A Systemic Review of the Socio-Economic Status Using Participating Rapid Appraisal: Case Study of Ikageleng Community in North-West Province

Mokgadi J Ngoepe-Ntsoane
University of South Africa

Abstract

In the present era, which seeks the global development agenda driven by the Sustainable Development Goals, a plethora of developments are taking place. A comprehensive assessment of the socioeconomic status of Ikageleng village was conducted in the North-West province, South Africa, in order to profile the rural community using a participatory approach. The study on which this article is based revealed the villagers' potential towards coping strategies, along with the region's abundant yet untapped resources that could yield positive sustainable livelihoods for the inhabitants. The article contributes to the existing knowledge on stakeholder mobilisation, whichis required for establishing an inclusive economy while aiming to improve the knowledge and practice of community development practitioners. The article advances critical theory on socioeconomic aspects and environmental benefits. The current conditions involve community problems, potential for job creation and a possibility of combating poverty. The catalyst for rural transformation in this instance is through a possible exploitation of the identified mineral resources for small-scale mining in Ikageleng village. The study orbits around the policy developments in the broad area of Local Economic Development. Further research is needed to operationalise the recommendations.

Keywords: Empowerment, engagement, participation, partnership, Local Economic Development.

Introduction

In the phase of development, where every nation is gearing towards attaining sustainable development, the low economic status of the Ikageleng community situated within the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality and the Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality of Zeerust has posed several challenges. Ikageleng is hard hit by unemployment, despite the presence of abundant resources in the area that could conceivably improve their standards of living. A lack of employment in this village and surrounding areas has contributed negatively

to the region's socioeconomic status. The aim of the present inquiry is to profile this community, in which a social infrastructure development project is being implemented, using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) (Chambers, 1983:439) methodology. The study aims to determine the Ikageleng community's socioeconomic living conditions and proposes ways of alleviating unemployment and combating poverty.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), according to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA, 2015), had advanced the notion of an inclusive economy that encompasses social inclusion. This research considers Goal 1 of the SDGs, which is to end poverty in all its forms, and Goal 8, which is to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth (UNGA, 2015). An inclusive economy should ideally be embraced by all so as to attain sustainable development. According to the National Development Plan (NDP) 2020 (National Planning Commission, 2012), political leaders and policy makers have always emphasised job creation as a way of dealing with unemployment. All populations depend on direct or indirect income to ensure a sustainable livelihood, which makes earnings a substantial factor in determining the rate of a community's economic growth and development. The SDGs aim to reinforce development through socioeconomic interchange and facilitate human development from being single-dimensional to becoming multi-dimensional, considering the current as well as future initiatives.

The present research probes into a South African initiative, led from the bottom up, as a potentially critical factor in ensuring sustainable development. Importantly, it employs a rights-based empowerment approach that focuses on building community capacity and knowledge and has the potential to bridge the socioeconomic divide, particularly for the rural poor (De Vos *et al*., 2009). Such empowerment initiatives instil a sense of responsibility, where everyone realises that they can make a difference – as Gandhi (1942:106) had aptly stated: 'We must become the change we wish to see in the world'.

The research approach for this article is to investigate the rhetorical discourse within the context of community participation and empowerment in a social development setting. The information is then verified and confirmed by using data acquired from Statistics South Africa (StatsSA, 2016) through its community survey datasets. The Community Survey (2016) is a large-scale survey that happens in between Censuses 2011 and 2021 (StatsSA, 2016). The main objective is to provide population and household statistics at municipal level to government and the private sector to support planning and decision making. The last community survey was conducted in 2007, making the 2016 statistics the most recent. Support-led and bottom-up socioeconomic development, as conceptualised by Levin (2000:640), is the approach adopted for this study as it has the potential to support poverty eradication and secure sustainable livelihoods, despite a stagnant economy, using various outputs.

The focus here is on a participatory research project undertaken in North-West province, among the members of the rural community inhabiting Ikageleng village, situated within the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality and the Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality. The village was selected

based on a school-building project funded by the Department of Education in the North West and implemented by the Independent Development Trust (IDT), with the researcher acting as a social facilitator. In this role, the researcher facilitated participatory planning with residents of the community in an attempt to profile the area and allow the people to identify priority issues as well as sustainable livelihood opportunities and formulate plans and develop appropriate solutions for their day-to-day (and future) problems.

The three objectives of the study were identified as follows: the first was to develop a complete socioeconomic profile of the Ikageleng community, which involved a baseline study from a historical perspective. The second was to strengthen the relationship between community members, stakeholders, and project workers through participatory development, in order to help intensify existing networks within the community and ensure their availability to other development partners for fostering future collaborations, as well as information-sharing on development-related aspects. The third was to recommend proposals for local economic transformation, as manifested in the achievement of a sustainable development process aimed at bridging the socioeconomic divide. Specific PRA tools were selected and utilised for this purpose.

The article has been organised into five sections: an introduction providing an overview of the paper, the literature review describing theoretical fundamentals, the research methods describing the data collection tools and how the data was analysed, the research findings discussing the socioeconomic status of the municipality and village, and the research implications concluding the study.

Literature Review

The concept of PRA has been effectively used to gather information, particularly in rural areas. By the 1990s, there was wide recognition among Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and academics that the basis of successful development lay in strengthening peoples' capacity to determine their own priorities (Asmorowati, 2010; Werner & Bower, 1982). Importantly, this approach introduced a paradigm shift from a commanding and dictating approach to a level of participatory lesson-sharing for learning purposes.

The two theories identified for the study are empowerment theory and building powerful community organisations theory. Essentially, the empowerment theory captures the second objective which is to strengthen the relationship between community members, stakeholders, and project implementers through participatory development. The second theory, Building Powerful Community Organisations Theory, is based on observation. The study followed a participatory based research where some of the employed methodologies included a transect walk which gave the researcher an opportunity to observe, listen, identify different zones or conditions, and ask questions aimed at pointing out problems and possible solutions. Power imbalances, as elucidated by Brown (2006), are some of the factors associated with this theory, which are necessary interventions that could build powerful community organisations.

