

**A proposed multi-disciplinary and integrated model  
for managing the flow of information in development  
projects in Africa**

by

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## ABSTRACT

Assuming that Africa is serious in its intent to become a developed role player in the global world, then information and the way in which it is managed is of critical concern. This study is *inter alia* informed by the need for an interdisciplinary, holistic approach to information management integrating relevant aspects and characteristics of human beings as well as aspects of the life and culture, economy and ecology of a community with sustainable development, and by the notion that information is a crucial resource in development projects. The study responds to the acute need for trained information managers/agents in development projects and aims to develop an information management model to be used in development projects in Africa.

*Chapter one* identifies the problem to be investigated, the objectives to be attained, the research methodology to be followed, and the significance of research into development in Africa. This is placed within a theoretical framework focusing on managing information flows in developing communities.

*Chapter two* focuses on the present status of development policies and conditions in Africa. It seeks to facilitate understanding of current development initiatives, particularly where these relate to information management and its interrelationship with coordinating development agencies such as the African Union, NEPAD and the Africa Peer Review Mechanism. The importance of information management as a holistic approach to long-term sustainable development in Africa is highlighted.

*Chapter three* focuses on information management as a core concept in development. The basic management activities of the proposed integrated and multi-disciplinary model for information management are described. The use of organisational development theory in a community context is proposed as a means to integrate project management principles with the needs of communities affected by development processes and projects, so as enable communities to accept development and change.

The need for awareness of socio-cultural tensions emerging in communities during development processes is discussed in *Chapter four*. Reference is made to sixteen cultural elements guiding the activities in communities and influencing development and/or information, as well as the interaction between these during development and change processes. In this, human development is defined as a process of personal change, growth and advancement through processes involving the acquisition of knowledge, development of the capability to make decisions and to participate in the activities of a community.

*Chapter five* proposes a three-part model for information management in development, which serves as a holistic, integrated and multi-disciplinary tool for information managers and agents in development projects in Africa. The model proposes three categories of (circular) information flow during development process to ensure an all-stakeholder focus, namely, (i) initiation and introduction of the development project, (ii) strategy and management information (iii) facilitation of consultation processes in the communities with subsequent inclusion of local and indigenous knowledge. The chapter indicates that the facilitation of the circular flow of information is a main responsibility of the information manager.

*Chapter six* evaluates the contribution of the study and identifies new opportunities to further the objectives of this study.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

#### 1.1 Background and orientation

According to the United Nations (UNDP, 2001), the apparently rapid internationalisation of national economies is affecting the everyday life of billions of people around the world - economically as well as culturally, geographically, scientifically and technologically. As a result, the cultural offer of the world is increasing and national borders are becoming less and less important. The tourist industry is growing rapidly; scientific cooperation and access to inventions are expanding and the 'borderless' information technology (IT) and Internet, through its increasing influence on public opinion, are contributing to the shrinking of distance between individuals.

The UNDP (idem) moots that globalisation is neither governed by fate nor is it a consequence of the actions of invisible powers. Rather, it is the result of deliberate decisions made by, and the positive developmental ambitions of, governments and international organisations. Governments view economic cooperation and other forms of international interaction as avenues to better living conditions for all humankind, including *that* half of humanity still living in materially poor conditions. Government views are also influenced by ecological considerations, such as the existence of natural resources and a belief that, while the future of the earth cannot be guaranteed, the best chance of doing so lies in the close cooperation of all nations and countries or, at least their willingness to do so. Allied to these notions is the assumption that the maintenance of peace and global security would increase if nations were economically, socially and culturally inter-dependent.

Global operations are typically based on and controlled by sets of national and international rules. Ultimately, however, the form and contents of such operations are determined by the views and values of company owners and/or managers while the views of consumers determine whether or not a particular company will prosper or founder (UNDP, 2001). Acknowledging differences in the orientation and/or agendas of nations, managers, owners and consumers, the UNDP has adopted a holistic and integrated approach to the management of information. Directing this approach is the aim to forge a pattern of thinking that would result not only in the interaction of culture, economy and ecology with other developmental elements but would also accord each of these equal status and importance.

Central to this holistic, integrated approach is the realization that information is a crucial resource in development projects, not only as regards the sharing of objectives but also as regards the choice of project methodology, processes and procedures. Implied in this realization is an acceptance of the fact that not only information specialists in the IT or library environment would qualify as *information managers or agents*; rather, the term would apply to any role player or stakeholder tasked with the collection, processing or dissemination of information of any kind, that is, project leaders, development engineers, social workers, town planners and even construction workers.

Given the broad applicability of the term, 'information manager', Boon (1992) argues that there is a dire need to train dedicated information managers/agents to ensure



that all stakeholders will have access to the requisite information as and when they need it. Their argument is especially pertinent if one accepts as a premise that information management would, in normal developmental processes, be devolved to a range of role players, and that *any person* who accepts responsibility for the management of information during development projects should, therefore, be trained in information management. An analysis of existing guidelines for development programmes - including those of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the UNDP – indicates that this is not currently the case. Prescribed processes for the dissemination of information are limited to presentations and reporting and, even then, detailed information is only required on 'traditional' research and development foci like environmental issues, climatic patterns or financial matters.

Development agents and developing communities should constantly ask themselves whether or not many of the elements involved in a truly multi-disciplinary information structure are simply ignored in development project information circles, perhaps due to the lack of tested guidelines. It would seem as if it is only when implementation problems occur that crucial elements, like local and indigenous knowledge, are acknowledged and, perhaps, accommodated. Even then, community consultation becomes a means of persuading/convincing the communities concerned to become part of the development project, with administrative role players being given the responsibility of preparing community satisfaction ratings for one reason only – because they have to be included in the financial reporting process. Consequently, information managers are seldom even considered as part of project management teams and training them for information management is not a priority.

Even if the ultimate impact of the information revolution turns out to be something less than the current excitement suggests, it is likely to have a profoundly positive spin-off on the economy and society. Ironically, the spin-off is less likely to benefit those who need it most, mainly because of the unequal distribution of information and concomitant information technology across the world (World Bank, 1998).

These findings are particularly pertinent to development work in Africa given the crucial role played by the immediacy, relevance and trustworthiness of information in the establishment and maintenance of credible African leadership structures. With the formation of the African Union in June 2002, in Durban, South Africa, the Continent's political leadership acknowledged that Africa was facing a range of grave challenges, the most urgent of which are the eradication of poverty and the fostering of socio-economic development through democracy and good governance. Having acknowledged the challenge, the then leaders committed themselves to being just, honest, transparent, and accountable in their dealings with others; to promote participatory governance and participation in public life, and to combat and eradicate corruption, a practice they deemed to be retarding economic development and undermining the moral fabric of society (NEPAD, 2002b).

Quality leadership, notwithstanding the fact that it is a key element in the reconstruction of the African continent, will not, however, be enough to achieve the ultimate goal of an African Union. On the one hand, unity is threatened by ethnic and/or cultural conflicts, with specific groups attempting to dominate and/or exclude others on the basis of differences in values, benefits and leadership positions. On the other hand, the creation and maintenance of quality African leadership is threatened by a lack of capacity, information and structures needed to address existing problems (NIC, 2000). The reality of Africa, as reported in the UNDP Human

Development Report (2001), is that no African country falls within the category of 'high human development'. Even though Global Trends 2015 (2000) rated South Africa and Nigeria as Africa's largest economies and most dominant powers, the UNDP Human Development Report (2001) rates South Africa 94<sup>th</sup> ('medium human development') and Nigeria 136<sup>th</sup> ('low human development') out of 162 countries. Norway, on the other hand, was rated number one in the world, with the USA being rated 6<sup>th</sup>, placing both of them in the 'high human development' category.

One could therefore infer that without relevant and credible information on the one hand, and its proper management on the other, African leaders might not achieve their goal of Africa's unity, development and economical prosperity. It follows that changes to the current mindsets of communities and their leaders are only possible through the sharing of information, values, notions of quality, et cetera. It is through such sharing that African leaders might be persuaded to commit themselves to the use of a value-based evaluation framework for the assessment (internal and external) of their activities, a framework that is both holistic and balanced in terms of leadership and community representation.

## 1.2 Central statement of the problem and contribution of the study

Through this study the researcher hopes to create an acute awareness of the important role of and functions performed by dedicated information managers in development projects in general, and in Africa in particular.

The study is a response to Boon's request (1992) for the training of information agents in general. More specifically, the purpose of the study is to investigate the possibility of developing a model that could be used for the training of information agents in and for development projects. The central statement of this study is, therefore:

*To develop a holistic and integrated model that could possibly be used to manage the flow of information in development projects in Africa, with specific reference to the role of information agents.*

A number of secondary challenges will have to be addressed to support the central statement of the study. These are:

- To investigate the current status of development initiatives in Africa, with specific reference to the flow of information.
- To create an understanding of the relationship between information flow and management within a development paradigm.
- To clarify the multiplicity of variables to be considered in the flow of information within developing communities.

## 1.3 Central focus of the study

As suggested in 1.2, the central focus of the study is on the development of a proposed model that could be used to manage the flow of information in community development projects in Africa.

To this purpose, the researcher will first analyze existing models used for the packaging of information, models that address the specific needs and challenges for Africa. Then, using the results of this analysis, he will develop a holistic model that should promote interaction between management, leadership, information and

communities (*Note: Semantically, managers, leaders, information agents and communities can interact; however, management and leadership, being processes, and information, being an entity, cannot!*) The researcher will also describe some of the processes and procedures he regards as appropriate to *value-based* leadership, within *value-based* communities, through *value-based* information.

### 1.3.1 Aim and objectives of this study

The primary aim of this study is to develop a holistic information management model for use in development programmes in Africa. Such a model would have to accommodate a range of variables aimed at ensuring the successful and efficient management of information to and from developing communities in Africa.

### 1.3.2 Primary objective

Flowing from this aim is the direct objective, that is, the development of a model that could be used to manage the flow of information in *community* development projects in Africa.

In order to achieve this objective, the researcher will focus on three research questions, derived from the sub problems, namely:

- What is the current status of development initiatives in Africa with specific reference to the flow of information?
- What is the relationship between management and information flow within a development paradigm?
- What are the main variables that need to be considered in the flow of information within developing communities?

### 1.3.3 Secondary objective

An indirect objective of this study is the advocacy of a multi-disciplinary and integrated approach to information management in development projects. If it were true that the availability of information influenced the quality of leadership and that the quality of leadership were influenced by the quality of information (O` Regan, 2001), then the relationship between community leadership and information management should also form part of this study.

The need for transparent and accountable authorities in Africa to supply information and create information structures on the continent is not simply a government or leadership morality dilemma. Addressing this need requires the involvement of all stakeholders - in leadership and professional environments - and the adoption of a range of processes. Given the current emphasis on the need reorientation of African leaders one could infer that many followers are cynical about their leaders and the way they have managed information to date. Should this be so, a model that could facilitate the involvement and reconstruction of communities as holistic entities is crucial because it would enable leaders and followers to agree on objectives and values on the one hand and to interact effectively on these on the other hand.

The researcher would argue that at least three levels of information-based reorientation are necessary if the mindset of African leaders were to change.

- The first level would be a *personal awareness and understanding* of the value of information. Such awareness would have to occur within the individual as the result of a personal awareness programme.
- The second level would be *interaction between leaders and the communities/groups* they lead. Leadership roles would have to be defined in terms of leaders' proximity and ability to interact with one another without their being limited by time and/or distance.
- The third level would be *representative leadership*. Representative leaders create and/or operate in environments where leaders and followers are indirectly and mutually influenced and directed by one another, with time, distance and management of mandates being crucial elements of these relationships. This would include the election and re-election of political leaders every 4 to 5 years; the proviso that, once a mandate is given, leaders would interpret it and set priorities for the rest of their respective terms of office, and the acknowledgement that aspects such as morality, integrity and principles constitute important building blocks towards the establishment of sustainable trust and respect between leaders and those they represent.

The objectives formulated by the African Union created high standards for the recreation of Africa and raised the expectations of current and future political, business and community leaders in this regard. *Political leaders* in government structures are now required to create peaceful and orderly environments and to engage in lawful actions. *Economic/business leaders* are required to supply the basic elements for economic growth, business development and a sustainable income for households. *Civil society leaders* are expected to keep people motivated and focused on the holistic role of all to build sound, reliable and healthy communities.

The effectiveness with which each of these groups of leaders fulfils these expectations will depend directly on the quality of information the leader has available. This study reflects on ways in which such information could be shared with and/or communicated to followers and others whose lives will be influenced by the results of the decisions taken by these leaders.

#### 1.4 Research methodology and design

The *first* part of this study focuses on the identification of elements and needs that are, according to the researcher, intrinsic to the effective management of information in development projects in Africa. The *second* part focuses on the development of an information management model in which these elements and needs have been integrated.

Given the use of symbolic interactionism (Burgess, 1985) - the study of social process and meaning - as a theoretical framework, interaction must, of necessity, be 'witnessed' by the investigator (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1990), something that is possible only if the research context is 'natural' (Ary *et al.*, 1990:8) or authentic - a community or an organisation - not contrived or artificial. In this study, local government structures and community-based organisations, identified by formally elected and political structures, were used as data sources. Research participants - elected municipal ward representatives and/or appointed municipal officials - were participants in SADC workshops.

According to Neuman (2002), *social research* is conducted for many reasons: to answer practical questions; to make informed decisions; to change societies, and to gather basic knowledge about societies. In an attempt to address as many of these aspects as possible during the course of a single inquiry, the researcher has, in this study, adopted a multi-disciplinary approach – management, anthropology, information technology, psychology, communication. Having been involved in development projects in various African countries, the researcher observed social problems first-hand, entered into discussions with community leaders regarding the way they would like development projects to be conducted and reflected on ways in which both the problems and the suggestions could be accommodated in an information management model suited particularly to development projects in Africa.

Since the primary purpose of this study is the development of an information management model that takes cognizance of and/or reflects the views of role players, stakeholders and participants in community development projects, the emphasis is on *qualitative* rather than on quantitative procedures and findings. Procedures for data collection and analysis were adjusted to the purpose or matter at hand with the result that the design emerged as the study unfolded. As argued by Ary *et al* (1990), the rationale behind the design depends on the nature and types of interactions and, because important features in need of investigation cannot be known until actually witnessed by the investigator, is not fully predictable.

The researcher, being interested in interpreting human actions, institutions, events and customs with a view to constructing a “reading” or portrayal of what is being studied (Ary *et al*, 1990) will, therefore, describe development projects and their impact in *natural/authentic social contexts*, highlighting the ways in which people attach meaning to events and using motifs and/or themes as a means of explaining these (Neuman, 2002). Given the multiple perspectives obtained this way, the research findings should form a sound basis for the development of an inclusive information management model.

The focus on a particular context, Africa in this case, makes the study *contextual* in nature. The researcher identified the need for a context-specific information management model during the course of his own extensive engagement in leadership and political development work in Nigeria and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). He attended and, at times, facilitated public discussions in Africa on a range of development and leadership issues. Policy declarations, public speeches, workshops, interviews and other field data served as basis for the development of the information management model presented in this study

For the purposes of this study the researcher tried to focus on African countries that are relevant to the objectives of the study. Nigeria was chosen mainly for its accessibility via the activities of the Africa Institute for Leadership, Research and Development of which the researcher is the Executive Director and because it is Nigeria the most populated country in Africa – 121.2 million people in 2000, according to a publication by the African Union Summit in 2002 (African Souvenir, 2002) During informal discussions between the researcher and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in Nigeria in 2003, the estimated population was between 140 million and 150 million people. The figure is an estimate only because, according to the IEC source, the government of Nigeria for political reasons did not want to organise a formal census.

Informed by his own involvement in African development initiatives, the researcher decided on Nigeria and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as cases worthy of investigation. The reasons are discussed in more detail in what follows.

#### 1.4.1 Nigeria

Nigeria was chosen mainly for its accessibility via the activities of the Africa Institute for Leadership, Research and Development of which the researcher is the Executive Director and the fact that Nigeria the most populated country in Africa. According to a publication by the African Union Summit in 2002 (African Souvenir, 2002) Nigeria had 121.2 million people in 2000. In informal discussions between the researcher and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in Nigeria in 2003, the population was between 140 million and 150 million people. According to the IEC source the government of Nigeria due to political reasons did not want to organise a formal census. Nigeria was a further obvious choice, given its political history, population and current importance and status internationally status. Politically, Nigeria is Federal Republic comprising 36 states. It has a long history of military rule – and an accompanying disregard for human rights. According to the inhabitants the population is divided into more than 230 ethnic groups, with 50% claiming to be Christians and the other 50% claiming to be Muslims. At present, the Nigerian government is actively engaged in democratising and developing Nigerian society, a process that lends itself well to social research. This process started well after the Nigerian elections of 1999 but still needs to develop into a complete and strong established way of life and not only a way of electing political representatives

Another reason for the inclusion of Nigeria as a research case is the existence of research data on the changes that Nigeria has already undergone, data that could inform this study. In June 2001 the Nigerian based Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe Foundation initiated a research programme aimed, on the one hand, at gaining a better understanding of community life and of the role that information plays in the organisation and development of Nigerian villages and regions and, on the other hand, at the establishment of an Africa-based development institute that would propagate and further develop the teachings of the Nigerian-born philosopher Emmanuel Onyechere Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe.

In July 2001, a research team, under the management of the Foundation's coordinator, Mr. Michael Anyiam Osigwe, started interviewing, deliberating and consulting a cross-section of the Nigerian society across six geo-political zones of Nigeria. Research subjects included top level politicians; government functionaries at local, state and federal levels; the media; traditional rulers; community leaders; religious leaders; teachers and academics; corporate executives and captains of industry in different sectors of the economy; NGOs; rural-based cooperative societies; town unions; women organizations and their leaders whose opinion received special attention, particularly in the rural areas.

Based on the research findings, including identified needs, the Anyiam-Osigwe Foundation formally established the *Africa Institute for Leadership, Research and Development* in November 2001. Officially launched by the former South African President, Mr. F W de Klerk, and the former USA Vice President, Mr. Al Gore, in Lagos, Nigeria, the Institute, through its various training programs on democracy, political organization, and participatory citizenship as well as its efforts to involve the

business and religious communities and civil society in African Renaissance initiatives, is currently contributing to the building of an enabling environment for economic growth and social welfare in Africa. Moreover, it also aims to reawaken the values of social caring and communalism that are fundamental and unique attributes of primordial African society.

#### **1.4.2 South African Development Community**

Since the researcher had been actively involved in various development projects in the South African development Community (SADC) and could, therefore observe and experience development projects first-hand, it was regarded as another information-rich site and hence included as a case to be studied.

SADC includes, in alphabetical order, Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Republic of South Africa, Tanzania, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Between 1997 and 2000 funding was made available for a number of SADC projects, including the drafting of a study on the structure, terms of reference and modus operandi of a possible SADC Local Government Forum; development of a common directory of contact persons and institutions involved in local government in the SADC region; development of a study documenting different systems of local government in the SADC region; and a study documenting best practices in local government in the region.

During July 1999 South Africa convened the first SADC Local Government Conference, funded by NORAD (Royal Norwegian Embassy/Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) in Johannesburg. At this conference, the Ministers responsible for Local Government in the SADC region resolved to promote regional co-operation through information sharing and capacity building; the establishment of constitutional frameworks and local governance structures; investing in the development of infrastructure and sustainable service delivery; environmental planning and disaster management, and establishing partnerships for development.

Capacity Building Programmes agreed upon at the conference included, amongst others, support for the formation of national associations of local government; support for exchange programmes between local governments in the form of twinning information sharing, and sharing information. One of the key resolutions of the conference was the establishment of a Local Government Forum of Ministers in the SADC region and the creation of communication networks between Local Government practitioners in the region, both of which contributed greatly to the repository of the Regional Information Centre (RIC) on Local Government in Harare, Zimbabwe. The Ministers attending the conference recommended that such a forum should confer annually to ensure continued sharing of ideas and co-operation on local government matters.

In 2001 SADC structures were restructured, with the SADC Local Government Forum was assimilated into the activities of the Social and Human Development Directorate of SADC. This new development, and other events – e.g. the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) - highlighted new challenges that Local Governments in the SADC region had to address.

Following the conference, a Ministerial Task Team composed of Ministers from South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, supported by relevant officials, was established to investigate and recommend the terms of reference, institutional structure and modus operandi of the Forum. It was agreed that the Task Team would report back to its principals at the next meeting. The Minister for Local Government in South Africa was tasked with the responsibility to act as convener of both the Task Team and the Forum and each country serving on the Ministerial Task Team - Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe - was tasked to investigate a particular aspect pertaining to the structure and modus operandi of the Forum.

The reports resulting from these investigations were shared with regional participants at two follow-up meetings arranged by the Directorate: Research (Governance) of the South African Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), one in Lusaka, from the 27th to the 30th of November 2002, and one in Maputo, Mozambique from the 13th to the 14th of March 2003. South Africa was given the task of investigating the effects of developments in respect of SADC and the African Union (AU) on the SADC Local Government Forum. This study, which was finalized in August 2002, made certain recommendations for presentation before the Minister's meeting. The other countries submitted country studies outlining the areas of intervention per country as identified at the initial conference.

Country workshops constituted another rich source of information for this study. On 29 April 2003, at a SADC/DPLG workshop in Cape Town, participants in the SADC Local Government Capacity Building Programme agreed that workshops should be conducted in each of the SADC countries as soon as possible. Workshops were organised under the auspices of the SADC Local Government Capacity Building Programme in accordance with the NORAD/DPLG agreement. The primary purpose of these workshops would be to share the information on local government, gathered through the SADC Local Government Capacity Building Programme, with all participating countries. Each 3-day country workshop would be attended by at least 20 Local Government role players and would focus on the following four themes: The environment for Local Government in SADC; Needs analysis and practical guidelines for Local Government in SADC; Structures and Networking for Local Government in SADC, and Leadership orientation and the structuring of the SADC Regional Structure for Local Government.

The workshops started in July 2003 and by the end of April 2004 had been conducted in all the SADC countries, with the exception of Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo: Zimbabwe (11-13 July 2003); Zambia (18-20 July 2003); Swaziland (23-25 July 2003); Malawi (28-30 July 2003); Namibia (4-6 August 2003); Botswana (12-14 August 2003); Mauritius (18-20 August 2003); Tanzania (26-28 August 2003); South Africa (17-19 September 2003); Mozambique (23-25 February 2004); Lesotho (27-28 April 2004).

## **1.5 Data collection and analysis**

Data collection in qualitative research is an interactive face-to-face and time-consuming process entailing systematic fieldwork during which time a range of multi-modal strategies (observation, interviewing, recording and the coding/analysis of themes as they unfold during the course of the inquiry) are utilised. Patton (1990), while acknowledging that this is a tedious and time-consuming process, argues that it is also creative because it requires carefully considered judgements regarding the significance and meaningfulness of the data. Ensuring the trustworthiness of both



the data and the analysis are important considerations throughout if the final report is to be validated.

McMillan & Schumacher (2001) define qualitative data analysis as an inductive process of organising the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among categories. The inquirer does not wait until all the data have been collected before he begins to interpret them. From the outset of the first interview or observation, the qualitative inquirer reflects on the meaning of what he/she has heard and seen, developing hunches (working hypothesis) on the meaning and seeking to confirm or disconfirm these hunches in subsequent interviews or observations (Ary *et al*, 1990). This process of data analysis is inductive because it proceeds from data collection (data) – to hypothesis – to theory. As the inquirer reduces and reconstructs the data through the process of coding and categorisation, he aims to develop grounded theory (Ary *et al*, 1990).

In this study, data collection is done primarily primarily through document analysis - government publications as well as current Internet information related to the research theme and/or problems - and fieldwork. These sources are deemed appropriate and valuable given the topic being investigated and the fact that very little has as yet been written on the kind of interdisciplinary and integrated information management model to be developed as part of this study.

Given the qualitative and contextual nature of the inquiry, fieldwork data include not only data collected via interviews with research participants but also data emerging from ethnographic observations of participant behaviour and events/occurrences in their natural settings (White, 2005) by the researcher himself. Together, these activities should enable the researcher to uncover the assumptions and/or orientations in which processes and/or actions are embedded (Gorman & Clayton, 1998). To ensure trustworthiness, observational data and document analysis will be supplemented and/or crosschecked by means of casual interviews, either in one-on-one conversational situations or in shared group activities (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Together, these research activities should yield rich, in-depth data on the phenomena observed (Gorman & Clayton, 1998).

### 1.5.1 Interviews

According to Cohen & Manion (1982) an interview is a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining relevant information. By interviewing the other person the researcher will be able to gauge the respondent's thinking, knowledge, likes or dislikes, beliefs and attitudes. Gorman & Clayton (1998) identify the following sub-types of unstructured interviews:

- *Standardised open-ended interviews* in which the topics are specified in advance, but the wording is spontaneous. Open-ended questions allow the interviewer to probe so that s/he can clear up misunderstandings while testing the limits of the respondent's knowledge. In standardised open-ended interviews all issues are covered and responses can be compared. It is also easier for the interviewer to gather detailed and comprehensive data.
- *Informal conversational interviews* in which questions emerge from the discussion. Since the organisation and synthesis of data in interviews of this type are not straightforward, it is regarded as an exploratory way of gathering information.

With a view to being flexible while ensuring the authenticity of interview data, the researcher used an open-ended interview schedule (Cohen & Manion, 1982) that will enable interviewees to talk freely and fully concerning a particular issue, incident or relationship while the interviewer will be able to focus on what he hears (words, tone of voice) and observes (body language, facial expressions). To protect the validity of the data, the researcher will show interest in what is being said without influencing the interviewee's response in any way (Van Dalen, 1979). Interviews were conducted as part of workshops facilitated by the researcher where specific items were tabled and discussed. More informal interviews and conversations took place during breaks and after formal programmes had been concluded. In order to give greater visibility to the subjective experience of women (Neuman, 2002) and also to increase the involvement of the respondent in the research process, interviews were also conducted with women at a workshop specially organised in response to a demand by rural Nigerian women who felt excluded because the scheduled community workshop initially only included men as traditional leaders.

### **1.5.2 Observation**

Data collection in this study also included the observation and careful recording of observable phenomena and behaviour during conferences, workshops and interviews. This enabled the researcher to uncover patterns of behaviour that reflected what might otherwise have been hidden attitudes or views unconsciously affecting participants (Gorman & Clayton, 1998). In this sense, it provided useful insights into unconscious behaviour and indicated ways in which the researcher's own perceptions might have influenced his assessment of those involved in specific events.

In the sense that the researcher was an active participant in the conferences and workshops mentioned earlier, he adopted the role of a participant-observer (Croll, 1986). This involvement enabled him to better understand the meaning of social relations and social processes in those particular settings as regards the phenomenon – community development projects - being observed. These understandings were recorded in his field-notes, often as verbatim accounts of selected episodes relevant to the research questions that were being investigated (Gorman & Clayton, 1998).

### **1.5.3 Document analysis**

Document analysis included the analysis of observation notes, minutes of meetings and workshops as well as relevant governmental documents from Governments from countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). To stay focussed on the theme of this study the data was divided into relevant units and areas of meaning related to the structure of the proposed model. This method enabled the researcher to concentrate on smaller units of material while processing large amounts of diverse data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Identified categories were later integrated into the themes emerging from empirical data collected through interviews and observations.

Empirical data were coded in terms of emerging themes during and after the data collection process. Once the fieldwork had been completed, information collected from document analysis was merged into the relevant themes emerging from the empirical research and structured in terms of a research report.

## 1.6 Trustworthiness of the data

A qualitative inquirer uses a variety of procedures to check the credibility of the data being gathered and to confirm his/her developing insights or hypotheses. Among these techniques are prolonged engagement at the site and persistent observation to lend sufficient scope and depth to observation (Ary *et al*, 1990). According to Kock (1994:946), trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry is established when data are perceived to be credible, transferable and dependable rather than reliable and valid, as is the case in quantitative research. A study is credible when it presents faithful descriptions and when co-researchers or readers confronted with a specific experience can recognise or relate what they read to what they experience in their own contexts.

In this study the researcher describes his/her observations and impressions in sufficient detail and, in doing so, provides readers with an audit of events and interventions to establish trustworthiness.

## 1.7 Overview of current research and the contribution of this study

A qualitative researcher conducts preliminary literature reviews as a basis for his/her research proposal because it enables him/her to develop a conceptual framework for the problem/s s/he would like to investigate. Ary *et al* (1990) suggests that researchers review the literature to find a link between their proposed study and the accumulated knowledge in the particular field of study because, without links to existing knowledge, the study is unlikely to contribute significantly to the field of research if only because the accumulated outcomes of numerous studies conducted by generations of researchers and theories serve to integrate knowledge and to explain observed phenomena.

A literature review frequently cites broad scholarly thinking and/or illustrates why certain concepts may be relevant in data collection and analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Moreover, a literature review enables the researcher to look at social scenes from more than one perspective, to understand associated complexities, and to illuminate subtle meanings. Finally, a literature review leads indicates to the researcher the strengths and limitations of his/her own knowledge and/or of previous studies as regards problem formulation, results, or methodological difficulties.

According to Gorman & Clayton (1998), there is no substitute for extensive reading in the relevant field before embarking on qualitative research since it could:

- Aid the researcher in the choice of a topic, as previous studies would indicate what is known and unknown about a topic. A chosen topic in this instance should aim to fill the gap, or put a new complexion on existing research.
- Confirm the appropriateness of the chosen research topic, indicating whether or not it has been overworked and should be changed.
- Assist the researcher in his/her research design and the choice of an appropriate methodology. If others have succeeded in using designs and methodologies to investigate a similar problem, these could validate the researcher's intentions and/or choices.

It was during a preliminary literature review that the problem addressed in this study was identified, but the search for confirmation of evidence and insights as well as criticism of existing views continued during the data collection and analysis processes. Information gathered during the course of the literature review forms an integral part of the research project, affirming the significance of the study in its extension of knowledge (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Information gathered during the literature review is used not only as a means of triangulation but also as data in its own right and, consequently, references to research literature and/or citations are merged with other data to illustrate and/or to illuminate more subtle meanings where applicable.

The literature review included primary as well as secondary sources.

*Primary sources* included original research studies or writings by theorists and/or researchers and provided information on previous and current research, theories and methodologies used to investigate problems, for example empirical studies published in journals or placed in databases, reports on research, scholarly monographs and dissertations, etc. *Secondary sources* included reviews of previous research and provided the researcher with an overview of the field, a general knowledge of what has been done on the topic and a context for placing current primary sources into a framework (*id*).

