courage to confront it. Big social problems seem to demand commensurately big solutions. However, looking for them is counterproductive, as they do not exist. For when the bulldozers and the planners go home from a major development project, as they inevitably must, the people remain. The only question is whether the intervention has been sustainable – has left them in a better position to deal with their own circumstances and continue living their own lives, or not”.

By promoting sustained economic development and encouraging participation in the productive economy among all sections of the population, social development seeks to minimize costs. The social work profession will be instrumental in creating such a climate by assisting the client population with skills development, creating social and economic networks and actively supporting all efforts to better living conditions with advice and motivation.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

“Some people see things as they are  
and say “why”?

We dream things that never were  
and ask “why not”?

(Bernard Shaw in Jahan, 2001:1)

From the above discussion it is evident that the quality of material, social, cultural and political conditions in all communities are crucial for the development of healthy, productive individuals. The problems of absolute physical poverty pose serious obstacles to achieving prosperous communities. Prevailing negative conditions in society, which include amongst other things, a lack of basic services and employment opportunities, have led to a severe breakdown in the social fabric and social cohesion of many communities. A vibrant economy where every member of a community has the opportunity to participate in the economic, social and political dimensions of daily life is essential to sustain continuous growth and development.

A great number of subsystems within a community, such as health and social welfare, education and crime prevention, environment and political participation, depend on the strength of the economic system of that community. Healthy social systems support healthy economic systems, and vice versa. Economic activity has wide ranging impacts on social norms, values, ideals, opportunities and human well-being within a community but also within the broader society. A truly sustainable society is one where wider questions of social needs and welfare, and economic opportunity, are integrally connected to environmental concerns.

The challenge to the social work profession in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is enormous. Social workers have the tools and the training to extend the domain of the profession to include active participation in economic growth and development. Social workers can be the facilitators of community economic development and political actions that are empowering and transformational.

Development is not about giving away or handing out resources, nor is it about benefits from the trickle down effect of economic development – development is all about people taking charge of and accepting responsibility for their own well-being and progress in life. It is realistic to recognise that not all social work clients

and every member of a community can be economically active. On the other hand, so many individual clients and communities need to be actively encouraged and supported through economic empowerment and capacity building to accept that the way out of poverty is through hard work, determination and commitment. Social workers need to be open to changing circumstances for their clients and for themselves. A continuous process of learning and relearning will enable social workers to proactively address the issues of a changing environment. It is therefore significant that the social work should be part of this quest to enhance the quality of people's lives.

In summary, intervention strategies with an ecological approach where the emphasis is on transactions between people and environment, stressing the importance of linking social development and economic objectives, would be most suited to alleviating poverty. Within a sustainable development paradigm a comprehensive and integrated socio-economic strategy is advocated.

The following chapter will focus on the empirical study, exploring the perceptions and attitudes of social workers with regard to the concept sustainable development and the role, place and value of the social worker within the sustainable development paradigm.