To this point, the concepts or constructs which were deemed vital included participation, empowerment, partnership and Local

Economic Development. Cornwall (1996:14) explains that participation in development practice is based on people's knowledge, opinions, and the actions of local communities, enabling action on their part. According to Cornwall (1996:16), participation is a means of empowering communities through education in action, with inhabitants as well as experts learning together as partners for a common purpose. Chambers (1994:1440) and Reason and Bradbury (2006:95) further regard participation as enhancing participants' capacity to think while boosting their self-esteem and confidence. Chambers (1997:954) had noted that granting people permission to participate fully and actively confers the power on them to make decisions. Wallerstein (1992:199) agrees that people should be empowered to such an extent that they are made competent to challenge decisions that influence them, as and when necessary, especially regarding developments affecting their well-being. Without empowerment, participation will prove ineffective.

An empowerment philosophy does not advocate that citizens become mere passive recipients of services. Masango and Mfene (2012:76) concur, stating that for more effective service delivery, citizens should be encouraged to participate in related processes. Some criticism has been aimed at the practice of involving communities in efforts to improve their quality of life or obtaining their approval for already-decided projects, since there are existing power blocs within any community that effectively silence the very poor and marginalised (Ngoepe-Ntsoane, 2018).

Maintaining community interest and engagement are critical to the sustainability of any development project (Gilchrist, 2000). Cornwall and Jewkes (1995:1669), Gaventa and Cornwall (2006:126), and Rahman (1993:63) state that local people who participate are regarded as agents of change, and who have the ability to transform power and social relations through their own praxis.

Importantly, Werner and Bower (1982:93) assert that Participatory Development Communication (PDC) is one approach that aims to enhance stakeholder engagement during all stages of a project cycle. Various development models for a horizontal process of knowledge exchange, as advocated by Schulz (2003:443), are generally more successful than the hierarchical top-down data-extraction processes involved in knowledge transmission. Levin (2000:640), however, maintains that conventional approaches (top-down and bottom-up) to development are not as sustainable as horizontal knowledge exchanges. Importantly, the horizontal exchange model channels the in-flow and through-flow of knowledge, and this is, thus, the researcher's preferred method for ensuring sustainable development.

As key partners, implementing agents need to invest by allocating an appropriate level of human and financial resources to a partnership (Ngoepe-Ntsoane, 2018). Participation, empowerment, and partnerships, according to Cavestro (2003:25), are good vehicles for envisioning the future. During the focus group interactions carried out for this study, the participants were asked how they would like things to be in five to ten years and to predict what would happen if nothing was done (as opposed to, if something was done). In this way, their desires, wishes, and expectations were revealed – a process Cavestro (2003:25) refers to as 'Futures Possible'.

LED can be defined as an increase to the local economy's capacity to increase wealth for local residents (Bartik, 2003). The World Bank (2002) upholds this phenomenon that LED enables sustainability of the economic growth when local people are organised as a collective for achieving the quality of life enhancement through the economic benefits for the entire community. Rogerson (2014) indicates that LED is a participatory process that encourages and facilitates partnership between the local stakeholders, enabling the joint design and implementation of strategies, mainly based on the competitive use of the local resources, with the final aim of creat- ing decent jobs and sustainable economic activities. Importantly, there is a taxonomy of pillars that succinctly describe LED in perspective. The four pillars are listed below:

1. Local development.

2. Strengthening competitiveness and enterprise development.

3. Promoting local economic governance.

4. Building community conscience, and improvement of their well-being (Rogerson, 2014).

The notion of Local Economic Development as the main emphasis in this article has already been iterated. It is of prime importance to strengthen competitiveness and enterprise development when dealing with aspects of LED. According to Winterbauer, Bekemeier, Van Raemdonc and Hoover (2016:10), building trust and mutual accountability are important elements for establishing true partnerships between diverse entities. Thus, contrary to what proponents of decentralisation advocate, rural areas and poorly resourced municipalities have not exhaustively reaped the benefits of economic transformation or an inclusive economy. This has led NGOs to be seen as the main actors in any developmental initiatives envisaging to build community conscience, and improvement of their well-being.

Research Methods

The study on which this article is based departed from the taxonomy of active participatory research. A qualitative method was selected with the aim of attaining an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons governing such behaviour (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The PRA method, which is premised within qualitative methodology, was adopted for the collection of data. It had been selected to encourage the active participation of the community and foster gender neutrality. A participatory methodology is suitable for grassroots data collection, as it works against respondents becoming fatigued (Chambers, 1983). According to Chambers (1994:1448), PRA as a methodology offers a means of learning about rural life, living conditions, and the environment from a rural perspective. Chambers (1994:1439) further describes PRA as a method to learn about rural life and conditions from, with, and by rural people. Most importantly, it reflects innovative thinking about people's needs, their responsibilities, and any programmes and development initiatives present in their area. Likewise, it encourages teamwork and employs tools that are powerful in triangulating, probing, and validating any data captured.

Convenience sampling was considered the most appropriate technique as it makesno pretense of being representative of a

population but takes units as they are presented, especially when the population is small (Mohlasedi, 1998). It would have been ideal to test the entire population, but due to its size, as well as financial constraints, it was impossible to do so. As Kurien (1978:68) points out, large groups are ineffective in meetings, often causing a disjuncture in terms of the flow of discussions and, thereby, hampering the envisaged progress. Thus, the sample size for this study included 18 participants for the focus group and participatory exercises. Some respondents feel intimidated in large groups, while others might dominate the group, which would defeat the purpose. A heterogeneous group based on the principle of social inclusivity was, therefore, constituted, which included both males and females in the age group of 25-60 years. Gumucio-Dagron (2003) notes that social inclusivity gives all classes and categories within a population an opportunity to be heard.

