Developing Assessment Criteria for Successful Poverty Alleviation with Special Reference to the Nomzamo Special Care Centre

Student: Banele Anthony Gidi
Student Number: 50049364
Supervisor: Dr Andrea Hurst
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ABSTRACT

While this study is partly theoretical it includes an exploratory case study in which theoretical insights are applied. In the theoretical part of this study, criteria for a successful poverty alleviation project were developed, guided by sustainability theory and complexity theory. It was proposed that researchers could assess existing projects according to these criteria to show where they were successful and where they could improve. The second part of this research consists of a case study, where an actual poverty alleviation project (The Nomzamo Special Care Centre, Peddie, Eastern Cape) was assessed according to the criteria developed in the first part. For this exploratory case study a non-random sample of 9 participants was drawn from the Nomzamo Special Care Centre and other stakeholders in the Ngqushwa Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape. Data was collected using questionnaires, observation and interviews. The results obtained from analysis indicate that project members particularly experience challenges pertaining to financial resources, infrastructure and maintenance. It is recommended that project members receive assistance from the government departments in order for the project to remain sustainable.
DECLARATION WITH RESPECT TO PLAGIARISM

I, Banele Anthony Gidi hereby declare that the work contained in this research is my own work, all the information used is correctly sourced and has not previously in its entirely or partly been submitted at any university for the purposes of obtaining a degree.

BANELE ANTHONY GIDI

B. A GIDI
PORT ELIZABETH
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 Background

According to May (2000:5) poverty is associated with alienation from the community; food insecurity; crowded homes; use of basic forms of energy; lack of adequately paid, secure jobs; and fragmentation of family. Gouws and Gibson (2003:21) state that most scholars agree that poverty is one of the greatest contributors to political conflict and violence in South Africa. As can be seen from this, poverty is a multi-faceted and can be manifested in hunger, lack access to water, sanitation, and education in rural areas. Aliber (2002:2) identified three aspects of poverty, namely income poverty, quality of life and inequality. According to him, poverty is seen as a system of relationships that have the cumulative effect of excluding people from the process of development and accumulation. This was exemplified according to him in the system of apartheid which skewed power relations and economic, political or social injustice that denied the majority of South Africans access to resources such as inter alia safe water, health services and education.

All of this suggests that South Africa’s consolidation of democracy will only be successful if the imbalances of the past are redressed and poverty is eradicated or at least reduced. This means that the government should adopt policies and programmes that aim to increase job creation, to ensure that the working poor do not pay the cost of change on their own. The cost of future employment losses should be socialised, such that the state can consider policies to encourage greater employment creation for low paid workers, or prepare them to deal with these changes by improving the skills, through adequate social safety net mechanisms. This is why poverty alleviation has always featured prominently in the social sciences.

1.2 Research Problem

The Eastern Cape Provincial Departments have embarked on promoting the economic empowerment of individuals, groups and families through the funding of community projects. The purpose of funding these projects is to help these groups to create job
opportunities and to empower them through skills development so that they may be self-reliant and self-sufficient. Despite these efforts, poverty remains prevalent in the Eastern Cape. This suggests that these efforts are meeting with only limited success.

1.3 Research Question

The central question that this study seeks to address, therefore, is the impact of poverty alleviation programs on poverty stricken communities in the Eastern Cape. More specifically, this research seeks to make a theoretical contribution, using sustainability theory and complexity theory, to our understanding of what is required for successful poverty alleviation.

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

In the theoretical part of this study, a list of criteria for a successful poverty alleviation project was drawn up, using sustainability theory and complexity theory as a guide. These criteria, it was proposed, make it possible to assess existing projects and to show where they are successful and where they can improve. To test this, the second part of this research consisted of a case study, where an actual poverty alleviation project (The Nomzamo Special Care Centre, Peddie, Eastern Cape) was assessed according to the criteria drawn up in the first part.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this literature review is to establish criteria for assessing the success of poverty alleviation projects, using ideas from sustainability theory and complexity theory. Before defining and discussing poverty, it is first necessary to briefly outline sustainability theory, and complexity theory.

2.1.1 Defining and Discussing Sustainability

Sustainable development implies self-reliant and cost-effective development, facilitating access to health, shelter, clean water and food. It implies the need for people-centered initiatives. Sustainable development is at the very heart of South Africa’s Reconstruction and Development Programme, as it places many of these concerns, and in particular meeting basic needs, at the centre of the agenda of the growth process itself (Munslow & FitzGerald, 1994:4).

According to Anna-Marie Du Toit (1998: 12), sustainable development requires effort in many different areas. One of the most important areas to concentrate on is education. Communities should be made aware that it is essential to manage the resources we still have at present wisely. This means we have to strive to maximize efficiency so that we can put in less and get out more. Efficiency in the present will not only meet the needs of today’s communities better, but will also help provide for future generations. At the very least, today’s needs should not be met at the cost of future generations. Sustainable development, Du Toit (1998: 12) states “is a concept which is in harmony with deep-seated African cultural values concerning the continuity of the dead, the living and the yet unborn.”