Given the primary purpose of this study, namely to develop a holistic, integrated model that could be used to manage the information flow during development work in Africa, the literature review represents an eclectic mix of readings from management, information technology and anthropology. As is common in qualitative research insights from these disciplines have been merged into the discussions of various themes where applicable. Major insights have, however, been summarised here with a view to providing the reader with a frame of reference against which to interpret discussions in subsequent chapters.

### **1.7.1 Development and change**

An individual grows physically, spiritually, intellectually and socially within the context of his or her relationships with other humans, the cultural, demographic and socio-economic context of communities, all within the context of the larger society and the environment. Community development, when initiated from the inside, can be defined as attempts by communities themselves to improve their own conditions, within existing systems, under the guidance of their own leaders, according to their own needs, within their own capabilities, in accordance with their own plans, with support from inside or outside parties (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). Put differently, social development is essentially a process of reconstruction – the shaping or reshaping of circumstances, individuals and groups. In this sense development can be defined as the reorientation of communities and/or the reshaping of individual thinking and behaviour through planned interventions and/or structured development programmes.

According to Taylor, Risvi, Lingard & Henry (1997) the traditional approach to development was based on the assumption that a society consists of interest groups and stakeholders who share the same values and that, because of this, change would occur as the result of consensus among stakeholders. This 'consensus view' does not, according to him, hold true for post-modern contexts where communities are characterised by divergent values and continuous contestation. Consequently,

leaders and managers have to continually negotiate the meaning and importance of diverse values underpinning/informing the project. Often, the challenge is to lead stakeholders with widely differing ideas toward a common goal or values. Implied in these insights is the notion that project managers must not only identify the contributing role players or stakeholders in a project but, more importantly, must identify the values underpinning the thinking of each stakeholder in order to facilitate the process of contestation among stakeholders towards the adoption of common values.

Development projects and/or other interventions or programmes require changes to the target community's existing cultural principles, values and community codes of conduct. This, in itself, could evoke resistance from the targeted community. According to Robbins (1997), individuals often resist change because it requires changes to the way they are used to doing things (habit); because it makes them feel insecure (moves them out of their comfort zones); because it might impact on their economic status (it may lower the individual's income); because they fear the unknown (dislike for uncertainty); because their perceptions of the change are inaccurate (selective information processing); because there may be structural or group inertia, and because they may perceive the change as a threat to their expertise, power or established resource allocations.

Magnussen & Noren (2002), while acknowledging these reasons for resistance to change, argue that it is often the views and values of those who own and manage change operations that determine their form and contents. It follows that such changes can only be successful if those involved in development work know and understand the community in question and the environment in which it operates, i.e. if development workers are sensitive to the culture, beliefs, systems and structures that hold this community together. In this regard Gibson (2005) argues that customs and practices could be used as tools for development, capacity building and innovation in traditional and indigenous communities. To illustrate her point that the cultural environment of indigenous communities is an integrated one, she cites residents of Bougainville, Southwest Pacific who told her that '*Land is our life – our physical life-food and sustenance. Land is our social life, marriage, status, security, politics; in fact, it is our only world*'. (Gibson, 2005:238)

### **1.7.2 Africa as context for development work**

Human beings operate within a specific environment on which they depend for their continued existence (Coertze, 1980; Coertze & Coertze, 1996). This environment is both physical - the earth, climatic conditions and the elements in space – as well as socio-cultural environment (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). An understanding of and effective management of both types of environment are crucial to the success of any development project.

At the physical level, the availability and sustainability of environmental resources are of crucial importance not only for the success of the project but also for the continued survival of the targeted community. In traditional societies, where subsistence economies are the norm, not only economic health but the very survival of the community are dependent on the production of resources for communal needs (Potgieter, 1973). In other words, project managers should, as a matter of principle, determine whether or not there are sufficient resources, capacity and will to sustain development over an extended period of time prior to the commencement of the project (Anyiam-Osigwe, Bester & Claasen, 2002).

In terms of the socio-cultural environment, project managers should accept that the members of a community typically share a sense of belonging and identity and that a community spirit often exists amongst those participating in the activities of the community (*id*). They should also realize that, in Africa, according to Vilikazi (cited by Broodryk, 2002), human beings and their needs are always valued more highly than economic, financial or political considerations). It is these shared biological, intellectual, spiritual and social characteristics and needs of people (*cf* Coertze, 1973) that determine the cultural achievements and behaviour of all those who are part of this community.

Given this understanding, the project managers should, therefore, prior to embarking on an development project, determine not only who the stakeholders are but also what their needs and expectations are (Burke, 2001). They should understand the dynamics of community life, they should know whether the targeted community is urban or rural and whether or not community life is based on a system of indigenous knowledge that includes beliefs about the way of life that is desirable for society, symbols that communicate meanings of common interest, and different classifications of reality (Peoples & Baily, 2000). They should realize that the more 'traditional' a community is, the more likely it is that cooperation is valued more highly than competition, and that traditional values, structures, procedures and leaders are accepted unquestioningly, almost blindly. They should ensure that changes to be effected, and the ways in which such changes are managed, should be perceived by the target community as being congruent only with its culture and values. This is true even when those initiating and/or managing the change believes that the community can only survive if it changes and/or when change is motivated/driven by a changing environment that necessitates adaptation and/or the adoption of new ideas (P.J. Coertze, 1973).

### 1.7.3 Managing development projects

Projects are currently the most common vehicles for development work, in Africa and elsewhere result because, more often than not, they produce something that satisfies client and stakeholder needs and expectations (Burke, 2001). Successes and/or beneficial change/s effected through project management can be ascribed to the use of special management techniques typical of project management, hence the decision to review texts dealing with management in general and project management in particular.

Burke (2001:3) citing PMBOK (Project Management Institute,1996) defines project management as the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities in order to meet stakeholders' needs and expectations, while Morris (in Burke, 2001) defines it as the process of integrating everything that needs to be done, i.e. the project activities, in order to meet the project's objectives as it evolves through its life-cycle. An integrated project management process life-cycle would typically include a work/organisational breakdown structure; a critical path method; resource smoothing; earned value, and configuration control (controlling quality).

Because project management involves the simultaneous management of the independent variables of time, cost, resources and human behaviour, it requires flexibility, decentralisation of management responsibility, the adoption of a holistic view of problems, and the use of goal-orientated problem-solving processes. Given the complexity of this type of management, it follows that project managers should

have the ability/skill integrate discrete management processes and knowledge from a range of management areas (Burke, 2001). It is their duty to effect a match between community needs and the expectations of external stakeholders (sponsors and other interested parties) in such a way that the community does not regard the project as an attempt to undermine its culture but rather as an intervention that will benefit the entire community. Implied in this duty is the need to ensure some form of alignment between the cultures of the target community and the project management team.

#### 1.7.4 Information management

Effective communication is a key component of project management: It is the only way to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, dissemination, storage and ultimate disposal of project information is ensured. It is also through communication that critical links between people, ideas, and information crucial to the success of the project are established (Burke 2001:246, citing PMBOK, 1996). According to Burke (2001), the importance of project communication is evident from the fact that project managers spend about 90% of their working time engaged in some form of information sharing and communication, be it at meetings, in written memos, or through e-mailing, faxing, reading reports, talking to team members, senior managers, customers, clients, sub-contractors, suppliers and stakeholders. Although he acknowledges that information costs money, Burke argues that a lack of information could be even more costly, given that experience has shown that the way in which communication is managed is often the single most important factor determining quality, efficiency, productivity and satisfaction.

Burke's argument is borne out by Magnussen *et al* (2002), who ascribe the rapid rate of globalization to the communication – or information technology – revolution. It is a known fact, however, that developing countries often lack the ability to access or use information technology, and that there is a clear link between lack of access to digital technology, economic growth and productivity (Norris, 2001). In fact, according to O'Regan (2001), the development of ICT and the availability of information are not only socio-economic issues but are also reflections of effective democracy: it is the functional right of all citizens, because it enables them to make informed decisions and to ensure that government wields public power properly.

Applied to the management of development projects, effective communication or, put differently, effective management of the flow of information, would imply that all stakeholders should be involved in visualising, formulating and maintaining the project vision, mission and goals and objectives; that structures and procedures should be defined in unambiguous terms and communicated effectively to all stakeholders throughout; that all projects should, in essence, be regarded as human ventures; that project managers should understand and respect the anthropological framework within which the target community lives and operates, and that the project manager should accept the responsibility to guide all project participants towards that attainment of the ultimate goals.

Since different groups use different languages to express their thoughts, feelings, attitudes and ways of being, and since communication is important for building and maintaining relationships between individuals and groups (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002), project workers need to be sensitive to the language and communication protocols of the communities where they plan to work. In this regard it is especially important to be cognisant of the use of proverbs which, especially in developing countries, are vehicles for the expression of cultural wisdoms and values,

metaphorical speech, alliteration and rhyme and are transferred verbally from one generation to the next (*cf* Coertze & Coertze, 1996).

The choice of communication lines is as important as the choice of language. In traditional communities, it is often considered appropriate to communicate with the people through their leaders and/or accepted, often hierarchical, leadership structures. Political organization and control of the people by authorities and organizations is often a fundamental part of structured society and is often interwoven with various cultural aspects. These structures should, therefore, be utilised as an important part of communication in community development projects (Coertze, 1973b).

### **1.8 The specific contribution of this study**

According to Gibson (2005), the Seventh Session of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in 2004 highlighted the lack of a consensus on core principles with respect to the protection of traditional culture and argues that the absence of an international instrument is a source of frustration for indigenous and local communities. Her argument seems to be validated by the expressed wish of an African delegation at the same meeting that such core principles should form the basis for an international binding instrument on generic resources and traditional knowledge. Gibson's conclusion (2005:296), namely that development models should respect for cultural diversity, emphasize the dignity of indigenous communities and recognize the concept of a community, reflects the purpose of this study. However, she fails to provide any specific detail regarding the consensus, the instruments or the tools referred to by the WIPO. WIPO does not clearly identify holistic and integrated guidelines for the structuring of community participation, the measurement of community input in international forums, or the protection of community resources and culture either. This study hopes to address some of these limitations.

The contribution of this study will be significant in that it not only complements the research conducted by Gibson but that it addresses a new aspect of community development work that has not as yet been researched, namely the management of the information flow in community development projects. As such, it should create a new awareness of the need for sensitivity and respect for indigenous people and their cultures during development work in Africa. The high intensity of need for development in Africa as well as the lack of sensitivity for the cultures and the communities that will be exposed to the development processes and results creates an environment for disaster. Even more alarming is the fact that the intentions and objectives of the donor organisations seem to overshadow the perceived naivety of those in communities in need for development.

In addition to the creation of awareness by the study itself, the model developed as a result of the study should contribute positively to the management of information in development work in Africa, especially since it is culture sensitive and eclectic in nature. Together, the new awareness and the holistic, integrated model, could help all developing communities in Africa to play a much bigger role in their own development, in the sense that it will guide them in the formulation of development objectives, involvement with donor organisations and interaction with their people and the local communities



## 1.9 Division of chapters

*Chapter one* provides a theoretical framework for the investigation of problems with the management of the flow of information in developing communities, with specific reference the role played by information, the information needs of developing societies, and the need for skilled information agents to manage information in development processes. The chapter also sets the parameters for the study in terms of the problem to be investigated, the objectives to be attained, the research methodology to be followed, and the contribution/significance of the study as regards research on development work in Africa.

*Chapter two* focuses on the first sub problem of the study namely the latest development opportunities for Africa as a developing continent. It attends to current African initiatives as well as directly related issues, the current status of development policies, and conditions for development in Africa. It seeks moreover to facilitate an understanding of new initiatives on the African continent as regards the management of information, e.g. the African Union, NEPAD and relevant bodies that will mostly be responsible for the creation of development needs in Africa. The chapter discusses the dilemmas of current initiatives in Africa and describes the interrelationship between the Africa Union and information management as well as the Africa Peer Review Mechanism as coordinators of development in Africa with a view to highlighting the importance for Africa to become less gullible regarding development aid and more focused on the importance of information management as a holistic approach to long-term sustainable development.

In *Chapter three* the second sub problem, namely the management of information during development projects is discussed. Based primarily on the work of Burke (2001), *Project Management, Planning and Control Techniques*, it provides a summarized overview of the most important activities and processes in project management processes. This management synopsis is important to this study as it increases the awareness of basic management information that is needed in development; provides the basic theoretical foundation of management elements within the framework of the information environment as it relates to the monitoring of development projects in Africa, and describes the concept of information management as a core focus. Not only does it describe the initiators of development and the normal strategic and project management processes that should guide development but it also refers to the needs of developing communities as regard the balance between development and traditionalism/culture as an integrated human trend. These important cultural matters and processes are recognized in Chapter three but will be the main focus of Chapter four.

*Chapter four* aims at the creation of an awareness of the socio-cultural tension emerging in communities during development processes. To this purpose, the chapter provides a socio-cultural overview of the main cultural variables in developing communities that are relevant to sub problem three of this study. As such, it focuses on relevant traditions and cultural facets as well as on community structures from an anthropological perspective. The content concentrates on 16 cultural elements that guide community activities, highlighting the influence of new developments/ information on community activities and the interaction between those holistic and integrated activities once one of the variables has changed.

*Chapter five* describes the proposed model for the management of information in development. The three-part model aims to serve as a holistic, integrated and multi-disciplinary tool for the use by professional and information managers in

development projects in Africa. In addition to the description of the model, the chapter also refers to a number of elements that could form part of a practical checklist that Information Managers could use to guide the flow of information during development projects.

The conclusions and recommendations in *Chapter six* will include guidelines for the use of the results of this study.

## CHAPTER TWO BACKGROUND TO AN INFORMATION MANAGEMENT MODEL

### An overview of Africa as a developing continent

#### 2.1 Introduction and purpose

As indicated in Chapter 1, the primary aim of this study is to design an information management model that could be used in/for development projects in Africa. One of the objectives related to this aim is to describe the current status of development initiatives in Africa, with specific reference to managing the flow of information. It is this objective that is the focus of Chapter 2. More specifically, the chapter is aimed at determining whether or not the African environment is suitable for development. To this purpose, development, as a concept, is defined as part of this discussion.

In this chapter the researcher analyzes current interaction – in terms of information flow - between the international world and different African structures. Such an analysis is deemed important in the sense that the success of the proposed model will depend to a large extent on the context/environment in which it will be used: development opportunities, leadership, political will, and communities interested in development are important elements in this regard. New African structures are, therefore, explained and existing interactive information structures are identified.

#### 2.2 Globalization: concept and process

As indicated in the 2002 World Bank Report *Globalization, growth and poverty: Building an inclusive world economy*, the world as a whole is becoming more integrated socially, economically and culturally. Metaphorically, the whole world is becoming a big 'global village'. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as 'globalisation' and is, according to the report, a complex process. The internationalisation of national economies is affecting the everyday lives of billions of people around the world. The tourist industry is growing rapidly; scientific cooperation and access to inventions are expanding like an avalanche; distances between individuals are shrinking at an enormous speed, and the Internet and information technology (IT) are constantly creating new conditions and influencing public opinion across national borders. There are even those who argue that world peace, global security and the survival of the world as such depend on the extent to which all countries and nations cooperate with one another on all fronts.

Globalisation is not a new phenomenon. According to the World Bank Report (idem) the most recent wave of globalisation, which started in the 1980s, was spurred on by technological advances in transport and communication technologies as well as by the decision of large developing countries to improve their investment climates. While nearly no corner of the world has escaped the effects of globalisation, the contributions of the various regions and nations have differed markedly. The locomotive for these major advances is the highly industrialised nations. Outside this domain, only a few countries in the developing world play a substantial role in the global economy. Many developing countries, especially in Africa, contribute passively to this process, mainly on the basis of their environmental and resource endowments.

It is in the distribution of benefits accrued from globalisation that the global imbalance is most glaring. On the one hand, opportunities have increased to expand wealth, acquire knowledge and skills, and improve access to goods and services — in brief, to improve the quality of life. In some parts of the world, the pursuit of greater openness to the global economy has lifted millions of people out of poverty. On the other hand, greater integration has further marginalized those countries that were unable to compete effectively in the global arena. In the absence of fair and just global rules, globalisation has increased the ability of the strong to advance their interests, mostly to the detriment of the weak, especially in the areas of trade, finance and technology. Consequently, globalisation seems to have limited the opportunity for developing countries to control their own development. The result is that the conditions of those marginalised in this process have worsened in real terms and there is now a clear divide between those nations that have been included and those who have not (OAU, 2001).

The closing years of the previous century in particular reflected a major financial collapse in much of the developing world. This not only threatened the stability of the global financial system, but also the global economy as a whole. One of the immediate effects of the financial crisis is the exacerbation of existing levels of deep, structural poverty in which about half of the world's population lives on less than US \$2 per day, and a fifth on less than US \$1 per day (idem)

Slower dynamics posed longer-term risks. These included a rapid increase in the numbers of the socially excluded in different zones of the globe, contributing to political instability, civil war and military conflict on the one hand, and a new pattern of mass migration on the other. The expansion of industrial production and the increase of poverty contributed to the environmental degradation of the oceans, atmosphere and natural vegetation. Included in documentation of the New Africa Initiative (OAU,2001) is an acknowledgement by the OAU that, if these areas were not addressed, they would set in motion processes that would increasingly slip beyond the control of governments, both in developed and developing countries.

While the rapid rate at which the world is changing into a single 'global village' is commonly ascribed to the communication – or information technology – revolution – Magnussen *et al* (2002) are of the opinion that globalisation is the result of deliberate decisions by, and ambitions of, governments and international organisations, not of fate or invisible powers. The driving force behind globalisation is economic power: individual and company shareholders, consumers, governments and employees, credit institutions and trade unions all want 'their companies to be profitable. Consequently, they demand that global operations should be managed in ways that would ensure long-term profitability. Inherent in this demand is the danger of exploitation – cheap labour, abuse of human rights, et cetera. To minimize the risk of this happening, global operations are typically regulated by a series of national and international codes of conduct. These codes are informed not only by an economic motive but also an altruistic one - economic empowerment – sharing economic and other benefits with those who are still living in abject poverty, for whom every day is a struggle for survival.

Magnussen *et al* (2002), arguing that it is the views and values of those who own and manage such operations that determine the form and contents of the operations, and the views and values of consumers that determine whether a company prospers or founders, makes the point that globalisation cannot be described or viewed from a strictly economic perspective only. Cultural aspects also play a role, given the fact

that the lesser importance of national borders and the increase of information technology facilitate cross-cultural experiences. The World Bank (2002) agrees with this view, arguing that respect for diversity should feature strongly in international agreements, warns that too much emphasis on homogenization could pose a threat to globalization.

Government decisions, too, are informed by considerations regarding ecology and natural resources. It is, therefore, not surprising that demands for ethical, environmentally responsible and socially acceptable production and operations are becoming more and more vociferous (Magnussen *et al*, 2002). The increase in codes and voluntary guidelines for global operations could be seen as a response to these demands. Best known amongst these codes is the '*Global Sullivan Principles of Social Responsibility*', a code that is aimed at regulating the behaviour of European companies in the Third World, currently being discussed by the European Parliament. Developed by various multinational corporations and business associations, in conjunction with Leon H. Sullivan, a Baptist leader in Philadelphia on the East Coast of the USA, who dedicated his life work to ensuring that corporations met their obligations to society, the Sullivan Principles urge companies and organisations of all sizes, in disparate industries and cultures, to aspire towards the common goals of human rights, social justice and economic opportunity.

The Sullivan Principles were informed by Reverend Sullivan's belief that companies and their managers are intrinsically good and that it would, therefore, be possible to convince them that proper behaviour could be implemented through reasoning and good examples. Maintaining that it was in a corporation's self-interest to behave decently, that is if it wanted consumers and investors in a market economy to back it and its products, he strove to work hand-in-hand with the community to advance social responsibility and the culture of peace (*idem*). It is this vision of inclusivity - of all countries and all industries - more than anything else, which makes these principles truly unique (*idem*),

In subscribing to The Global Sullivan Principles, associated companies are expected to pledge themselves to explicitly support universal human rights; to treat all employees equally, irrespective of gender, race, age and religious persuasion; to strive for fair competition, neither giving, nor accepting bribes, and to promote said code in their business relations (*idem*). More specifically, the pledge obliges associated companies to:

- Express support for universal human rights.
- Create equal opportunities for all employees at all levels of the company.
- Not resort to the exploitation of children, physical punishment, female abuse, involuntary servitude, or other forms of abuse.
- Respect employees' right to voluntary association.
- Ensure that employee compensation meets at least employees' basic needs.
- Create opportunities for employees to improve their skills and capabilities in order to improve their social and economic opportunities.
- Provide a safe and healthy workplace.
- Protect the environment and promote sustainable development.
- Promote fair competition, including respect for intellectual and other property rights.
- Work with governments and communities in which they do business with a view to improving the quality of life in those communities.
- Provide training and opportunities for workers from disadvantaged

backgrounds.

- Advocate the application of these principles to those with whom they do business.
- Develop and implement company policies, procedures, training and internal reporting structures to ensure commitment to the principles throughout their organisation.
- Be transparent and consistent in their implementation of the principles.
- Provide information that demonstrates publicly their commitment to the principles

Globalization is also a product of scientific and technological advances. Many of these are market-driven, yet governments — particularly those in the developed world — have, in partnership with the private sector, played an important role in shaping their form, content and course (OAU, 2001). The case for an increased participation by national authorities and private institutions in guiding the globalisation agenda along a sustainable path where benefits are more equally distributed, remains strong. In this regard, the OAU identified the importance of a commitment on the part of governments, the private sector and other institutions of civil society, to the genuine integration of all nations into the global economy and body politic. Such a commitment would require a recognition of global interdependence in respect of production and demand; an environmental base that sustains the planet; cross-border migration; a global financial architecture that rewards good socio-economic management, and global governance that recognises partnership among all peoples (idem).

Guidelines like these could also direct African involvement in global affairs and could be used to measure her participation in the globalization process. It is, therefore, important to look at Africa from a global perspective to determine not only how she could become a serious global contestant but also to determine what the impact of her participation in global affairs would be on the people whom she represents and serves.

### **2.3 Africa, Development and Globalization**

The question for Africa is whether or not globalisation will change their current status, involvement and benefits. Experience has shown that, despite the unparalleled opportunities that globalisation has offered to some previously poor countries, there is nothing inherent in the process that automatically reduces poverty and inequality (idem). Nevertheless, the World Bank Report (2002) indicates that globalisation generally reduces poverty. It cites Uganda as a case in point, where, during the 1990s, the levels of poverty dropped by about 40% while school enrollment doubled.

African leaders are convinced that globalization presents itself as an historic opportunity to end the scourge of underdevelopment that afflicts Africa. The resources - including capital, technology and human skills - that are required to launch a global war on poverty and underdevelopment exist in abundance, and are within the grasp of every participant. What is required to mobilize these resources and to use them properly is a new global partnership, based on shared responsibility and mutual interest, coupled with bold and imaginative leadership that is genuinely committed to a sustained effort of human upliftment and poverty eradication (OAU, 2001).

The historical impoverishment of the African continent was first discussed at the OAU Summit in July 2001. According to the OAU (Organization for African Unity), Africa's 'poverty' and 'backwardness', her continued marginalization in the globalization process and the social exclusion of the vast majority of her peoples constitute a serious threat to global stability (idem). The OAU argued that this impoverishment was primarily the legacy of colonialism, the Cold War, the workings of the international economic system, coupled with inadequacies of and shortcomings in the policies pursued by many countries in the post-independence era. According to this argument, Africa had, for centuries, been integrated into the world economy mainly as a supplier of cheap labour and raw materials. Of necessity, this resulted in the draining of Africa's resources rather than in their use for her own development: neither the minerals nor the raw materials were used to develop manufacturing industries or a highly skilled human base to sustain growth and development.

Colonialism also subverted hitherto traditional structures, institutions and values or made them subservient to the economical and political needs of imperial powers. At independence, virtually all the new states were characterized by a shortage of skilled professionals and a weak capitalist class, resulting in a weakening of the wealth accumulation process. Post-colonial Africa inherited weak states and dysfunctional economies that were further aggravated by poor leadership, corruption and bad governance in many countries. These two factors, together with the division caused by the Cold War, hampered government accountability across the continent (idem). Consequently, Africa remains the poorest continent despite being one of the most richly endowed regions of the world (idem). In other countries and on other continents, the opposite happened. There was an infusion of wealth in the form of investments that, in turn, created more wealth, mostly through the export of value-added products. The time has now come for African resources to be harnessed in such a way that it will create and distribute wealth on the continent for the well being of her peoples (idem).

This increasing polarization of wealth and poverty is one of a number of processes that have accompanied globalisation, and which threatens its sustainability (idem). On the positive side, the means for reversing this gloomy scenario are not yet beyond reach. Improvements in the living standards of the marginalized, through the creation of new markets and the harnessing of increased economic capacity, offer massive potential for growth in the entire international economy and will create greater stability, social well being and cultural exuberance on a global scale, all of which thrive in conditions of certainty (idem). On the negative side, according to the OAU, Africa's inability to harness the process of globalisation to her own benefit is partially the result of her own structural impediments to growth and development in the form of resource outflows and unfavorable terms of trade. The OAU justifies this argument by highlighting the failure of political and economic leadership in many African countries, claiming that it impedes the coherent mobilization of resources into productive areas of activity in order to attract and facilitate domestic and foreign investment. The low level of economic activity means that the instruments necessary for the real injection of private funds and risk-taking are not available, and the result is a further decline. In this self-perpetuating cycle, Africa's capacity to respond to globalisation is weakened, leading to further marginalization.

Although globalization is no longer a new concept, it is only now that the African continent is positioning itself to become part of the process. The choice that

economic and political leaders in Africa had to make was clear: globalisation or continuing marginalization. The imperative for development, according to the OAU (idem) not only poses a challenge to moral conscience; it is, in fact, fundamental to the sustainability of the globalisation process. The choice is a difficult one because while in some quarters globalization is regarded as an opportunity for economic expansion and development, in others it is regarded as a threat to the cultural survival and/or resources of Africa. On the one hand, Africa will have to abide by the rules and guidelines laid down for 'membership' of the global society. On the other hand, she does not wish to sacrifice her traditional values, like 'ubuntu', on the altar of globalisation.

These two sets of values seem contrary to each other and hence create a moral dilemma: while globalisation is associated with economic/financial and political values, processes, procedures and benefits, Ubuntu is associated with humans and humanism. Contrary to the 'profit' motive of globalisation, Ubuntu pursues the values of dignity, safety, welfare, health, beauty, love and human development. Human beings and their needs are always valued more highly than economic, financial and political considerations (Vilikazi, cited by Broodryk, 2002:24). For Africa, the challenge lies in ensuring that globalization, Ubuntu and development do not clash with but rather strengthen and complement one another.

The researcher would like to argue that the African Union could play a significant role in this regard. Not only could it provide guidelines for the development of an international competitive framework to direct Africa's globalization process, but it could also serve as a buffer between local resistance to and international eagerness for Africa to become part of the global village. The views of African leaders on globalization and development are important since it is they who will be mainly responsible for the development of Africa's information structure, infrastructure and commitment and for the alignment of African global operations to international norms and standards. More specifically, the African view on globalisation, the political will of the African leaders and the international perspective on Africa's participation need to be considered if Africa is to benefit from globalization.

The New African Initiative was formed to follow and continue with the work of the OAU. The primary aim of the New African Initiative (NAI) was to consolidate and accelerate these gains. It is a call for a new relationship, one of partnership, between Africa and the international community, especially the highly industrialized countries, to bridge the development gap that has widened over centuries of unequal relations. The NAI acknowledges that there have been attempts in the past to set out continent-wide development programmes but indicate that, for a variety of reasons, both internal and external, including questionable leadership and ownership by Africans themselves, these have been less than successful (OAU, 2001). Through actions like these, African leaders have declared that the hopes of Africa's peoples for a better life can no longer rest on the magnanimity of others.

The New African Initiative is more than a movement: it is a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision, and a firm and shared conviction, that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development while at the same time participating actively in the world economy and its body politic. In short, the NAI programme is anchored in the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalising world (idem).



## 2.4 The political will to develop Africa

NEPAD's success in implementing its agenda will depend largely on the participation of all stakeholders at all levels, including the civil society groups, and effort made to build their capacity. These remain priorities on the NEPAD agenda (NEPAD Dialogue Online Weekly, 18 August 2006). The NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) recently confirmed and resolved to study options for investing African pension funds in selected high priority infrastructure projects, again confirming Africa's commitment to its own development. Initial work has been undertaken on the Pan-African Infrastructure Development Fund, which is aimed at creating a platform for basic infrastructure for accelerating growth for sustainable development in Africa. Under the leadership of South Africa and Nigeria a steering committee supported by a secretariat has been established to lead the establishment of the fund, which will initially focus on infrastructure sectors: transportation (roads, rail, ports, and airports), telecom, water and energy (gas and electricity) (idem).

## 2.5 New African Structures

With the formation of the African Union in Durban, South Africa, in June 2002, political leaders intimated that Africa faced grave challenges, the most urgent of which were the eradication of poverty and the fostering of socio-economic development through democracy and good governance. Acknowledging the importance of just, honest, transparent, accountable and participatory government and probity in public life, they committed themselves to combating and eradicating corruption, which retards economic development and undermines the moral fabric of society (NEPAD, 2002b), through the creation of NEPAD, the programmatic expression of the African Renaissance. The African Union is the vehicle through which NEPAD programmes will be implemented. In addition, according to Article 17 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, as adopted in Togo on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2000 (OAU/AU, 2002), a Pan-African Parliament will be established to oversee the development and economic integration of the continent.

In practice, the NEPAD programme will be implemented via the structures of Africa's economic regions since Regional Economic Communities are regarded as crucial to successful implementation. According to Pahad, the South African Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (media briefing, 14 August 2002) Regional Economic Communities are the building blocks of the Africa Union. The identified Regional Economic Communities are, in alphabetical order:

- Central Africa: Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS)
- East Africa: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- Northern Africa: Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)
- Southern Africa: Southern African Development Community (SADC)
- West Africa: Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS)

Since the mechanisms and controls built into the AU will form an important part of the monitoring process it is important to look somewhat more closely at the nature and purpose of various AU structures, principles and objectives.

### 2.5.1 New African structures and information

As indicated earlier, African leaders are determined to increase their efforts to restore stability, peace and security in the African continent, given that these,

alongside democracy, good governance, human rights, social development, protection of environment and sound economic management, are essential to sustainable development. To this purpose, their efforts and initiatives will also be directed at seeking speedy and peaceful solutions to current conflicts and to building Africa's capacity to prevent, manage and resolve all conflicts on the continent (NEPAD, 2002a).

