

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines conclusions regarding the goal, objectives and hypothesis of the study. It also make recommendations and formulate guidelines for the implementation of future CBPWP's and possible research topics.

#### 6.2 . CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

In this section, the study discusses conclusions regarding the goal, objectives and hypothesis of the study.

##### 6.2.1. GOAL OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study was to evaluate the impact of the CBPWP on rural communities. The goal has been attained through comparing communities which received the programme with those which did not receive it, called the experimental and the control groups, respectively.

##### 6.2.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study has three objectives, namely; firstly, to investigate through a literature study, the issues regarding community empowerment and community empowerment programmes, secondly, to investigate through an empirical study, the impact of the CBPWP in rural communities, and thirdly, to formulate guidelines and make recommendations on the most effective implementation of the CBPWP in rural communities.

Conclusions regarding these objectives of the study will be individually discussed.

### 6.2.2.1. OBJECTIVE 1: TO INVESTIGATE THROUGH A LITERATURE STUDY, ISSUES REGARDING COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES

This objective has been attained and the researcher came up with the following conclusions:

#### \* COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

A literature investigation revealed that community empowerment is the most effective approach to develop the poor rural communities because it combines the attributes contained in the self-help, the conflict and the technical assistance approaches, and the involvement of communities in their own development (Chamber & McBeth, 1992:22; Horton, 1992:6).

Proponents of community empowerment, Musandiwa (1997:2), Chambers and McBeth (1992:22), Sundet and Mermelstein (1988:94), Rappaport, Swift and Hess (1984:23) and Harrison, Hoggett and Jeffers (1995:147), maintain that effective community empowerment emphasises strong community participation in the processes of programmes, after which a community will gain enhanced capacity building, has full ownership of the assets and minimised reliance on outsiders, and have sustainable development.

Community empowerment process becomes effective when the important sectors within a community are afforded an opportunity to take part in it. Grassroots are the important representatives of communities who play a major role in every community empowerment project and their inclusion in the programmes is of utmost importance.

## \* **COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES**

It has been identified from literature investigation that effective community empowerment programmes in the rural communities should be conducted in such a manner that they satisfy objectives similar to those of the CBPWP, namely; strong community participation, labor intensive methods of construction, education and training, management and maintenance of assets once they are completed, targeting the most needy within a community and sources of funding.

### **Strong community participation**

According to Horton (1992:13) and Triegaart (1993:10), community empowerment programmes will be effective if the grassroots within communities are involved in resolving their own problems with the minimal reliance on the outsiders.

### **Labour intensive methods of construction**

Musandiwa (1997:13) says programmes which replace machinery with human resources in their construction tend to involve more community members than the ones which utilise the machines. This objective enables community projects to improve the qualities of life of the many, by employing them and reducing unemployment which is rife in the communities

### **Education and training**

Community empowerment programmes which concentrate on education and training opportunities for those who are involved in their projects tend to be effective in enhancing the community knowledge, attitudes and skills (Nkuhlu, 1994:6; Cheetham, Fuller, McIvor & Petch, 1992:6).

### **Management and maintenance of assets once they are completed**

Lombard (1991:287) and Dykeman in Shaffer (1995:148) believe that sustainable community empowerment programmes are those that are co-ordinated amongst government user departments and/ or non- governmental organisations, have minimal duplication and conflicts, and lead to continual management and maintenance of assets after they are completed.

### **Targeting the most needy within a community**

Community empowerment programmes must have a specific sections of the community that they are targeted for. According to Musandiwa (1997:13), for programmes to be effective, they should concentrate on targeting only those sections of community which they are meant for.

### **Sources of funding**

Rubin and Rubin (1992:394) and Lombard (1991:157) maintain that communities should apply the leveraging method of obtaining funds from the donors. Leveraging enhance community participation and efficacy.

### **6.2.2.2.OBJECTIVE 2: TO INVESTIGATE THROUGH AN EMPIRICAL STUDY, THE IMPACT OF THE CBPWP ON RURAL COMMUNITIES**

The second objective of this study was to investigate through an empirical study, the impact of the CBPWP on rural communities. In this section, the researcher will evaluate the research methodology that was utilised, and discuss the research conclusions that were obtained from the findings of the study.

#### 6.2.2.2.1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this part of the section, the researcher will evaluate the research methodology that was utilised for this study.

