POVERTY ALLEVIATION
THROUGH
EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION:
THE SEKI WOMEN’S FOUNDATION.

By

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DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE.

I, Yolisa Innocentia Lawrence (209063282), hereby declare that the guided research report for Masters in Development Studies (Coursework) in the Department of Business and Economic Sciences at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another University or for another qualification.

Yolisa Lawrence.
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First and foremost I would like to give the greatest honour and appreciation to uQamata, Sombawo, My Father in Heaven. I am what and where I am today due to your guidance and teachings of patience. I remember a time where all I asked from God was to pass high school, but instilled a motivated spirit in me, to prove to myself that I can be that which I aspire to become, through hard work and perseverance and for that, I will always be grateful.

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ABSTRACT.

As poverty alleviation projects are being established in communities in order to reduce the impact of unemployment, crime, and inequality as well as other factors propagating poverty, numerous projects fail to democratically meet the needs of the poor majority. Development initiatives brought forth by government and non-governmental organisations, which adopt a top-down approach in order to accelerate development, do not always have a positive effect on the community, especially on the poor majority, which development is meant to empower and benefit. This results in the short life span of the project and leads the community into immense poverty.

Thus, the focus of this research paper was to evaluate the extent to which poverty alleviation projects such as the Seki Women’s Foundation, contribute towards the alleviation of poverty in its community, located in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. This evaluation study focused more on aspects of development concerning community participation, empowerment through skills training and project sustainability.

The objectives of the study were to investigate the values, aims and objectives of the Seki Women’s Foundation; how these values, aims and objectives were fulfilled; the challenges faced by the project towards effective community development and the determinants of the long-term sustainability of the project.

The research study adopted a qualitative approach, which allowed the researcher to collect meaningful knowledge from the volunteers and stakeholders by conducting semi-structured interviews and a focus group which were guided by open-ended questions. The data was thematically analysed where important concepts were coded in order to obtain accurate information so that valid results could be reached.

The main findings of the research study suggested that the contribution made by the Seki Women’s Foundation towards poverty alleviation and community development is to empower the volunteers and community through skills training in baking, gardening and sewing. The volunteers share these skills amongst community members, enabling them to be self-sufficient and implement the skills in their own surroundings. The project builds strong partnerships with the stakeholders by being accountable and transparent about the utilisation of funds through report formulation.
Although the project implements some principles of community development, the full participation of volunteers in the development process remains a concern, especially in decision making.

The challenges faced by the project are concerned with burglary of clothing containers, stealing of vegetation and garden tools and the community not buying the products sold by the project. The research study recommends that the volunteers reason with the community and instil trust and honesty to avoid crime. The project should instil authentic participation in all development processes and form a partnership with local shops in convincing them to sell their produce as this will allow some income to generate within the project and community.

**Keywords**: Community Development, Poverty Alleviation, Participation, Empowerment, Sustainability.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.

1.1. INTRODUCTION.
As times have been evolving, so has the theory of development. Coetzee (1986) states development thinking as a form of social change leading to progress, the expansion of people’s choices, acquisition of knowledge and obtaining access to resources to ensure adequate standard of living by improving socio-economic and political dimensions of a society. Development as a concept is multi-dimensional with various meaning and definitions. Development comprises of elements such as sustainability, empowerment, capacity building, the expansion of role women play in development, participation, decision making, transparency, accountability and equity (Coetzee, 1986; Pieterson, 2001; Cypher and Diethz, 1997).

Poverty alleviation, as a process, seeks to soothe the extent of poverty in a community, amongst a group of people or country. It concentrates on the assets and resources that have an effect on the livelihoods of the poor. Poverty alleviation programmes may adopt economic or non-economic objectives for example, by improving the capital income of the poor or the elimination of the poor’s dependency on external sources (Nyathi, 2012).

Poverty alleviation projects have failed to attain their main objectives of creating economic growth and adequate standards of living. The gap between the rich and the poor is constantly widened through the minority of groups that benefit in the projects and do not fully represent the needs of the poor. Is the failure of poverty alleviation in communities associated with the lack of participation between the government, non-governmental organisations and the community at large; is it due to the lack of accountability with regards to empowerment whether through skills training or knowledge or is it the lack of sustainability of projects when external resources are no longer assisting, thinking that they are permitting space for self-sufficiency?

As development theory evolved and became more focused on alternatives towards development strategies, conventional development which was more dependent on the liberal economy failed (Kankwenda, 2004).
Apart from the questions listed above, this research paper evaluates the extent to which poverty alleviation projects namely, the Seki Women's Foundation, contributes towards the alleviation of poverty in their community located in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. This evaluation study focused more on aspects of development concerning participation, empowerment through skills training and the long-term sustainability of the aforementioned project.

1.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.

The theoretical approach that adequately encapsulates the ideas discussed in this research paper is the alternative development approach which became prominent in the 1980’s and 1990’s (De Beers and Swanepoel, 1998). Although this form of thinking is not new in the development world, it emerged from the paradigm shift of the 1980’s when researchers sought for alternative ways of developing Third World countries (Asia and Africa) since the advocacy for development, which was reliant on the distribution of economic growth and the establishment of industries so as for developing countries to be on par with Western or developed countries of the world failed (Kankwenda, 2004).

According to Kankwenda (2004) in the context of Africa’s development, neo-liberal outcomes were a failure. The perceived economic take-offs and growth were noticed in limited areas, projects were no longer attaining their main purpose, debt started to increase and the overall well-being of the people was no longer at the centre of development. Alternatives to development had to be formulated since dependency on external forces and debt led to Africa being dubbed as a sinking ship (Kankwenda, 2004).