But what are the primary responsibilities of authorities and governments in Africa? In 1995, former South African President, Nelson Mandela, speaking at the World Telecommunications Conference in Geneva, observed that the capacity to communicate would almost certainly be the key human right in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Maloka and Le Roux, 2001). By implication, governments would have to facilitate information transmission and connectivity to the global infrastructure by passing the necessary laws and regulations while creating a supportive external environment that promotes the use of information technology. Governments in Africa will, moreover, have to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers that affect the development and sustainability of Internet services on the continent and actively promote (also via NGOs) the use of the Internet (Maloka and Le Roux, 2001). In practice, it means that import taxes on information technology hardware such as computers, printers, satellites, televisions and radios will have to be reduced or abolished. In some African countries these items are currently treated as luxury items and, hence, heavily taxed, further hampering the availability of these items to the people who need them most (Oshikoya and Hussain, 1998).

According to Norris (2001), the widening technological disparities around the world have generated considerable concern amongst international agencies and national governments. She ascribes unequal global diffusion of digital technologies to a lack of economic development and confirms that international agencies like the UNDP, World Bank and the G-8 have acknowledged the link between access to digital technologies on the one hand and economic growth and productivity on the other. O' Regan (2001) argues, however, that the development of ICT and the availability of information are not only socio-economic issues but are also reflections of effective democracy; that right of access to information is functional, both to enable citizens to exercise their rights in an informed manner and to ensure that government wields public power properly.

There are, however, some limitations regarding what government can be expected to do as far as ICT development is concerned. Singh (1998:48), for example, referring to a 1984 report from the International Telecommunications Union that singled out telecommunications as the missing link for economic prosperity in developing countries, indicated that we couldn't expect a centralized authority such as the state to supply telecommunication services efficiently. Hamelink (1999), adding to this view, moots that citizens should exercise their rights by playing an active role in democratizing policy for ICT development. In this regard, one should take note of the People's Communication Charter (PCC), which states that the rights of people should be central in all forms of ICT supply. One could interpret this statement to include ICT structure development and ICT policies for development and implementation.

These views suggest that one should study and, perhaps, rethink the responsibilities of the different role players (government, political leadership and information agents), not as separate entities but as team members participating in a holistic approach. This is especially pertinent given that many people in Africa are not even aware of

their losses (personal and economical) due to the non-availability of information. The rights mentioned in the PCC should also be applicable to the NEPAD and African Union structures and their search for "just, honest, transparent, accountable and participatory government and probity in public life" (NEPAD, 2002a:4). Since power and information are inextricably linked (O'Regan, 2001:13, citing Justice Thomas, an Australian Judge), access to information technology would not only benefit the people of the African continent but would also enhance the quest for transparency and accountability in the governance of member states.

#### **2.5.1.1 Ministerial Oversight Committee**

Crucial to the development of ICT on the African continent is the role to be played by the Ministers of Communications of the different countries in Africa. Given the importance of their role their activities will be supported and monitored by the Ministerial Oversight Committee (MOC) that, in turn, is to ensure that ICT development remains a core priority of the NEPAD programme and that the current digital divide is bridged (Matsepe-Casaburri 2002).

#### **2.5.1.2 E-Africa Commission**

The Electronic Africa Commission (E-Africa), which is the Information Communication Technology (ICT) arm of NEPAD was launched during September 2002 following the report of a task team set up to form administrative functions of the commission. This Commission consists of fifteen Ministers from African States, representing the 15 person Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee of NEPAD (*idem*). The aim of this Commission as interpreted by the newspaper East Africa Standard (August 12, 2002) is to bridge the digital gap between Africa and the rest of the world. According to the same newspaper this is an enormous task given that there are only 18 mainline telephones per 1000 people in Africa, compared with 146 for the world as a whole and 567 for high-income countries.

More specifically, the Commission will focus on linking the entire continent with a broadband fibre-optic submarine system, through the laying of the East Coast cable. The cable, to be ready by 2005 will be laid at Djibouti, Mombassa, Dar-Es-Salaam, Beira and Durban, from where the continent links with Europe. Currently, only the West African Coast has a submarine cable thus, the building of the East Coast submarine cable will ensure that the whole of the continent will be linked by means of a single cable (*idem*).

For the most recent development in the E Africa Commission, the NEPAD Dialogue Online Weekly (18 August 2006) reports that the NEPAD e-Africa Commission together with the Rwandan Government and the African Union will be hosting a protocol signing ceremony of ICT Ministers from Eastern and Southern African countries participating in the NEPAD ICT broadband infrastructure network, including the Eastern Africa Submarine System (EASSy) cable, in Kigali, Rwanda on 28-29 August 2006. The protocol signing follows an earlier meeting of ICT Ministers held in Johannesburg on 5-6 June 2006, at which the official signing of the protocol was scheduled for August in Kigali. Several other exhaustive consultative meetings have been held prior to the signing, with government ICT policymakers, regulators, telecom operators and financial institutions, among others. President Kagame of Rwanda will preside over the signing ceremony that will also be attended by the

Rwandan Prime Minister, Albert Butare, the Rwandan Minister of Communications and top officials from NEPAD and the African Union. The ceremony will enable the project Steering Committee to fast-track implementation of the NEPAD ICT broadband infrastructure network that, among other things, involves construction of the 9900 km submarine cable from Mtunzini, South Africa to Port Sudan in Sudan. The 23 countries involved in the network are Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Djibouti, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In addition NEPAD declared in the NEPAD Dialogue Online Weekly (*idem*) that it recognises the pivotal role that ICT and backbone infrastructures can play in accelerating regional and national socio-economic development, regional integration and trade, wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction, and meeting the Millennium Development Goals. NEPAD's priority ICT objective is to ensure that all African countries are connected to one another by broadband fibre-optic cable systems that will in turn link them to the rest of the world through existing or planned submarine cable systems. Since its adoption by the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) in November 2004 as a NEPAD flagship project, the ICT broadband infrastructure project is being run under the auspices and principles of NEPAD, which emphasise collaboration among African countries, and specifically African ownership and leadership.

### **2.5.1.3 African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)**

The reconstruction of democratic leadership in Africa has been sharply under the spotlight since the establishment of the African Union in June 2002. During the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002 the 38<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Organisation of African Unity approved Document AHG/235 (XXXV111), Annex II, (OAU, 2002) establishing the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). In terms of this document the mandate of the African Peer Review Mechanism is "to ensure that the policies and practices of participating states conform to the agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards contained in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. The APRM is the mutually agreed instrument for self-monitoring by the participating member governments" (*idem*, paragraph 1)

The primary purpose of the APRM is to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration through sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful and best practice, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity building (*idem*, paragraph 2). Every review exercise carried out under the authority of the Mechanism must be technically competent, credible and free of political manipulation. These stipulations together constitute the core guiding principles of the Mechanism.

Participation in the process will be open to all member states of the African Union. After adoption of the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance by the African Union, countries wishing to participate in the APRM will notify the Chairman of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee. This will entail an undertaking to submit to periodic peer reviews, as well

as to facilitate such reviews, and to be guided by agreed parameters for good political, economic and corporate governance (idem, paragraph 4).

The operations of the APRM are to be directed and managed by a panel of between 5 and 7 Eminent Persons who will serve for up to 4 years and will retire by rotation (idem: paragraph 7). Panel members must be Africans who have distinguished themselves in careers that are considered relevant to the work of the APRM. In addition, members of the panel must be persons of high moral stature with demonstrated commitment to the ideals of Pan Africanism (idem: paragraph 5). Candidates for appointment to the panel will be nominated by participating countries then short listed by a Committee of Ministers and, finally, appointed by Heads of State and Government of the participating countries. In addition to the criteria referred to above, the Heads of State and Government will ensure that the panel has expertise in the areas of political governance, macro-economic management, public financial management and corporate governance and that the composition of the panel reflects broad regional balance, gender equity and cultural diversity (idem: paragraph 6).

The panel will oversee the review process to ensure the integrity of the process. Its mission and duties will be outlined in a Charter, which will also spell out reporting arrangements to the Heads of State and Government of participating countries. The Charter will secure the independence, objectivity and integrity of the Panel (idem: paragraph 9).

The Panel will be supported by a competent Secretariat that has both the technical capacity to undertake the analytical work that underpins the peer review process and that also conforms to the principles of the APRM. The functions of the Secretariat will include the maintenance of extensive database information on political and economic developments in all participating countries; preparation of background documents for the Peer Review Teams; proposing performance indicators and tracking performance of individual countries (idem: paragraph 11). The Secretariat may, moreover, engage, with the approval of the Panel, the services of African experts and institutions that it considers competent and appropriate to act as its agents in the peer review process (idem: paragraph 10).

The Heads of State and Government of participating countries will appoint one of the members of the panel as Chairperson. The Chairperson will serve for a maximum period of 5 years. The criteria for his/her appointment will be the same as those for the appointment of ordinary panel members with the exception that s/he should be a person with a proven leadership record in one of the following areas: government, public administration, development or private sector (idem: paragraph 8).

Bearing in mind that African countries are at different levels of development a country will be assessed (the base review) on joining the mechanism, and will be required to draw up a timetable (Programme of Action) for achieving the agreed standards and goals, given its particular circumstances and/or level of development (idem: paragraph 16).

In order to ascertain whether or not progress is being made towards the achievement of mutually agreed goals and whether or not there is overall compliance with agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards as outlined in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance, the APRM will conduct periodic reviews of the policies and practices of

participating states to (idem: paragraph 14). It is hoped that the peer review process will urge countries to give serious consideration to the impact of domestic policies, not only on internal political stability and economic growth, but also on neighboring countries and that it will promote mutual accountability and compliance with best practice (idem: paragraph 15).

Peer reviews will take place in stages:

- *Stage one* will involve a study of the political, economic and corporate governance and development environment in the country to be reviewed, based principally on up-to-date background documentation prepared by the APRM Secretariat and material provided by national, sub-regional, regional and international institutions (idem: paragraph 17).
- In *Stage two*, the Review Team will visit the country concerned where its priority order of business will be to carry out the widest possible range of consultations with the government, officials, political parties, parliamentarians and representatives of civil society organizations (including the media, academia, trade unions, business, professional bodies) (idem: paragraph 18).
- *Stage three* is the preparation of the Team's report. The report will be prepared on the basis of the briefing material prepared by the APRM Secretariat and the information provided by official and unofficial sources during wide-ranging consultations and interactions with all stakeholders in the country concerned. The report will be evaluated against applicable political, economic and corporate governance commitments and the submitted Programme of Action (idem: paragraph 19). Should the review team identify problems, its report should indicate:
  - Whether or not the government has the will to take the necessary decisions and measures to address said problems;
  - What resources are necessary to take corrective measures
  - How much of these can the Government itself provide and how much is to come from external sources.
  - Given the necessary resources, how long will the process of rectification take (idem: paragraph 21).

The review team's draft report will also be discussed with the government of the country concerned before submission to ensure the accuracy of the information and to provide the government with an opportunity both to respond to the team's findings and/or to put forward its own views on ways in which the identified shortcomings may be addressed. Government responses will be appended to the team's report (idem: paragraph 20).

- The *fourth stage* starts when the report is submitted to the participating Heads of State and Government through the APRM Secretariat. The consideration and adoption of the final report by the participating Heads of State and Government, including their decisions in this regard, marks the end of this stage (idem: paragraph 22). Should the government of the country in question show a demonstrable will to rectify the identified shortcomings, then it will be incumbent upon participating governments to provide what assistance they can, as well as to urge donor governments and agencies to come to the assistance of the country reviewed. Should the necessary political not be forthcoming from the government concerned, participating states should first do everything practicable to engage it in constructive dialogue, offering in the process technical and other appropriate assistance. Should dialogue prove unavailing, participating Heads of

State and governments could inform the government concerned of their collective intention to proceed with appropriate measures by a given date. The interval provided would provide said government with a further opportunity for addressing the identified shortcomings through a process of constructive dialogue but such measures should always be utilised as a last resort (idem: paragraph 23).

- The final stage is the tabling of the report, which takes place six months after the Heads of State and Government of the participating member countries have considered the report. At this point it should be formally and publicly tabled in key regional and sub-regional structures such as the Pan-African Parliament, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the envisaged Peace and Security Council and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union. This constitutes the Fifth and final stage of the process (idem: paragraph 24).

From the above description it should be clear that the African Union regards the Peer Review Committee as part of its structures and that it plans to use it to evaluate the effective functioning of important elements in the building of the Union. Elements of the Peer Review Committee included in the procedures of the African Union will in future clearly impact on the evaluation of democratic elected leadership and governments. Africa is known for the holistic approach to human existence. The recognized African principle of *Ubuntu* indicates that the values and essence of existence for the individual lies in the group to which that individual belongs (Broodyk, 2002). Informed by this philosophy, peer reviews should always be voluntary, and should provide Member States with the opportunity to use the ARPM to monitor themselves first as regards values, codes and standards contained in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economical and Corporate Governance (NEPAD, 2002b) before submitting to a peer review.

### 2.5.2 The Pan African Parliament

From the Pan African Parliament (PAP) Consolidated Report on Committee Meetings and Proposals for the Implementation of Committee Plans (October 2005) it became clear that the Second Ordinary Session of PAP was devoted to the establishment of ten (10) permanent Committees tasked to ensure the proper discharge of its functions defined under Rule 12(13), namely committees on Monetary and Financial Affairs; Rules, Privileges and Discipline; Health, Labour and Social Affairs; Gender, Family, Youth and People Living with Disabilities; Trade, Customs and Immigration Matters ; Justice and Human Rights; Transport, Industry, Energy, Communications, Science and Technology; Rural Economy, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment; Education, Culture, Tourism and Human Resources; Cooperation, International Relations and Conflict Resolution.

Each of these committees is charged with the responsibility of developing programs in their particular field as well as with the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of such with the aim of achieving the overall objectives of the PAP. Their general function is to ensure synergy and systematic coordination and to ensure efficiency and efficacy in the work and deliberations of Pan African Parliamentarians.

Since the accelerated implementation of projects and programmes of the PAP will depend on the performance of these committees, the PAP attaches great value to their effective working. Although there were teething problems, the reports of the various committees indicate continued commitment to accountability in governance and progress in every area. As one of the most influential development structures on

the African continent this study would like to reflect on a few matters and activities of the PAP committees as contained in the PAP 2005 reports.

#### **2.5.2.1 Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs**

The 2005 PAP Committee Report indicates that the 2005 budget did not properly enable the realization of all the objectives the PAP had assigned itself through its various activities. The functioning of PAP initial activities was negatively affected by this financial problem, which seriously hampered the availability of services offered, the activities of the Committees, and made it impossible to popularise the image of the PAP. Moreover, there were some bottlenecks in the implementation process hence financial decisions were often delayed. The committee also noted the fact that the two African Union (AU) representatives were obliged to refer to the Organisation for most of the payment orders, a situation which affected urgent and efficient financial decisions crucial to the efficient running of the affairs of the Secretariat. Informed by these challenges, the committee recommended the provision of a budget that would allow PAP to cover all inherent expenses required for its proper functioning.

The report further indicates that the 2006 budget was prepared from experience acquired in the implementation of the 2005 PAP budget, which had largely taken into account the guidelines of Decision EX.CL/Doc 98 (v) of the Executive Council during its Fifth Ordinary Session held in July 2004 in Addis Ababa. South Africa's offer to host the Head Quarters of PAP was also sanctioned on 16 September 2004 by the signing of the Head Quarter's Agreement.

#### **2.5.2.2 Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline**

According to the Pan African Parliament Rule 26(10) of the Rules of Procedure, the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline shall among others:

- Assist the Bureau in interpretation and application of these Rules of Procedure;
- Consider requests for waivers of immunity and discipline submitted under these rules;
- Consider proposals for the amendment of the rules of Procedure; and Consider cases of indiscipline referred to it.
- Acting in accordance to its mandates, the committee took up the challenge of addressing the following issues; formulating a Code of Conduct for Members of the Pan African Parliament;
- Formulating guidelines and procedures for dealing with Petitions and Motions presented to the Pan African Parliament
- The diplomatic Privileges of Parliamentarians;
- Development of a 5-year plan of activities.

#### **2.5.2.3 Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs**

Documentation from this committee indicates that based on the premise that the management effectiveness and ultimate efficacy of PAP mandates are directly linked to producing a healthy population and labour force across the continent, the core objectives of this committee, as reflected in its 2006 – 2010 plan of action relates to the mitigation of the rampaging scourge of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases that pose a potential threat to specific age groups, the actively employed population and maternal groups of the African population. The report recognized



that Africa has been in the limelight as one with the most heavily infected HIV/AIDS related patients and has, therefore, actively on HIV/AIDS intervention programmes to encourage and support existing structures in all its member nations in the fight against the epidemic. The Committee therefore supports the implementation of the Ouagadougou Declaration of Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation and favours the strengthening of the Health System in relation to the Millennium Development Goals.

To hasten the effect of its actions, the committee emphatically requested the enforcement and immediate implementation of the Abuja Declaration of every member State to allocate more than 15% of their national budgets to the health sector; to support the implementation of the Ouagadougou declaration of employment promotion and poverty alleviation and to urgently solicit funds from international development partners for expanded and comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases. In addition, the Committee requested the International Community to provide the urgently needed resources required for an expanded and comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS through the Global Fund. Finally, the Committee urged the African Parliament to play its role in advocating and enforcing human rights on the people living with HIV/AIDS.

#### **2.5.2.4 Committee on Gender, Family, Youth and People Living with Disabilities**

The 2005 PAP Committee Report reflects on the activities of the Committee on Gender, Family, Youth and People Living with Disabilities. The report from this committee focus on its vision to encourage members to find documents on progress made in their regions on issues pertaining to gender, youth, family and people living with disability, proposed that an audit be done on existing African organizations dealing with issues pertaining to its mission. It noted the importance of sensitising members on issues of gender, family, youth and people living with disability and suggested that, once PAP gets on board, parliamentarians should work with their national parliaments on these issues. The Committee recommended, moreover, that regional workshops should be held in each region to lobby and advocate for the relevant AU protocols and declarations on gender, family, youth and people living with disabilities since protocols like the Rights of the Child and the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women were gathering dust in some countries. The Committee urged governments to ratify and domesticate the various protocols on youth and children, especially child soldiers and people living with disabilities and recommended that PAP hastens the ratification of all conventions, charters, declarations and regional and international protocols and the adoption of national laws to protect the rights of women, children, youth and people with disabilities and that it should monitor their implementation, including a campaign for the adoption of an African Charter on the rights and dignity of people living with disabilities.

During 2005 this Committee resolved to lobby and advocate for gender budgeting in the national budgets of all member states of the African Union, a resolution that was strongly favoured. It was argued that a larger percentage of the budget should go to income generating activities and a smaller percentage to firearms, especially since 2005 was the International Year of Micro-Credit.

### **2.5.2.5 Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration Matters**

The PAP Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration Matters discussed the various challenges and constraints posed by the complex nature of immigration rules hampering the movement of Africans on the continent. In this context, the Committee resolved to inform itself of various protocols of OAU/AU and also to study regional and bilateral agreements among member states since this would enable the Committee to come up with recommendations and an action plan that PAP could promote in order to assist in the harmonizing of action in this area.

The Committee recalled its earlier decisions that the Committee needed to appraise itself of the status of on-going work before any new work could be undertaken in this area and recommended the establishment of an African Chamber of Commerce, and the harmonization of tariff laws, regulations and practices, noting that this was a core area of its work. Allied to this, the Committee discussed the work of the Regional Economic Groupings (RECs) in Africa and proposed that visits be undertaken by member teams to ascertain how PAP could collaborate and help promote their programmes.

Finally, this Committee discussed the work of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), with particular reference to concerns discussed in Hong Kong in December 2005 and recommended that PAP applied for observer status with a view to eventual accreditation by the WTO, as this was standard practice. Allied to this, it encouraged National Parliaments to include MPS in their delegations to Doha and future WTO negotiations so as to clarify the work done by Regional Economic Groupings (RECs) in Africa. Pursuant to the presentation made, the Committee proposed that a workshop be arranged with the NEPAD Secretariat to review issues of WTO, training and assessment of the outcome of December 2005 Hong Kong Summit and the way forward.

### **2.5.2.6 Committee on Justice and Human Rights**

The PAP Committee on Justice and Human Rights strongly recommended the creation of a database on justice and human rights. It is also taking into account broader justice and legal matters, as it seems to put more emphasis on human rights issues. The Database should take into account legislative information for countries with emphasis on democratic principles and should balance justice and human rights aspects as per Rule 26(9) of the Rules of Procedure of PAP. The Committee emphasized a cautious approach in naming countries identified to be contravening human rights legislation and suggested that countries would only be named once reliable facts had been established and investigated. In the spirit of good governance, the Committee should follow up on the African Peer Review Mechanism and the establishment of a desk on Human Rights, as well as help desks to strengthen the Committee's financial resources. It also considered the possibility of tabling a Resolution on Human and Child Trafficking.

During 2005 this Committee also recommended strengthening the relationship of the Committee with Africa Union and UN Committees, proposing that it should be granted observer status in UN and Africa Union committees dealing with justice and human rights.

#### **2.5.2.7 Committee on Transport, Industry, Energy, Communications, Science and Technology**

The PAP Committee on Transport, Industry, Energy Communications, Sciences and Technology presented a Five-year Action Plan 2006-2010, which was structured into short, medium and long-term action plans for Transport, Industry, Energy, Communications, Sciences and Technology respectively.

This Committee urged PAP to encourage and support research, exploration, drilling, exploitation, transport and marketing of oil while simultaneously mooted for the accommodation of African oil consuming or net importing countries so that they, too, could benefit from cooperation and the gas pipelines network agreements, which feature prominently across some countries with constant oil supply benefits for urban and rural areas.

The Committee also focused extensively on electrification, industrialization, Science and Technology, deliberating on the importance of accelerating electrification of African urban and rural areas in this 21<sup>st</sup> century through industrialization, Science and technology, infrastructure development, research and development

Apart from providing financial support, PAP agreed to provide a legal framework, patent rights and protection for any unique scientific breakthrough for deserving individuals, institutions and governments.

#### **2.5.2.8 Committee on Rural Economy, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment**

This Committee report took a critical look at short term, medium and long term activities of various PAP action plans as well as at its mandates to accelerate rural, economic, agricultural, natural resource and environmental development in Africa. The success of PAP, and indeed of Africa's development efforts from 2006 to 2010, hinges primarily on the enhancement and boosting of rural African economies as well as on the success with which the problems hunger, extreme poverty and food insecurity in the continent are tackled. While acknowledging that Africa is massively endowed with renewable and non-renewable resources and, as such, exploited, the committee argued for an acknowledgment of the importance of rebuilding and ploughing back to the environment for sustainable development, defining the need for the current generation to meet their natural resources and environmental needs without jeopardizing the chances of the future generation.

#### **2.5.2.9 Committee on Education, Culture, Tourism and Human Resources**

Informed by the premise that human resources represent the focal point around which the success or otherwise of a strategic plan revolves, the Committee paid considerable attention to education. The strengthening and acceleration of physical and social infrastructures that would boost education of Africans from pre-school playgroup to university levels was emphasized and a comprehensive policy framework for ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of human resources has been developed and will be implemented. As part of its strategic initiative the committee committed itself to bridging the disparity between girls and boys, to ensure equitable school enrolment and attendance and to discourage school children dropouts at all levels of educational development.

This Committee also proposed the establishment of a Pan African University as part of its strategic action steps towards realizing its education, development and training objectives. Some of the envisaged success factors relate to the need to have a common institution of learning that would unite Africans through culture, arts, languages and sciences across the continent, and the need to have an African identity with the concomitant upholding of African oriented values. Allied to this is the need to enhance distance education, training and development, an action that will impact positively on capacity building and manpower planning across Africa.

#### **2.5.2.10 Committee on Cooperation, International Relations and Conflict Resolution**

This PAP Committee set up a program of activity, which included election observation missions, information missions in conflict areas, as well as an information mission at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa. The Mauritania report and its deliberations by the members of the committee is a reflection of the seriousness with which members regard conflict issues. The challenge before the Committee on Cooperation, International Relations and Conflict Resolution (CIRCR) is how to involve the African peoples in the overall efforts to end the scourge of conflicts in Africa, to promote democracy and defend human rights, and to work towards sustainable peace. This would, of necessity, require a well-articulated strategy to promote cooperation at all levels, through a better conduct of international relations within and outside the continent, and to put to an end the prevalence of conflicts in Africa. To this end, the programmes, measures, and activities of the CIRCR would require a viable strategy plan for their implementation including monitoring and evaluation of the process of implementation. Consequently, the interventions by CIRCR in the fields of cooperation, international relations, and conflict resolution become central to the overall efforts being deployed at the level of the continent towards the realization of the major objective of the Africa Union, PAP and NEPAD.

The Committee argued that the program missions consisting of Pan African Parliament (PAP) members belonging to other regions tended to marginalize the Committee and its Bureau, neither of which was informed of decisions taken. These and other issues, when resolved, will go a long way in assisting the committee for effective and efficient implementation of their projects and programmes.

It should be clear from these reports that African leaders are fully aware of the fact that the world has entered the new millennium and that it is in the midst of an economic revolution (OAU, 2001). They realize that the current economic revolution has, in part, been made possible by advances in information and communications technology (ICT), which have reduced the cost and increased the speed of communications across the globe, abolishing pre-existing barriers of time and space and, in consequence, affecting all areas of social and economic life. ICT has made the integration of national systems of production and finance possible and this is reflected in incredible growth in the scale of cross-border flows of goods, services and capital. African leaders are convinced that this revolution could provide both the context and the means for Africa's rejuvenation. While acknowledging that globalisation has increased the cost of Africa's ability to compete, they believe that the advantages of an effectively managed integration present the best prospects for future economic prosperity and poverty reduction.

## 2.6 An international perspective on Africa and globalisation

But what is the international status and credibility of new African structures like NEPAD and the African Union?

It would seem as if governments across the world have already been recognized the changed conditions in Africa. The United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted in September 2000, confirms the global community's readiness to support Africa's efforts to address the continent's underdevelopment and marginalization. The Declaration emphasises support for the prevention of conflict and the establishment of conditions of stability and democracy on the continent, as well as for the key challenges of eradicating poverty and disease. The Declaration further points to the global community's commitment to enhance resource flows to Africa, by improving aid, trade and debt relationships between Africa and the rest of the world, and by increasing private capital flows to the continent (OAU, 2001).

It would, moreover, seem as if Africa's place in the global community is now defined by the fact that the continent is an indispensable resource base that has served all humanity for many centuries (idem) Among these resources are:

- The rich complex of mineral, oil and gas deposits, its flora and fauna, and its wide unspoiled natural habitat, which provide the basis for mining, agriculture, tourism and industrial development;
- The ecological lung provided by the continent's rain forests, and the minimal presence of emissions and effluents that are harmful to the environment— a global public good that benefits all humankind;
- The palaeontological and archaeological sites containing evidence of the evolution of the earth, life and the human species. The natural habitats containing a wide variety of flora and fauna, unique animal species and the open uninhabited spaces that are a feature of the continent;
- The richness of Africa's culture and its contribution to the variety of the cultures of the global community.

There are also indications that the NEPAD programme has revived optimism about Africa in the international arena. The former German State Secretary, Uschi Eid, for example, is reported to have said that (*with NEPAD*) the Africans themselves have spoken on this topic (i.e. globalization), and that people would be well advised to listen carefully to what they have to say. She added that the forces for reforming Africa have gathered together in NEPAD in order to break once and for all with the image of the lost continent. She also noted that Africa was a continent that was taking her future into her own hands in order to improve political, economical, and social opportunities in a globalised world and that the member states of NEPAD was, in effect, a declaration of collective African self-responsibility (Mensing, 2002). The G8 representatives also indicated their support for the NEPAD processes. Eid, who was also the G8-representative of the former German Chancellor, Schröder, indicated that the G8 representatives had met with the initiators of NEPAD as well as with the 15 NEPAD member states and that this meeting had led, *inter alia*, to the development of a G8 Africa Action Plan focusing on good government and leadership.

Concerns about Africa's ability to participate as an equal partner in the global community are however, still raised in the international arena. Some of these concerns are:

- The *impact of conflict* – colonial, geographic, resource, racial, ethnic - on economic growth and prosperity, with the cost mostly visible in the low levels of human- and infrastructure development, both of which are directly linked to the levels of economic progress.
- The lack of constructive *involvement of women* in the development of the continent, primarily because they are not considered as potential 'partners', merely as objects to be dominated and/or abused (Eisler, 2002).

Merkestein and Makonero (2002, *personal communication*), who studied the violence and recent peace negotiations in the DRC, sums it up beautifully when they argue that the whole 'body politic' – government, NGO and civil society – should be mobilized if peace is to be restored in Africa. Perhaps one should include in the body politic, the international community. Only when peace reigns will development be sustainable and economic growth possible. However, unless people's basic needs for food and proper living conditions are not met, any peace agreement or process initiated from 'the top' will be undone at 'the bottom'. Any attempt to rebuild society, and any endeavor at poverty reduction will come to nothing.

## 2.7 Conclusion

It should be clear from the above that Africa is ready to enter the global development arena. The will to change and the commitment to accountability in government and business practice are evident in the public, political and private sectors. The international community is willing to assist wherever it can because, seemingly, its confidence in Africa has been restored. The challenge is to ensure that Africa is not lost in the process; that the positive aspects of the cultures of her people are not sacrificed on the altar of economic prosperity, that she is given equal opportunities and treated with the same respect that her international partners are, also when she is a beneficiary of 'development work' done by them. In all of these foci on Africa it seems clear that information and the way in which it is managed will be a critical concern if Africa wants to become a developed role player in a global world. One of the objectives of this study is to develop a model that could be used to manage information in development. However, as stated in Chapter One of the study, Boon (1992) pointed out that management techniques and skills for the information management sector are not frequently available and there is, therefore, a need for training in this regard. Given Boon's observations, this study needs to consider some basic management activities that will be needed by information management roleplayers in development processes. The next chapter is therefore devoted to a description of the basic management activities that will eventually be form part of the proposed integrated and multi-disciplinary model for information management in development projects.