##### \* Population

It became impossible to involve the entire community (population) in the research project, therefore the researcher selected a sample and utilised the steering committee members as respondents for the study.

Smith, Morse and Lobao (1992:135) call steering committee members “the co-ordinators” and support their choice as respondents for a research project by stating that “in this context, the advantages of using the co-ordinators as informants about program success are that they may provide particularly accurate reports because they:(1) have detailed knowledge about the program; (2)should have few problems with recall; and (3) should understand survey questions related to program objectives.”

Sundet and Mermelstein (1988:96) call the steering committee members the “key informants” and write that they are “knowledgeable and involved in community activities. Thus they meet almost exactly the definition of key informants in the professional needs assessment literature.”

Generalizability in this study has been violated because the biographical characteristics of the respondents (steering committee members) are not the true reflection of the population they represent.

Sundet and Mermelstein (1988:96) argue that “the key informants approach, on the other hand, is criticised for the selectivity of its data base and the built-in bias of informants.” They continue to explain that “as key informants, it was anticipated

these persons would come from positions of leadership and that one index of leadership would be the level of formal education attained.”

### \* **Units of analysis**

A population is made up of units of analysis. In this study, the units of analysis were communities which received and communities which did not receive the CBPWP, called the experimental and the control groups, respectively.

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:64) maintain that “ unit of analysis is the person or object from whom the social researcher collects data.” Units of analysis for this study were not the communities themselves, but their representatives who were the steering committee members .

### \* **Focus group size**

Nine to twelve individuals who were to compose the right size of the focus group at a given point in time were impractical to obtain during the empirical part of this study because most of community members in the area were harvesting in the fields.. The size for each focus group was reduce to six which ensured their punctual attendance in the interviews.

Six respondents from each of the ten community groups were able to attend the focus group interviews and they were enough to give the necessary empirical data.

### \* **The cost of Focus group interviews**

The qualitative data was collected through the focus group interview method which is expensive to conduct.

The researcher hereby argues that the application of the focus group interviews research methodology is extremely expensive if conducted by an independent person who does not have other financial backing from funding institutions.

The researcher is supported by Krueger (1993:70) who writes “focus groups are not cheap according to the standards used by academics and non-profit organisations.”

Rural communities are populated with unemployed individuals who do not have other means of making themselves available at the research project centres and do not have money to buy themselves meals. The researcher provided transport and meals for the respondents during interviews.

#### \* **Score forms**

The researcher trained an observer to record responses given by the respondents on the score forms with great success.

The utilisation of this instrument is supported by Hedrick, Bickman and Rog (1993:18) who say “when issues are especially difficult to clarify, several additional tools are available to the applied researcher to generate new information” and that those tools include participation observation and other observational instruments. Leedy (1989:141) continues to mention that observers “make a careful record of what they observe so that when the aggregate record is made, the researcher can return to the record to study the observations that have been described there.”

#### \* **Focus group interviews**

During the implementation of the study, it was identified that respondents tended to respond positively in an act to please the researcher.

Smith, Morse and Lobao (1992:135) remarked that “a validity issue meriting further discussion is the possibility of socially desired responses.” Morgan and Krueger

(1993:7) stated that “focus groups tend to produce conformity,” and advised that in order to reduce it, a researcher need to create an atmosphere in which every respondent feels free to share his/her opinions with others.

In this study, the researcher explained his role as a researcher and that the respondents' answers were not in any circumstance going to affect their relationship with his employer, namely; Public Works.

### \* **Data collection**

Biographical information of the respondents was collected through an attendance register, and the qualitative data through the focus group interviews. The procedure of using both the qualitative and quantitative methods is called triangulation and it produces valuable data.

Grimes, De Ville and Leonard (1984:51) say “impact analysts make use of data from a wide variety of sources in their efforts to adequately depict the environment of the host area.” Sundet and Mermelstein (1988:95) support by saying “it is now generally accepted that some combination of approaches yields the most accurate results.”

The quantitative method compensated on the strengths/weaknesses of the qualitative method, and *vice versa*. Thus, when the quantitative method could not collect a particular information, the qualitative was able to collect it.

### \* **Coding procedures**

Data was difficult to manage, analyse and interpret when it was in their raw state, and therefore the coding procedures became necessary in this study. The researcher followed successfully the coding procedures cited in Poggenpoel in De Vos (1998:343-344), Victor (1996:98) and Creswell (1994:155) in order to analyse and interpret data obtained through the focus group interviews.