In his chapter called “Sustainability Theory” in the Berkshire Encyclopedia of Sustainability: The Spirit of Sustainability, Willis Jenkins (2009: 380) defines the fundamental concept of sustainability as literally “a capacity to maintain some entity, outcome, or process over time.” Any kind of activity, such as farming or running a small business, can be called
sustainable if that activity does not deplete the resources that it depends on to keep running. The resources in question here do not have to be thought of as only material. As Jenkins (2009: 380) remarks, “An analogous use of the term “sustainability” refers to dependent social conditions; for example, a peace treaty, an economic policy, or a cultural practice may be called sustainable if it will not exhaust the support of a political community.” It is true that sustainability can be defined in this broad way, but it has become more and more common to define it in association with global, environmental problems. For the most part, sustainability is defined in the normative terms of what should be happening rather than the current practices that threaten to deplete the essential resources that keep our economic, environmental and social systems running.

Jenkins adds that the idea of sustainability incorporates a multidimensional approach. One might assume that to be sustainable at all at an interpersonal or ethical level, social systems must promote the goal of eliminating poverty at an economic level. But these goals, in turn, depend on ecological conditions. As Jenkins (2009: 380) claims “overcoming poverty cannot, over the long run, stand in competition with protecting sufficient biodiversity.” This is why the idea of sustainability is intricately linked with the idea of complexity. To be practically sustainable we have to find ways to achieve the different social, ethical, economic and environmental goals while still taking into account that they are all interrelated in complex ways. Jenkins insists that the possibility of developing “a decent quality of human life for all” depends on acknowledging the complex, multidimensional nature of the concept of sustainability. He concludes that the very idea of sustainability raises important ethical questions: “What must be sustained? What goods may be imperiled by the dramatic expansion of human systems? Which goods must be protected? Which goals must be pursued? And what is the shared foundation for doing so?” (Jenkins 2009: 380).

2.1.1.1 Psychological Sustainability

Elizabeth Topp (2010) who is described as “a co-founder of Shiftalliance, a consulting firm focused on meaningful business model design,” offers us a useful definition of psychological sustainability, based on her experiences of workplace behavior. In her view “psychological sustainability in the workplace” is associated with “the mental, emotional, and behavioral
characteristics that allow workplaces to function and thrive over time without depleting the intelligence or energy of the people.” In other words, psychological sustainability is exactly analogous to environmental sustainability. Just as environmental sustainability means preserving and maintaining elements in an ecosystem by caring for and nurturing the resources that we have and not depleting them, so we can identify the elements in people that we want to nurture and promote instead of depleting.

Topp argues that the most basic of these elements are intelligence and energy. In her words: “Ideas, innovation, products, and policy come from the heads, hearts, and hands of people. It is people talking, organizing, and behaving together in order to achieve our social, economic and environmental sustainability goals.” In any organisation, whether it is a business or an NGO, it is essential to consider how people think and how they feel (that is, their minds and their hearts) as a precious resource, since we will only create sustainable organisations by developing and nurturing what Topp calls a “sustainable state of mind” in those people who make the important daily decisions that keep an organization running. Topp sees the idea of psychological sustainability as “key to addressing the larger topic of sustainability and sets the stage for organizations to look at policies and processes to increase the intelligence and energy of their people.”

This “sustainable state of mind” is what is meant by psychological sustainability. Cultivating this state of mind is key to addressing sustainability in broader economic, social and environmental terms.

2.1.1.2 Economic Sustainability

The idea of economic sustainability is tied to the truism that a strong economic base allows for a higher level of development, increased services and a higher quality of life for the population in general. On the webpage of the City of North Vancouver (www.cnv.org), it is added that economic sustainability must focus on developing healthy local economies. Again, the benefits of a healthy local economy are uncontroversial:
A healthy local economy is essential for a sustainable and liveable community. It provides the resources that allow residents and a community to prosper. It brings employment and a solid tax base to support services, leading to healthier lifestyles and greater opportunities for personal fulfilment.

2.1.1.3 Social Sustainability

On the link to social sustainability on the webpage of the City of North Vancouver (http://www.cnv.org//server.aspx?c=3&i=511), one is reminded that a community is a collection of citizens who give it its character and direct how it will evolve. The choices people make concerning “where to live, work and play” has an enormous influence on the development of the community as a whole. This means that decisions made by groups of people about how to live together (for example political decisions) have significant capacity to effect “immediate and positive change”. Social decisions have significant impact on the sustainability of a community.