## CHAPTER THREE

### AN INTEGRATED AND MULTI-DISCIPLINARY INFORMATION MANAGEMENT MODEL

#### Essential management elements that should form part of information management in African development projects

##### 3.1 Introduction and purpose

Aid to developing communities is mostly given in the form of development projects typically initiated by the sponsoring institution/s and implemented in the host/recipient developing community. Since a variety of stakeholders are involved in such projects and, since project management is a very complex endeavour depending on a continuous, effective flow of information between stakeholders and the project management team, it is obvious that there is a need for the development and utilization of a model aimed at managing the information flow in developing communities.

The success of any community development project depends on the extent to which all stakeholders are well informed about all aspects of the project. This implies not only an effective flow of information throughout the entire process but also the identification of development needs in every stage, from initiation through actual implementation and delivery to aftercare.

Also implied is the notion that community development projects should be managed in such a way that stakeholders are not only informed about what happens but are actively involved in participating according to the respective roles each one plays in the project.

The model proposed in this study represents a multi-disciplinary understanding of information management in developing communities. Firstly, the model acknowledges that life, culture and traditions are particular to a community that is the ultimate target and/or focus of a particular development initiative. Secondly, the model acknowledges that development initiatives start with a sponsoring organisation or country, which provides not only finances but also other means of aid and support for the development project. Thirdly, the model is an attempt to link these two (targeted community and sponsoring organisation) by means of effective project management processes that include the effective flow of information.

As indicated in Chapter 1, this chapter is essentially based on the work by Burke (2001) *Project Management - Planning and Control Techniques*. This work gives a complete but simplified overview of the most important activities and processes in project management. This chapter has as general purpose the description of the elements that should form part of this model. More specifically, it is aimed at discussing the various elements that, together, ensure the integrated and multi-disciplinary nature of the model as regards its use in the management of information in development projects. The discussion of the elements will respectively describe the sponsoring agency or development initiator; describe the management processes involved in community development; provide guidelines towards and understanding of the community life, culture and traditions of developing

communities, and indicate how these aspects impact on community development as such.

What should emerge from the model is a list of items against which information agents and project managers in community development projects may check/monitor information flow with a view to ensuring the accuracy and effectiveness of the information that reaches all stakeholders involved.

### 3.2 Project management as concept

Managing by projects, an approach currently used by a number of organisations, encourages organisational flexibility, decentralised management responsibility, a holistic view of problems, and goal-orientated problem-solving processes. Project management is, however, a complex activity (Burke, 2001) requiring integrative management processes, project-by-project management, general management skills, technical management, management of the project environment, and an understanding of at least nine management areas.

- Burke distinguishes between these knowledge areas that describe the core elements determining the deliverable objectives (scope, time, cost, quality) of the project and those knowledge areas that provide the means (integration, human Resources, communication, risk, procurement and contract) to realizing the deliverable objectives. The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) describes project management in terms of nine knowledge areas:
- **Project integration** – refers to the integration of the main project management processes of planning, execution and control. Information inputs from several of the other knowledge areas are accommodated during project integration.
- **Project Scope Management** – refers to the processes required to ensure that the project covers all the work required, and only the work required, to ensure success. Management the scope of the project entails defining and controlling what is and what is not included in the project (with a view to meeting sponsors' and stakeholders' goals and objectives), i.e. authorisation, scope planning, scope definition, scope change management and scope verification.
- **Project Time management** – refers to the process required to ensure timely completion of the project. It consists of activity definition, activity sequencing, duration estimating, establishing a calendar, schedule development and time control.
- **Project Cost Management** - the process required to ensure that the project is completed within the approved budget, entailing resource planning, cost estimating, cost budgeting, cash flow and cost control.
- **Project Quality Management** – aimed at ensuring that the project will satisfy the needs and goals at the required standard of quality set out in the objectives. It consists of determining the required condition, quality planning, quality assurance and quality control.
- **Project Human Resource Management** – ensures that the process makes the most effective use of the people involved in the project. Organisational planning, staff acquisition and team developments are elements of this knowledge area.
- **Project Communications Management** - ensures proper collection and dissemination of project information and involves communications planning,



information distribution, project meetings, progress reporting and administrative closure.

- **Project Risk Management** - concerned with identifying, analysing, and responding to project risk and entails risk identification, risk quantification, and impact, response development and risk control.
- **Project Procurement Management** – concerned with the acquisition of goods and services from outside the performing project team or organisation. It involves procurement planning, solicitation planning, solicitation, source selection, and contract administration as well as contract closeout.

Burke (2001:3, citing PMBOK, 1996) defines project management as the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities in order to meet stakeholders' needs and expectations, while Morris (in Burke, 2001) defines it as the process of integrating everything that needs to be done, i.e. the project activities, in order to meet the project's objectives as it evolves through its life-cycle. Project management is, therefore, a means of developing structure in a complex project, with the independent variables of time, cost, resources and human behaviour coming together (Burke, 2001). It follows that the project's objectives should be congruent with the needs and expectations of all stakeholders. It is, therefore, crucial that the project manager determines not only who the stakeholders are but also what their needs and expectations are before s/he defines the scope and objectives of the project. In other words, the project manager must do whatever is required to make the project happen (idem).

Project management differs from general (organisational) management in that it (project management) is both temporary and unique (Burke, 2001 citing PMBOK, 1996). In other words, a project has a definite end (temporary) and the product or service associated with the project distinguishes itself from similar/related products or services (unique). Turner (in Burke, 2001) further elucidates these definitions by pointing out that human (or machine), material and financial resources are typically organised in novel ways because of the unique nature/scope of work to be done, the clear specifications directing the project, the constraints of cost and time, and the benefits (defined by quantitative and qualitative objectives) that must result from the project as a whole.

According to Burke, a project typically includes a start and finish (although they may be difficult to define); a life-cycle (a number of distinct phases in between beginning and end); a budget with an associated cash-flow; activities that are essentially unique and non-repetitive; resources that needs co-ordinating; a single point of responsibility (i.e. the project manager), and team roles and relationships that are subject to change and need to be defined, established and developed (team building)

Given these features, Burke defines a project as a beneficial change effected by special project management techniques used to plan and control the scope of work in order to deliver a product that will satisfy client and stakeholder needs and expectations. In the context of developing communities a project may thus be defined as:

a sustainable beneficial change in a developing community which uses special project management techniques (including information flow techniques) to plan and control the scope of work in order to deliver a product to satisfy the client's (sponsoring agency's) needs and

expectations as well as those of the stakeholders within the developing community.

This definition seems to suggest that the needs and expectations of the developing community are of paramount importance in community development projects. If the project is to succeed, the client's/sponsoring agency's needs and expectations have to be congruent with those of the community.

### 3.3 Project management as process

Given the complexities of project management it is important for all stakeholders to have a common understanding of the concept, 'project life cycle'.

The simplest way of explaining what a 'project life cycle' is, is to talk about the project in terms of its sub-divisions, phases or stages. Project scope is typically sub-divided in terms of manageable work packages, often arranged in terms of priority (hierarchical arrangement) while sub-divisions in the project life cycle is typically done in terms of sequential project phases. Collectively, these phases are called the project life cycle (Burke, 2001). According to Burke there is general agreement that most projects pass through a four-phase life cycle:

- **Conceptualisation and Initiation Phase**

This is the first phase of the project cycle and is primarily aimed at establishing whether or not there is a need or opportunity for the product, facility or service. The feasibility of proceeding with the project is investigated and, if feasibility is confirmed, the next phase of the project would start.

- **Design and Development Phase**

During the second phase the guidelines compiled by the feasibility study is used to design the product, facility or service, develop detailed schedules and draw up plans for creating the product/ facility or delivering the service.

- **Implementing or Constructing Phase**

During the third phase the project is implemented as per the baseline plan developed during the second phase.

- **Commissioning and Handover Phase**

During this fourth (or culmination) phase there is confirmation/evidence that the project has been implemented or that the structures have been established and the project concluded.

According to Burke, the names of the phases are derived from deliverable objectives, initiate, design, construct and handover. The sequencing of phases generally involves some form of technology transfer or handover from phase to phase. The end of every phase is marked by a review of both deliverables and performance in order to determine whether or not the project should continue to the next phase. Each phase can be planned as mini-project, with different phases executed/managed by different departments or companies, if so desired. Should the goals and objectives change along progress through the phases, each phase should reflect those changes.

Wideman (1991) presents a more detailed illustration of the project life cycle by relating the processes to the respective phases with which they are associated. An integrative project management process is typically characterized by a life-cycle, (the collective phases and/or stages into which a project may be sub-divided to provide better management control); a work or organisational breakdown structure (the organisation breakdown structure); a critical path method (a deterministic approach to control turnaround time); resource smoothing (ensuring the smooth flow of resources throughout the project); earned value (tracking the progress of costs and time), and configuration control (controlling quality).

There is some overlap between project management, general management and technical management in almost all projects. Often, project managers start off as technical experts and develop into the field of management. Successful project managers are competent in a wide range of general management skills including leadership, communication, organising, staffing, team building, planning, instructing, co-ordinating, implementing, monitoring, and controlling. Although the project manager cannot realistically be expected to demonstrate expertise in all these (and other) fields, s/he may well be expected to be conversant with these areas given that, at some stage or other s/he might be confronted with issues related to one or more of these areas and, although s/he will delegate duties/tasks to others, s/he still represents the single point of responsibility in the project

### **3.4 Development Project Initiators**

According to Burke (2001), ideas, needs and problems crystallise into projects in different ways. In developing communities two kinds of project initiators may be identified. Discussions with community leaders in different African countries suggest a distinction between internal and external initiators, with the former (internal indicators) referring to those ideas, needs and problems that are identified and formalised by someone within the developing community and the latter (external initiators) referring to ideas, needs and problems identified and formalised by someone from the outside.

The term, internal initiators, refers to those people or organisations from within the developing community who may have identified a novel idea, experienced a development need or, faced with a serious problem in community life, taken some or other action to address the idea, need or problem. Internal initiators are intimately conversant with information on community life and the ability of the community to develop the idea, realise the need and/or solve the problem. Often, internal initiators are community leaders and change agents already involved in development issues and/or projects in the community.

External initiators include those people, organisations, governments - or their agents or officials - who have the ability to observe a dilemma, develop an idea, address a need or solve a problem that they perceive to exist in another community. They do not necessarily have an intimate knowledge or understanding of the community in need but they do have the desire to assist the community, to take action, to develop an idea, to address the perceived need or to solve the perceived problem in the developing community concerned.

The question may arise why a distinction is drawn between these two categories of development initiators. The reason lies in the underlying motive or hidden agenda of

stakeholders – initiators as well as recipients - involved in the project. More often than not the motives of internal and external stakeholders in community development projects may differ considerably. Moreover, the real and the declared motivations for a project are often not the same, something that impacts negatively on the credibility of the project.

Another reason for the distinction could be related to the point of view of the initiator. Internal initiators are looking from the inside out: they are part of the community and have an intimate knowledge and understanding of, and background information on, the community. They are therefore in a position to interpret or respond to new ideas and perceived needs or problems experienced from a community perspective. This places them in an informed position from which they could judge whether the community would be inclined to accept or reject the idea, agree or disagree with the identified needs and have the ability to solve the problem. Should assistance be needed, or should the community not have the ability to realise the need or solve the problem, these internal initiators would look to the outside to find help.

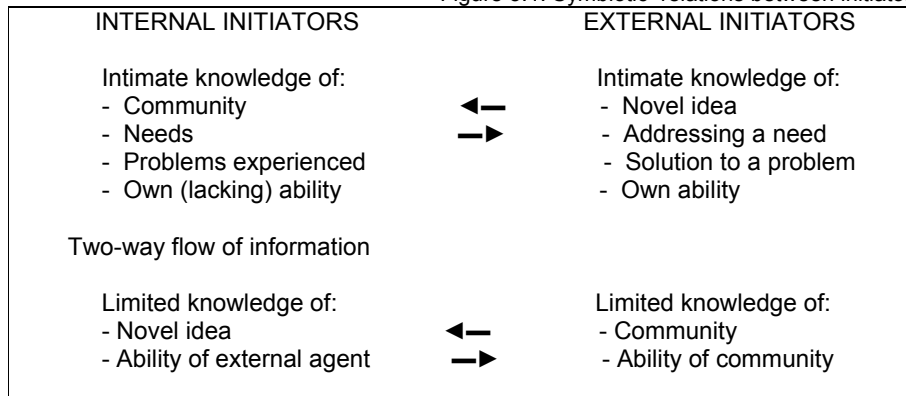
External initiators usually come from more developed communities and different information backgrounds, looking at developing communities from the outside in. They may have preconceived ideas and views on the needs of developing communities and, more often than not, have ready-made solutions to the problems based on their experiences in other, often different, contexts. Based on information they may have gathered about the community from outside sources, they might even have preconceived views about the community, its problems and its ability to solve its own problems. The danger of operating on the basis of preconceived notions like these lies in the possibility that operations may be influenced by prejudices towards and/or based on false assumptions about initiators, project objectives and developing communities.

Finally, a distinction between internal and external initiators could make it easier to identify internal and external stakeholders, should this become necessary. Given that internal as well as external initiators are stakeholders, and that both groups become involved with the project during the initiation process already, it makes sense to distinguish between them as early on in the project as possible and, subsequent to such identification, to meet and share their views so as to develop a common understanding of the purpose of the project as well as of the community for whom the project is intended.

It seems logical that, in the context of interpreting and managing information processes in developing communities, internal initiators should focus on collecting, processing and disseminating information related to the developing community and its needs and challenges, while external initiators should do the same regarding the ideas, abilities to address needs and solve specific problems. It is not the information per se but its sharing of such information that seems to be crucial to the development of a common understanding of the developing community concerned and the external initiator/s involved.

The symbiotic relation between internal and external initiators is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Symbiotic relations between initiators



Within the context of this understanding of internal and external initiators, the issue of project motivation needs some clarification. Although a free flow of information is propagated in the previous section, project managers, and all other stakeholders and participants, for that matter, need to take note of the underlying motives initiators may have regarding a development project. It is accepted in any sphere of life and business that a distinction can and should be made between overt (stated) motives and more covert (hidden) motives.

Overt motives are usually easy to identify because initiators (internal or external), sponsors, recipients, and stakeholders in development projects state them openly. These overt motives are mostly in line with what is expected and accepted in general society and are not usually questioned by other parties in a project. Consequently, it is easy to respond to them and/or to make decisions relating to them. Unfortunately, however, overt motives exert a moderate influence only on the decisions and actions taken in a project.

Covert, or hidden, motives on the other hand, are embedded in very strong convictions and positions of the party who holds them. They might be discernible 'between the lines' but they are never stated in public, and often not even in the closed environment of senior managers in an organisation or community. These hidden motives may even be in conflict with the overtly stated motives of the party holding them. Nevertheless, their role in motivating role players is significant, not least because they are embedded in strong convictions, convictions that may not always be in line with popular thinking. Consequently, they tend to have an extremely powerful influence on decisions taken and actions launched in a project.

Given this scenario, stakeholders should be careful not to accept overt motives as the *real* and/or *only* position of stakeholders. Rather, they should try to identify and understand the covert motives of other parties, participants and stakeholders in a project. Moreover, they should remember that even covert motives that are in conflict with stated motives may be used by intelligent participants to the benefit of all, some, or themselves, since all the motives, overt and covert, form part of the project information framework and will, inevitably, influence the outcome/s of the project, either in terms of its acceptability or in terms of its credibility. It would also be wise to consider all motives – overt and covert, internal and external – when conducting feasibility studies related to the envisaged development project/s.

Once the basic motivation or motive for a project has been identified the initiators of a project could use a feasibility study to test the elements of a project or a community for its readiness to accept the development project.

### 3.4.1 Feasibility studies

According to Burke (2001), a formalised project charter should precede feasibility studies. Such a charter, which should be included as part of the project information, should outline the purpose of the project and spell out what it hopes to achieve. In the context of this study, and based on what was stated earlier with regard to initiators, the project charter should emerge from a meeting or meetings conducted by and between internal and external project initiators. Burke argues that senior management (of the company considering a project) at this point uses information for one reason only, namely to decide whether or not to conduct a feasibility study. The decision on whether or not to implement the project will be made later and would, presumably, be based on the recommendations of the feasibility study. Should the senior management contingent decide to start with a feasibility study, it would probably appoint a project manager or team leader who, in turn, would identify and appoint members to serve on the feasibility study team.

Based on the researcher's own experience and numerous discussions with African leaders, he would like to argue that the more inclusive a feasibility study is the more likely it is that the project will be a success. However, inclusively should not be the only criterion when selecting team members: expertise and/or ability are equally important, especially expertise in the field that forms the frame of reference for, or focus of, the project. Belbin (in Burke, 2001) identifies the following criteria for the selection of team members in a feasibility study: creativity and innovation - essential for solving problems; flexibility - in order to be able to play the role or support the role that is demanded at the time; opportunism - i.e. the ability to take advantage of opportunities presented in the context of the project; team orientation - i.e. the ability to work together in a team context.

Burke (2001) notes, moreover, that it is of the utmost importance to include someone who represents the future operators of the facility or product developed in the project, as this will allow them to feel that they have contributed towards its design and that they have a certain amount of control over its outcome. This issue is of particular significance when projects are designed for developing communities. Many community development projects fail simply because the community who will be operating the new technology or will be providing the intended service in the community were excluded from the outset of the project, even when the first feasibility study was considered and planned.

Feasibility studies, according to Burke, should be informed and formalised in terms of the requirements, boundaries and expected outcomes, including answers to the following questions:

- Who is responsible?
- What is the project brief?
- What is the nature of the proposal to be analysed (charter)?
- Who should be involved?
- What level of detail is required?
- When is the report back date?
- What does the budget of the feasibility study look like?

Burke (idem) also proposes the use of a project life-cycle model to plan the feasibility study as a mini project. Outlining the purpose of the feasibility study would constitute the conceptual stage; planning it would constitute the design phase; conducting it would constitute the implementation phase, and confirming that the feasibility report has been compiled, would constitute the commission phase.

One of the objectives of this study is to create awareness for the fact that many possible stakeholders represent communities on different levels and activities within the community. It therefore seems that conducting a stakeholder analysis is an important part of a successful feasibility study and, by implication, of the successful initiation of a development project. In community development projects in particular, stakeholder involvement is regarded as integral to the project in the same way that different role players are regarded in any organisation.

Fundamentally, the management of an organisation and the management of a project do not differ significantly. The only major difference between them is that involvement in organisations is typically more long term in nature whereas involvement in projects tends to be relatively short. It makes sense, therefore, to regard a project as a temporary organisation of stakeholders who use information and contribute to the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the project in the same way structures in more formal and permanent organisations do. In this regard, Burke suggests that:

- The purpose of a needs analysis should be to determine the needs and expectations of all the stakeholders.
- Stakeholders (internal and external) should be people or organisations who are either actively involved in the project, or whose interests are affected by the project being implemented.
- Stakeholder identification and the determination of their needs and expectations should be the responsibility of the project manager.
- These needs and expectations should then be managed, influenced and balanced to ensure project success.
- The project manager should create an atmosphere where the stakeholders are encouraged to share the knowledge and skills they have which may be useful to the success of the project.

As far as stakeholders are concerned, Burke suggests that a variety of internal and external stakeholders should be considered (see Table 3.1).

Burke (2001) also distinguishes between various categories of stakeholders each of which affects the project differently, namely those that are positively affected by the project; those that are negatively affected by the project; those interested in the outcomes of the project; those interested during implementation; those in support of the project, and those opposing it.

According to Burke, affected stakeholders (positive and negative effects) by the project should be managed carefully by quantifying their risk tolerance. In this way those who are positively affected would compensate for/balance out those who are negatively affected. With regard to supporters and/or opponents of the project, Burke suggests that the fears of those opposing the project be discussed with them,

especially since some of their concerns may be valid, but also because not addressing their concerns may derail the project, especially if some of the dissenters are in powerful positions. This is particularly relevant regarding projects in developing communities and, where possible, valid concerns should, as a matter of course, be accommodated - with some flexibility shown by the project manager. It is, nevertheless, not possible always to please all stakeholders. A major task of the project manager is, therefore, to manage potential conflict carefully by, for example, establishing the priority of every stakeholder's needs and expectations and making decisions accordingly.

Table 3.1: Stakeholder involvement

| STAKEHOLDER                    | GENERIC DESCRIPTION  | DEVELOPING<br>COMMUNITY CONTEXT  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>STAKEHOLDERS (INTERNAL)</b> |  |  |
| Originator                     | Person who suggested the project   | Internal and or external initiators  |
| Owner                          | The person whose strategic plan created the need for the project   | The person whose strategic plan created the need for the project   |
| Sponsor                        | Company or client who will authorise expenditure on the project  | Usually an external organisation /government agency providing funding for the project  |
| Project Champion               | A person with influence in high places who makes the project happen  | A person with influence in high places who makes the project happen  |
| Users                          | The people who will operate the facility after completion of the project   | Community members who will use the facility  |
| Customers                      | The people who will receive the benefit of the facility and pay for those benefits   | The people who pay for benefits from the facility  |
| Project Team                   | The selected individuals who plan, organise, implement and control the work within the constraints of time, cost and quality | The selected individuals who plan, organise, implement and control the work within the constraints of time, cost and quality |
| Senior Management              | Management of the organisation to whom the project manager report and who the project manager needs to support the project   | Management of the organisation to whom the project manager report and who the project manager needs to support the project   |
| Functional Managers            | Managers within the organisation / company who will supplying the workforce of the project (matrix structure)                | Managers who supply the workforce, internally – from the community externally – from other sources                           |
| Boss                           | The person the project manager reports to  | The person the project manager reports to  |



|                     |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Colleagues          | Other managers who may offer moral peer support or peer pressure  | Other managers who may offer moral peer support or peer pressure, preferably known to the community |
| Contractors         | External companies of people specialist expertise to supplement the company's resources                       | External companies of people specialist expertise to supplement the company's resources             |
| Suppliers & Vendors | External companies or people who supply materials and equipment   | Preferably companies and people from the community who supply materials and equipment               |
| Supporters          | Parties who provide goods & services to enable the facility to be built, e.g. telephones, electricity & water | Preferably those parties with whom the community have existing contracts                            |
| Legal requirements  | Rules and regulations both nationally and internationally that must be complied with                          | Also the often unwritten rules and regulations, traditions etc. of the host community               |

| <b>STAKEHOLDERS (EXTERNAL)</b> |  |  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Regulatory authorities         | Health & safety                                    | Also other community authorities       |
| Organised Labour               | Trade Unions                                       | Trade unions                           |
| Special interest groups        | E.G. Environmentalists                             | Also other lobby groups                |
| Government agencies            | National, provincial and other government agencies | Local government agencies specifically |
| Individuals                    | Citizens   | Citizens                               |

### 3.5 Managing Community Development Projects

Against the brief overview of generic project management theory provided in the first part of this chapter the researcher would define project management in developing communities as:

a way of providing a structure to a complex community development project by integrating the independent variables of time, cost, resources and human/community behaviour, into an effective planning and controlling system while retaining an holistic view of the project and the community.

As suggested in the previous section, effective project management is crucial to the success of development initiatives. The focus of this section is, therefore, on management in general and on project management in particular, as these relate to community development initiatives.

In discussing the management of community development projects, the researcher has used two theoretical frameworks namely; project management and organizational behaviour. The former serves as basis for the discussion of the elements of project life and situation analyses and the latter as basis for the design of action plans. The knowledge management areas are henceforth referred to as information areas so as to indicate the specific function of the information agent in the management of community development projects.

However, due to the limited scope of this study, only two of the nine information areas: project scope management, and project communication, will be discussed in detail. These two areas were selected for discussion because scope management is one of the core processes of project management while project communication is the primary means by which information is collected and disseminated/shared between stakeholders.

### **3.5.1 Scope management in community development projects**

Project scope management is related to six management processes; project initiation (see earlier), scope planning, scope definition, scope verification, scope change control, and project closeout. (Burke, 2001:94-104)

Project initiation refers to the stage when the possibility or existence of a new project is formally recognised and, in the case of an existing project, it indicates that the next phase of the existing project should start. Such recognition is typically given in the form of a project charter, project mission and/or terms of reference. A project charter includes the background to the project; the key assumptions informing the project; business needs; scope of work; key activities, budgets and dates; comments on, of guidelines for managing the project; the role of the project manager (responsibility and authority), and the reporting structure. The charter essentially serves as a formalisation of the project and should be documented and signed off, thus providing the project manager with the authority to apply resources to the project.

#### **3.5.1.1 Scope planning**

Scope planning refers to the process during which a written scope statement is developed as basis for future project decisions, and includes the criteria used to determine whether or not the project or phase has been completed successfully. The scope is, however, subject to revision as the project progresses so as to reflect possible changes to the scope. The written statement formalises the criteria for the completion of an activity, phase and/or the project as a whole and, at the same time, outlines the project philosophy. As such, it defines the boundaries of the project; confirms common understanding among stakeholders; forms the basis for agreement between the client and the contractor (by identifying both the project objectives and major deliverables); is a guide and constraint for configuration management influencing change control, and, finally, helps to confirm during the commissioning phase, that the project has been implemented in accordance with requirements and/or criteria.

#### **3.5.1.2 Scope management**

In defining the scope of a project, the major project deliverables are sub-divided into smaller, more manageable components. The scope definition specifies the content

of the project; describes the ways in which the project will be approached; explains how the project will solve the client's needs or problem; establishes a method for the identification of all the items of work required to complete the project, and provides a subdivision of the scope of work into manageable work packages.

### **3.5.1.3 Scope verification**

Having defined the scope of the project, the project manager needs to verify that what is planned is accepted by all project stakeholders. Formal verification/approval is essential as it establishes the required condition (standard/quality) of work expected before implementation and confirms that this condition was satisfied on completion. Scope verification serves as a means of formalising acceptance of the project scope by stakeholders (PMBOK, 1996) and could be related to the phases constituting the project lifecycle (Burke, 2001). Scope verification could take place at the end of the concept phase (when the feasibility study had been done); after the design phase (just before implementation starts); during the implementation phase, and/or on completion of the project, i.e. during of the commission phase.

### **3.5.1.4 Scope change control**

Three aspects of change control are indicated in the PMBOK definition of scope change control (Burke 2001:96):

- Firstly, it ensures that factors that cause scope changes are controlled and that they are of benefit to the project
- Secondly, it enables the project manager to determine whether or not a change has occurred
- Thirdly, it serves as a means of managing the actual changes if and when they occur

According to Burke, all projects are subject to scope changes at some stage of their lifecycles. Changes are typically managed by means of a scope control system or configuration management system to ensure that there is little if any deviation from the baseline plan during the course of the project. The configuration management system formally documents the procedure/s according to which official project documents may be changed; lists the people who have the authority to change the scope; maintains an updated description of the product; provides for the trace ability of previous baseline configurations; provides a record and an audit trail of approved changes; provides a framework to monitor, evaluate and update the scope baseline to accommodate any scope changes, and allows for automatic approval in emergency situations.

### **3.5.1.5 Project closeout**

Once all the work parcels planned in the scope of work have been completed, the project manager is ready to proceed with project closeout. According to Burke (2001), project closeout not only provides opportunities to learn from the mistakes and successes of previous projects, but also to learn progressively during a current project. Project closeout includes/entails the compilation of historical data from previous projects to assist conceptual development, feasibility study and estimating on future projects; the compilation of data from previous and current projects to predict trends and problem areas on the current project, and the generation of a closeout report which evaluates the current project and makes recommendations for future projects.

As the same mistakes have the habit of occurring again, particularly if their causes have not been addressed, Burke warns that historical data need to be studied closely since there is a wealth of similarities between completed and running projects. By implication, a project closeout report should contain not only lessons learnt during a current project but also sensible recommendations related to these.

### 3.5.2 Project Communication

The art of good communication is to strike a balance between the value/worth of information supplied and the cost and time it takes to collect, process and disseminate it (Burke, 2001). The objective of all communication should be to provide recipients with sufficient information to participate, make good decisions and feel involved and/or part of the project. Burke emphasises the importance of controlling certain information such as contracts, specifications, drawings, instructions and scope changes; the need to ensure agreement on the frequency of reports and turnaround times; the need to discuss and agree upon the format and content of reports; the need to present information in a format that is easy to understand so that the recipient can quickly assimilate the situation and take appropriate action if required.

Like project management, project communication is a process rather than an event. It involves at least the following stages/phases: conceptualising project communications; establishing lines of communication; determining the medium of communication; deciding what should or should not be communicated and to whom and/or whom not this should be done; establishing a project information and control system; reporting on project communications, and controlling documentation.

#### 3.5.2.1 Conceptualising project communications

PMBOK (cited in Burke, 2001:246) defines project communication as the process by means of which timely and appropriate generation, collection, dissemination, storage and ultimate disposal of project information is ensured. It establishes critical links between people, ideas, and information that are crucial to the success of the project. According to Burke (2001), the importance of project communication is evident from the fact that project managers spend about 90% of their working time engaged in some form of information sharing and communication, be it at meetings, in written memos, or through e-mailing, faxing, reading reports, talking to team members, senior managers, customers, clients, sub-contractors, suppliers and stakeholders. He acknowledges that information costs money, but argues that a lack of information could be even more costly, pointing out that projects are particularly prone to communication difficulties because of their unique nature and the matrix organisation through which they are generally managed, where overlapping responsibilities, decentralised decision-making and complex interfaces all place strain on the entire communication system of the project. He concludes that, if managed well, communication could be the single most important factor determining quality, efficiency, productivity and satisfaction.

##### a) *Lines of communication*

Burke (2001:247) defines a line of communication as an informal or formal link between two or more people, departments, companies, suppliers, contractors or stakeholders. Lines of communication usually follow the organisational chart of the project (similar to that of an organisation), which outlines the position of the manager and team members, their responsibilities, authority and lines of reporting (who

reports to whom). The organisational chart should also identify all the other interested parties or stakeholders, both external and internal to the project. Every effort should be made to include all the key stakeholders in the project lines of communication.

*b) Medium of communication*

Obviously, as is the case in all communication, a wide range of formal written, informal verbal, and non-verbal media of communication may be used in project management contexts. Burke argues that the use of written communication should be encouraged in project management as it minimises possible misinterpretation and forgetfulness.

### **3.5.3 A project information and control system**

According to Burke, the information and control system complements the lines of communication and the project control system by focusing on the flow of information. For information flow to be effective, all parties must be aware that they are part of a linked system and that the quality of the information will directly relate to the weakest link, like the cogs in a wheel or the links in a chain. The *garbage-in, garbage-out* rule of systems applies. In essence a project information and control system is a fully integrated information system that generates progress reports.