## \* **Research type**

The evaluative research type was relevant for the impact analysis of the CBPWP in rural communities.

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:51) maintain that this type of research is set out “to determine the extent to which programmes meet their specified aims and objectives.” De Vos (1998:365) defines it by “the general process of weighing or assessing the value of something.”

The succeeding section will discuss the conclusions that were made from the research findings of this study.

### **6.2.2.2.2. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EMPIRICAL FINDINGS**

This part discusses the conclusions that are based on the empirical findings of this study.

## \* **Educational qualification of respondents**

The data reflected in Figure 5.3 indicate that rural communities have less representation of their own experts, with a score of  $N=1$  (1.7%). This score was obtained from both the experimental and control groups. The lack of own experts leads to reliance on outsiders, which according to Nkuhlu (1994:12), prevents sustainable development.

## \* **Community participation of respondents**

In Table 5.2, organisations of origin for respondents are listed as school governing bodies (SGB's), civic associations, churches, political parties and traditional leaders.

Harrison, Hoggett and Jeffers (1995:147) wrote that the form of representation that is usually evident in the rural community programmes should include “constitutional/democratic representatives, e.g. councillors; elected chairpersons for a committee; (b) religious representatives of a community; e.g. Vicar of Anglican churches, Muslim elders; (c) “grass-roots” representatives (natives) e.g. individuals born and/or living in a community; and (d) “professional” representatives e.g. community development workers, health service staff who work within/with a community.”

A similar steering committee body which is a South African example was contributed by Lombard (1991:305), who maintained that, it is composed of a Chairman (a youth from local congregation), secretary (a non-working mother), a teacher, representative from the local mine, a community nurse, representative from the town council, two matriculants ( a boy and a girl from the high school) and the community worker.

In this study, the respondents in the experimental and the control groups were not represented by the technical/social consultants and the officials from the funding institution.

#### \* **Labour intensive methods of construction**

Table 5.7 reflects that community empowerment projects in the rural communities satisfy the prerequisite of labour intensive methods of construction objective of the CBPWP, which is intended to involve many community members during the construction of the project.

Community members in the experimental group were involved with the menial work, the actual construction, the replacement of machinery with individuals and the reduction of salaries, with scores of N=5 (100%), N=5 (100%), N=4 (80%) and N=1 (20%), respectively.

The respondents in the control group did not report on this objective because CBPWP did not fund them.

#### \* **Education and training**

From item 5.5.3 and its respective graphical presentation Figure 5.8, it is indicated that community projects in the experimental group successfully trained members in the implementation of their projects, but they failed to train steering committee members who are the heart and soul of the projects into their management of the projects. Training was skewed and only concentrated on the vocational and/or the technical management skills for the employees who were engaged on the projects.

Communities are empowered through their contact with the steering committee members. Steering committees are the mouthpiece of the entire communities and failure to empower them leads to failure to empower the entire communities, and the latter will continue to be reliant on outsiders and fail to take control of their own lives. Steering committee members should receive both the technical and vocational management skills training in order to become good managers of their community projects.

#### • **Management and maintenance of asset once it is completed**

According to Table 5.5, in the experimental group, only 20% of the projects were reported to be maintained through regular cleaning, 20% enrolled their children to fully utilise the assets, 80% of the completed projects have closed down, 80% of the projects lack security, teachers and children, 20% are occasionally vandalised and that N=5 (100%) are not managed and maintained by the user government departments and/or non-governmental institutions after they were completed by the CBPWP.

The respondents in the control group did not report on this objective because CBPWP did not fund them.

This indicates a serious lack of co-ordination among government departments during the planning and the implementation stages of the projects.

Programmes should be co-ordinated among institutions in order to prepare their management and maintenance once they are completed.

### **Targeting the most needy within a community**

Table 5.6 reflects that N=3 (60%) of the respondents in the experimental group were older women who were targeted the most needy within communities by the CBPWP projects.

The respondents in the control group did not report on this objective because CBPWP did not fund them.

CBPWP projects failed to target the disabled as the most needy within the communities, but included the older women who were not stipulated in the programme.

*The White Paper on Public Works (1997:6)* states that the Department of Public Works has introduced its labour-intensive methods of construction in order to create as many jobs as possible to absorb people "with greater emphasis on unskilled labour, women, youth and disabled workers."