Potential participants were invited to a data-collection session while they were attending a parents' meeting at a school, having been selected by the steering committee for the school-building project and by the Community Liaison Officer (CLO). A meeting was scheduled with the participants and the steering committee. During the meeting, after all the attendees had introduced themselves, the purpose of the research and the involved activities were then explained. Participants were duly informed of the criteria for focus group selection, which included an acceptable age (ranging from 25-60 years), geographical spread, and different representations (based on leadership, gender, disability, and availability). Other expectations, such as active participation, were also emphasised. A verbal commitment was obtained from the selected volunteering participants, and a date was chosen for the first meeting with them to conduct the mapping and modeling exercises.

As to why a participatory methodology was adopted for the study, the researcher had preference for the bottom-up and horizontal approaches for the transformation of communities.

The following tools and methods were used in the research process:

- **Participatory Mapping and Modelling**: A mapping session was held at the project site, and the participants were encouraged to contribute freely. The participants were divided into two groups and were issued a chart and markers. They were asked to draw a map of their village. The researcher provided each group with the legends for displaying features. On completion, the two maps were compared for verification purposes. A consensus was achieved among all the respondents, and then the maps were consolidated into a single map. Mapping is mainly used to depict infrastructure, natural resources, land ownership, settlement and cropping patterns, and soil types. The mapping exercise helped the facilitator to acquire information about community perceptions regard- ing their natural resources (abundance or scarcity), and their access to health services, land, and water.

- **Social Mapping**: Social mapping, according to Cavestro (2003:10), is a PRA method that involves the sketching/drawing of houses, and other facilities and

infrastructure (shops, schools, churches, roads) in a village. It helps to visualise and situate the location of households and other social facilities and serves as a baseline for planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating development activities (including the selection of a village organising strategy). Conversely, social mapping also identifies social structures in a village and differences among households regarding ethnicity, religion, and wealth.

- **Transect Walks**: This activity took place during the third meeting with the participants, where the researcher and key informants conducted a walking tour through areas of interest in order to observe, listen and identify different zones or conditions and ask questions that aimed at pointing out problems and possible solutions. With this community-traversing method, the researcher could learn about topography, soil, land use, forests, watersheds, and community assets, which also helped in validating previous mapping activities (quality verification). Other community members/inhabitants had an opportunity to respond to some of the questions posed by the researcher, which also provided a clearer picture.

- **Semi-Structured Interviews/Appreciative Inquiry**: The method utilises informal interviews and is conversational, thus, granting flexibility and comfort while still being carefully controlled. This method was chosen because it allows large amounts of information to be captured, which helps to interpret data for those who are unfamiliar with the area under study. Furthermore, PRA-generated data is seldom conducive to statistical analysis (given its largely qualitative nature, and relatively small sample size).

- **Secondary Data**: The information collected was, therefore, validated by community survey data that had been collected by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA, 2016) for triangulation and to ensure the reliability of the findings. The StatsSA sampling was based on the approximate stratification of communities by geographic location, utilising a master sample.

The data has been taken from official statistics that were collected by StatsSA in 2016, thus, presenting a complete socioeconomic profile of the Ikageleng community in the Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality. The survey used a master sample, whereby sampled households were selected from the enumerated areas. Importantly, the main objective of the survey was to provide population and household statistics at the municipal level to support planning and decision making for the government and the private sector.

An interview guide was prepared to serve as a checklist, enabling the researcher to follow a systematic sequence and achieve comprehensive coverage. In terms of data quality and ethics, bias was reduced by using a mix of PRA tools, instead of repeatedly using the same tool with different participants. As explained, secondary data sources from StatsSA (2016) were used to validate all findings before cross-checking the information collected during the PRA sessions, in order to arrive at a comprehensive picture of the bio-physical and socioeconomic situation of the village. Rapport-building enabled

the researcher to establish a working relationship with the locals. All the processes explained had been properly facilitated by the researcher, who acted as a catalyst, while a moderator and a note-taker were also present during the sessions.

At the onset of the project, a social facilitator (the researcher of this article) was appointed by the consulting company responsible for project management to take care of all social issues and liaise between the community and the project workers. This involved facilitating indispensable negotiations and arrangements with community and municipal leaders, and other important stakeholders within the community, prior to implementation. The main role of the social facilitator was to identify stakeholders in the community, obtain their support for the project, act as a liaison in respect of public relations (between the project and the community), facilitate the appointment of a CLO and steering committee, and solidify synergies with community actors. The traditional authority and ward councillor, as the main stakeholders, were approached for their approval of the project, thus, illustrating a bottom-up approach. Social inclusion was practised by giving representation to special groups (the disabled, youth and women).

As a facilitator, the researcher made efforts to integrate both dominant personalities and quieter participants to ensure that everyone could express their opinions openly. Further, key words arising from the discussions were repeated, before being written on a chart for the approval by all. Proper time management was employed during the activities to avoid fatigue. The researcher exercised patience and displayed a sense of humor, flexibility, and creativity, and (most importantly) was able to speak the same language as the respondents did. Several techniques were used that assisted with cross-checking, for investigating the participants' views on a single topic, and this included a final community meeting for the discussion of the findings and correcting inconsistencies, during the process of self-critical review. Fifty-two people attended the meetings and also signed the attendance register and this was done during each meeting. Debriefing sessions and discussions are important as they allow for a review of the field notes, once fieldwork has been completed.

The method used for analysing the data collected through the PRA approach allowed the participants to present their findings to other community members and outsiders on a flip chart and cards for cross-checking if the results represented them all in terms of adequacy. Most importantly, this provided another opportunity for validation, cross-checking, feedback, comment and criticism. Key findings were recorded before 'leaving' the village (the community consented to have the research data made public). During debriefing sessions, the researcher provided brief summaries of each diagram, model and map, and gave an overview of all processes followed. One advantage of PRA is that, with some training, local people can conduct these research processes themselves and easily adopt them all, irrespective of their illiteracy.