Included under the heading of social sustainability are many complex elements and issues, such as the quality of life of the community, general health, equity and numerous other ethical and political issues. Adequate acknowledgement and management of all of these elements and issues are integral to the long term sustainability of a community, which is measured by the capacity of community members to live together in relative peace and mutual respect. As it is put on the webpage, any sustainable community,

recognizes that its true wealth lies in its citizens. The concepts of environmental and economic sustainability mean very little without their support. Conversely, for a community to function and be sustainable, the basic needs of its residents must be met.

2.1.1.4 Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability involves consideration of human interaction with the surrounding environment, generally with a view to keeping ecosystems as intact as possible and allowing them to remain pristine where possible (http://en.wikipedia.org
In relation to the material environment, a situation becomes unsustainable when human use of natural resources exceeds nature’s capacity to replenish these resources. In other words, the idea of environmental sustainability includes the condition that “human activity only uses nature’s resources at a rate at which they can be replenished naturally.” Again environmental sustainability is interlinked with the idea of social, economic and psychological sustainability in the sense that the final outcome of an unsustainable relationship with nature is the inability to sustain human life. If we do not care for the material world which supports us, we threaten ourselves with extinction.

2.1.2 Role players in Sustainable development

Due to the multi-faceted definition of sustainable development, there are diverse kinds of role-players in sustainable development. Jones and Nelson (2005: 51) correctly point out that successful development can only occur if individuals are concerned about living sustainably and are well-motivated to play active parts in ensuring that their lifestyles are sustainable. Motivation to live sustainably at an individual level, however is not enough. A sustainable lifestyle will only occur when motivated individuals are able to “play a constructive role within the context of standards set by the community and their elected local and national governments and administrations.” The development of capacity at local government levels is key for sustainable development, although until a few years ago donor agencies did not give this area enough consideration. In other words, psychological sustainability must be backed up by social sustainability at every level of our multi-layered social structures.

This means, firstly, that certain social issues must be addressed at a political level. For example, as Jones and Nelson (2005: 51) insist, individual motivation must go hand in hand with attempts to ensure that marginalized and vulnerable groups, women and poor people for example, have equitable access to and involvement in decision-making processes. Secondly, it is important that sustainable action by role-players begins at the local level. For example, the residents of a neighbourhood should be able to work together to create local
sustainability, at schools for example, within the general municipal, provincial, or national development frameworks. According to Jones and Nelson, (2005:52):

The concept of neighbourhood development implies a special relationship between residents and their territory. As a concept of developmental focus it has not yet enjoyed much interest in recent project cycles. However, it is at this level that many of the participatory planning and focus groups are organized.

Broader and more narrowly defined local communities also play a vital role in sustainable development. A community should not be simply identified as the group of people who belong to a certain physically defined neighbourhood. Within a particular neighbourhood there can be many kinds of internal communities that bring together people who have common interests, such as sport, religion, education and so on, and use communal facilities, that might not be part of the neighbourhood. According to Jones and Nelson (2005: 51), there has been much recent debate over the role of communities in sustainable development. On the one hand, it is deemed important to gain community “buy in” to sustainable development strategies, since communal investment can make substantial contributions to improving and maintaining local environments. As Jones and Nelson (2005: 51) point out, “several participatory planning methods have been developed to engage people at this level in the action.” Yet, on the other hand, communities cannot act independently since they often need state or governmental assistance to manage communally shared assets. Important role-players in creating sustainable communities, therefore, are the voluntary and NGO agencies that operate in tandem with community driven initiatives.

2.1.3 Defining and Discussing Complexity

Complexity involves the notion that an organism interacts dynamically with its environment, influencing and, in turn, being influenced by its environment. This is a key principle of the emerging science of complexity (Morrison, 2002: 1).
Complexity theory is defined in the business dictionary as the set of concepts, derived from chaos theory, that aim to enable us to explain natural and artificial systems without oversimplifying them. Important in this definition is the idea that complexity theory does not break systems down into their constituent parts in order to explain them, but accepts that understanding systems depends on recognizing that all complex systems are networks of relations between interdependent elements that interact with one another at many levels (http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/complexity-theory.html).

Complexity theorists argue that to understand what is required for worthwhile poverty alleviation projects we first have to understand human activity in the world in terms of complex systems. Briefly, these thinkers argue, firstly, that humans should treat their surrounding environment as inseparable from their own being (humans and their environment belong to a single ecosystem). This is why discussions about poverty alleviation cannot be separated from issues that have to deal with natural resources. Secondly, these thinkers argue that we should treat all humans as belonging together in social ecosystems. Thirdly, since natural life without human interference forms robust and successful ecosystems, they argue that the best way for us to operate in material and social environments is to observe and mimic the principles of natural ecosystems. They argue that the long term sustainability of a natural ecosystem depends on its micro-diversity and we therefore must promote biodiversity in material systems and individual diversity in social systems in order to sustain existing ecological and social systems (Bagchee S, 1987).