Progress reports should include accounts of various types of meetings and areas/activities reported on during the project lifecycle (See Table 3.2) (Burke, 2001).

#### **3.5.3.1 Document Control**

The purpose of document control is to ensure that key documents are sent to a predefined list of key people but also to establish an audit trail of transmittals of such documents (Burke, 2001), using transmittal notes, document control sheets or transmittal summaries for this purpose.

#### **3.5.3.2 Information and time management**

Burke (2001) moots that the level of accurate information varies with time, with current information being the highest, and historical information, as recorded in other records, being the lowest. According to him, information moves forward like a wave as the project progresses, with closeout reports accumulating in the wake of the wave.

### **3.5.4 Project Environment**

Project managers also need to have a keen understanding of the *project environment* as the latter influences the project directly. If and when the environment changes, there may be a resultant and/or continual shifting of the goal posts. In this regard, project managers need to consider the following aspects: stakeholders (all interested parties), client/sponsor requirements, organisational structure/s, market requirements and trends, competitors, new technology, rules and regulations, and economical cycles, all of which must be managed to prevent any one person from derailing the project.

Table 3.2. Meeting types, reports on activities (Burke, 2001:46, 249-252).

| MEETING TYPE                                      | PURPOSE  | AGENDA   |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Handover Meeting</b>                           | To formally commence the project, project phase or sub-contract and to set the scene for the project and establish how it will be managed                                    | <b>Project Charter</b><br>Discuss purpose of project<br><b>Project OBS</b><br>- Identify participants and stakeholders<br><b>Discuss Scope of work</b><br><b>Communication</b><br>Discuss lines of communication<br><b>Method</b><br>- Discuss how product will be made<br><b>Schedule</b><br>- Discuss schedule & milestones<br><b>Reporting</b><br>- Format, content, frequency, circulation<br><b>Meetings</b><br>- Attendance, venues, agendas<br><b>Instructions</b><br>- Procedures, format, authorisation<br><b>Document Control</b><br>- List and how transmitted<br><b>Configuration</b><br>- How changes will be incorporated<br><b>Payments</b><br>- How progress measured and payments done<br><b>Contract</b><br>- Discuss requirements<br><b>Commissioning</b><br>- Discuss product run-up, tested, accepted, rejected |
| <b>Project Progress Meetings (Weekly Reports)</b> | To monitor progress and guide the project to completion and to co-ordinate, integrate and manage the participants, also to provide a venue for consensus and decision-making | Actions<br>Progress<br>Configuration Management<br>Document Control<br>Claims<br>Payments<br>Minutes   |
| <b>Earned Value Reports</b>                       | To integrate the variable parameter of cost with time  |  |
| <b>Variance Reports</b>                           | To quantify the difference between actual and planned, e.g. to quantify the difference between the actual expenditure with the budget.                                       |  |
| <b>Trend Reports</b>                              | To use historical data to extrapolate trends   |  |
| <b>Exception Reports</b>                          | To flag an occurrence or event that is outside the predetermined control limits in order to filter information by means of a threshold                                       |  |
| <b>Monthly Reports</b>                            | To quantify what is happening on the project and report it to senior management and the stakeholders   |  |

|                         |  |  |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Closeout Reports</b> | To record useful information regarding the entire project including lessons learnt from mistakes and successes |  |
|-------------------------|--|--|

In his account of the history of project management Burke (2001) indicates that the 1980s saw an increased awareness of the role played by external factors in projects and that the project environment, in particular, was being considered in project design, with project managers being encouraged to look at the bigger picture. Since then a consideration of the external environment as part of project management, has become standard practice in all fields of management. This is especially true in the field of strategic planning, where the positioning of an organisation is influenced by the external as well as the internal ability of the organisation.

The Davidoff & Lazarus (1997) model illustrates the relationship between organisations and the environment, including the complexities of involving various stakeholders in attaining organisational (project) goals and objectives. In terms of this model, organisations exist and operate in global (macro), national (meso) and local (micro) environments. This model could be useful in the management of community development projects if projects are regarded as organisations. Given that all organisations (also projects in the context of this study) exist within global, national and local contexts that are not inherently part of the organisations but nevertheless exert considerable influence on the organisation in terms of their vision, mission goals and objectives, Davidoff & Lazarus argue that the leaders and managers of an organisation have to do contextual analyses in order to identify trends and/or anticipate developments and should account for these in the strategic planning of the organisation.

From an anthropological point of view, project managers should use the Davidoff & Lazarus model as a means of analysing/understanding the developing communities in which the project is done to ensure that the project is in line with their developmental level, while ensuring that the elements of organisational life are led and managed in such a way that their interrelatedness is optimally used to attain the project's goals and objectives.

For this study, the following six elements of organisational life, identified by Davidoff & Lazarus (1997) should be regarded as important elements of project life.

#### **3.5.4.1 The cultural paradigm of the project**

The culture of the project/organising team is central to the concept of organisational/project life with 'culture' referring to the way things are done in an organisation, imbedded as it is in the values and norms of the people forming part of the organisation. According to Taylor, Risvi, Lingard and Henry (1997), the traditional approach to policy implementation was based on the assumption that a society consists of interest groups and stakeholders who share the same values and that the realisation of ideals would therefore occur as the result of consensus among stakeholders. However, this traditional 'consensus view' of society (community) is outdated and does not hold true for post-modern contexts where communities are characterised by divergent values and continuous contestation. This is especially true in as regards project management in developing communities, where the values and norms of stakeholders may differ considerably. Hence leaders and managers have to continually negotiate the meaning and importance of diverse values underpinning/informing the project.

According to Taylor *et al* (1997) this divergence could be ascribed to that fact that the value that different role players, including community members, attach to specific goals, objectives or outcomes represents what they regard as ideal and is therefore open to contestation. Often, the challenge is to lead stakeholders with widely differing ideas toward a common goal or values. Contestation often starts with the initial stages of policy formulation and continues throughout all other phases, including implementation, revision and continued implementation. The challenge becomes especially daunting when a project reaches implementation phase and stakeholders are still contesting the best possible position or outcomes of the project for their particular constituents. Implied in these insights is the notion that project managers must not only identify the contributing role players or stakeholders in a project but, more importantly, must identify the values underpinning the thinking of each stakeholder in order to facilitate the process of contestation among stakeholders towards the adoption of common values.

To complicate matters further, the implementation of a development project in a community may often require a change in community culture, and associated values. In this regard, Robbins (1997) highlights the difficulty of changing the culture of an organisation – or project, in this case - primarily because of the weight of embedded organisational values. He argues that, if the culture of an organisation is to be changed, the focus should be on changing the behaviour of groups and teams within the organisation, rather than on trying to change the culture of the organisation as a whole. This, he argues, requires a range of interventions, all contributing to the establishment of desired values in work teams throughout the organisation. The use of new symbols, new stories, and behaviours all contribute towards growing the desired culture of the organisation.

Robbins (1997) and Taylor *et al* (1997) support Davidoff & Lazarus (1997) and emphasize the importance of culture in a project and suggest that the underpinning values of the project should be communicated to and lived visibly by all stakeholders in spite of initial differences amongst them.

#### **3.5.4.2 Identity of the project team**

Another element of organisational/project life regarded as important by Davidoff & Lazarus (*idem*) is its 'identity', i.e. the composite of its vision, mission, goals, objectives and tasks.

In community development projects the identity of the project is clearly spelt out in the purpose of the project, with specific reference to the particular product, facility or service that is to be created/established in the community. All stakeholders within the community and within the project management team need to be very clear on what the ultimate purpose of the project is if the community is to change or develop as a result of the project.

#### **3.5.4.3 Project team strategy, structures and procedures**

Strategy according to Davidoff & Lazarus (*idem*) refers to processes such as the setting of goals, planning to achieve them as well as implementing measures to evaluate progress. Structures are the lines of authority and responsibility, whereas procedures refer to the rules and regulations according to which things are done. The structures and procedures facilitate information flow, decision-making and accountability.



#### **3.5.4.4 Technical support of the project team**

According to Davidoff & Lazarus (idem), no organisation or project can function effectively without the technical support provided by means of sound administration, resource control and financial management.

#### **3.5.4.5 Human resources of the project team**

The 'human resources' referred to here by Davidoff & Lazarus (idem) are the people involved in the organisation but also the relationships amongst individuals and teams, and the conditions of service in terms of which they have been employed. Obviously the human resources in any organisation or project need to be developed to do their work effectively and efficiently.

#### **3.5.4.6 Leadership and management of the project team**

Davidoff & Lazarus (idem) view leadership as a guiding role and management as a containing and holding role and argue that these roles ensure that all aspects of organisational development (project development) are held together and developed.

#### **3.5.4.7 The context of the development project**

The context according to Davidoff & Lazarus (idem) within which an organisation (project) operates includes everything in the micro, meso and macro environments that may directly or indirectly exert an influence on the organisation (project) itself and the ability of the organisation to solve the problems and challenges it faces.

In summary, when these insights into the elements of organisational life are applied to community development projects the following significant aspects arise:

- All stakeholders in a project contribute to all elements of project life. This means that all possible stakeholders need to be identified as soon as possible when a project is initiated.
- All stakeholders should be involved in visualising, formulating and maintaining the identity of the project by means of direct involvement in formulating the project vision, mission and goals and objectives.
- The relative contribution of every stakeholder to the strategies that would be deployed to attain the vision should be clearly described and understood in order for stakeholders to contribute optimally and not to exceed its focus by treading on the terrain and expertise of other stakeholders.
- Structures and procedures need to be defined in unambiguous terms and communicated effectively to all stakeholders at all times during the project.
- The detail of issues describing all possible technical support needed should be identified, procured and made available in line with agreed time frames and schedules.
- All projects should, in essence, be regarded as human ventures where the right number of the right kind of people are recruited, appointed and trained to deliver the right kind of goods at affordable and reasonable remuneration.
- The context in which projects are conducted need to be carefully analysed to identify influences on the project exerted by from the global, national and local environments. In this regard the anthropological framework for understanding

the local community as the environment in which and for which development projects are done, is of particular importance.

- The project manager as the single point of responsibility plays a pivotal role as the leader who has to guide all participants in the project toward attaining the ultimate purpose of the project on the one hand and to play a containing role in ensuring that the complex matrix of participants are co-ordinated and controlled throughout the life-cycle of the project on the other.

It is important to note that there are considerable overlapping of aspects between the elements of project life and the framework for understanding community life. While a critical analysis of both should be done to illuminate the congruence between these two frameworks, such an analysis falls outside the scope of this study. It should, however, be done by project management teams prior to their embarking on community development projects.

### **3.6 A cyclical approach to the management of development projects**

As indicated in various frameworks already discussed in this chapter, development and change management are inherently cyclical in nature. Consider the phases of a project - initiation, design, implementation and commission. Any of these phases could be managed by means of mini projects. Also consider the four components of community life, existence, construction and social structuring.

In terms of this framework, development is regarded as a cyclical rather than a linear process consisting of four phases occurring in an action-reflection cycle. In its simplest form, an action-reflection cycle can be described in terms of four steps/questions, namely:

- Where are we now? (Situation analysis) - Experience
- Where would we like to be? (Vision & Mission) - Reflection
- How will we get there? / How will we manage it over time? - Strategy (Action plans and implementation)
- How will we know if we are successful? – Evaluation (Evaluation and checking progress)

Based on the outcome of step four, stakeholders again ask the first question to start a next cycle of action and reflection. In the context of this study, any number of cycles may be completed until the project team/community is satisfied that the original goals and objectives have been attained. In terms of community and organisational development it is clear that the cycles never end since the community develops along similar phases from existence to construction through development to social structuring. Within any one of the four components of the community's development any number of action-reflection cycles may occur. Likewise, any number of action-reflection cycles may be completed throughout the life span of the project and would even evolve into the following project.

Informed by these notions, the researcher is of the opinion that the use of an action reflection cycle is particularly appropriate as a framework for community development projects as evidenced in its application to education, where Ndhlovu, Bertram, Mthiyane and Avery (1999:) used it to indicate how schools could be developed as organisations. The primary value of this framework lies in the fact that it is not another of the once-off interventions or 'quick-fix' approaches typical of

community development projects; rather it acknowledges the cyclical nature of development.'

Cyclical development processes are also typical of strategic management approaches and are well documented and often used in 'bosberade', 'indabas', or planning workshops and usually include four inter-dependent cycles, namely planning, implementation, control and evaluation.

Applied to community development projects, the cycle would look something like this:

### **3.6.1 Situation analysis**

Based on the insights emerging from literature on anthropology, management and, in particular, project management, it could be inferred that all stakeholders in the community should be represented in a forum to do the strategic planning in community development context.

A two-pronged approach to situation analysis for community development projects seems logical. The elements of project life could be used to do a SWOT analysis of the development project. The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the organisation doing the project in the community need to be analysed prior to designing plans. This means that the strengths and weaknesses of every element of project life / organisational life could be determined by means of careful analysis. The opportunities and threats in the global, national and local environment for elements separately and for the organisational structure or integrated elements as a whole can be identified and analysed.

On the other hand, the framework for understanding developing communities could be used to analyse the community in which the development project is done. In this instance the progress of the community through the cycle (existence, construction, development and social structuring) can be assessed. Every aspect contributing to each component may also be analysed in terms of its relative contribution to the component and development needs every aspect may reveal. This study proposes that a model be developed for doing community development analyses by integrating these two approaches.

### **3.6.2 Project Vision**

The organisation doing a project in a developing community has to be sensitive to integrate the project vision with the developing community's overall development needs as revealed in a community analysis in terms of the framework for understanding developing communities.

### **3.6.3 Project Mission**

The project mission statement should be detailed in terms of every stakeholder's role and contribution to the project and the ultimate outcomes specified in the project charter could be regarded as the project mission statement.

### **3.6.4 Goals And Objectives**

The (specific) goals & objectives of the project need to be aligned with the (general)

developmental goals of the community and should reflect the implications of understanding the community in terms of the Anthropological Model for Understanding Developing Communities (AMDC). The prioritising of goals and objectives should clearly reflect developmental priorities in terms of the AMDC.

### 3.6.5 Action Plans

Although action plans would be designed by the management structure (project manager or project management team), these need to be communicated very clearly to all stakeholders in order to keep information flowing throughout the developing community.

According to Robbins (1997), action plans are the same as interventions aimed at effecting organisational change and could be structural, technological, task-oriented or people-focused in nature. Such interventions are typically founded in humanistic-democratic values and have a more effective organisation at heart; emphasize the importance of focussing on work teams as the key units for learning more effective ways of working; emphasize participation and collaborative management; emphasize changing the organisation's culture; use change agents, and view change as an ongoing process.

In this regard, Robbins (1997:262-264) distinguishes three structural interventions aimed at making organisations more effective – and this could also serve as a guideline for management of change in developing communities:

- **Structural re-organisation**, where organisational structures are reorganized into ones that are more egalitarian, less bureaucratic, and less hierarchical with shorter spans of control, in other words, flatter and more flexible, with managers at the workplace are in direct communication with those who may innovate a tool, procedure or structure for the unit, branch, or organisation to be more effective.
- **New Reward Systems**, informed by the pay-for-performance principle. Employees at all levels of the organisation should be rewarded for being more creative and innovative and for embracing change as the norm rather than to resist every change as a matter of habit. Incentives for being creative and innovative encourage employees to focus on effectiveness and efficiency. Emphasis is also placed on teamwork and cooperation, and the reward of group and organisational performance.
- **Changing the Culture of the Organisation** – A more long-term intervention, aimed at changing the values of employees to be more in line with what is needed in a fast changing global environment. Organisations that have taken up this daunting challenge are constantly presenting new success stories, showcasing new symbols of success, re-organising work teams, revising structures and procedures to be more effective, rewarding positive change, not accepting failure but rather embracing every challenge as an opportunity for growth. They also hire and support individuals who will espouse the new values.

### 3.6.6 Task-Technology Interventions

These interventions described by Robbins (1997:262-264) are focused at changing the actual jobs that stakeholders do or the technological processes and tools they use, or even both. These include:

- **Job Redesign** – i.e. job rotation, enlargement, enrichment and autonomous work teams. The emphasis is on the job characteristics model that includes increasing task variety, task identity, and the significance and autonomy of and feedback on jobs. It is interesting to note that organisations that use this intervention are either not unionised or have the support of their unions.
- **Socio-technical systems** - optimising both the technological and social demands of the job. According to Robbins the accomplishment of any task requires a technology and a social system where the technology consists of the tools, techniques, procedures, skills, knowledge, and devices used by employees to do their work. The social system refers to the people working together as well as the relationships among them.
- **Quality of Work-Life (QWL)** - the process by means of which an organisation responds to employee needs through the creation of mechanisms that allow them to share fully in the making of decisions that affect their lives at work. The emphasis is on humanising the workplace. These include adequate and fair compensation; a safe and healthy environment; jobs that develop human capabilities; a change for personal growth and development; a social environment that provides for personal identity, freedom from prejudice, a sense of community and upward mobility; rights to personal privacy, dissent and due process; a work role that minimizes infringement on personal leisure and family needs; socially responsible organisations.

### 3.6.7 People-Focused Interventions

Development brings along change and usually people do not like change. Interventions in this category are therefore directed at changing the attitudes and behaviours of members of the developing community through the processes of communication, decision-making, and problem solving. They include the following:

- **Sensitivity training** - Training that changes behaviour through unstructured group interaction. Learning takes place by means of open and informal discussion where observation and participation are pivotal. Apart from effecting more realistic self-perceptions, greater group cohesiveness and a reduction in dysfunctional interpersonal relations, it will ideally result in better integration between the individual and the organisation.
- **Survey feedback** - This intervention is used to assess attitudes, identifying discrepancies among member perceptions, and resolving such differences. Questionnaires are used as a springboard for identifying problems and clarifying issues that may be creating difficulties for people. Group discussions of the results of a survey usually result members identifying possible implications of the findings and in so doing the remedies to problems identified becomes more obvious among those who experience them.
- **Process consultation** - Although similar to sensitivity training this kind of intervention is more task-directed. Usually done by external consultants the client develops an insight into what is going on around them, within them, and between them and other people. Problems are not solved specifically, but the process of solving problems is scrutinised, evaluated and improved.
- **Team building** - Team building refers to building the capacity to work together in groups (intra-group development) and for groups to work together as different teams (inter-group development) *Intra-group* development. Role clarification,

improving key processes and other techniques are used to make teams more effective. *Inter-group* development. This intervention seeks to change the attitudes, stereotypes, and perceptions that groups have of each other, often by means of problem solving methodologies where teams will realise that they need each other.

Davidoff & Lazarus (1997) warn against an atomistic view of the elements. The elements of organisational life are clearly interrelated and interdependent. While it is possible to describe them separately, they function in an integrated way in reality. One malfunctioning element will effect the functioning of the entire organisation and likewise the well-functioning element will have a positive impact on all other elements.

### 3.7 Managing Resistance To Change

In a sense resistance to change is positive (Robbins, 1997). It provides the organisation with a degree of predictability and stability to behaviour. It can also be a source of functional conflict – by stimulating a healthy debate over the merits of a new idea, product or service – resulting in a better decision. There is however, a down side – it hinders adaptation and progress. Resistance can be overt, implicit, immediate, or deferred. Overt and immediate resistance is easier to manage than implicit and deferred resistance.

Robbins argues that although we can distinguish between individual and organisational resistance, they overlap in the real world. Individuals resist change because of habit (being used to do things in one way); security (comfort zones); economic factors (it may lower the individual's income); fear of the unknown (dislike for uncertainty); selective information processing (perceptions are inaccurate); structural inertia - built in mechanisms for stability; limited focus of change - changes in sub-system nullified by the larger system; group inertia – group norms act as a constraint for individuals who want change; threat to expertise – specialised groups may feel threatened; threat to established power relations; threat to established resource allocations

Organisations are by nature conservative – they actively resist change. If the manager understands the reasons why individuals, groups or structures resist change, it becomes easier to manage such resistance. It is important to remember that resistance cannot be removed completely it should be managed in such a way that the detrimental effects of resistance may be overcome. Robbins (1997:265) suggests six tactics that may be deployed to overcome resistance:

- **Education and communication.** Resistance can be reduced through communication with employees to help them see the logic of a change. Drawback – time consuming.
- **Participation.** It is difficult for individuals to resist a change decision in which they participated. Involve those who resist a change before the decision is made. Drawbacks – potential for a poor decision and time consuming.
- **Facilitation and support.** When fear and anxiety are high, counselling, new skills development, short paid leave etc. may be used to facilitate adjustment. Drawbacks: expensive, time consuming, no assurance of success.
- **Negotiation.** The exchange of something in return for accepting a change –

Quid-pro-quo may win stubborn resisters over. Drawback: potentially high costs and the possibility to be blackmailed by other resisters.

- **Manipulation and cooption.** Covert twisting or distorting facts to make them appear more attractive, or starting false rumours to get employees to accept the change are examples of manipulation. Cooption is a combination of participation and manipulation – co-opting the ringleader of resistance into the decision-making forum is an age-old strategy used often in the political arena.
- **Coercion or force.** Threats of loss of promotion, transfer, or poor performance evaluation may force the fierce resister to capitulate.

The last two tactics obviously carry a large penalty if the manager's bluff is called and should be used very sparingly, if at all. Once discovered the manager's credibility drops to zero!

Robbins (1997) puts the need to be able to manage change by means of interventions and resistance to change by means of various tactics in perspective by indicating that in the past, managers could treat change as an occasional disturbance in their otherwise peaceful and predictable world. Such a world no longer exists for most managers. Today's managers are increasingly finding that their world is one of constant and chaotic change. In this world managers must continually act as change agents.

This position seems to be in perfect congruence with what the project manager in developing communities may expect. The project manager needs to have a wide variety of action plans, strategies and tactics in reserve when managing a project in a complex developing community with a myriad of stakeholders with diverse needs and expectations, sponsors with strong views on their objectives and an expansive work force with their particular demands. The project manager should not only be able to manage change, he/she should be an expert change agent.

### 3.8 Conclusion

This chapter touched on the fundamental framework underpinning project management. At least one of several management processes in community development projects was analysed, albeit very superficially, namely the use of feasibility studies prior to the taking of a final decision on whether or not to proceed or continue with a project. This analysis did not attempt to give a formal overview of the complete managing and strategic planning field but rather to guide the process towards a holistic approach to integrated thinking by the information manager and other stakeholders in the development processes. In addition to this analysis this section also highlighted the following key observations; internal and/or external initiators initiate projects; overt and covert motives underpin stakeholder participation in projects; feasibility studies are inevitably done before the final decision is taken to continue with the project, and stakeholder analysis is crucial to project success.

The use of organisational development theory in community development contexts should be understood as action plans to be applied to community life in general, not only with regards to the specific project. The need for these interventions and tactics need to be integrated with community life, culture and traditions. It should not only be understood, but be actively implemented in the project context if community development projects are to succeed. Hence interventions in community life should not only take note of one-dimensional project objectives but also of the integrated impact of the project results on traditions and socio-cultural aspects of the

community. In order to secure the balance of and in community life during development these aspects should include at least the interrelated aspects that recognise the economy, health services, knowledge, art, military/security system, education, judicial system, religion, social organisation, games and recreation, political organization, language, technology and a value system of the community (Coertze & Coertze, 1996).

The application of these frameworks also seems relevant to project management processes. In this regard several of the management approaches, principles and processes identified in project management correlate with the interventions and tactics mentioned in this section. All these should be considered in the planning of community development projects in the context of this study. One however, in working with communities of people, sees in these management principles a lack of full consultation regarding the moral, ethical and socio-cultural aspects of the lives of the people who will be influenced by the development processes.

This concludes the overview of some management theories and frameworks deemed relevant of this study. A proper literature study may reveal several other frameworks that may also be very useful. Such a literature study may be considered for post-graduate study in this field, but fell outside the scope of this study.

As indicated in Chapter 1 this management synopsis is important to this study as it aims to increase the awareness of basic management information that is needed in development. This chapter therefore also focused on the basic theoretical foundation of management elements within the framework of the information environment relating to the monitoring of development projects in Africa. It also referred to the needs of the developing communities expressed through their leaders and representatives. Humans and their culture seem to have a strong influence on the ability of communities to accept development and change. These important moral, ethical and socio-cultural matters were recognized in this chapter and will be the main focus of the following chapter.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### ESSENTIAL SOCIO-CULTURAL VARIABLES THAT NEED TO BE INCLUDED AND MANAGED AS PART OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

#### 4.1 Introduction and purpose

People and their activities, as well as their perceptions, their actions and their motivations are the main concern of this chapter. What connects people is that they have things in common. Thus, one of the themes of this chapter is how people decide what they have in common and why, and how this commonality can be extended to include other individuals and groups. There are many well-known theories to describe basic human needs and concerns. However, given the primary aim of this study, namely to develop an integrated model that could be used for the management of information in development projects, only those theories that have relevance for the model will be briefly mentioned here, and only in the sense that they relate to said model.

The first and most basic characteristic of human life is the capability to *exist* or, put differently, the effective survival and subsequent growth of humans and societies. Existence implies survival within a natural, unseen or supernatural environment because human beings are equipped with the ability to operate at more than one level - physically, spiritually, intellectually and socially: they can establish relations or communities that not only support them in their efforts to survive but that can also enable them to grow through the application of values, principles, knowledge and rules.

In this chapter the focus is on the strategies used by communities to adapt to and manage their environment. Influenced by an anthropological view of humanity, this chapter describes the elements that need to be considered in the initiation and monitoring of development projects specifically in Africa. Reference to prevailing socio-cultural elements therefore guides the approach to change and development in communities.

#### 4.2 Basic human needs

Generally speaking, social scientists like Maslow (1970), Burton (1990) and Max-Neeff (1991), argue that *basic human needs* form the core of what makes us human. When these are then not fulfilled, conflict will ensue. According to Maslow, the satisfaction of needs is a hierarchical process, i.e. the most fundamental need has to be satisfied before the next need can be fulfilled. By satisfying our needs we could eventually attain self-actualization. Because basic human needs are *ontological*, people have no choice in this regard: they cannot help but strive to have basic human needs fulfilled simply because they are human.

Burton concurs with Maslow's view that humans have basic human needs that must be fulfilled but rejects the notion of a needs hierarchy. Rather, he argues, any basic human need that is compromised for any duration of time would lead to people being in conflict with others whom they regard as hindering the fulfilment of these needs and the longer the needs are compromised or the more serious the conflict is, the greater the chance of a long-term, complex and deep conflict.

In exploring the reasons for such conflicts, Max-Neeff concluded that it might be because our needs influence our perceptions and motivate our actions. Burton (1990) and Azar (1990) argued, however, that basic human values, such as religion and ideology) and interests such as scarce resources, when compromised, could also result in serious conflict. According to Azar, the unique properties of protracted social conflicts are that their focus is on a religious, cultural or ethnic communal identity, which, in turn, is dependent upon the satisfaction of basic needs such as those for security, communal recognition and distributive justice. He concludes that most conflicts are, therefore, about developmental needs expressed in terms of cultural values, human rights and security.

Following the thinking of these scientists it becomes clear that a pure hierarchical approach to basic human needs in order to understand how individuals and groups function does not suffice. Human and community interactions and actions are much more complicated.

### **4.3 Common humanity: common needs**

Burton (1990), Maslow (1970), Azar (1990) and Max-Neeff (1991) use different words to describe fundamental human needs even though they are describing the same issues: we need to live, we need to be safe and secure, we need respect, recognition and understanding, we need to belong to groups and act within groups, we need development and creativity, we need an identity, and we need freedom. In other words, no matter how different we would like to think we are in comparison with others, this is what we have in common. These needs are the characteristics of our common humanity, and they are the same for all of us. They influence our behaviour, our thoughts, and the way we act and group ourselves.

### **4.4 Community development**

Given the assumption that survival is a basic principle of human life, there is always a need for the continued development of the individual within the community, of the community within the broader society, and for their sustainable interaction with the environment. Fundamental to such development is the human capability to adjust to changing circumstances. This adjustment occurs at two levels, namely the development of the individual human being, and the development of the community or society as a whole.

An individual grows physically, spiritually, intellectually and socially within the context of his or her relationships with other humans, the cultural, demographic and socio-economic context of communities, all within the context of the larger society and the environment. Community development, in particular, is the stimulation of local communities to improve their own conditions within existing systems, under the guidance of their own leaders, according to their own needs, within their own capabilities, in accordance with their own plans, and with support from inside or outside parties (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). Put differently, social development is essentially a process of reconstruction – the shaping or reshaping of circumstances, individuals and groups.

The fundamental rationale for development is to unfold or bring to full fruition all that is potentially contained in something. In this sense, development is a management process aimed at identifying the relevant potential of qualities or entities and to activate mechanisms and procedures to realize the potential of such qualities or

entities for the benefit of people and the wider environment alike while ensuring the harmonious interaction of community members and change agents. Community development would, therefore, first require the identification of the potential of the individual, of the community at large, of their practiced lifestyle, and of their environment. Only then can actions aimed at adjusting these in ways that would enable the community to interconnected with the rest of the world be planned.

The motivating or driving power behind development and change is, more often than not, the changing environment that confronts a community with new needs, new ideas that affect the normal harmony and/or balance in said community (P.J. Coertze, 1973). In this sense, development can be defined as the reorientation of communities and/or the reshaping of individual thinking and behaviour through planned interventions and/or structured development programmes. Such interventions/programmes typically require changes to existing cultural principles, values and community codes of conduct. It follows that such changes can only be successful if those involved in development work know and understand the community in question and the environment in which it operates, i.e. if development workers are sensitive to the culture, beliefs, systems and structures that hold this community together.

Given this notion of development, education and training are important aspects of community development. Education and training could take place informally or formally, in and out of institutions and are typically influenced by some or other aspect of culture (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). Intrinsic to education is the development of character and personality and a desire to prepare the youth for adult life (Coertze & Coertze, 1996; Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002). This could happen in a number of ways. It could either happen through the informal transfer of knowledge, skills and values from one person or generation to another in the course of daily living or it could be the result of a formal intervention aimed at the achievement of predetermined goals. The success of education programmes, formal or informal, are most likely to succeed, however, if such programmes include both traditional/or indigenous and new/foreign knowledge – the first to ensure the survival of cultural values and ways of living and the second to help communities cope with changing conditions. Implied in this notion is the assumption that development should ideally take place within the contexts of the existing culture and requirements for survival and growth particular to the targeted community.