FINDINGS

The study on which this article is based was conducted to obtain a comprehensive understanding of Ikageleng village, where a school extension project had been commissioned.

Ikageleng is a rural village accountable to Chief Moiloa through the tribal head (*induna*), Boase Moiloa. The chief is based at Ramotshere Traditional Authority, which is located at Dinokana village. A deeper study into the history of the place has not been done in this research. At Ikageleng, despite being a rural village, traditional practices such as initiation schools and subsistence farming practices have not really taken hold. Thus, this presupposes that urban/peri-urban influences prevail, especially because the village is located near Zeerust town.

Socioeconomic Status of Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality

The geographical area of Ramotshere Moiloa is predominantly rural. The Local Municipality is characterised by a few urban areas, including Zeerust (the main town), as well as formal settlements at Henryville, Olienhout Park, Shalimar Park, Welbedacht (Lehurutshe Town), and Groot Marico. According to the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), the vast majority of the populace lives in rural or peri-urban areas, which are mainly unplanned and poorly serviced (Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality, 2017). The rural part of the municipality is estimated to cover 70% of its total area, with over 40 villages spread across distances of up to 120km from the main town (Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality, 2017).

According to the survey (StatsSA, 2016:12), in 2016, the entire population of the local municipality stood at 48 070 people, with the majority aged between 40 and 49 years, and the minority being children aged between 10 and 19 years. There had been notable developments in terms of amenities and services accessible to the community, which housed 2 144 maternal and 3 028 paternal orphans. The statistics for child-headed households were as follows: Individuals from 10-19 years – 1 257 people; 20-29 years – 5 841 people; and 30-39 years – 9 350 people.

In terms of the census (StatsSA, 2016:8), 75.3% attended school. At a household level, 78% lived in formal dwellings, 15.1% in informal housing, 5.2% in traditional housing, and 9.9% in RDP houses, with only a small fraction (5.6%) maintaining that they had inadequate housing. Of the population, 45.1% indicated a lack of safe and reliable drinking water, 80.4% stated that accessibility was not a problem, 16.8% had water in their homes, 39.2% in the yard, while 8.7% had access to communal water. In terms of electricity, 84.1% of respondents used pre-paid meters in their homes, and 71.7% used electricity for cooking and lighting, 22.1% used firewood for cooking, followed by paraffin (2.2%), and some used gas and paraffin (2.9%).

The survey (StatsSA, 2016:7) further reported that 56.2% of respondents perceived crime to be low and deemed it safe to live in their area, while only 2.8% stated that their area was unsafe. Crime, as a variable of the baseline survey, was reported as low during the focus group discussion. The most significant crime mentioned was housebreaking. From census 2011 to the time of the survey in 2016, there had been 1 067 reported cases. Inadequate health services were reported by 1% of respondents, with 98.5% reporting themselves to be in good health (StatsSA, 2016).

Lack of employment opportunities was indicated by 12.2% of respondents in the municipality. Notably, 4 386 (61.2%) of

households had skipped a meal for five or more days during the preceding 30 days, while 2 778 (38.8%) had not. Statistics on the distribution of households involved in agricultural activities showed that only a small fraction of inhabitants – 9 090 (18.9%) – practised farming, while 38 980 (81.1%) did not (StatsSA, 2016).

Additionally, 64.8% of the people migrated (left the community to find jobs in other areas) over the five years preceding the survey. Of those remaining, the majority were women (35.2%). In terms of mortality, the distribution of deaths during the 12 months preceding the survey was found to be 839 (48.9%) for men and 878 (51.1%) for women. During the StatsSA (2016) survey, 37 457 (78.0%) households deemed it to be very important that their living conditions should improve, 10 366 (21.6%) deemed it to be important, while only 181 (0.4%) did not deem it to be important at all.

According to the StatsSA (2016) survey, pit latrines were still in general use (according to 46.9% of respondents), thus, presumably the situation at Ikageleng would be similar. Of the respondents, only 9.6% reported the roads as being inadequate; the majority were also satisfied with the available transport, and that their town is located near Zeerust. Of the entire municipality, 1 135 people reported having internet access at home. Very few respondents identified drug abuse as a significant problem – only 15 people did so.

Profile of Ikageleng Community

From the PRA exercises conducted, there were two schools identified at Ikageleng village: a primary and a secondary school. The first school was established in the 1960s, and initially, it only catered for learners up to Grade 5. There is no post office and no police station (the closest one is at Dinokana). Access to basic services such as water, health, housing, etc. was reported to be poor during focus group discussions. There are no clinics at Ikageleng. The only nearest clinic is at Dinokana, which is a 10-minute drive from Ikageleng. The roads at Ikageleng were in acceptable condition. The advantage is that the village itself is close to Zeerust town.

The natural resources on which the community takes pride are manganese, limestone, clay, white slate, red oxide (*lentwe-lebowa*), and petroleum oil. Despite these, no mining activities are being undertaken in the area.

According to the focus groups, a common concern for the community is child malnutrition, and most of the children are dependent on the school nutrition system for food security. Crime was perceived as being low. Teenage pregnancy is another social problem which is exacerbated by a lack of family planning, since there is no clinic. As stated, there are several child-headed households due to parental deaths and parents migrating to the cities for work. Child grants are the predominant source of income, which according to some respondents, has been encouraging the impoverished girl child to become pregnant. The lack of recreational facilities is also a big contributor to teenage pregnancy.