In an article that concerns the complexity of poverty alleviation planning, Bagchee (1987: 139) argues that poverty alleviation programmes “suffer primarily from a lack of conceptual clarity and an inadequate understanding of the complex nature of the environment in which they have to be implemented.” The natural world is characterized by diversity and interactions, continuous change, learning and unexpected events. In dealing with the complexities of living systems we face task of “exploring the known, the unknown and the unknowable” (Levin, 2002:3). Bagchee goes on to argue that the success of such programmes will depend on recognizing that it is essential to modify programme designs in a way that enables them to take account of multiple factors and their relationships, from
environmental to administrative, as well as, multiple role-players, stake holders, objectives, goals and social norms.

Clark and Dickson, (2003:56) define complexity theory “in contrast to previous conceptual theories or world views that emphasize predictable and non-changing end-states that are temporarily offset by exogenous disturbances.” In other words, previous models of the way the world works tended to assume that order and stability were the norm and that anomalies or disturbances were temporary errors which could be remedied and resolved once we had the right formulas. However, as Folke et al (2005: 441) point out “it has become abundantly clear that failures to sustainably manage natural resources often occur as a consequence of a lack appreciation and understanding of underlying natural processes.” Similarly, Ludwig, Hilborn et al. (1993:17) argue that: “Simple optimization-oriented scientific solutions ... often fail because they ignore both the complexity of the ecosystem functions that support the target species and the social dimensions that dictate how people organize around top-down institutions” By contrast, complexity theory accepts that multiplicity, relationality, change, surprise, and adaptation are an integral part of natural and social processes and must be acknowledged in our models.

Complexity theory implies that the problems of sustainability are best assessed in ways that are integrative and trans-disciplinary (Kates and Clark 1996). Kates and Clark (1996) add that strategies “need to be communicative in the sense that they foster exchange and highlight differences in the ways that disparate disciplines and participants have learned to deal with the characteristics of complex systems.”

2.2 Defining and Discussing Poverty

Poverty may be chronic (long term) or temporary (short term). Chronic poverty is usually the more difficult to address, and it is often associated with persistent intergenerational poverty. Temporary poverty may result from a one-time decline in living standards (e.g. the loss of job), from which the household gradually emerges (Bhorat et al 2001:54).
Esterhuise (2004:192) maintains that democratizing South Africa and setting viable structures embodying the vision of a non-racial and non-sexist democracy are laudable strategic objectives and should be underpinned by strategies aimed at alleviating the plight of the poor, effectively addressing socio-economic objectives and establishing a thriving economic environment. Development and economic growth are imperative aspects as they will contribute to social and political stability which will ultimately consolidate a stable democracy in South Africa. Gouws and Gibson (2003:21) state that most scholars agree that poverty is one of the important contributors to political conflict and violence in South Africa’s consolidation of democracy will only be successful if poverty is eradicated or at least reduced. Aliber (2002:2) identifies three aspects of poverty, namely income poverty, quality of life and inequality. According to him poverty is seen as a system of relationships that have the cumulative effect of excluding people from the processes of development and accumulation.

2.2.1 Race and Poverty in South Africa

According to May (2000:5), South Africa is an upper middle-income country, the social indicators suggest that living standards are closer to those of lower middle-or even low income countries. The difference between economic status and social development in South Africa can be ascribed largely to a high level of material inequality that has left inordinately large numbers of people outside the economic mainstream. This implies that South Africa is highly inefficient in converting economic resources into equitable social welfare.

2.3 Conceptualizing Poverty According to the Perceptions of the Poor

According to May (2000:5), the perceptions of the poor themselves are a good source from which an appropriate conceptualization of poverty in South Africa can be derived. From the perspective of the South African poor, poverty is seen to include a number of factors.

1. Firstly, poverty is associated with alienation from the community. The poor are isolated from the institutions of kingship and community. If the elderly, for example, live without care from younger family members they are seen as poor, even if they have state pensions that provide an income which is relatively high by local
standards. Similarly, young, single mothers without the support of older kin or the fathers of their children are perceived to be poor (May 2000:5).

2. A second factor in the characterization of poverty is food insecurity, defined as the inability to provide sufficient or good quality food for the family. Households are considered poor where children go hungry because they rely only on social grants that are not sufficient.

3. Poverty is also associated with overcrowded living conditions; for example, in rural Peddie some people live in one small mud structure used for both cooking and sleeping.

4. Having more than three children is seen as a cause of poverty, not only by parents, but by grandparents and other family members who have to assume responsibility for the care of the children.

5. A related indicator of poverty is homes that are in need of maintenance.

6. Use of basic forms of energy is often associated with poverty. The poor lack access to safe and efficient energy resources. In rural communities such as in Peddie, the poor, particularly women, walk long distances to gather fire wood. In addition, woman report that wood collection increases their vulnerability to physical attack and sexual assault (May 2000:5).