Effective community empowerment programmes should stick too closely with its rules and regulations, failure of which will lead to mismanagement, maladministration, corruption and nepotism which have a negative effect on community empowerment.

Other sections of the community in Table 5.6 are not mentioned as a concern in this part because they met the requirements of the CBPWP.

### Sources of funding

Table 5.7 indicates that there is a community, N=1 (20%) in the experimental group, which was funded by the CBPWP which did not contribute resources towards the implementation of its project.

This shows that some CBPWP projects were funded without regarding whether they practised the leveraging process.

CBPWP projects need to leverage in order to increase their immediate funds.

#### 6.2.2.3. OBJECTIVE 3: FORMULATE GUIDELINES AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE CBPWP

This objective is also attained and the recommendations and guidelines are discussed in detail under 6.3.

### 6.2.3 HYPOTHESIS FOR THE STUDY

This study hypothesised that rural communities which received an adequate CBPWP tend to be empowered.

From the empirical data presented above, this study concludes that the CBPWP did not adequately empower rural communities on strong community participation, education and training, management and maintenance of assets once they are completed, targeting the most needy within a community and sources of funding, objectives.

To redress this state of affairs, the researcher will make recommendations and guidelines for effective future CBPWP.

### 6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study made recommendations on the effective research methodology into the evaluation of the impact of community empowerment programmes on rural communities, and future CBPWP on rural communities.

#### 6.3.1. RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY INTO THE EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES ON RURAL COMMUNITIES

This study recommends the following guidelines for effective research methodology that could be utilised in order to obtain good results into the evaluation of the impact of community empowerment programmes on rural communities, namely; that future researchers should:

- \* utilise members of steering committees as respondents of their studies, even though they are not a true representative of the entire population.
- \* regard communities who applied for the programme as their units of analysis.
- \* utilise the static group comparison design which is a type of the quasi-experimental design.
- \* consider reducing a number of respondents for the focus group interviews to that which is accessible to them.
- \* apply different data collection methods for minimising the bias of unnecessary conformity in the focus group interviews.

use data collection methods which are able to capture both the quantitative and the qualitative information from the respondents.

and that researchers who utilise the focus group interviews as the method of data collection should,

-consider the financial implications and arrange for the transportation, catering and even reimbursement of respondents, and

-make use of the score forms or tally sheets in addition to other instruments to record their observations.

### **6.3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE CBPWP'S IN RURAL COMMUNITIES**

This study recommends the following guidelines for future CBPWP practitioners to conduct effective programmes, namely; practitioners should:

- \* consider the inclusion of the technical/social consultants and the funding institutions representatives in their steering committee composition;
- \* educate and train steering committee members in the technical and management skills of projects;
- \* co-ordinate their programmes with other government departments and/or non-governmental organisations;
- \* include only the targeted sectors of the communities which were specified in their programme missions; and that they
- \* should utilise the leveraging method of increasing funds and other resources for their programmes.

The final section of this chapter discusses the hypothesis, recommendations for future research, value of the study to the social work profession and a summary.

#### **6.4. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The researcher recommends that future community empowerment researchers should concentrate their research topics around effective capacity building, long-term projects and sustainable development.

#### **6.5. VALUE OF THE STUDY TO THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION**

This study is valuable to the social work profession because it outlines discussion around community empowerment and community empowerment programmes. According to it, community empowerment is a newly developing approach in the social work context. It is an intervention utilized by community development practitioners to enable disenfranchised communities to actively participate in the programmes which are intended to sustainably empower them.

This study is an important asset to the profession because it is a pilot for future community empowerment practitioners who wish to conduct effective evaluation research on the impact of programmes on rural communities, and to implement effective programmes.

#### **6.6. SUMMARY**

This final chapter outlined the conclusions and recommendations which were derived from the discussion on the goal of the study and its three objectives.

The study concluded that the CBPWP did not adequately empower rural communities on, strong community participation, education and training, management and maintenance of assets once they are completed, targeting the



most needy within a community and sources of funding, objectives , and recommended guidelines into effective methods for conducting the CBPWP.

The study evaluated the research methodology into the evaluation of the impact of community empowerment programmes on rural communities, and recommended guidelines for effective research methodology.

The researcher concluded that this is a pilot study which can be utilised to guide the future researchers and CBPWP practitioners into conducting effective evaluative research and community empowerment methods.