Burial societies, stokvels, and grocery clubs are regarded to be the community's coping strategies. At Ikageleng, high levels of unemployment were reported by the focus groups, with few surviving through small-scale farming

TABLE 1: Summary of Findings

Variables	Ramotshere Moiloa Municipality (StatsSA, 2016)	Ikageleng Village Focus Group
Child Headed Households	10 -19 years – 1 257, 20 - 29 years – 5 841, and 30 - 39 years – 9 350 Total: 9 350 of 48 070	High
Reliable Water	45.1% indicated a lack of a safe and reliable drinking water, 80.4% stated that accessibility was not a problem, 16.8% had water in their homes, 39.2% in the yard, while 8.7% had access to communal water	Poor access to resources such as water. At Ikageleng, new taps were being installed, thus water had to be collected from communal taps (most of which were plumbed by the Bophuthatswana government [Bantustan/homeland] regime, and were no longer working)
Electricity	84.1% of respondents used pre-paid meters in their homes, and 71.7% used electricity for cooking and lighting	Access to electricity not a problem
Crime	56.2% of respondents perceived crime to be low	Perceived to be low during discussions
Health	Inadequate health services were reported by 1% of respondents, with 98.5% reporting themselves as being in good health	No clinic in the vicinity, the nearest clinic is found at Dinokana
Education	31.8% attended secondary school and 29.1% studied up to matric while 4.2% studied until Grade 7	The majority of people at Ikageleng have studied up to Grade 7. There is one primary and one secondary school
Hunger	Notably, 4 386 (61.2%) of households had skipped a meal for five or more days during the preceding 30 days, while 2 778 (38.8%) had not	According to the focus groups, a social factor commonly troubling the community is child malnutrition, and most learners are dependent on the school nutrition system for food security
Agricultural Activities	Statistics on the distribution of households involved in agricultural activities showed that only a small fraction of inhabitants – 9 090 (18.9%) – practised farming, while 38 980 (81.1%) did not	Few surviving through small-scale farming
Migration	At 64.8%	Lots of parents, particularly men, have migrated to other cities for jobs offering meagre income
Mortality	839 (48.9%) for men and 878 (51.1%) for women	High due to fashionable diseases (they said)
Roads	Only 9.6% reported the roads as being inadequate	Not a problem
Employment	Lack of employment: 12.2%	High levels of unemployment were reported. Some worked at nearby farms or as domestic workers
Levels of Income	Very low	Child grants are the predominant source of income Burial societies, stokvels, and grocery clubs are regarded as community coping strategies
Living Conditions	78.0% of households deemed it very important that their living conditions improve	They mentioned that their livelihoods would improve if the identified natural assets in their environment could be utilised efficiently over the next 5-10 years

Source: Author's own interpretation

and small business activities while others migrated to other areas such as Rustenburg and Johannesburg to work in mines. Some worked at nearby farms or as domestic workers. Many survived through child grants or foster care grants. Many households were reported to be predominantly poor, with a low income.

Community and faith-based organisations in the area have as their main objective to provide home-based care for bedridden patients and child-headed households. Most people in the community possess self-help skills related to trades, such as brick-laying, building, painting, carpentry, and dressmaking. Identified dangers and health hazards in the community include a huge donga, which is not barricaded off, and is currently mostly used as a dumping site for rubble and debris. Importantly, this presents a health hazard, particularly when it rains, as children might drown in it.

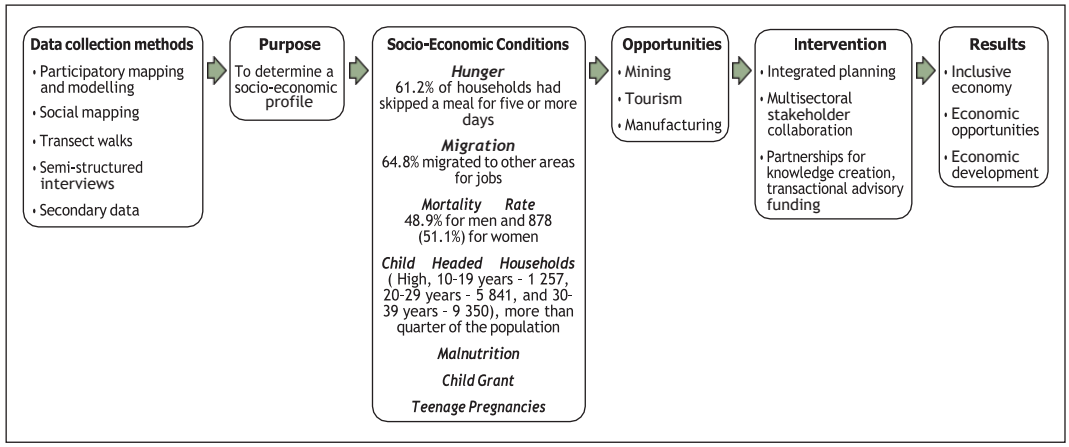
When participants from the community were asked how they thought their situation would improve in five to ten years, they mentioned that their livelihoods would improve if the identified natural assets in their environment could be utilised efficiently.

The information obtained through focus groups when cross-referenced with the statistics released by the CS established many commonalities. Of the 14 variables considered in Table 1 on the previous page, the shaded ones (being 12) have similar results, while it was found that the views of the respondents differed on two variables – water and education. This, according to the general responses on the entire municipality, implies that Ikageleng is among those villages or places that are still behind in terms of service delivery.

Stakeholder Relationship Management

Under this heading, the second objective, namely, strengthening the relationship between community members, stakeholders, and the aforementioned project workers, has been stated. The issue of stakeholder

FIGURE 1: Schematic Presentation of the Research Process



Source: Author's own interpretation

engagement is critical in all development initiatives. This notion is supported by the German international development agency (GIZ) who elucidated that for the LED to be a success, the key stakeholders and organisations from all domains of society, the public and private sector as well as civil society, should work collaboratively to produce an exceptional advantage for the locality and its firms, tackle market failures, remove bureaucratic obstacles for local businesses and strengthen the competitiveness of local firms.