7. A large part of the perception of poverty involves an actual lack of adequately paid, secured jobs and a perceived lack of employment opportunities. People depend on seasonal jobs for income for example, pineapples and oranges harvesting.

8. Poverty goes together with fragmentation of the family. Many poor households are characterized by the absence of fathers or children living apart from their parents. Households may be split over a numbers of sites as a survival strategy (May 2000:5).

9. The poor also have low levels of education. Too many poor people remain uneducated because of the low standard of education in rural areas. The long distances to school also discourage many poor people from going to school. Some have not even attained matric certificates as a result. The role of education in reducing poverty is of paramount importance, because it contributes to improving the earnings potential of the poor, both in competition for jobs and earnings in a static labour market, and as a resource of growth and employment in itself.
10. The poor are more likely to be black Africans and live in rural areas. Most of the rural areas around Peddie are mostly populated by Xhosas and there are no industrial areas nearby that offer employment.

11. Female headed households are also associated with poverty. In rural Peddie there are female headed homes that depend on child support grants, with only small amounts of other income received through selling sweets and oranges.

12. Poverty is associated with lack of access to basic services such as water, electricity, and health services.

13. The poor lack of transport makes it difficult to commute and transport goods.

14. Finally, the very poor often lack access to social security.

2.4 Criteria for a Successful Poverty Alleviation Project

In the above literature study it becomes clear that a poverty alleviation project will only be successful if it aims to:

1. address poverty successfully by ensuring individual sustainability, a poverty alleviation programme must:

   - Address the psychological problem of “learned helplessness” in individuals.
   - Promote “self-efficacy” among individuals in the community.
   - Improve the standard of education and access to educational institutions.
   - Empower women to be fully participative and capacitated.

2. To address poverty successfully by ensuring social sustainability, a poverty alleviation programme must address:

   - The problems that associate poverty with race
   - The problems that associate poverty with violence, from both sides. That is, address both the perpetrators, and the victims (who are more vulnerable if they are poor).
   - The problem of alienation of the poor from the community.
   - Issues in family planning to alleviate the burden of having too many children.
• The issue of family fragmentation caused by the splitting of spouses.

3. To address poverty successfully by ensuring economic sustainability, a poverty alleviation programme must:

• Work to eliminate high rate of unemployment in rural areas, both in the sense of job seeking and creation and promoting self-employment practices.
• Improve the access to social security.

4. To address poverty successfully by ensuring environmental sustainability, a poverty alleviation programme must:

• Address the issue of food insecurity for the community, by helping a community create sustainable food production and sourcing.
• Work to alleviate overcrowded living conditions.
• Work to alleviate problems associated with home maintenance.
• Work to ensure sufficient, sustainable energy resources.
• Improve the quality and the access to basic services such as health care facilities, water, electricity and sanitation.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Broad Approach and Methodological Framework

The proposed research falls within the domain of Development Theory and its approach will primarily be theoretical, although an empirical component is added, which is qualitative rather than quantitative.

The methodological framework for research of this kind is called “critical hermeneutics”. Critical hermeneutic research primarily aims to come to an interpretation or understanding of a phenomenon or situation, with a view to offering a critical assessment of its current condition and making suggestions for future practice. The overall hermeneutic task of theoretical research may be divided into the following consecutive research tasks: *auslegung*, critique, and application.

3.2 Research Assumptions

The research assumption is that any poverty alleviation project will be worthwhile to the extent that it meets certain specifiable criteria for a worthwhile poverty alleviation project, and unsuccessful to the extent that it does not. This means that a project can be successful in some respects and unsuccessful in other respects, and this would be because it meets only some of the specifiable criteria and does not meet others.

3.3 Scope and Scale of Research

This study focuses on a particular case-study; namely the Nomzamo Special Care Centre near Peddie Town in Ngqushwa Local Municipality. The Nomzamo Special Care Centre, located next to Nompumelelo Hospital, near Peddie Town, is a community-based and non-profit project. Currently it depends for funding on government departments and NGO’s operating in the Eastern Cape Province as well as businesses, citizens and parents.
3.4 Research Design and Process

The main aim of the study was to begin exploring ways of assessing the impact of poverty alleviation programs on the poor community of Eastern Cape. My research method, or method of data collection, is designed to follow the structure indicated by the three broad theoretical, empirical and analytical or critical tasks involved in critical hermeneutic research.

3.4.1 Auslegung (Uncovering)

Auslegung names the first, theoretical task of the researcher, and it involves the detailed “laying out” of a phenomenon. The primary aim of the study was to gain a thorough understanding of the main causes of poverty in South Africa especially in Ngqushwa Local Municipality, Peddie, Eastern Cape, as the elimination of poverty should be backed by a thoughtful understanding of the nature of the problem, otherwise resources cannot be wisely utilized. Firstly, therefore, using the method of conceptual analysis, which pertains to the definition of phenomena, I began this study by using sustainability and complexity theory, as well as literature on poverty, especially on how poverty is perceived by the poor themselves, to help me propose and justify a list of assessment criteria for what constitutes a worthwhile poverty alleviation project. The primary method was literature review and critical analysis where I tried to answer the question: “what fundamental factors define a worthwhile poverty alleviation project?”