It would seem, therefore, that an integrated culture and community development programme requires a synthesis of the various interconnected aspects of the culture of a people as well as their ability and commitment to survive and grow within a specific environment, set of circumstances and specific time period. Critical to successful community development is the imperative to balance individual and community needs for the development of their potential with the need to that of the surrounding environment to in a sustainable, holistic and integrated way. Given these requirements, development agents should, therefore, understand the characteristics of the community concerned, including its culture and the processes of cultural change and development that it uses in selecting and applying relevant concepts of self-sustainable community development.

#### **4.5 Knowledge as a crucial element of community development projects**

Informed by the personal experience and facilitated participation of more than 100

final year students at the University of Pretoria regarding the nature of knowledge it would seem as if knowledge could be defined as the sum of known facts or information, wisdom gained through experience, theoretical or practical understanding of something that is rooted in the past and applied to the present. In terms of this definition knowledge could be classified as either indigenous or foreign.

- **Indigenous knowledge** would then be knowledge that is peculiar to a particular community or culture and is usually based on local information, traditions and values perceived as necessary to the survival and growth of that community. Such knowledge is typically transferred from one generation to the next through a process of enculturation and includes shared norms or ideals of how people should act in certain situations or toward one another. It also includes beliefs about the way of life that is desirable for society, symbols that communicate meanings of common interest, and different classifications of reality (Peoples & Baily, 2000).
- **Foreign knowledge** is knowledge that enters a community from the outside and is typically introduced into a particular host community through acculturation.

The survival and development of human society is dependent on the knowledge of individuals as well as on the shared pool of knowledge that communities constantly tap into in order to exist, to interact with one another, and to cope with existing and changing conditions. Knowledge is fundamental to the maintenance and development of culture and the basic elements of human life. It follows that knowledge that is flawed, or coloured through bias or particular perspectives, could negatively influence the success of development initiatives, hence the emphasis in this chapter on the need for development agents to ensure that they have a sound knowledge and/or understanding of the communities where they plan to work.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to brief descriptions of the kind of knowledge that development agents should have in order to enable them to manage development projects in culturally sensitive and sustainable ways.

#### **4.5.1 Knowledge of the environment in which development project is to be conducted**

The human environment is a reality upon which humankind depends for its continued existence, and includes the natural environment, the socio-cultural environment and a non-tangible, unseen environment (Coertze, 1980; Coertze & Coertze, 1996). While the natural environment is the physical environment that consists of the earth and everything on it, climatic conditions and the elements in space, the socio-cultural environment is the cultural environment created by specific groups of humans, often through a process of en- or acculturation (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). Environmental resources are necessary for survival and the human impact on the environment should, therefore, be a prime consideration in community development design. Of critical importance is the sustainable use of the environment in such a way that it would not harm the environment, society or the people involved, irrespective of donors or external funding. In other words, there should, as a matter of principle, be sufficient resources, capacity and will to sustain development over an extended period of time (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002).

As humankind basically depends on the environment and its resources for existence, the way in which a particular community views its natural environment and/or the unseen world is an integral part of culture. The techniques used to acquire raw

materials, the methods used to manufacture or produce goods for human use are reflections of the way a particular community views its relationship to the environment. Technology has in itself developed during many millennia, through various processes of evolution, from the subsistence orientated, traditional cultures of the Stone Ages, Metal Age and the early Middle Ages through the commercially oriented, revolutionary Industrial Age to the current information and communication technology of the Information Age. Nevertheless, technology is still firmly anchored in the availability of raw materials on the one hand and economic systems on the other hand. The survival and growth of developing communities within rural and urban contexts would, therefore, depend largely on their ability to apply and integrate their traditions, local industrial capability and global Information Age technology.

An important aspect of the material expression of culture is human settlement and architecture, something that involves human culture in its totality. The temporary camps of hunter-gatherers, the settlements of subsistence farmers and the sprawling townships and cities of the industrialized world are major features of human existence and growth. These rural and urban dwellings of humankind are the environments within which people live out their lives. It is within these dwellings that the changes from local village to global village and their consequences can best be witnessed (Coertze & Coertze, 1996).

#### 4.5.2 Knowledge of community social relationships

Due to the social nature of humankind and practical priorities for survival and co-operation, people live together or manage common interests as structurally organized groups. Social organization is the way people are grouped together and/or live together within a variety of social units, based on principles of relationship and according to common interests and values and the regulation of common behaviour (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). Social relationships are, therefore, typically structured in terms of the social organization of a particular society.

As an aspect of culture, social organization is the grouping of individuals within various cultural contexts as a variety of structured social units based on kinship, co-residence and interest groups or associations within which the behaviour and relationships of the individual are determined by social values, prescriptions or regulations (cf. (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). Amongst these organized groups there are different kinds of organizations based on aspects such as kinship, politics and economics.

A **society** can be defined as all the people who live in a specific area, sharing a common culture whilst functioning fairly independently of people outside that area. Societies are usually made up of all the different communities in the same area who share the same values and have a common culture. (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002). A **community**, on the other hand, can be defined as a group of people who share a common residential area, social life and interests based on and maintained through local knowledge and strategies of co-operation for survival and growth. A community can, therefore, be described as a group of people who are inhabitants and neighbours within a specific geographic area and who share a social life with common interests at a specific point in time. A good example of this would be a farming community (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). Community members share a sense of belonging and identity; and a community spirit exists amongst those participating in the activities of the community (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002). It is these shared biological, intellectual, spiritual and social characteristics and needs of people (cf P.J.

Coertze, 1973) that determine the cultural achievements and behaviour of all those who are part of this community.

According to Coertze and Coertze (1996) a **band** can be defined as the smallest socio-political unit of people, with several bands often forming some or other loose confederation. A **clan** is distinguished from a band in the sense that it – the clan – is a social unit of related families or members with a common ancestor. In a matrilineal society, an ancestral mother would, for example, be regarded as the common ancestor, while in a patrilineal society it would be an ancestral father. Clans share the same family name and function as a social unit within the broader society. A **tribe** consists of a number of related clans under the leadership of a senior clan that forms the core of the tribe. An **ethnos or 'people'** is a group of people of common origin and identity, pursuing a common lifestyle developed over a long period of time and recognized as such by others. There is typically a fourfold link between members of the ethnos, namely their common culture, historical development, geo-political link and their awareness of an own identity as expressed by a name and an emphasis on common cultural traits such as language and religion. An ethnos or people can vary in size from a band, a clan, a tribe or a nation. Finally, a **nation** can be defined as a complex social unit within a state. Typical of a nation is that it has a homogeneous ethnic core, supplemented by foreign/alien groups who integrate into the core group in due course. The state may attempt to stimulate unity and cohesion between different groups through a process of nation building, such as in post-colonial Africa. Nation building is complicated by factors such as the use of an official language to promote unity and is achieved through state initiated directed acculturation.

#### 4.5.3 Knowledge of community culture

Culture as a concept refers to the multifaceted, adaptive and patterned ways of life created by humankind in a process of human adaptation to a complex environment and in accordance with the complex human nature (P.J. Coertze, 1968). Culture is multi-dimensional, comprising interrelated aspects or systems that include the economy, health services, knowledge, art, military system, education, judicial system, religion, social organization, games and recreation, political organization, language, technology and a value system (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). It also includes the information, attitudes, ideas, beliefs, rules, values, perceptions, and standards that affect people's ways of thinking (Peoples & Baily, 2000). The dependence of a culture on the maintenance and applications of traditional values and customs for survival and growth may be described as *traditionalism*.

It follows that community/societal life is also a multidimensional phenomenon: it could include one or more multifaceted cultures, depending on its social composition, the interactive dynamics of human characteristics and the utilization of environmental potential by the community to sustain itself and to adapt to continuously changing conditions of existence. The dimensions of community life and its existence are specific to the kind of community in question and its characteristic way of life, including the way it responds to and manages cultural change and development – through the transfer of culture and the application of knowledge in community development in dynamic interaction with a specific set of environmental conditions.

According to Peoples & Baily (2000), culture is essential for the psychological and social development and patterns of behaviour of individuals within a group. The culture into which a human is born and educated acts as the source of information or knowledge that is needed to survive in the natural environment and to participate in

the life of the particular group (Peoples & Baily, 2000: 24). The specific culture of an ethnic group or a separate people is, therefore, the unique and patterned way of life of that a group or people adopts, based either on its traditions or on its innovative cultural adaptation to environmental conditions, with each individual member of that group making his/her own cultural contributions to the group (P.J. Coertze, 1968; 1973).

Specific cultures can also be classified as types in accordance with criteria such as socio-economic systems, language groupings or religions. Cultural types could be small, mobile groups or bands of nomadic foragers or hunter-gatherers; seasonally nomadic pastoralists or herders; horticulturalists; intensive agriculturalists (Peoples & Baily 2000) and complex industrialized societies. What is important in all of them, though, is that all the members of such a group share the same knowledge and same culture and transfers it from one generation to the next through a process of *enculturation* (Coertze & Coertze, 1996: 71). This is particularly true with regard to the education of small children (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002: 62). Over time this enculturation process establishes traditions and an ancestral cultural heritage that, in turn, serve as basis for continued enculturation. Cultural change is often the result of cultural innovation within a specific culture but could also be the result of external factors and/or interventions.

Table 4.1: Transfer of culture & application of knowledge in community development

|               |   | Traditionalism   |               |   |  |
|---------------|---|--|---------------|---|--|
| Enculturation | <b>Traditional rural society</b><br>Traditional communalism<br><br>Holistic, integrated values and approach to life<br>Isolation<br>Traditional knowledge application<br><br>Social network information communication | <b>Developing urban society</b><br>Mixed traditional and modern cultural traits<br>Intensive adaptation to foreign cultural elements<br>Localization<br>Local knowledge and fragmented specialization<br>Selective information and communication | Acculturation | <b>Developing rural society</b><br>Traditional cultural base with modern traits<br>Moderate adaptation to foreign cultural elements<br>Dependence on foreign knowledge and products<br>Mixed local knowledge & specialization<br>Peripheral information and communication | <b>Globalized modern society</b><br>Complex commercialism and industrialization<br>Individualistic and fragmented approach to life<br>Globalization and international networking<br>Diversified specialization<br><br>Sophisticated information services |
|               |   |  |               | Modernism   |  |

As indicated in Table 4.1, *enculturation* is the result of knowledge transferral, *acculturation* happens when a community adopts foreign cultural elements into its own traditions and ways of being (Coertze & Coertze, 1996; Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002), thus effecting changes to established culture (R.D. Coertze, 1968). *Direct acculturation* occurs when cultural change is intentionally imposed from within (own authority) or from without (by a foreign authority) (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). The acceptance and applications of new values and customs from the modern international world, also through globalisation, is typically referred to as *modernism*.

#### 4.5.3.1 Knowledge of values and beliefs as aspects of culture

Values can be defined as the moral principles or accepted standards of a person or group; the standards or principles by which people live their lives; what is considered to be good, desirable and proper; what people find important and valuable in life; and what is perceived as morally right or wrong (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002: 156).

Core values, those that hold communities together, constitute the basis of everything a person believes and contributes to the identity of a person or group (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002). Very often, these values are structured in the form of a religion and associated with particular religious rituals and/or ceremonies. Religious beliefs include a belief in supernatural powers and entities that have the capability to influence life on earth and the spirituality of humankind, while religious procedures are aimed at the achievement and maintenance of a harmonious relationship between humans and supernatural powers or entities (*cf* Coertze & Coertze, 1996).

Structured supernaturalism typically manifests as categories of religion that include theism, personal supernaturalism and impersonal supernaturalism. Theism is the belief in and worship of gods; Deism is the rational belief in a god that created but do not maintain its creation; Fetishism is the belief in a supernatural spirit that occupies a natural or human made feature or object and are in some cases able to perform magical acts (Coertze & Coertze, 1996); Monotheism is the belief in and worship of a single, supreme god and Naturalism is the belief in and worship of supernatural powers that are related to natural features (Coertze & Coertze, 1996).

While *personal* supernaturalism is the belief in and worship of independent supernatural beings whose favour must be gained by prayer or sacrifices (Coertze & Coertze, 1996; De Villiers, 1968), *impersonal* supernaturalism is the belief in a supernatural power that has no will of its own, but can be used for specific purposes (De Villiers, 1968), such as divination, a process through which the unknown is believed to be exposed, through the application of a variety of methods (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). A traditional healer, for example, is believed to apply his/her magical powers to act as intermediary between humans and supernatural beings (*cf* Coertze & Coertze 1996). The negative application of supernatural power or magical action to influence events or people is referred to as 'black magic' (Coertze & Coertze, 1996).

Often associated with religion, spirituality is, in fact, a much more encompassing term. It includes the essence of morality, those principles that guide the steps of the individual or group and provides them with a frame of reference against which they could evaluate their own thinking and behavior. Examples of such principles are trust, truth, credibility and accountability

In modern times, the exposure of traditional communities to foreign religions and values as well as to some extent the absence of religion in much of modern society has had a marked effect on the beliefs, perceptions and social behaviour of many community members, suggesting that ignorance or denigration of community values could lead to a rejection of everything associated with the development project and those associated with it.

#### 4.5.3.2 Knowledge of Language as an aspect of culture

Since different groups use different languages to express their thoughts, feelings, attitudes and ways of being and, since communication is important for building and maintaining relationships between individuals and groups (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*,



2002), project workers need to be sensitive to the language and communication protocols of the communities where they plan to work. In this regard it is especially important to be cognisant of the use of proverbs which, especially in developing countries, are vehicles for the expression of cultural wisdoms and values, metaphorical speech, alliteration and rhyme and are transferred verbally from one generation to the next (*cf* Coertze & Coertze, 1996).

#### 4.5.3.3 Knowledge of Humour as an element of culture

Humour, the quality of being funny or the ability to see and appreciate the funny things in life, to laugh and not to take everything seriously all the time (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002), is a unique human characteristic (Apte, 1977). It reflects both a cognitive experience of socio-cultural reality and of external socio-cultural factors that trigger this cognitive experience as well as the pleasure that results from the humorous cognitive experience, external manifestations of the cognitive experience and the resultant pleasure, expressed through mirthful laughter and smiling (Apte, 1977).

Humour is presented and experienced in many forms and during numerous kinds of occasions in different cultures over the world. It varies from the spontaneous and often-unexpected humorous event during everyday life to formally designed presentations such as visual and performing art forms, the communication of the lighter side of life in media such as published cartoons and comedies in plays. In many of these forms, humour is a powerful information and educational medium to effectively convey values, information and prescribed behaviour in an interesting and entertaining way.

Amongst traditional communities, including ethnic populations in Africa, humour is an integral part of accepted social behaviour and relationships that involve joking behaviour as patterned social behaviour. Such joking behaviour is manifested in institutionalised kinship-related roles within the social organization and is an essential aspect of social interaction with functional relevance to social structure and values (Apte, 1977). In kinship relationships, the joking relationship within the social structure is patterned playful behavior between two individuals with special kinship or other types of social bonds between them. Such behaviour typically consists of reciprocal or nonreciprocal verbal or action-based humor such as joking, teasing, banter, ridicule, insult and horseplay, usually in the presence of an audience. Kinship based joking relationships are more formalized, structured, institutionalized, socially controlled and obligatory in nature and often reflects the nature of the relationship. (Apte, 1977).

Some joking relationships are not kin based but, rather, exist in different types of social groups such as age groups or amongst members of different villages, or amongst persons of different occupational groups. Non-kinship based joking relations are more person-oriented. It is voluntary, less formalized and a behavioral attribute of friendship (Apte, 1977). In the sprawling urban townships where traditional and foreign cultural traits are integrated into changed lifestyles, humor is reflected in adapted language traits, values and issues of everyday life. Physical objects, institutions, values, concepts and people are applied as humorous metaphors and meanings in communication and to present the lighter side of life in journalism (*cf* Makaringe, 1996).

#### 4.5.3.4 Knowledge of art and aesthetics as aspects of culture

While aesthetics is the study of the rules and principles of art, a branch of philosophy concerned with the study of concepts such as beauty and taste (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002), art is an aspect of culture that is concerned with the creation of beauty, with a harmonious relationship between rhythm, sound, colour, line, form and movement (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). Performing arts include the various forms of music, dancing, praise songs, mimic and drama while visual arts include drawing, painting, engraving, body decorations, wall and textile decorations etc. Art in literature includes poems, folklore, etc. (*cf* Ember & Ember, 1973)

The largely religious and social orientated expressions of art and aesthetic values in traditional communal lifestyles have to some extent changed to expressions of urban social forms of life and adapted European forms of art. Some modern developments such as commercialism and related aspects of tourism have a detrimental effect on aesthetic values and traditional forms of art.

#### 4.5.4 Knowledge of social structures

Social structuring refers to the establishment and maintenance of social structures or organizations and regulated social behaviour that are shaped through internal interactions between members of a single community as well as to external interactions between members and organizations of different communities. Social/community structures typically reflect the dominant 'culture' of the group with each individual member carving out his/her own existence by co-operating with the group, from his/her own position and within a personal framework towards the maintenance of the whole (P.J. Coertze, 1968).

In modern rural developing communities, the relationships of kinship and traditional leadership is largely responsible for social order and function. It is in these leadership structures where systems of rules for behaviour and ways of disciplining those who disobey them are created. Discipline - the obedient adherence to prescribed behaviour through inherent conviction or through external compulsion or force - is typically taught through systematic training in obedience, through punishment and corrective action (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). Where there is discipline there is order (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002).

In more complex multi-cultural urban societies there is a tendency to move away from kinship-based societies and their social cohesion, in some cases towards a more economically class-based society. Order in such communities are more likely to be maintained by means of a legal system, with laws that are enforceable by the courts regulating the relationship between the state and its subjects and the conduct of the subjects towards one another. In this sense the fair and equal treatment of all people under the law would mean that the law is applied in the same way to all people without any exceptions; and justice is to give a person what he or she deserves (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002).

Legal systems consist of coherent sets of written or unwritten compulsory prescriptions within cultural context, often derived from general customary rules, and practiced as customary law or instructions or legislation issued by an authority and requires discipline - the obedient maintenance of prescribed behaviour through either inner convictions or external enforcement by authorities (*cf* Coertze & Coertze, 1996).

#### 4.5.5 Knowledge of safety and security systems

Protection and safety, too, are prerequisites for human survival and existence in any environment. Effective human and community development require effective protection and safety measures. Protection and methods to achieve safety include cultural actions, regulation of social behaviour and government instituted measures to protect members of the society against threatening natural and supernatural elements, crime, military threats and dangerous human behaviour in general. In some cultures, even supernatural beings - such as ancestors or guardian spirits that are associated with specific humans - are regarded as protective entities (Coertze & Coertze, 1996).

Political organization and control of the people by authorities and organizations is, therefore, a fundamental part of structured society: the existence of political and other management structures are typical of social organizations and should be considered in community development programmes. Such structures are typically hierarchical in nature, consisting of a central government and local authorities that act according to relevant legislation and regulations, order and administration. Political governance is closely interwoven with the numerical strength of a people and with other aspects of culture including forms and methods of production, kinds of social structures such as foragers, herders and agriculturalists, and with legal systems (R.D. Coertze, 1973a).

Developing countries often use a mix of governance structures, including gerontocracy (governance by elders or wise old men); democracy (representative leadership, or governance by leadership that is elected by a public electorate according to a statutory determined election process); monarchy (governance by a single person of royal blood); oligarchy (governance by only a few people), and plutocracy (governance on the highest level of state by a class of wealthy people) (Coertze & Coertze, 1996).

In Africa, although many countries claim to be democratic, the clan structure is still very strong. Traditionally the tribal structure consists of related clans under leadership of the senior clan. Clans from outside also join the tribe. The tribal chief is the political head of the tribe, often as a hereditary position but he could be also elected to the position due to particular qualities, duties or functions (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). The headman is the political leader of a local unit or clan (Coertze & Coertze, 1996; Pelsler, 1968). The headmen of respective clans and wards or districts within a tribe often act as a tribal council in support of the tribal head or chief (Pelsler, 1968).

#### 4.5.6 Knowledge of health systems of the community

Crucial to survival and/or human existence is the notion of health, that is, freedom from illness, disease or injury and to be well in body and mind. A person can be healthy even though he or she is physically disabled; and a person can be unhealthy or ill even though they are able-bodied. (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002).

The health of humankind and its environment is maintained largely through health systems. According to Coertze & Coertze (1996), a health system, health service system or ethno-medicine is an aspect of culture that focuses on the maintenance of physical and spiritual health, the application of actions or methods and material resources for the achievement and maintenance of health and the treatment of disorders and diseases (*cf* Coertze & Coertze, 1996).

Regardless of the existence of scientifically based health systems and procedures, perceptions of health and its maintenance are often culturally based and in conflict with what is regarded as scientifically sound. Social development therefore often includes changes in the attitudes towards or systems used for health management.

Related to the maintenance of good health is the need for sport and recreation, which are necessary for the maintenance of the self and the community (Max-Neeff, 1991). Play, sport and recreation, including cultural activities that involve the intellectual, physical, spiritual and social characteristics of human beings, are highly valued elements of community life. According to Coertze & Coertze (1996), play and recreation not only differs from culture to culture, but are related to other aspects of culture such as cultural activities, religion and art and the idealistic fantasies of children (Coertze, 1980). In numerous cultures, play-acting and educational games are powerful methods of teaching and exercising the various activities of learning and qualities and capabilities such as values and life skills.

#### **4.5.7 Knowledge of economic systems of the community**

Economics can be defined as the complex of activities concerned with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Business and economic activities in a country refers to the wealth and resources of a community or a country with special focus on the production and use of goods and services (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002) and is related to other aspects of culture, including the political system, social life and religion (Potgieter 1973). Different kinds of economic systems are foraging; subsistence farming and herding; and commercial farming.

Culturally, an economic system is an element of human acquisition and the use of material resources through activities including collection, hunting, cultivation, breeding, barter and trade and manufacturing; the processing of the resources including consumer goods and prestige commodities; their storage, and their allocation and distribution to members of the society in an organized way (cf. Coertze & Coertze, 1996; Potgieter, 1973).

In a traditional society, where subsistence economies are the norm, economic health is dependent on the production of resources for communal needs (Potgieter, 1973) and typically involves the domestication of plants and animals. These include:

- *Foraging* – by hunter-gatherers who get their food from collecting wild plants and hunting or fishing for wild animals in their environments. Foragers do not attempt to increase the resources in their environments by agriculture or breeding of livestock and migrate to those areas where game and edible wild plants are available during a given season (Peoples & Baily, 2000: 87-91).
- *Domestication* - the intentional planting and cultivation of selected plants and breeding of certain species of animals for food and raw materials; and the keep of animals for performing work (Peoples & Baily, 2000: 91-92). Pastoralists or herders acquire much of their food and raw materials by raising domesticated animals and subsisting on the products of the animals. Their herds graze on natural forage and therefore must be moved to where the forage naturally occurs. Consequently, pastoralists are seasonally nomadic peoples. (Peoples & Baily 2000: 100-103).
- *Farming*, In the farming system known as horticulture, including activities such as shifting cultivation (or slash and burn and dry land gardening, people use their physical energy and hand tools in clearing land, preparing the soil,

planting the crops and harvesting while in permanent villages where they practice a sedentary lifestyle. In intensive agriculture, fields are farmed more frequently and intensively with the use of substantial fertilization, crop rotation, plowing with draft animals and irrigation to produce higher yields and surplus production that supports specialized workers development of infrastructures, government services and trade. (Peoples & Baily, 2000: 92-99).

- In *industrialism*, the organization of society is characterized by large-scale mechanized manufacturing industry (Collins, 2002). Allied to this is commercialism, the spirit, principles or procedures of commerce emphasizes profit-making (Collins, 2002). In modern commercialism, the market principle increasingly integrates the economies the countries of the world into a global economy in which raw materials, manufactured goods, infrastructures, information, communication, investment and services play an increasing and integrated role.

Table 4.2: A holistic integrated community development model for the total

| <b>Cultural and socio-economic stability and growth</b>         |  |   |                            |
|---|--|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Effective facilitation and flow of information</b>           | <p><b>The Information Age society</b><br/> <i>Modern existence:</i> Survival and growth through traditional &amp; universal principles, integrated knowledge systems &amp; rules</p> <p><i>Balanced construction:</i> Orientation &amp; shaping of the individual through communication, values &amp; knowledge</p> <p><i>Multi-faceted development:</i> Individual identity, informed capability, positioning through active participation in a modern society</p> <p><i>Modern/multiple social structuring:</i> Social structures &amp; regulated behaviour through internal &amp; external interactions</p> | <p><b>Indigenous society vs. Modern Age</b><br/> <i>Communal existence:</i> Dependence on traditional principles, indigenous knowledge &amp; communal rules</p> <p><i>Traditional construction:</i> Orientation &amp; shaping of individuals - inability to communicate and integrate conflicting current information and values; indigenous vs. alien/foreign information systems and related values</p> <p><i>Development:</i> The dualities of individual identities, capability, positioning through participation in society and economic factors</p> <p><i>Communal social structures:</i> Social structures &amp; regulated/conflicting behaviour through internal &amp; external interactions from diverse cultures</p> | <b>Lack of information</b> |
|   | <p><b>The reconstructed society</b><br/>(guided acculturation)</p> <p><i>Existence:</i> Survival and growth through different sets of principles, knowledge &amp; rules</p> <p><i>Reconstruction:</i> Orientation &amp; shaping of the individual through multi-cultural communication, values, knowledge</p> <p><i>Development:</i> Individual identity, capability, positioning through participation in society</p> <p><i>Social restructuring:</i> Representative traditional and modern social structures &amp; behavioural procedures based on integrated internal &amp; external interactions</p>       | <p><b>The disintegrating society</b></p> <p><i>Cultural extinction:</i> Low survival and growth capability due to lack of principles, knowledge, rules, adaptability to &amp; maintenance of the environment</p> <p><i>Deconstruction of the individual:</i> Disorientation &amp; deterioration due to lack of communication, motivation, values &amp; knowledge</p> <p><i>Stagnation:</i> Loss of individual identity, respect and capability; negative responses in society</p> <p><i>Social disintegration:</i> Social structures &amp; behaviour incapable of maintaining itself and coping with internal &amp; external interactions</p>   |                            |
| <b>Cultural and socio-economic stagnation and deterioration</b> |  |   |                            |

In developing communities and countries, the mixture of traditional subsistence economical systems and variations of modern commercialism lead towards changing forms of existence, values and education, community development and social structuring. Against this background, developing rural communities within more isolated, traditional cultural contexts may develop differently from more developing urban communities that have to survive and grow within more heterogeneous, globally linked social and economic contexts (see Table 4.2).

## 4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the focus was on the elements of community life used to establish a social structure in order to survive. Anthropological aspects were used to describe those elements that need to be considered in managing development projects in Africa. Special reference was made to the cultural elements that typically guide activities in communities and influence new developments and/or information on such elements, and the interaction between those during the change processes. Human development was defined as a process of personal change, growth and advancement through processes that involve the acquisition of knowledge, the development of the capability to make decisions and participate in the activities of one or more communities and the point was made that education and training are central to development since they empower people to provide for their basic needs and to enhance their personal growth and their ability to make choices (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002).

In this and the previous chapter the researcher also pointed out that crucial to community survival and growth is the need for a community development model that involves the total community with all its interrelated aspects of existence. As mentioned such a model should preferably be interdisciplinary and holistic in nature, integrating all the relevant aspects and characteristics of a human being as well as the life and culture of a community into sustainable development initiatives.

An important implication of such a community development model is the need for systematic documentation and understanding of community life and culture, the structure and processes of development, and the integration of all these aspects into dynamic and sustainable self-maintenance and growth. In terms of community development, such a system would include a database and information system focused on the nature, maintenance, potential and growth of community life as well as on the structures and processes of development management that can be applied in community development programmes. The discussion of this model is the focus of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### AN INTEGRATED MODEL FOR MANAGING THE FLOW OF INFORMATION IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN AFRICA

#### 5.1 Introduction to this chapter: background, aim and overview

As indicated in Chapter 1, the primary aim of this study is to develop a holistic model for the management of information in development projects in Africa. In order to achieve this purpose, the researcher has looked for answers to three research questions, namely:

- What is the status of development initiatives in Africa with specific reference to the flow of information?
- What is the relationship between management and information flow within a development paradigm?
- What are the main variables that need to be considered in the flow of information within developing communities?

Each of these questions was the focus of a particular chapter in this study. Chapter 2 focused on question 1, Chapter 3 on question 2, and Chapter 4 on question 3. The researcher then used the answers to these questions as a basis for the development of an information management model that could be used during development projects in Africa. This model, the development of which was the primary purpose of this study, is presented in detail in this chapter.

More specifically, the focus in this chapter is on the description of three areas of informational importance that have been identified as elements of the multi-disciplinary model for managing the information flow in development, namely information on the origin and/or initiation of development; information on the management of the project itself, and finally, information on the community that has been targeted for development. The chapter concludes with the discussion of a number of pathways that could serve as conduits for the flow of information during development projects. The guidelines provided could be used as operational indicators in information management checklists.

#### 5.2 Background information on the proposed integrated and multi-disciplinary model

Communication and interaction are natural human characteristics. However, not all people communicate in the same way and/or for the same reasons, be it consciously or subconsciously. As indicated in Chapter 4, people use language to express their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and ways of being. They also use language to build and maintain relationships between themselves and other individuals and groups (Anyiam-Osigwe *et al*, 2002: 22). There is, therefore, a close relationship between the way individuals and groups communicate and the way they act/behaviour towards one another. In our communication behaviour we use the mental maps, or pictures, of the way we see the world and its people as a filter. On the one hand this filter assists us in determining whether we should accommodate or reject ideas, concepts, etc. On the other hand, since our 'mind maps' are shaped by norms, beliefs, and values we have experienced, they may hinder us and we might, in fact reject other people and their ideas simply because they are different from what we know and



how we see the world. This may become problematic if our filters prevent us from realising that all people belong to the same race – the human race – and that, by the virtue of this, we are connected to one another. When we interact with others, it is up to us to utilise these connections, for our own benefit and for the benefit of humanity at large.

Unless development project workers and information managers take cognisance of these ‘filters’ when they communicate and interact with target populations, communication might well break down, which may have serious consequences for the success of the project.

The integrated and multi-disciplinary model that is presented in this chapter is informed by the researcher’s acknowledgement of the relationship between human thought, communication, and activities. Thus, in the model human concerns are integrated and translated into human activities in such a way that differences in cultural norms, beliefs and values are accommodated rather than ignored. In fact, the model is informed by the notion that the things people do - human activities – and the way they do these may be used as indicators of what people value. It follows that the information manager in a context of development and change must view these activities as objectively as possible, that is, as sources of information and/or predictors of human behaviour.