DISCUSSION

According to the third objective identified in this research, proposals for local economic transformation were to be recommended. Within an arena of events the National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform DRDLR) was mandated to develop a Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) for the state. The CRDP has an advantage of enabling the rural citizens to be independent and in a way taking control of their destiny, for defeating the scourge of rural poverty through the optimum use and management of natural resources (DRDLR, 2012b). Suggestions made during engagements with the community focused on how Ikageleng village could become self-sufficient. Rogerson (2014) states that the centrality of policies in support of small enterprise development embellishes competitive local economies as well as inclusive growth (Sibanda, 2013). Essentially, for the success of small enterprise development, policy support and stakeholder commitment are critical forces for progress (Ndabeni, 2012). Lack of income (unemployment in the area) contributes negatively to the region's socioeconomic status.

The lack of income is justified by the migration patterns reported to be at 65%, meaning that 65% of the earning population had been leaving their households to seek employment in other cities. Additionally, the rate of mortality was reported to be high: 48.9% for men and 51.1% for women, thereby, leaving children as orphans, thus contributing to the problem of lack of income, resulting in poor livelihood and poverty. There are many social problems such as child malnutrition, teenage pregnancies, etc. which occur due to aforementioned factors. Lack of health education also contributes towards teenage pregnancies and mortality because of population's illiteracy levels, poor living conditions, and a shortage of health facilities. On the question of difficulties faced by the local municipality (StatsSA, 2016:4), of all 20 variables, the lack of safe and reliable drinking water was listed as the first difficulty, followed by the lack of employment opportunities. Furthermore, most girl children plan the pregnancies in order to get child grants, which are regarded as a predominant source of income.

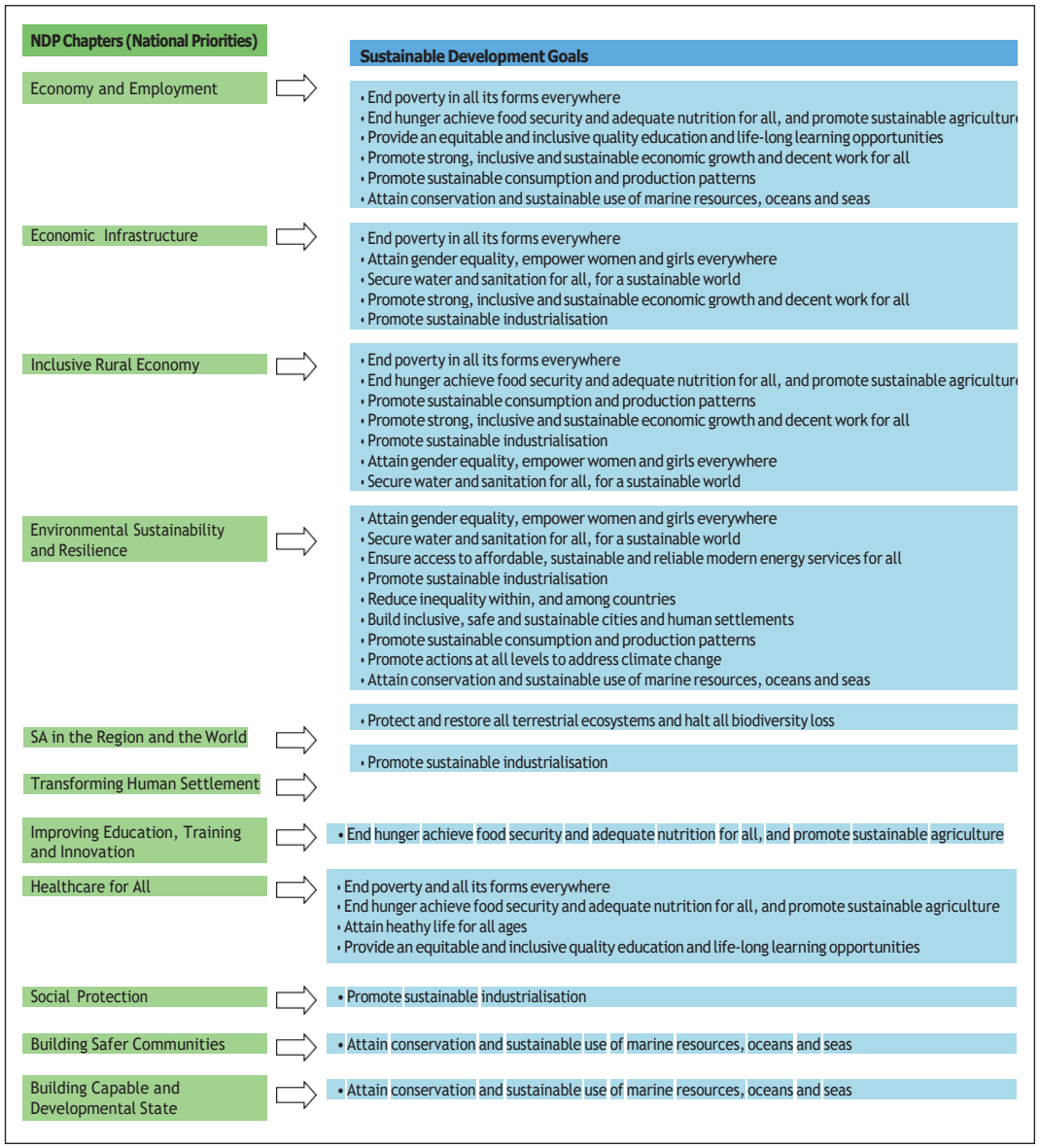
The statistics reveal that the inhabitants aspire to better their standards of living, meaning that they currently do not view their living conditions as acceptable. The findings revealed that 78% of households deemed it important that their living conditions should improve. As a means of survival, IDP revealed the existence of mining opportunities at Dinokana, thereby justifying comments made by the Ikageleng participants during the focus group discussions. The conservation, nourishment and manipulation of these assets might improve the economic conditions of the community as a whole.

The Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality's close proximity to the N4 platinum highway and the Gaborone Corridor, with their high traffic volumes, locates it in an advantageous position for mining and tourism. The researcher asserts that, for this potential to be realised, development facilitators, investors, and NGOs need to become instrumental in assisting the municipality to close the current capacity gaps. This can be done by processing the community's aspirations and putting their wish list into practice. Nel and Binns (2002), Rogerson (2014), and Marais (2010) have elucidated that the mining sector in South Africa plays a special role and serves local development. According to Rogerson (2014), LED is a participatory process that encourages and facilitates partnership between the local stakeholders, enabling the joint design and implementation of strategies, mainly based on the competitive use of the local resources, with the final aim of creating decent jobs and sustainable economic activities.

The Zuma administration launched the New Growth Path in 2009, its objective being to promote an integrated and inclusive rural economy. The New Growth path is instrumental in the promotion and redistribution of opportunities and wealth and for curbing exclusion, creating five million jobs by 2020 and with a focus on a new more inclusive, labour-absorbing development path (Department of Economic Development, 2010). Implementation and coordinated planning, however, remain a problem. The findings have revealed that manganese, clay and white slate as mineral resources could potentially be explored in the area through small-scale mining as a catalyst for rural transformation. Feasible studies should be done to verify and estimate the quality and quantity of these resources. It is critical to ensure that other proposed strategies comply with the relevant environmental requirements and standards. Environmental impact studies should include underground quantity surveys to potentially uncover underutilised resources which will benefit both the public and the private sectors. Through the provision of employment and job creation projects, other important aspects such as social services, health services, and education will concomitantly be addressed. By encouraging the redistribution of wealth and providing opportunities for previously disadvantaged communities and individuals, the community leaders will be on track to fulfill the requirements of the SDGs and the NDP 2020 (National Planning Commission, 2012) with regards to attaining sustainable development. Figure 2 on the following page shows the NDP and SDG contextualised.

Most shops in Zeerust town are owned by immigrants, particularly from Asian countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan and they allegedly cause problems for locals in the retailing environment as they are perceived to be operating in a cluster. This enables them to buy in bulk and buy fake products imported from other countries and sold at lower prices, which means local entrepreneurs cannot compete with them. They are also alleged to underpay the locals that they employ, yet the economy revolves around them. One of the recommendations made here is that the local people should become more self-sufficient and self-reliant by exploring their area's natural resources, with a view to improving their living standards and quality of life. Conversely, Rogerson and Rogerson (2011) and Rodriguez-Pose and Palavicini-Corona

FIGURE 2: Correlation between NDP and SDG



Source: Author's own interpretation

(2013) alluded to there being a desire to espouse the approach of LED whereby local stakeholders assume greater responsibility for catalysing an area's opulence potential, particularly for the neighbourhoods to be more viable locally, nationally and internationally. Here, the recommendations were mostly limited to what participants articulated regarding their expectations and their five-to-ten-year vision for the future.

CONCLUSION

The article has investigated how much can be achieved through participatory action research by using a horizontal approach for identifying problems, improving knowledge, advancing critical theory, and finding solutions to bring about community change. The low economic status of the Ikageleng community, which is ravaged by unemployment, remains a problem and requires a long-term solution. The article profiled Ikageleng village and put its socioeconomic status in perspective. Given the largely deprived socioeconomic living conditions of the inhabitants, it became clear that there is the potential to improve livelihoods at Ikageleng village. There is an abundance of natural resources, which if mined, would greatly benefit the community. The study itself employed various techniques to critically examine community problems that have implications on the social, economic and environmental conditions for sustainability.

The data collection methods labeled in Figure 1 were used for identifying the determinants of the socioeconomic status of the Ikageleng area, after the analysis of data for the purpose of profiling the village. The findings from the data analysed have revealed that unemployment is under-reported. This notion of unemployment, which was stated by 12.2% of the respondents, is found to be under-reported and flawed, given the information obtained from the focus groups. Additionally, the indicators of unemployment, child-headed households, teenage pregnancies, hunger, malnutrition, migration patterns, and adult mortality justify that the socioeconomic status in the area is quite influenced by the unemployment status of the majority. Thus, a socioeconomic profile of the Ikageleng community in the Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality was provided as the first objective of this study.

The second objective was fulfilled by highlighting the importance of the relationships between community members, stakeholders and project workers, which illustrated that a better landscape for future planning can be achieved by collectively identifying socioeconomic ills, using participatory approaches. If funding can be made available through the assistance of investors, this community might be able to nurture, develop and conserve its resources for achieving the envisaged five-to-ten-year plan, which also centres around improving socioeconomic conditions in the area.

The third objective, which was to provide proposals for local economic transformation, was also placed in perspective. Unemployment was identified as one of the main contributors to the community's generally poor socioeconomic status, thereby, meaning that sustainable job creation opportunities could lead to significant improvements in this regard.

To overcome most of the constraints identified, Gurr and King (1987:57-58) assert that one-size-fits-all interventions are not ideal to apply to municipalities, because each is different in respect of its human, natural and financial resources. This view is supported by Rodriguez-Pose and Palavicini-Corona (2013) who emphasise that LED processes provide a cohesive slant to development rather than a 'one-size-fits-all' solution. The core objective of this is to ensure that the local economic potential is harnessed through innovation to all its advanced scales ranging from infrastructure, to local businesses and

their capabilities, to attract foreign direct investment (Rodriguez-Pose, 2008:23).

An intensive empirical study is needed into the capacities, constraints, principles and strengths of this community, preferably by means of a collaborative approach. Recommendations have been made for economic transformation by alleviating unemployment and combating poverty through the exploitation of the identified mineral resources through small-scale mining as a catalyst for rural transformation.

REFERENCES

Asmorowati, S. 2010. Bureaucratic culture or citizen-oriented culture? Bureaucracy, community and reform in the National Program for Community Empowerment. Indonesia: Surabaya.

Bartik, T.J. 2003. Local Economic Development Policies, Kalamazoo, Michigan: Upjohn Institute Staff Working Paper No. 03-91.

Brown, M.J. 2006. *Powerful Community Organisations: A personal guide to creating groups that can solve problems and change in the world*. Arlington Massachusetts: Long Haul Press.