The second objective of the research was to gather together as much information as possible on The Nomzamo Special Care Centre in order to enable researchers and policy makers to assess its success according to the criteria outlined in the first part of this study. To try to explain in detail what the Nomzamo special care centre does to combat poverty, in order to assess whether or not the project is sustainable, I used a qualitative data-gathering method. Qualitative research, which deals with the subjective data produced by minds of the respondents or interviewees, is the most suitable approach because qualitative research is based on flexible and explorative methods that enable the researcher to change his or her strategies if necessary in response to the data progressively so that a deeper understanding of what is being investigated can be achieved (Welman, et al 2005:8). In this case study, the primary method of sourcing data was through interviews and observation. Using the criteria...
developed to assess the sustainability of a poverty alleviation project, I developed a list of questions to use in interviews (See Appendix 1).

To meet the research objectives, research was conducted to examine and document household experiences and the impact of poverty alleviation on the lives of the people in Ngqushwa Local Municipality

**Empirical research process**

The target population of thirteen respondents consisting of officials, community members and stakeholders was determined by a non-random sampling method. This group was selected solely because they have experience of the dynamics surrounding the issues of Nomzamo Special Care Centre. The aim and the purpose of the research was explained as an exploration into the factors that might contribute to the sustainability of a poverty relief project. Consent to participate was obtained from each of the respondents, and therefore questionnaires were sent to them. One on one interviews were also part of data collection method. A total response of nine questionnaires out of the thirteen questionnaires that were sent out was received. One of the contributing factors towards the positive response was that most of the participants are officials working at the Centre. This fact makes it easier to cooperate with them. One of the problems encountered was the fear on the part of some officials that the research was aimed at trying to find something else other than the research objective.

**Names of the respondents on the Nomzamo Special Care Centre:**

- Lizzie Holani (Director of the Centre) was interviewed on (25/08/2011)
- Mr. Thobani Kuta (Community Member) was interviewed on (25/08/2011)
- Mr. Mgcini Mhlakane (Administrator) was interviewed on (25/08/2011)
- Ms. Nosipho Sishuba (Provincial Coordinator for Services to People with Disabilities) was interviewed on (27/08/2011)
- Ms. Siphokazi Memani (Fish River Sun) was interviewed on (20/08/2011)
• Ms. Nomonde Cawa (Municipality) was interviewed on (26/08/2011)
• Mr. L Mbeceni (Agriculture) was interviewed on (17/08/2011)
• Ms. Nomsenge (Agriculture) was interviewed on (17/08/2011)
• Ms. Joyce Duplessis (Spar Supermarket – owner) was interviewed on (26/08/2011)

For the presentation and analysis of findings or results, fourteen themes were identified, and quotations that appeared to best represent each theme were selected to illustrate the theme.

3.4.2 Critique

The third task in this exploratory study was to use the assessment criteria developed to enable me to assess the sustainability of a particular poverty alleviation project. This task of critical analysis, involves assessment of the data gathered. In this assessment, I used the earlier developed assessment criteria to help ascertain whether or not the project was a worthwhile poverty alleviation project. This may help to address the question of why poverty is still an unresolved issue in the community in question.

3.4.3 Application

Although theoretical work is concerned primarily with understanding, it is hoped that the understanding generated by the research will lead to a change of spirit in those introduced by it to a new way of thinking. In other words, the moment of application is highly significant and cannot be neglected. It is necessary at least to draw some conclusions or make some suggestions about how the insight gained by doing the research may be applied. In the concluding section of my study, therefore, I make some suggestions concerning the question of what a responsible policy or strategy would be concerning the project in question. In other words, what kind of development policy would fulfill a mandate for sustainable poverty alleviation?
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

For the presentation and analysis of findings or results, fourteen themes were identified:

1. involvement in the establishment of the project;
2. sustainable energy and maintenance;
3. the access to basic services;
4. the issue of overcrowded homes;
5. the issue of food insecurity;
6. social security;
7. family fragmentation;
8. family planning;
9. alienation of the poor;
10. problems that associate poverty with violence;
11. learned helplessness and self-efficacy;
12. sustainability of the project;
13. education and capacity building;
14. benefits from the project and employment creation

Quotations that appeared to best represent each theme were selected to illustrate the theme.

Theme 1: Involvement in the establishment of the project

The Nomzamo Special Care centre was established in 1994 by Ms Lizzie Holane and the community with the help of the Department Social Development, Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, Nongovernmental Organisations, and local businesses.