The proposed model is also informed by the Basic/Fundamental Human Needs theories of Maslow (1970), Burton (1990) and Max-Neeff (1991) (see Table 5.1), which were briefly discussed in Chapter 4, with the proviso that the model proposed is an information management model meant to be used in development projects aimed at effecting transformation. Transformation – or real change – is, as argued before, only possible if development workers, with particular reference to their role as information managers, have an empathetic understanding of inter-group and intra-group behaviour in the cultures of the communities in which they work.

Table 5.1: categories of stakeholders

| CATEGORIES OF STAKEHOLDERS                               |  |
|--|--|
| Those that are <b>positively affected</b> by the project | Those that are <b>negatively affected</b> by the project       |
| Those interested in the <b>outcomes</b> of the project   | Those interested in the <b>processes</b> during implementation |
| Those <b>supporting</b> the project                      | Those <b>opposing</b> the project                              |

### 5.3 The Proposed Model

#### 5.3.1 Information Area 1: Origin and initiation of a development project (Part 1)

In terms of the proposed model, the vision, mission and expected results of the project, as set out in planning documents, represent the views of the project initiators and, as such, reflect their purpose, aims and objectives with the project. General and overview project objectives typically supply information on the project purpose and aims while detailed management objectives tend to provide information on the project strategy and methodology. It seems logical, therefore, that planning documents serve as the basis for information management.

However, as indicated in Chapter 3, the vision, mission and expectations of internal and external initiators and/or stakeholders could be markedly different from each other, with *internal initiators* viewing the project and its impact from the perspective of the targeted community, that is, from the inside out, while *external initiators* view it from the perspective of the development agency, that is, from the outside in.

Acknowledging and synchronizing these differences is crucial to the success of the project. If this is not done, the real danger exists that differences result in prejudicial behaviour and/or misunderstandings regarding intention, objectives, processes and expectations of the stakeholders. Generally, external initiators originate from more developed communities and from different information backgrounds. As 'onlookers', that is, looking 'from the outside in' at the targeted community, they may have preconceived ideas about the community, its problems and the community's ability to solve these. Consequently, they may be inclined to impose their preconceptions, based on prior experience in other contexts, regarding needs of developing communities on a particular project.

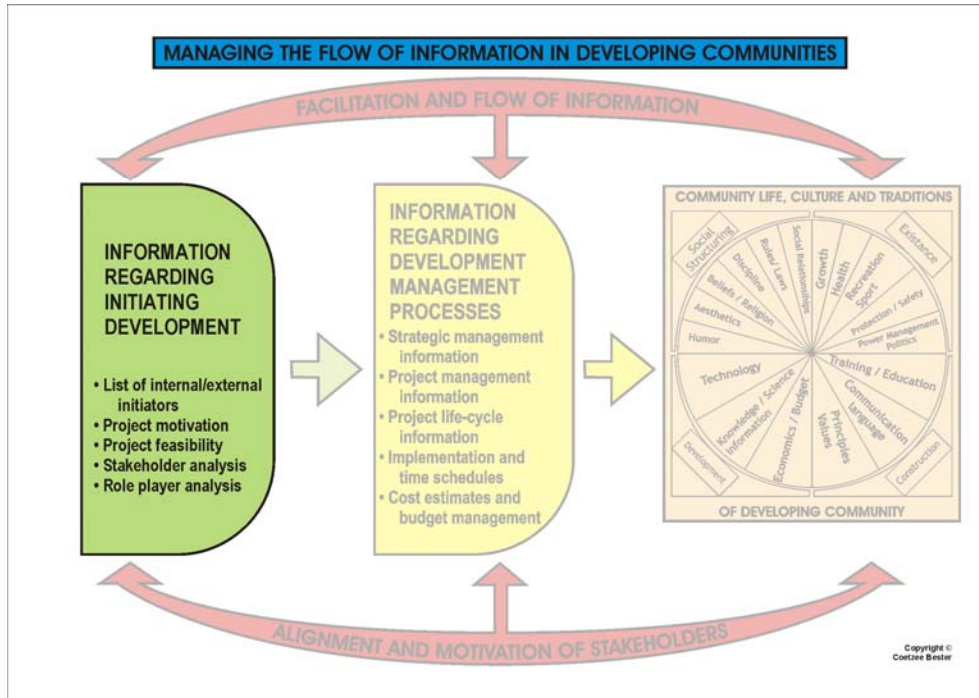
Internal initiators, on the other hand, are looking from the inside out. They are part of the community and have intimate knowledge and understanding of the background information of the community. For the team to become conscious of the community's perspective on development and what is needed, it is necessary for the community to share their ideas with the project team. As a result, the team will be better at anticipating the community's reaction to planned interventions, new ideas or proposed solutions to problems. In other words, merely using planning documents as information basis to found the project on, is, therefore quite risky.

While the acceptability of project objectives and processes can easily be assessed by means of feasibility studies, the results of such an assessment, if differences in stakeholder views are not taken into account, might not suffice as indicators of project success. After all, real and declared motives for a project might be incongruent. All role players/stakeholders – both internal and external – have overt as well as covert motives for participating in a project. Since all motives, both implicit and explicit, have an impact on the credibility of the project, it is crucial for the successful management of the project that all of them are declared, openly and honestly, and recorded as part of the total project information that has to be managed.

In terms of stakeholders' positive or negative attitudes towards a project (see Table 5.1), Burke (2001:40) highlights the importance of stakeholder management. One way of doing so, he suggests, is to quantify the stakeholders' risk tolerance, and then, based on the results of such an exercise to maintain a balance between the positive and negative poles through open and honest discussions of stakeholders' fears and concerns. Should this not be done, the project might well be derailed, especially if those opposed hold powerful positions. Burke warns that notwithstanding such discussions, there is no guarantee that everybody will be satisfied. Project managers have to accept this and, armed with this understanding, must make a point of explicitly managing differences, that is, establishing stakeholder needs and concerns, prioritising them, and basing decisions on the outcomes of negotiations.

Part 1 of the model, which is informed by the differences between external and internal initiators and the processes that could be used to manage such differences, is illustrated in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1: Part 1 of the model



### 5.3.2 Information Area 2: Information on the management of the project (Part 2)

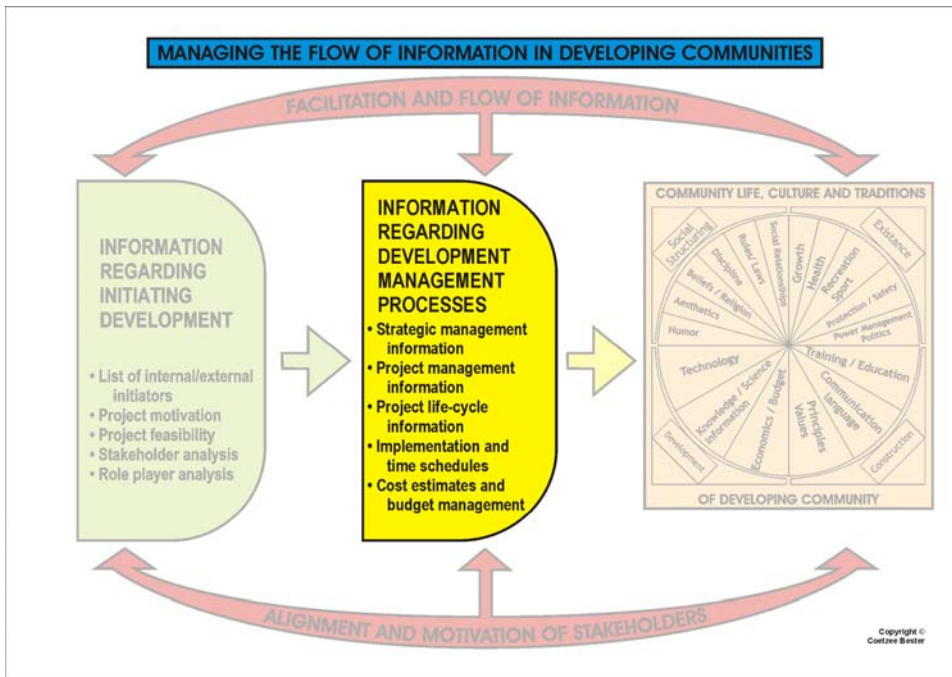
The second part of the model focuses on planning, organising and control mechanisms that contribute to the successful conclusion of a project. Information gleaned from the experiences of the first part of the model that focuses on motives, motivation, vision and mission, is, in the second part of the model, managed as project strategy and implementation plan. In this the strategic information is used to determine the viability of the development project and the best way to manage implementation.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the second part of the model supplies and manages information in accordance with project management methodology. This entails that the project strategy is informed by an analysis of the project environment to identify options and alternatives available to the project manager. This is not sufficient, however. Budgetary information, as indicated in Chapter 3, must be regarded as vital management information. Hence its inclusion in the proposed model as an integrated element of all other measurable sets of information. Together, these elements provide important background information on the project to be managed by an information manager. Part 2 of the model is illustrated in Diagram 2.

The rationale for the inclusion of this information category in the model is found in the contribution it makes to both information management and the enhancement of project credibility. In discussions the researcher had with African leaders at local government level during the SADC workshops (Ajulu and Bester, 2005), also mentioned in Chapter 1, it has become clear that when development projects are announced by international leaders, it creates uncertainty and a distrust amongst community leaders when concomitant detailed implementation and management

plans are not available. Thus, in the proposed model, the implementation of a project will be guided, measured and evaluated on the basis of management information that is made available and shared with the target community.

Diagram 2: Part 2 of the model



The second part of the model focuses on successful development project implementation rather than on rationalisation of the objectives of or motives for the project. The information generated through this part of the model could, thus, be used as a set of guiding and management indicators by stakeholders and/or project managers in order to monitor progress and/or judge the probability of a successful conclusion of the project.

Information managers might also use the second part of the model as a means of monitoring and/or evaluating the project on an ongoing basis. Not only will the integrated information supplied in Part 2 of the model enable information managers to monitor compliance with agreed-upon motives, objectives, time schedules and budget allocations, but it will also allow them to create a checklist for this purpose (see Chapter 3). In doing so, diversions from the planned activities or time schedules could be tracked so as to determine whether they need to be amended, which might result in restructuring of the implementation plan.

### 5.3.3 Information Area 3: Information on the developing community (Part 3)

As indicated in Chapters 1 and 4, one of the main objectives of this study is to ensure the availability of information from, and to, the developing community as part

of information management. A project can, during its life span, be regarded as a temporary organisation, with stakeholders performing different 'organisational' roles. This entails that stakeholders are integral to the project. They use information and contribute to the formulation and realization of the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the project in much the same way as shareholders do in a corporate organisation.

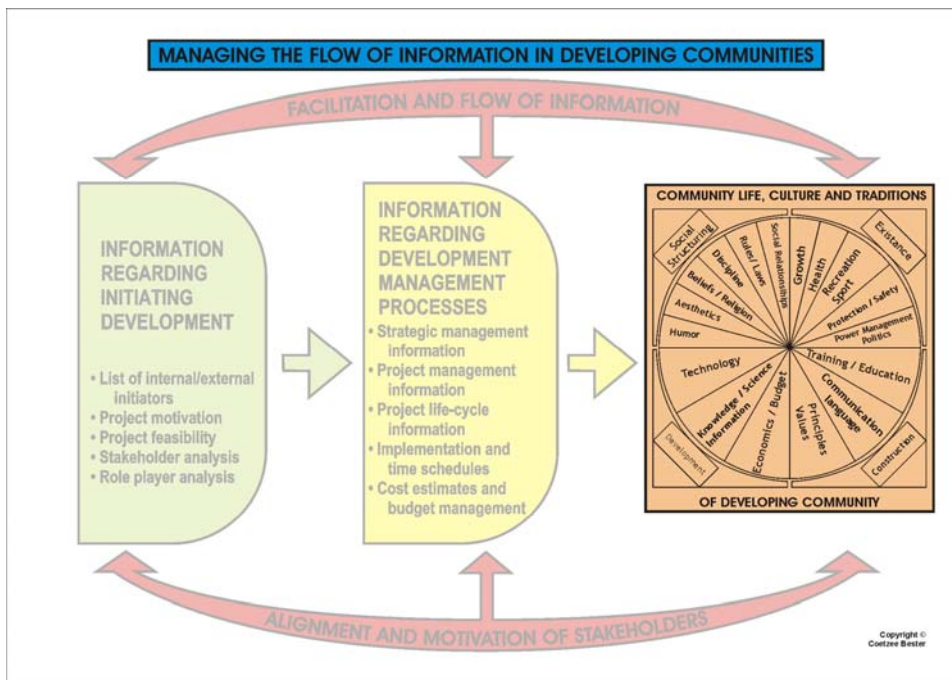
Since the community for development is expected to be the main beneficiary of the development activity, community members must be regarded as important stakeholders. It would be an oversimplification, however, to equate their roles with those of corporate shareholders. Rather, the roles community members could and should play should be viewed from an anthropological perspective - they are, after all, representatives of social and/or cultural communities, not of corporate organisations.

In this regard it is ironic that the target community, while being expected to benefit most from the development project, is also the biggest risk carrier. Although a development project may well bring about 'progress', and provide community members with new skills, open up new opportunities for growth, etc., it may also require the community to sacrifice elements of its traditional ways of living, traditional views of life and humanity, beliefs of what is right and wrong, ways of communicating and expressing themselves, etc. Eventually, the 'success' of the development project, that is, whether it brought joy or unhappiness to the community, will not be determined by the project manager but by the targeted community. It is this community that will decide whether or not the sacrifices they made were worth the benefits accrued.

Informed by this anthropological view of community participation in development projects, the third part of the model could, if correctly utilised, provide information managers with a set of guidelines that they could use to integrate multiple community features into the management structure of information during development projects. Crucial to this set of guidelines is the inclusion of different activities to fulfil the same fundamental human needs (see Diagram 3).

At the same time, this part of the model serves as a tool for experiential learning and awareness, a tool that creates ways of experiencing new information while raising awareness of the value/meaning of existing information, and the relation between the two. At the heart part 3 is the assumption that most humans and groups do not function in discrete categorised areas, but integrate their activities to satisfy their basic and fundamental human needs. Part 3 of the model does not, however, restrict itself to the satisfaction of basic needs. It addresses both needs and activities required to satisfy needs at four levels: (i) existence, (ii) construction, (iii) development, and (iv) social interaction. The model illustrates that the satisfaction of needs is not a linear, hierarchical process but a cyclical one that moves from *existence* to *construction* to *development* to *social structuring* and *back to existence* (see the quadrants in Diagram 3). Part 3 of the model is illustrated in Diagram 3.

Diagram 3: Part 3 of the model



#### 5.4 Elements of the suggested integrated and multi-disciplinary model

Based on class discussions between the researcher and South African students at the University of Pretoria, and based on interaction with participants from various SADC countries and from different backgrounds in workshops led by the researcher (Ajulu and Bester, 2005), the researcher felt that people in Africa, a developing continent, use the concept *information community* with reference to the increasing contemporary influence of information and communication technologies in their social and work environments. Implicit in their understanding of the concept is the notion that the information community refers to an environment where groups of people are aware of the importance of information, where they interact and work as a team to access and obtain information that will enable them fulfil their needs, such as finding answers to questions, solve problems, or simply input for relaxation.

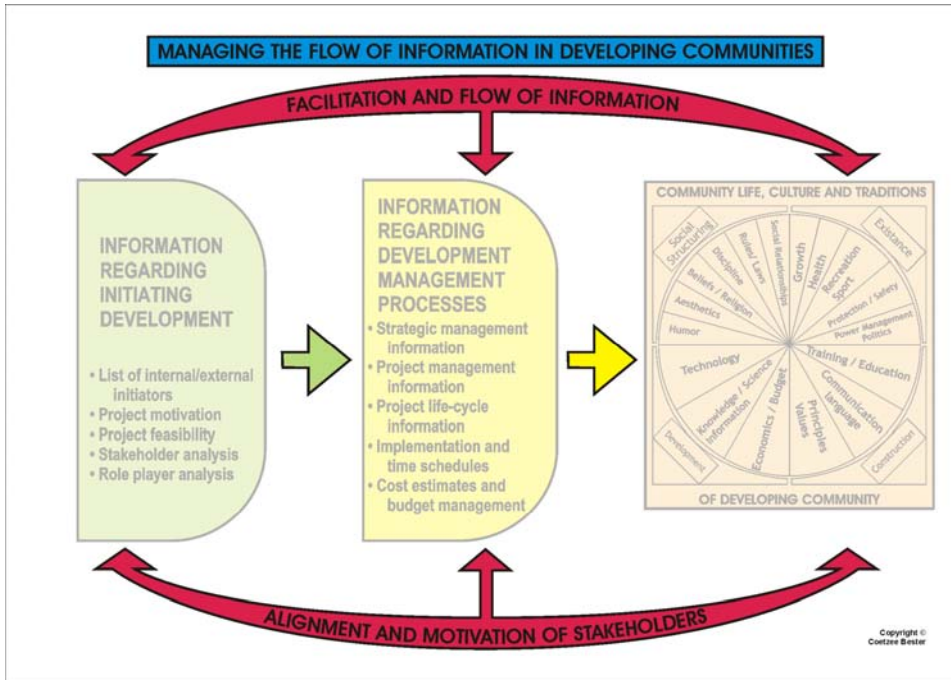
Although not formally researched, these observations and insights by Africa-based role players in the SADC region regarding the relationship between developing information communities and the management of information in development projects, led the researcher to the conclusion that the extent to which such communities utilise information depends on six factors, namely:

- Existence and awareness of the need for information
- Availability of information sources
- Accessing of information sources
- Law as an instrument to manage and regulate the flow of information
- Environmental and infrastructural influences on useable information

- Different levels of information regarding use and application

Part 4 of the model (see Diagram 4) illustrates processes and flow of information from an informed community back to the project management and the project initiators.

Diagram 4: Part 4 of the model



#### 5.4.1 Existence and awareness of the need for information

Information is of no value if its usefulness is not realised. People will only look for specific information once they realise that they need information in their everyday existence. Thus, it is imperative that people understand the relationship between their need for information and the achievement of specific results, for instance, information needed to solve a problem, to survive and/or develop, to interpret research, to compare prices for goods (advertisements), to satisfy the need for medical knowledge, to engage with religious or philosophical thought, to be educated. The need for information must, therefore, be identified, agreed upon and expressed within the developing community.

#### 5.4.2 Availability of information sources

Information is stored in an accessible format in a variety of sources, such as newspapers, books, radio, television, libraries and Internet. However, unless these sources are available to and accessed by the community concerned, they are of no use. In this regard the term 'availability' of information sources might need to be redefined to mean not only that the source exists and is generally available, but also that specific groups can 'avail themselves' of it, that is, can make use of it. Local

radio and television are information sources, for instance, that are generally available. Information on the Internet, although 'out there' is not necessarily available to developing communities. In this regard Chen and Wellman (2004) state that high costs, the dominance of English, the lack of relevant content and the lack or technological support are barriers for disadvantaged communities to gain access to information on the Internet. Very few members of deep rural communities have access to computers and the Internet, and few have the skills to access these even if they are available. Thus, Chen and Wellman (2004) say, unless computer programmes are customized to cater for the needs of developing information communities, they remain exclusive and 'elitist' and unavailable to these communities.

#### **5.4.3 Accessing of information sources**

Methods used by developing information communities to access and/or process information vary and often reflect the level of development of the community. Literate community members can read newspapers, articles and books in order to find the information they need. When they have access to a library, which is often not the case in developing communities, they can extend their search for information at minimal cost.

People who are not literate, however, are entirely dependent on word of mouth information – the oral tradition of primitive societies – and on audio and visual communication media such as local radio and television. Frequently, radio and TV use indigenous languages as communication media, which makes the information available and accessible. By contrast, approximately three quarters of the world's Internet websites are in the English language (World Economic Forum, 2002), which makes the information contained on the Internet much less accessible. Related to this it must be mentioned that there is a growing awareness of the need to make information more accessible to developing communities. Thus, the Local Language Speech Technology Initiative, a collaborative effort involving India, the UK, Nigeria, and South Africa, aims to develop an open source toolset for the effective development of a text-to-speech (TTS) system in any language of the world - the South African effort will develop an isiZulu TTS system as a very first pilot (Meraka Institute, 2003). This, however, is one of the rare attempts, and by implication, a community's ability to avail itself of information sources, access the information, select useful information and match the information to the community's needs is limited.

Considering these issues of availability and access to information sources and information itself, it can be concluded that many members of rural communities are dependent on others who do have access and/or the skills to search for and/or process information on their behalf. Also in this situation, people in need of the information have no role in deciding whether the information is relevant to their needs.

#### **5.4.4 Law as an instrument to manage and regulate the flow of information**

As suggested in the remainder of this study, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterised by a free flow of information. The digital environment in which we live allows us to access, create and disseminate information across the world in the wink of a second and at



minimal financial cost. This is not, the whole picture, though. Access to information is gradually becoming difficult as governments and other parties increasingly create restrictions and laws aimed at controlling the free flow and use of information. Some of the reasons for their doing so may be well-intentioned, for example, to control pornography, subversion and illegal hacking, money laundering. Other reasons may be less well-intentioned. Why, some people ask, should intellectual property rights be so strictly enforced? Is intellectual property rights legislation perhaps designed to protect the economic interest of a few big information role players? Or are these laws aimed at excluding people from essential information? This imbalance leads to the question: What is more important – the right of access to information or the right to own information?

To ensure a balance of power between those who use and those who own information the researcher argues that there should be a balance between the accessibility and the legal control regarding the distribution and use of information.

#### **5.4.5 Environmental and infrastructural influences on useable information**

As indicated in Chapter 4, technology – including information technology - is dependent on the availability of raw materials and infrastructure on the one hand, and economic systems on the other. The extent to which developing communities can, therefore, develop towards the 'ideal' of an information community, which is crucial for the survival and growth of developing communities in both rural and urban contexts, therefore, depends largely on the communities' ability to apply and integrate their traditions, local industrial capabilities and global 'information age' technology. Thus, when assessing the position of developing information communities should take note of environmental factors that might influence communities' ability to use information (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). Environmental and infrastructural factors could include distance, transport, electricity, available technology, finances, etc.

Information managers should identify these factors – empowering as well as limiting – and make the needed information available to the project manager/s to be accommodated in project management plans. In addition, information managers should design strategies for managing information within the constraints and opportunities identified.

#### **5.4.6 Different levels of information regarding use and application**

As indicated in Chapter 4, human survival and development is inextricably linked to individual and group knowledge. Knowledge is crucial not only for preservation and maintenance of what is valued, but also for change. Broadly speaking, knowledge might refer to known facts or information and/or with experiential wisdom. (Coertze & Coertze, 1996). Knowledge is not, however, a neutral commodity. Often its roots are in a particular culture and often it reflects particular orientations or points of view. Indigenous knowledge, as indicated in Chapter 4, is constructed over time, with one generation sharing its norms and ideals with the next. In contrast, foreign knowledge comes from outside, at times imposed, at times borrowed by choice, and, if successful, it is often integrated into indigenous knowledge as an integral part of community development (Peoples & Baily, 2000).

It is imperative that development agents and information managers understand the difference between these two categories of knowledge and manage them in ways that promote integration rather than the elimination of either. The proposed model suggests that such integration is possible if information managers begin the communication process at the level of existing/indigenous knowledge, which does not threaten the community in any way. After this phase gradually the new/external knowledge can be introduced, whereby it is indicated how this additional could benefit the community as a whole. The possibility of communities accepting this new information might be reinforced if the information manager can guide the community involved towards discovering or uncovering the new information for themselves rather than 'imposing' knowledge. It can be expected that once the community considers the new information relevant and contextually acceptable, they will more readily begin the integration process themselves. Might they not do so, they could reject and, perhaps even undermine the introduction of new ideas or information. Cultural anthropologists agree that this might, particularly, be the case if the introduction of new information is perceived to pose a threat to the continued existence of the community's culture, religion, language and way of living.

## **5.5 Categories of information to be monitored by the information manager**

The researcher's own experience in conducting and facilitation of workshops in various development projects in Africa (Ajulu and Bester, 2005), as well as existing literature on development and information management, suggests that there are certain categories of information that are crucial to the successful management of information on this continent. The most crucial categories are:

- Original information
- Potential information
- Active information
- Passive information
- Interpreted information
- Old information
- New information

### **5.5.1 Original information**

Original information is information that represents a totally new way of thinking about an issue, a theory, a strategy, etc, and has no basis in earlier knowledge. For instance, the possibility of people talking to one another over vast distances was not considered until Alexander Bell shared his original knowledge of telecommunication with the rest of world, and consequently, the telephone became a household utensil. Because of people buying into this idea, the 'unknown' was conquered and the potential to create more 'original' information based on previous original information was uncovered. At the time of the first conceptualisation, the importance of the particular original thought, not only in the world of telecommunication but also in the world of electronics was unimaginable. Likewise, the importance of information for its own sake, which has called into being the Information Age, was inconceivable at the time. Another good example of original information is innovative research done by institutions engaging in futures studies, where solutions are sought for current and future challenges.

### 5.5.2 Potential Information

Potential information is information that exists and might be used, but is not done so at present. It also refers to information that is not available yet to a larger audience, that is, merely its seeds have been sown. Potential information is in a sense unrealized information and needs to be recognized before it can become active information. Potential information only becomes recognised when interaction takes place between people accessing information and the actual content of the information.

### 5.5.3 Active Information

Active information is information that is recognized and used – interaction, knowledge acquisition, justification for actions and/or decisions, etc. Research content and study material can be classified as active information, so can information about communities that have been targeted for development work. Also information that has been recognised, even though it might not be used for the moment, is active information and, thus, it must be managed in ways that will be to the advantage of the project and/or the community concerned. Active information might include information brought to a community by an external initiator to be applied towards the solution of a problem experienced by the community.

In development projects, the first step information managers undertake to engage with the development project's active information is to study the project documents. They will identify gaps in the information base of the project for further research. Information managers can make potential information that has not been included in the project planning into active information.

### 5.5.4 Passive Information

Passive information is information that is already available and 'out there' but is not necessarily used now in a particular context. The difference with potential information is that this information has been recognized and interacted with in the past; it has been used, but is not active at present. Despite it being passive, this information could have an influence on behaviour and decisions of the community. This is especially true if the information has been validated and/or endorsed in some way by others. An example of this is the following sequence about breastfeeding and bottle-feeding practices:

Breastfeeding was what was simply 'done' (common knowledge); this practice was by many women replaced by bottle feeding because it was considered modern, showing progress and wealth (new active information replacing common knowledge, turning it into passive information); this practice was, in turn, replaced by 'breastfeeding is best' based on scientific information that the content of breast milk and hygiene of feeding surpasses bottle feeding (new active information replacing previous active information, which is now passive information); at present a previously discarded practice, bottle feeding, is re-activated, based on new research information that becomes active that to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transfer of HIV/AIDS, it is best to return to bottle feeding rather than practice breastfeeding. At the same time passive information is re-activated that in doing so, one has to take care of the necessary hygiene when bottle feeding.

Passive information might include information that some of the stakeholders have decided consciously or subconsciously to exclude from the body of knowledge of the project. If information managers do not manage passive information appropriately, it could contribute towards distrust and ethical problems in the project.

### 5.5.5 Interpreted information

Interpreted information is information that is not used in its original form but that has been filtered through a known and accepted process. Interpreted information has been analyzed in accordance with specific models or has been assessed against specific standards or criteria that are known to the community. Interpreted information is valid information provided that the user acknowledges the filters and processes that are employed in the interpretation process. An example of interpreted information is the technical data received from weather satellites, which are then interpreted into colourful maps on television to give the general public access to the weather forecast.

### 5.5.6 Old information

Old information is information that exists in the knowledge base of an individual or group. This usually forms the foundation for the interpretation and building of new information that can be applied within a variety of other contexts. An example of this is information about building and construction, or about mining methods, or farming practices. This is public information that has existed for centuries, but it may have been added on to or partly replaced with new knowledge. The old information might not necessary valuable at a given moment in a particular context but it can be recalled and made available if a situation demands it.

### 5.5.7 New information

New information is content that is added to the existing information framework of an individual or group. New information is usually the result of study or research. To ensure complete availability and use of the new information, it must be integrated into existing information systems. The difference between new information and original information lies in the fact that new information is developed on the foundation of old information and is not active yet in the knowledge-base of particular individuals or groups, while original information has no foundation to build on or compare itself with. In this, 'knowledge' must be understood to mean 'information that has been used, applied and evaluated'.

Having distinguished between the different categories of information, information managers need to keep reminding themselves constantly of their focus when they facilitate information in developing communities. They need to acknowledge that this focus might influence the facilitation and acceptance processes of the project activities. One suggestion is that the information manager in a specific development project analyses not only the community but also the categories of information when a *detailed community information plan* is put together to guide a community through a newly initiated development project.

## 5.6 Facilitating information in developing communities

In terms of the information management model presented in this chapter, information managers play a crucial role in the management of information flows in community development projects. They need to consider all categories and sources of information with a view to compiling a holistic information map for each development project. Information sources could originate from project initiators, and from strategic and management plans, as well as from the developing community and pertain to information about, for instance, language, culture, and levels of literacy. Information managers must also facilitate the information flow in such a way that it 'speaks' to both the community's needs for development and to the development goals of the project. Thus, for the information manager to succeed in this task, the researcher has identified five processes that must be followed::

- Facilitation of information regarding the internal needs for development
- Facilitation of information regarding the external needs for development
- Facilitation to create agreement and alignment amongst role players in developing communities
- The use of existing and new information in the developmental process
- The role of information in sustainable motivation

### 5.6.1 Facilitation of information regarding the internal needs for development

In this instance the information managers need to know who the community is, who the role players are, what their strengths and the weaknesses are. Information managers must acknowledge that community members know more about their own community than they, the outsiders, ever can. Consequently, it is much easier – and less time-consuming – for community members to identify their needs (new roads, clinics or schools, etc.) than it is for project and/or information managers.

Good information managers, therefore, use community members and groups to identify community needs from within. They might even use identified community members to introduce external/foreign ideas/information into the community on the information manager's behalf. Because it comes from a community member, it is much more likely that it will be accepted. An example of the latter would be the need to formalise practices at initiation schools. Should an outsider introduce this idea, the community might well regard it with grave suspicion, reasoning that it is an attempt to undermine the community's culture and traditions. If, however, someone from within the community were to suggest this, the reaction might be very different.