Cavestro, L. 2003. PRA: Participatory Rural Appraisal – concepts, methodologies, and techniques (Unpublished Master's dissertation), University of Padua, Italy.

Chambers, R. 1983. *Rural development: Putting the last first*. World Development Series. London: Longman.

Chambers, R. 1994. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Challenges, potentials and paradigm. *World Development*, 22(10):1437-1454.

Chambers, R. 1997. *Whose reality counts? Putting the last first*. London: Intermediate Technology.

Cornwall, A. 1996. Towards participatory practice: Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and the participatory process. In de Koning, K. & Martin, M. (eds). *Participatory research in health*: *Issues and experiences* (94-107). London: Zed Books.

Cornwall, A. & Jewkes, R. 1995. What is participatory research*? Social Science Medicine*, 41(12):1667-1676.

De Vos, P., De Ceukelaire, W., Malaise, G., Perez, P., Lefèvre, P. & Van der Stuyft, P. 2009. Health through people's empowerment: A rights-based approach to participation. *Health and Human Rights*, 4(2):121-127.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln Y.S. (eds). 2005. *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Department of Economic Development, Department of Rural Development and Land Reform 'Functional Regions' – A Spatial Development Response. Upublished Terms of Reference, Pretoria.

Gandhi, M. 1942. 'Quit India' speech on the eve of Quit India Movement, August 8.

Gaventa, J. & Cornwall, A. 2006. Challenging the boundaries of the possible: Participation, knowledge and power. *IDS Bulletin*, 37(6):122-127.

Gilchrist, G. 2000. The well-connected community: Networking to the edge of chaos. *Community Development Journal*, 35(31):264-275.

Gumucio-Dagron, A. 2003. Take five: A handful of essentials for ICTs in development, Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292773271.

Gurr, T. & King, D. 1987. *The state and the city*. London: Macmillan.

Kurien, C.T. 1978. *Poverty, planning and social transformation.* New Delhi: Allied.

Levin, D.Z. 2000. Organizational learning and the transfer of knowledge: An investigation of quality improvement. *Organization Science*, 11(6):630-647.

Marais, L. 2010. Donor-driven Local Economic Development in peripheral areas of KwaZulu-Natal: The Gijima Programme. *Development Southern Africa*, 27(4):577-530.

Masango, R.S. & Mfene, P.N. 2012. Citizen empowerment for promoting access to public services. *Administratio Publica*, 20(1):73-89.

Mohlasedi, K.M. & Nkado, R.N. 1997. The role of stakeholders in the delivery of affordable housing schemes in South Africa. In: Stephenson, P. (ed.). 13th Annual ARCOM Conference, 15-17 September 1997. King's College, Cambridge. Association of Researchers in Construction Management, (2):633-42.

National Planning Commission. 2012. *National Development Plan*, 2030. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Ndabeni, l.l. 2012. Small Medium and Micro Enterprises in South Africa's National System of Innovation. Preliminary report prepared for the Global Research Network for Learning: Innovation and Competence Building Systems. Economics Institute of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Nel, E. & Binns, T. 2002. Decline and response in South Africa's Free State Goldfields.

Ngoepe-Ntsoane, M.J. 2018. Perspective on corporate social responsibility as a route to citizen empowerment. *Development Southern Africa*, 38(4):419-431.

Rahman, M. 1993. *People's self-development: Perspectives on participatory action research*. London: Zed Books.

Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality. 2016. Availableat: http://www.ramotshere.gov.za/about-municipality. Accessed 22 May 2019.

Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality. 2017. The Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality Spatial Development Framework (SDF) 2017. Available at: http://www.ramotshere.gov.za/about-municipality. Accessed 22 May 2019.

Reason, P. & Bradbury, H. (eds). 2006. *Handbook of action research.* London: Sage.

Rodriguez-Pose, A. 2008. Milestones and challenges of LED Practice and Academic Research. @local. glob, 5:22-24.

Rodriguez-Pose, A. & Palavicini-Corona, E.I. 2013. Does Local Economic Development really work? Assessing LED across Mexican Municipalities. *Geoforum*, 44:303-315.

Rogerson, C.M. 2014. Pro-poor Local Economic Development in post-apartheid South Africa: The Johannesburg fashion district. *International Development Planning Review*, 26:401-429.

Rogerson, C.M. & Rogerson, J.M. 2011. Improving the business environment for Local Economic Development in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration*, 46:994-1009.

Schulz, M. 2003. The uncertain relevance of newness: Organizational learning and knowledge. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(4):661-681.

Sibanda, M.M. 2013. Small, medium and micro-enterprises in Local Economic Development: A South African Local Government Perspective. *Journal of Public Administration*, 48:657-671.

Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), 2016. *Statistics South Africa* (website). Available at: www.statssa.gov.za

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). 2015. *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.* Available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld. Accessed 12 May 2019.

Wallerstein, N. 1992. Powerlessness, empowerment and health: Implications for health promotion programs. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 6(3):197-205.

Werner, D. & Bower, B. 1982. *Helping health workers learn: A book of methods, aids, and ideas for instructors at the village level*. Palo Alto, CA: Hesperian Foundation.

Winterbauer, N.L., Bekemeier, B., van Raemdonck, L. & Hoover, A.G. 2016. Applying community-based participatory research partnership principles to public health practice-based research networks. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/2/58244016679211.

World Bank. 2002. World Development Report 2002: Building institutions for markets. New York: Oxford University Press. © World Bank.

Mokgadi Julia Ngoepe-Ntsoane is a Senior Lecturer at Unisa in the Department of Public Administration and Management and a social engineer. She believes in assisting disadvantaged communities through local economic development endeavors. Mokgadi subscribes to the school of visionary, authentic and ethical leadership. She is currently serving as a member of the public entity Boards, where her responsibilities encompass chairpersonship of committees, fiduciary duties aligned to the financial accountability of the institution and providing governance.