Theme 2: Education and capacity building

The first aspect explored in the theme was whether the participants attended any training relevant to the implementation of the project. Most people reportedly attended formal training continuously from other institutions which are recognised and accredited by SETAs.

“Women are being trained to equip them with necessary skills and knowledge to be able to be in a better position to take of the disabled children and thereby to improve the lives of both affected children and their parents”
“Standard of education is improved through training of caregivers on courses specifically needed on how to take care of people with disabilities. Staff and caregivers are also trained on minimum standards for compliance purposes. Standard of education is also improved through encouraging caregivers to attain qualification relevant to care and support services to people with disabilities.”

It is encouraging to note that 80% of the members of the Nomzamo Special Care Centre did receive training in different courses which are contributing to the success of the project. This in particular is an important factor in enabling the project to remain sustainable.

**Theme 3: Benefits from the project and employment creation**

The participants mention income and food security as the main benefit from the project. Through the income obtained from the project, project members are able to provide for the livelihood of their families. The members also reported that there is support from local businesses.

The project promoted farming activities such as poultry farming, and growing vegetables. It also offers skills training for the local people, who are then able to improve their skills in areas such as carpentry and care giving, which, in turn, leads to employment; either employment in the project or alternatively self-employment. This has a positive impact on sustainability.

“This project has created jobs in the area, it has skilled the unemployed, and 40 jobs has been occupied in the Centre. Some people are self-employed others are employed in other institutions because of the skills obtained at the Centre”.

“Since the establishment of this Centre in 1994 there were only three staff members employed, but today the centre has created 40 jobs for unemployed people of Peddie”.

These findings suggest that the income generated by the Nomzamo is achieving its objectives of providing a regular source of income for the participants; thereby, contributing significantly to poverty alleviation.
Theme 4: Sustainability of the project

The majority of the project members interviewed (87%) are of the view that the project has the potential to become sustainable. The sustainability of the project is attributed to the availability of skills training and knowledge, the will to progress, the availability of financial resources, support from the community, support from the stakeholders, and availability of infrastructure. The following views were expressed.

“Nomzamo Special Care centre will continue to exist because we get much support from the local people. We sell chickens, vegetables and wooden chairs to them, some are buying in cash others buy on credit especially those who receive social grants”.

“Our project will not die because we receive support from the Department of Social Development and the Department of Agriculture. They always assist us to make sure that we plant correctly and get the best vegetables”.

It is evident from the findings of this study that the project is able to generate income in order to ensure effective and efficient daily operation and to make profit. The income that is generated from the project is distributed among the members to improve their livelihoods.

This study also supports the view that a poverty alleviation project must demonstrate an integrated, holistic comprehensive and sustainable approach to poverty alleviation. This is reflected in the effectiveness of the programme, its significant impact on poverty alleviation, sustainability and ability to form partnerships.

Theme 5: Learned helplessness and self-efficacy

Nomzamo Special Care Centre aims not to focus on the past. Instead the centre uses a forward-looking developmental approach when implementing programmes, to improve the wellbeing and quality of life for children as well as adults with disabilities admitted in the centre.

“Nomzamo promote self-efficacy in the community through encouraging active and full participation of the community members in all Centre activities”.

“Some people undermine this project and are not interested in working in the project, because (i) they believe that project benefit certain group (ii) they employ certain people (iii) there is need for an accountable and effective management. The Centre has managed to prosper since 1994 to present and we believe that we going the right way”

The project is implicitly continuously addressing the issue of learned helplessness since it provides skills and employment for unemployed people from the community in order for them to be self-sufficient.
Theme 6: Problems that associate poverty with violence

The centre is addressing the problems that associate poverty with violence through the implementation of prevention programmes, e.g. educational talks and awareness campaigns, etc. People are taught how to behave especially in communities and homes where there is always violence and conflict among family members. The project encourages community members to avoid violence because it puts children in danger of abuse. The project takes care of the children for their own safety if necessary.

“By doing awareness campaigns with collaboration with stakeholders and mostly refers the victims to social workers or admit them at the Centre if they are disabled”.

Theme 7: Alienation of the poor

The Centre is addressing the issue of alienation by creating jobs for the poor, implementing prevention programmes like awareness campaigns, and allowing them to be part of the activities in the centre.

“We take part in community meetings in collaboration with the Department of Health and the Department of Social Development to motivate and employ them”.

Theme 8: Family planning

The Department of Health is deeply involved in the Nomzamo Special Care Centre. Health education is offered by their officials, and particularly awareness is raised concerning the dangers of having too many children and other problems associated with child bearing.

“We do awareness and promoting the use of condoms and contraception for the community”.

Theme 9: Family fragmentation

The Nomzamo Special Care Centre works closely with the Department of Social Development. Most cased of family fragmentation are referred to the Social Development Department, which is where vulnerable family members can be helped, often through special grants and food parcels.