### 5.6.2 Facilitation of information regarding the external needs for development

External needs manifest themselves when an outside role player, such as a project manager identifies a need for development. The community might consider the outsider as not being part of the community - irrespective of the outsiders' good intentions - and will most likely feel threatened by these unknown role players. The information manager should, as soon as possible, interpret information regarding the new foreign information in terms of benefits and opportunities for the developing community. The information manager should, for example, keep in mind the

credibility of the initiators, the processes as well as the envisaged outcomes of the project when external processes, role players and methods are introduced.

### **5.6.3 Facilitation to create agreement and alignment amongst role players in developing communities**

Since it is not always possible to consult with the entire community on new projects, information managers should identify the most important role players in the community who will actively be involved in the project. The community must understand the objectives of a community development project so that they can agree and align with the project objectives. The following questions will assist to attain this goal:

- Did the role players identify all possibilities of the project?
- What processes will be used to achieve maximum alignment?
- Are the processes the most practical?
- Were the community's needs taken into consideration?

This will give important input to project managers. Project managers must not only consider their own perspectives, they also have to take cognisance of the community's contributions and needs. Once the project objectives have been managed as primary objectives, the secondary objectives should include answers to the following questions:

- The most desired way / place / method / etc.?
- The most practical way / place / method / etc.?
- Agreement must be reached on the highest priorities for the project managers and the community.

During this phase the information manager should also be aware of any relevant local or indigenous knowledge that may exist in the community, which may have an impact on the project. The flow of the local or indigenous information back to the project managers and possibly, the project initiators might create a new information base that could inform the project.

### **5.6.4 Use of existing and new information in the developmental process**

The information manager must ensure that the background knowledge and information from the community forms part of the basis of all project information. Research, that is, feasibility studies, attitudinal profiles, situation analyses, etc., will contribute to the information manager's understanding of community knowledge and/or lack of knowledge regarding the envisaged project in the community, which will, supposedly, be to the community's benefit. For instance, the existing knowledge base of the community might address all the known illnesses that threaten the community. New diseases within a community will need new information – not only pertaining to the existence of the diseases but also with regard to the most efficient ways to treat them.

It is, moreover, crucial for the successful management of information that information managers observe and record community reactions to proposed activities and/or strategies. Only if they do this will they be able to suggest suitable project ideas that will yield positive reactions from the community. For instance, if community members do not know what HIV/AIDS is, the first step would be to describe the illness and

then talk about prevention and cure. The following questions are pertinent in this regard:

- What is the current level of information in terms of availability, knowledge of people and usability?
- What does the community need to know regarding the envisaged project?
- What are the community's sources of information? Information managers must ensure that they are informed about existing credible sources of information as well as about the methodology used by the community to inform each other. The latter might include electronic media, newspapers/letters, oral communication through community leaders such as clinic nurses/teachers, etc.
- Is there a lack of information in terms of content, sources and format?
- How can information managers ensure that the community receives information regarding the project while keeping in mind the content, sources and format of the needed information?
- How can new information be integrated into existing structures of information – for example, by making use of schools, clinics, community meetings, etc.
- How can the community's traditions, beliefs, norms and values - the way the community does things - be accommodated without compromising the aims and objectives of the project, that is, also in terms of the way in which information is communicated, used and applied by the information manager?
- How can differences between existing information and new/foreign information be reconciled? The information manager should be able to interpret the new information in terms of the existing knowledge of a community. New information might need more background knowledge; it might even clash with existing beliefs of a community. Information managers should therefore from time to time be prepared to resort to the methodology of change agents.

#### **5.6.5 The role of information in sustainable motivation**

As indicated earlier, motivation is of crucial importance in the sustainability of development projects. Motivation, the researcher would argue, is more likely to be maintained if information is freely available throughout the project. Although not formally researched, the researcher's own experiences in Africa as workshop initiator and facilitator have convinced him that information sharing is one of the most important elements to motivate communities (see also Ajulu & Bester, 2005).

Informed by this conviction, as well as by the importance of the credibility of the project information (see Chapter 3), and the acceptance by a community (see Chapter 4) the model developed by the researcher and presented in this chapter, emphasizes the importance of information managers motivating the community through timely and intelligible information. Based on their sensitive knowledge of the developing community information managers should ensure that:

- They are aware of the correct levels of knowledge and understanding of people in the community through which they might interpret the new information;
- Timely, correct and credible information needed by the community to address the problem/need by way of the development project is communicated to the community;
- Information is made understandable and accessible through correct and usable formats as required by the community;

- The community's changing needs and feelings towards the project/programme are monitored, interpreted and addressed, so that progress can be made in terms of the objectives of the project/programme;
- New information that is needed to fully comprehend the project objectives is made available to the community so that it can become an integral part of the community's existing knowledge of the development topic/project objectives;
- They understand the reasons for any community resistance towards the programme as well as formulate ways of dissolving this by, for example, keeping the community informed of small successes already achieved.

### **5.7 Methodology of the suggested integrated and multi-disciplinary model**

Based on some guidelines from Pippa Norris (2001) and the experiences of the researcher it seems appropriate that when information managers enter a developing African community their first priority should be to determine whether the environment where the development project is to take place is conducive for a project aiming at sustainable development. Once the project has commenced, the information manager should observe its impact on the existence and needs of the targeted community. The proposed model described in this chapter encourages an awareness of different characteristics, needs and existential elements of developing communities, pointing to, for example:

- *Immediate needs*: the things the community needs "NOW", such as medical attention, water and food;
- *Short term needs*: temporary comforts like tents or other forms of shelter;
- *Medium term needs*: the installation of a temporary pipeline for water and sanitary purposes;
- *Long term needs*: planning for future activities, i.e. build more dams, reservoirs.

Given that a project could easily come to a halt due to lack of community involvement, resources or finances, and given that there is a relationship between the need, the time that the project will run and the impact of the project on the developing communities, information managers need to ensure that information on the project is freely and timeously available. To assist with this process, the study suggests the following processes:

- Facilitation of the needs analysis and needs priorities of the developing community within the holistic approach;
- Developing and maintaining of networks as information instruments in the process of development.

#### **5.7.1 Facilitation of the needs analysis and needs priorities of the developing community within the holistic approach**

All communities engage in a range of distinct but, often, interrelated cultural activities such as health, education, religion, politics, economics, etc. (see Diagram 3). The holistic development of the community will only be possible if all of these interrelated activities are integrated into a single, holistic approach. Crucial to the success of such an approach is the information managers' ability to:

- See the expressed needs in context, that is, from the point of view of community members;
- Manipulate specific needs in such a way that different aspects are balanced;



- Negotiate the reality and/or feasibility of addressing the community's expressed needs by painting the whole picture for them;
- Prioritise different needs in cooperation with the community.

The information managers should, moreover, be aware of different priorities within the developing community, and understand the differences between what the community would like to have, that is, the community's 'wants') and what is crucial to their survival or development (the community's 'needs'). A community might, for example, want a new cinema, but urgently needs medication for malaria. The need should therefore be prioritised, even if this is against the community's wishes. The information manager then needs to assist the community, in a non-paternalistic way, to prioritise the needs in terms of the developmental goals as they are jointly formulated by the information manager and the community at the onset of the project.

In addition, information managers should be sensitive to the effect of certain types of information on the sustainability of development projects. The categories of information most likely to affect sustainability is information related to:

- Politics and governance;
- Culture;
- Availability of services;
- Economy;
- Natural environment;
- Levels of human development and change.

#### **5.7.1.1 Information on politics and governance**

To be effective, information managers must have, or develop, sensitivity for the political climate in the target community, attitudes towards and the status of the project, the extent of government involvement in the project and its control over the project. Without this kind of sensitivity it is possible that the project might fail simply because of different political ideologies. This sensitivity must direct itself to all sources of power in the community as well as all stakeholders who are involved in managing this power.

Information managers should also have a sound knowledge and/or understanding of the legal- and governmental framework in which the development will take place, which includes information on the city council, municipalities, local government offices, provincial and national legislation. If, for example, house plans need to be approved by the local government prior to the building of the houses, the information manager needs to know this and has to ensure that the project developers abide by these regulations. If not, the project may be stopped.

It may also be necessary for the information manager to have some knowledge of the constitutional framework of the country where the development project is to take place, not only because legal documents are typically based on the Constitution but also because the latter spells out the human rights that may not be denied to people in this particular context.

#### **5.7.1.2 Information on specific cultural influences**

Since cultural/ethnic tensions in the area of development, as discussed in Chapter 4, will inevitably have an impact on development projects, it is crucial for the information manager to consult widely with community leaders, religious groups and opposing

ethnic groups prior to the commencement of the project. If not, it is quite possible that certain decisions and/or project activities might offend the community's cultural sensibilities and that, as a result, the community opposes rather than supports the development initiative. The most important rule in this regard is to show 'respect' for the traditions and/or customs of the targeted community. Under no circumstances should people involved in the project create the perception that they regard cultural norms, standards and activities as inferior to their own. This, in itself is enough to evoke the ire of community members.

#### **5.7.1.3 Information on services available**

A fundamental assumption of the information management model presented in this chapter is the assumption that the strategic and management plan for the development project is informed by an analysis of the resources and services required for the successful management of the project. If resources and services like water, roads, electricity, and housing are unavailable but necessary they will have to be provided prior to the commencement of the project. This could lead to delays, have financial implications and/or lead to the decision not to proceed with the project at all. It is, therefore, up to the information manager to ensure that this kind of information is available when needed and in as much detail as possible.

#### **5.7.1.4 Information on economy**

Economic information does not only refer to resources, finances or budgets required for community development but also to the way such information is conveyed to the people concerned. It is important, for example, to ensure that the community understands the difference between a resource like underground water, and the development of such into a viable service like a borehole with an electric pump.

The kind of economic information that communities would need might include information on the approved budget, its constraints and possible benefits to the community. It is, once again, the task of the information manager to ensure that information on income and expenditure and the economic benefits are regularly and clearly shared with all concerned, not only to prevent deficits but also to keep everybody motivated and focused.

#### **5.7.1.5 Information on the natural environment**

Environmental information, that is information on water, geography, minerals, and climatic patterns, constitutes an important source of information. Not only does this information create a sense of the place that would be most suitable for the initiation of a development project, but such information could also be indicative of potential projects, like mining developments. Information managers should ensure that environmental information is up to date and presented in the form of a formal, holistic report, which should also be considered during both the planning and operational phases of the project.

#### **5.7.1.6 Information on levels of human development**

Information on the developmental levels of communities is crucial for the identification of appropriate project strategies, processes and activities, given that literacy, educational and skills levels have an explicit effect on the viability of the project and on community members' understanding of the purpose and possible effects of the project on their lives. Experience has shown that the less literate a community is, the more conservative and rigid it tends to be. The more conservative

the community is, the less likely it is to welcome change and the longer it will take to convince it that change could be beneficial in both the short and the long term. As indicated in Chapter 4, the more traditional the community is, the longer transformation takes but it can be done, through enculturation and/or acculturation.

### **5.7.2 Developing and maintaining of networks as information instruments in the process of development**

It could be argued that an information network is a combination of information carriers, processes and users put together in one system for the flow of information. It should, therefore, consist of sources, users, needs, interest groups as well as a framework for the implementation of an information network.

In terms of the model proposed here, an information network will have to include role players, interest groups and stakeholders, but also databases of these groups, and a methodology for interaction between them such as methods for conducting meetings, such as telephone conferences, email messaging, or visual computer conferences.

At least the following four elements of information networks should be linked if development projects are to succeed, namely:

- Resources
- Users
- Needs
- External interest groups

#### **5.7.2.1 Resources as part of the information networks**

Any of the stakeholders in the three main project activities (initiators, strategic/planning groups and the community) could function as internal sources of information in development projects. External sources of information include books, Internet, newspapers, TV, radio, etc. It is up to the information manager to ensure that the most appropriate methods are used for the timely collection and dissemination of information to all stakeholders. In this, it is of utmost importance for the information manager to acknowledge the accepted ways of communicating within the developing community. While DVD's and emails might be a good method of communicating to some stakeholders, others might rely more on word-of-mouth information via community clinics and community-based meetings. Information managers must make sure that the correct method is used to ensure effective transfer of information.

#### **5.7.2.2 Users as part of information networks**

Those who use project information will, generally, have their own reasons for doing so and will, therefore, decide which information is most relevant. Information might, for example, be used to inform stakeholders but also to give instructions or to monitor development according to objectives. Timely information will ensure that stakeholders remain motivated and it will contribute to change the mind of those who are reluctant to support the project.

#### **5.7.2.3 Needs as part of information networks**

Once all the information needs have been identified, the information manager should collate the relevant information in a format acceptable to potential information users. Some information would need to be provided prior to the commencement of project

activities, some during implementation and some only at the end. Information provided prior to the event/action, so-called proactive information, serves as an important means of preventing problems or future dilemmas. So-called reactive information provides project managers with the means to address problems. For example, information on weather patterns could be identified as proactive information while information on emergency community shelters after a devastating storm could be considered as reactive information.

#### **5.7.2.4 External interest groups as part of information networks**

External interest groups also have an impact on information networks. Governments, for example, may have a positive effect on the project, irrespective of their interest being long or short-term. Thus, for example, the government plays a short-term external role by approving the building plan and creating opportunities for the construction of roads and the provision of electricity. The electricity department, on the other hand, performs a long-term external role in its continuing delivery of electricity for many years to come.

### **5.8 Community consultation as an information tool in development projects**

The proposed model provides for the accommodation of 17 cultural components. Each of these components represents a specific action of the community culture with clustered activities and community (or appointed) leaders to guide the community on related matters. In Africa, these cultural components and the related leadership roles do not present themselves as specialized areas as clearly as they do in western societies. In western societies one finds a health fraternity with doctors and nurses, a religious fraternity with pastors and priests, an educational fraternity with teachers and headmasters, a judicial fraternity with magistrates and judges, etc. In most traditional African communities, one tends to find that the traditional leader is also the leader in many or all other components.

The interrelatedness of the cultural components plays a significant role in guiding community in its behavior. Consulting the community in matters of importance therefore implies that one needs to take note of each quadrant and components. Information manager in development projects should base their community consultation process on these cultural components, and adopt a balanced approach that will accommodate all the cultural components of the developing community concerned.

A checklist for community consultation could possibly include the following items with regard to the development project:

- Description of the envisaged development project
- Objectives for the development project
- Motives and motivation for the project
- Strategy and management plan for the project
- Financial benefits / implications for the project
- Possible information on local knowledge regarding the project
- Possible indigenous knowledge that could influence the project

Information managers should strive, during the first consultation stage, to include community leaders representing the various cultural components. Later sessions

could focus on specific items and community leaders could then suggest their own teams or specialised groups. Under no circumstances should community groups feel that they have been sidelined or left out since this could eventually result in serious credibility problems, even if the project is clearly to the benefit of the community.

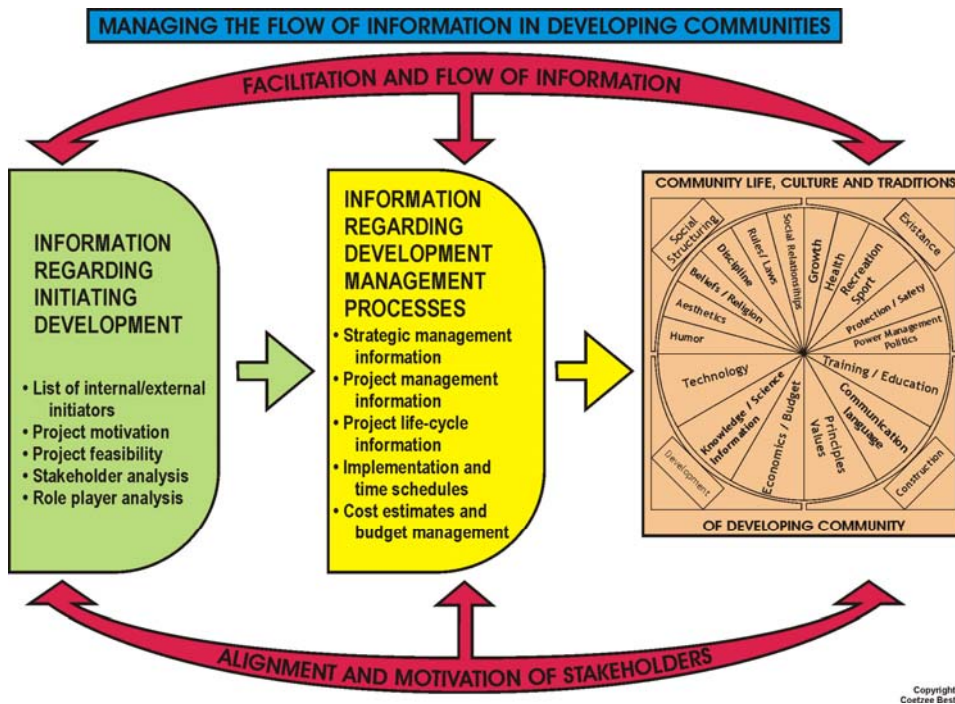
Processes used by information managers to consult the community might include sessions that

- Are meant to inform community leaders of the background to the project and provide them with basic information in this regard;
- Aim at answering possible questions that the community has; create opportunities for leaders to report back to their constituencies / interest groups;
- Aim at guiding community leaders towards the objectives and inform them of project progress to ensure their experiences of movement and success, for example, by providing clear progress benchmarks and opportunities for community celebrations.

Moreover, the creation of strategies for keeping all stakeholders fully informed – of good and bad news – and keeping full records of all meetings with documented and approved minutes - and the establishment of a communication channel between the community leadership and the project management team and so provide opportunities to discuss the positive and the negative aspects of the project. This might create lasting credibility for the project and may assist to eliminate internal politics.

The complete model, focusing on the 4 areas of initiating information, management information, community information and the flow of information, is illustrated in Diagram 5.

Diagram 5: the complete model



## 5.9 Conclusion

Based on the foregoing and supported by Pippa Norris' guidelines on development practices (2001), it can be concluded that information managers need to have a holistic and integrated portrait of the development project in mind. This picture will incorporate the beginning of the project, the envisaged methodology and management structure, as well as the developing community in all its facets and traditions.

To achieve this, information managers can make use of a number of tools. Amongst them are a number of checklists to monitor and evaluate the three categories of information flow during development process: the initiation and introduction of the development project is the starting point, followed by the strategy and management information, and thirdly, information managers will use the 17-activity checklist of community life described in Part 3 of the Diagram to monitor the developing community as a cultural entity. In this the community is not only an important source of information, but is also important as a user of information. Information managers will also facilitate consultation processes in the communities to ensure an all-stakeholder focus on a holistic approach to ensure that the community is an integral part of the project.

Based on the three categories of activities as described in Chapter 3 (Initiation activities and management processes) and Chapter 4 (Community activities) the flow of the information between the three categories should be one of the main functions of the information manager. This responsibility will include the planning, monitoring, managing as well as reporting on these categories of information.

It seems that the flow of information between these activities is not linear but rather circular in nature, as the one set of information will lead to new insights and understanding within the next category of activities. This growing and rising circle of information could enhance any development project and will ultimately ensure the active involvement of all role players and stakeholders in the project.

This study has led to many new questions regarding the flow and management of information in developing communities in Africa. Chapter 6, the last chapter of this study, will evaluate the focus of the contribution of this study and will identify new opportunities to further the objectives of this study.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction and purpose

As indicated in Chapter 1 the rapid internationalisation of national economies has a cultural, geographic, scientific and technological impact on billions of people around the world, which is primarily due to the increased use of information technology. The immediacy, relevance, trustworthiness and effective management of information are crucial to the success of development projects, especially since those involved in development projects often have different expectations of development initiatives and, therefore, respond differently to the objectives of these initiatives and to the processes and procedures used to realize such expectations.

Acknowledging differences in the orientation and/or agendas of nations, managers, owners and consumers, the UNDP (2001) moots for the adoption of holistic and integrated approaches to the management of information in development projects. The rationale for this is, so the argument goes, that such an approach would not only ensure the interaction of culture, economy and ecology with other developmental elements but would also accord each of these equal status and importance.

Key to such an approach would be recognition of the worth of indigenous knowledge and belief systems, a clear sense of available resources, the effective utilisation of community structures and processes, and the training of information managers. This is especially true as regards development work in Africa. The effectiveness of African leaders' current attempts to lead Africa out of its existing state of poverty through, amongst others, the establishment of credible leadership structures, is threatened by ethnic and/or cultural conflicts, attempt by certain groups to dominate and/or exclude those who do not share their values or beliefs, a lack of capacity, information and structures needed to address existing problems (NIC, 2000).

Unless all these groups are convinced of the benefits of development work in Africa and unless information in this regard is properly managed, African leaders might never achieve their vision of a united, economically prosperous continent. Current, often negative, mindsets can only be changed if information related to development projects is effectively managed, and if the framework within which development work takes place is one with which communities and their leaders can identify and which they can use to sustain and evaluate their own and others' efforts.

The primary purpose of this study was to develop a holistic and integrated model for the management of the information flow in development projects in Africa. Informing the development of the model was the assumption that current information management models, if these exist, are not meeting the needs of the African people and are, therefore, inadequate and/or inappropriate for development work. In order to determine whether or not this assumption was correct the researcher first had to answer the following three questions, the answers to which provided the researcher with a basis for the development of an appropriate model:



- What is the status of development initiatives in Africa with specific reference to the flow of information?
- What is the relationship between management and information flow within a development paradigm?
- What are the main variables that need to be considered in the flow of information within developing communities?

To answer these questions:

- The researcher first had to determine whether the African environment is suitable for development. This was done by reading up on the impact of globalisation on developing countries with the aim of understanding the different dimensions and moral implications of poverty. Next a range of documents were analysed, that contained records of structures established, policies developed and initiatives launched by African leaders to bring their countries into the global marketplace. The researcher also met a number of African leaders at conferences and meetings and discussed their initiatives, their views on development projects in Africa, and the flow of information between them and the international world. The results of these activities deepened the researcher's understanding of new African structures, such as the African Union and NEPAD, the problems experienced by officials serving in these structures, and, most importantly for the development of the envisaged model, the ways in which these bodies think information should be managed to ensure long-term sustainable development.
- Informed by these insights the researcher then did a careful study of the literature on management, with specific reference to the management of information in projects. In doing this, the importance of balancing strategic and operational plans on the one hand and traditionalism (cultural attachments) with progressivism (development needs) on the other became overly clear. The theoretical insights gained from the literature, specifically with regard to project management, enabled the researcher to identify those elements that are crucial for the successful management of information in any development project, and which, therefore, should be included in the envisaged information management model to be developed for use in Africa.
  - Having determined the essential elements of successful project management, with specific reference to the management of information, the researcher then turned the attention to other, but no less important, variables, such as culture, religion, customs, social structuring, etc. To supplement the insights gained in discussions with African leaders regarding the role played by culture and/or traditional customs and beliefs, a range of social science texts were scrutinized with a view to identify critical socio-cultural variables to be included and managed as part of community development projects. As a result, the researcher identified 17 cultural elements that typically guide community activities, influence new developments and/or affect one another. These variables, needed to be included in the model.
- Finally, based on the insights gained from the literature review, document analysis and various empirical data collection processes, an information management model was developed that the researcher believes is appropriate for development work in Africa. The researcher would like to argue that this holistic, multi-disciplinary and integrated three-part model could be used by professionals and information managers alike, primarily because it provides anybody who uses

it greater insight into African communities, while it also functions as a practical checklist for monitoring the flow of information during development projects.

This chapter provides a summary of the answers to the three research questions. In addition, it presents various conclusions and recommendations related to development work in Africa and the use of the proposed model for this purpose.

## 6.2 Development in Africa

In Chapter 2 it was argued that Africa is ready to enter the global development arena given that there is clear evidence of Africa's will to change, of African governments' commitment to accountability in the public, political and private sectors, and of the willingness of the international community to lend a helping hand where necessary. This argument was substantiated with a description of new African structures and the way they operate.

The researcher did point out, however, that the greatest challenge to development in Africa lies in ensuring that the essence of Africa - the positive aspects of her cultures - is not sacrificed on the altar of economic prosperity and that her peoples are given the same opportunities and treated with the same respect that her international partners are. It was argued that the African Union could play a significant role in this regard and that, in addition, there was an urgent need to acknowledge the role played by information managers and the need to train these for development projects.

Chapter 2 was concluded by reflecting on the impact that globalisation to date has had on developing countries. It was pointed out that there seems to be a marked imbalance in the distribution of benefits, with most of the benefits going to those who are already key players in the global arena, while those who have yet to make their mark have been further marginalized. It was suggested that the use of an ethical/moral code of conduct, like the '*Global Sullivan Principles of Social Responsibility*', could be a useful tool for regulating the involvement of 1<sup>st</sup> world countries 3<sup>rd</sup> World since the principles would ensure that all corporations would at least commit themselves to protect and promote human rights, social justice and economic opportunity.

## 6.3 Information management

In Chapter 3 the focus was on the role played by information management in development projects, with specific reference to the importance of involving all stakeholders, especially those who are targeted as beneficiaries, in all stages of the development process. The primary source of information in this chapter was Burke's *Project Management, Planning and Control Techniques* (2001), which provides a simplified, but complete overview of the most important activities involved in project management. Against the brief overview of generic project management theory provided in the first part of this chapter project management in developing communities was defined as 'a sustainable beneficial change in a developing community which uses special project management techniques (including information flow techniques) to plan and control the scope of work in order to deliver a product to satisfy the client's (sponsoring agency's) needs and expectations as well as those of the stakeholders within the developing community'.

In discussing the management of community development projects, two theoretical frameworks were used, namely, project management and organizational behaviour.

The former served as basis for the discussion of the elements of project life and situation analysis and the latter as the basis for the design of action plans. Together, these two frameworks provided the researcher with the point of departure for the development of an integrated and multi-disciplinary model for the management of information in development projects. It was argued that such a model was crucial for development work in Africa, given the divergence in values and expectations of project initiators and beneficiaries and the very real possibility that there might be a need for the latter to radically change or adjust their culture and/or communal values. This, it was argued, required intensive training in the area of information management.

#### **6.4 Socio-cultural variables**

In Chapter 4, the researcher focused, from a psychological-anthropological perspective, on the strategies that communities use in adapting to and managing of their environments. The role was described of prevailing socio-cultural elements and the acquisition of new knowledge in community change. It was argued that, given these influences, a model for the management of information in development projects should preferably be interdisciplinary and holistic in nature, integrating all the relevant aspects and characteristics of a human being as well as the life and culture of a community into sustainable development initiatives. Moreover, the importance of continuously recording not only the goals and objectives, but also the processes, procedures and results of development projects to ensure sustainability was pointed out.

#### **6.5 The model**

In Chapter 5 a model was presented, which, it was suggested, could be used for the management of the information flow in development work in Africa. The model, which is both theoretical and practical, is informed by the Basic/Fundamental Human Needs theories of Maslow, Burton and Max-Neeff (see Chapter 4) and has the integration of the human element into project management as purpose. Informed by the assumption that an analysis of human needs leads to a greater understanding of change, the model is specifically designed to facilitate transformation and information management while simultaneously preventing negative or subversive inter-, and intra-group behaviour. If is used as intended, the model should integrate human concerns and activities. In using the model, the information manager will, therefore, have to view the day-to-day human activities as the basis for predicting and managing human behaviour in situations where development and change are at the order of the day.

With a view to substantiating these assumptions, three areas of informational importance as elements of the model were identified and described, namely (a) information on the origin and initiation of the development project; (b) information on the management of the project, and (c) information on the community.

In Part 1 of the model a differentiation was made between external and internal initiators, and it was indicated how these differences could be managed. It was argued that, since the vision and mission statements formulated by the project initiators typically reflect the intention, meaning and the purpose of the project, specific objectives typically provide information on the project strategy and/or methodology. It was also pointed out that, given the differences in stakeholders

motives, both overt and covert, it might be sensible to conduct feasibility studies to test the acceptability of the objectives and methods of the intended project prior to its commencement.

The second part of the model focuses on the management of project methodology information, that is, the information related to the planning, organising and control mechanisms required for the successful conclusion of a project. The information collected during Part 1 of the model (motives, motivation, vision and mission) form the basis for the implementation strategy, which is the focus of the second part of the model. It was argued, with reference to Chapter 3, that information on the project strategy is informed by an analysis of the project environment which, in turn, determines the availability of options and alternatives that the project manager could consider while simultaneously providing him/her with important background information on the project. The primary value of Part 2 of the model, it was argued, was that the strategic and management information it collected, could be used as indicators against which stakeholders could assess the progress and probable success of that the project. Diversions from the planned activities or time schedules could be managed timeously, thereby enabling the project manager to keep track of progress, alignment with agreed-upon motives, objectives, time schedules and budget allocations. It was argued that it is the second part of the model that could serve as a set of indicators against which quality and progress could be assessed continuously, thereby ensuring the credibility of the development project.

Part 3 of the model, addresses the greatest challenge to project developers, namely the diverse ways in which those involved in the project experience its many activities. It was argued that particularly this part of the model that presents all role players with the opportunity to fulfil their needs, to acquire new information and to realize first-hand what this information means to them and how it relates to what they knew before. Based on the assumption that individuals, institutions, and groups exist on four levels of needs - existence, construction, development, and social interaction – this part of the model enables stakeholders to become part of a developmental cycle that moves from *existence* to *construction* to *development* to *social structuring*.

Chapter 5 concluded by suggesting a number of pathways that could be used as conduits for the flow of information during development projects, and propose a number of guidelines that could serve as practical indicators for information managers.

## 6.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research on information management in development projects in Africa, and the proposed model based on these findings, it is suggested that the guidelines that are listed in Chapter 5 be used to compile a number of operational checklists for the management of information in development projects in Africa.

It is also recommended that an awareness programme is developed from the model by means of which developing communities can be empowered to understand the importance of information management as part of their development. The communities might then become information communities within the framework of their own current as well as future development needs and projects.

Many development facilitation agents such as the World Bank, the IMF and governments prescribe levels of community/public participation in planning and execution of development projects. It is therefore recommended that the proposed model be used to act as a facilitation model and as a set of criteria to ensure multiple stakeholders' and balanced involvement in community/public participation programmes.

From an academic perspective, it is recommended that based on the results of this study a short course is developed to prepare and develop the skills of all development practitioners to enhance the effectiveness of public participation as part of communities' involvement in development.

## **6.7 Suggestions for further research**

In terms of further research, it is suggested that the impact of the use of this model on information management in development projects in Africa is researched. Development facilitation agents and governments could use the results of such a study to prescribe further levels of community/public participation in the planning and execution of development projects.

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