“We report the cases to the Department of Social Development for professional help”.

“We play an important role in educating parents about the dangers of splitting, because this does not affect only parents, it also affect their children. We have managed to close this gap between parents. When we started this Centre there were”
no males, there were women only but today we have a number of fathers who admit that disability is not a burden, or to have a disabled child is not a punishment”.

**Theme 10: Social security**

Nomzomo with the Department of Social Development improves access to social security through encouraging and assisting parents and people with disabilities to apply for social grants, e.g., child support grants care dependency grants, as well as disability grants.

“Nomzamo is collaboration with SASSA and Social Development in helping families and beneficiaries in getting social grants”.

“We encourage parents to apply for government grants, and also teach them how to spend those grants”.

**Theme 11: The issue of food insecurity**

There are two projects at the Centre; namely poultry (eggs and meat) farming, and vegetable farming. These projects provide enough food for the Centre and for the local market. The centre also receives bread and milk on a daily basis from Spar supermarket which is situated at Peddie.

“We have 1.5 hectors of land where we use it to plant vegetables for the children. Most of the garden workers are the parents of the disabled children, they work together with the disabled children. They got training from the Department of Agriculture. We also have a poultry project i.e. for meat and eggs. We sell these products to the community”.

“We have challenges like proper irrigation system and tractor to plough the land, and also structures for the poultry project, at present we use rondavels to keep our chickens of which is not healthy, and they are close to the children”.

**Theme 12: The issue of overcrowded homes**

Currently the centre is not overcrowded as it is utilising multiple buildings and if such challenges come up, future extensions of the current facilities will be considered.

“Community Health Services are visiting the Centre to educate beneficiaries about family planning these educators involve both parents and children. There is enough space to accommodate more disabled children, the challenge is that some buildings need to be renovated, and at present finance is still our main challenge”.

Theme 13: The access to basic services

The Centre does not have its own basic services such as sanitation and electricity. Instead the Centre relies on the Nompumelelo Hospital which is next to the premises. Some participants responded saying:

“Since we are next to the hospital we have access to basic services e.g. toilets, water, and health care. The biggest challenge is electricity. Eskom has been approached to connect us, they promised to give us generators. The challenge now is how are we going to pay because this needs money and yet we depend on Social Development subsidy only. We cater for 87 physically and mentally disabled children and staff members to be paid including daily running of the Centre at R 111 000, 00 a month”

Theme 14: Sustainable energy and maintenance

At present the Centre depends on Nompumelelo Hospital for energy and this is a challenge because Nomzamo is an NGO with financial constraints. The hospital has given notice that the centre must have its electricity meter box so that they can pay their own bill. The Centre is out of power; it is using generators for power. Although there are maintenance staff and caretakers, there is still a need for complete renovation of some buildings.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study show that the Nomzamo Special Care Centre is, for the most part, achieving its objective. There is commitment on the part of the project members to work towards the sustainability of the project. This study identified the capacity of the project members to implement the project; adequate infrastructure; availability of resources and support from relevant stakeholders. Poverty alleviation interventions need to address income, assets and human resource poverty; in this case the Centre has the capacity to achieve that.

It is recommended that project members receive guidance in the conceptualisation of their projects that would capitalize on the assets that are available in the community. It is further recommended that training and capacity building be tailored for the Centre with a strong emphasis placed on on-going mentorship.

Although the Nomzamo Special Centre seems to be achieving objectives, among them poverty alleviation, the centre still faces challenges such as insufficient funds, infrastructure, and equipment and lack of adequate maintenance. These challenges negatively affect the progress of the Centre.

It is recommended that the provincial government should evaluate the project on an annually basis in order to identify current problems or challenges. The department of agriculture has a responsibility to provide equipment such as tractors, a proper irrigation system and structures for housing poultry. Proper infrastructure and maintenance plans must be provided in order for the project to be able to operate even more effectively and efficiently.
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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

List of interview questions:

1. In your opinion, do you think that people in the community experience “learned helplessness”?
2. Does Nomzamo try to help people to overcome this feeling of “learned helplessness”?
3. Does Nomzamo capacitate the community in terms of skills and knowledge?
4. Are women participating in this project?
5. Does this project address problems associated with race?
6. Does it address the problems that associate poverty with violence, from both sides?
7. Does it address issues in family planning to alleviate the burden of having too many children?
8. Does Nomzamo address the issue of family fragmentation?
9. Do you think Nomzamo tries to reduce rate of unemployment and job creation in rural areas?
10. Do you think this project provide enough food and resources for the community?
11. Do you think the Nomzamo project tries to eliminate problems associated with overcrowded families?
12. How does this project try to improve the quality and the access to basic services such as health care facilities, and water?
13. What does Nomzamo do to provide access to a transportation infrastructure?
14. Were the members of Nomzamo involved in the establishment of the project?