According to Pieterse (1998:1,3) alternative development has been more focused on establishing strategies of development which are participatory and people centred as well as redefining the goals of what encapsulates as development. Alternative development can be viewed as a paradigm more concerned with local development and formulating alternative practices on the ground. It can also be viewed as an institutional challenge and constitute as a part of global alternative.
Within the alternative development approach, genuine development knowledge is that which emanates from the local people rather than abstract expert knowledge from external non-governmental organisations which arrive with pre-conceived policies to be implemented by the people whom the development is meant to benefit. It is a paradigm which is geared towards the provision of needs for the masses and the assurance of equitable human life. It advocates the reliance on endogenous (within a local community group) information in order to make effective development decisions and allow the community to be self-reliant as well as being in harmony with the environment (Pieters, 1998).

According to Onimode (1992, as quoted by Abiche, 2004) alternative strategies to development should strive to enhance the quality of life of the poor majority and abandon preoccupation with the material standards of living of the elitist few since they do not represent the sole needs of the poor.

De Beers and Swanepoel (1998) state that the people centered approach is formed from fundamental aspects of development which consider; the participation of the community in development, the desire for a development which is sustainable and the support or facilitation of government agencies, non-governmental organisations and voluntary organisations in the prominent role played by community individuals in the development of the community. The process of development within the context of the people centered approach will be null and void if the formulation, planning, implementation and evaluation of development is headed by external counterparts in this case non-governmental organisation or government departments. These external institutions often develop pre-determined policies of what constitute the needs of the people and what action will be undertaken in order to solve them. The community formulates their needs and develop a strategic plan on how development should take form.

1.3. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY AND PROBLEM QUESTIONS.
According to De Beers and Swanepoel (1998, as quoted by Abiche, 2004) research does not provide much information which relates to organised communities participating, and in turn succeeding, in their efforts to develop communities.
There exists a number of attempts in order to involve communities, but they all ended in failure. This research paper set out to understand why communities fail to participate in their development.

According to Landsberg and Mwaniki (www.globalcrisissolutions.org) one of the main factors which is absent in the process of alleviating poverty in community development is the involvement or participation of the people who go through poverty on a daily basis. The voices of those prone to poverty are shunned, leading to attempts of any form of development not being carried to its fullest extent.

Kgadima (2009) and Makhoul (1999) maintain that although development projects are being established in South Africa to combat the extent of increasing poverty, most of these projects fail to show adequate outcomes which are in accordance with the views of the poor. Numerous projects established for the development of social welfare fail to instil self-sufficiency in communities. They consider the employment of individuals in short-term employment, for example the building of roads and houses, as a way of alleviating poverty. One would ask, what happens after the roads and houses are complete? Poverty will continue unless strategies are in place to ensure sustainable employment and continuous skills development of communities at large.

In order for communities to develop, the poor have to be empowered whether through education or skills training. In South Africa, when one sets out to empower the previously disadvantaged, he or she needs to remove all institutional barriers which may hamper the unlimited choices the poor need to acquire in order to make sound and effective decisions concerning their well-being. By empowering the poor it involves the strengthening of the basic principles concerned with good governance by enhancing participation, improving efficiency in pro-poor development, promoting democratic accountability and transparency (Bonfiglioli, 2003). Poverty alleviation will not have much of an effect if people are not in any manner empowered, if there is still a lack of participation at the grass-root level and the projects still depend on external funding for sole survival.
The essence of poverty alleviation projects is not merely to provide the needs of those who were previously disadvantaged such as; women, the disabled and the youth, but it is to empower the latter through the realisation of their own power in order to stimulate effective development and move away from government dependency (Schenck and Louw, 1995).

Throughout the brief discussion above, one is able to observe three types of issues which this study addresses; one being the importance of participation, especially from the community in order to enhance effective development, the second being the prominent role empowerment plays in order to enable the community in making their own decisions and creating their own development. The third is concerned with the long term sustainability of the project which in turn will guarantee the self-sufficiency of the people. The aforementioned issues will be addressed in accordance with the project which will be evaluated, namely the Seki Women’s Foundation.

1.4. **RESEARCH QUESTIONS.**

This research paper investigates whether poverty alleviation projects, an example being based on one project namely, the Seki Women's Foundation, acquire the capacity of meaningfully contributing to the alleviation of poverty in their communities and to what extent are these contributions being made. The research paper assesses the long term sustainability of the project and how this leads to effective and efficient development in communities.

The primary research question is:

*To what extent does the Seki Women’s Foundation contribute to the alleviation of poverty in the New Brighton community of Port Elizabeth?*

The secondary questions which enable the main research question are:

- **What are the values, aims and objectives of the Seki Women’s Foundation?**
- **How are these values, aims and objectives being fulfilled or attained?**
- **What are the challenges faced by the Seki Women’s project towards effective community development?**
• Who or what are the determinants of the long-term sustainability of the project?

1.5. **SAMPLE AND SETTING.**

The study was conducted in the urban area of New Brighton, Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape between March and October 2013. The researcher was to investigate, in the form of an evaluation, the degree to which the Seki Women’s Foundation, which was the main project assessed in the area, contributes towards the alleviation of poverty in its neighbourhood. The researcher visited the organisation and met with the head of the organisation who accepted the request of being evaluated by the researcher and answer questions which would be relevant to the study, as these would be conducted in the form of interviews and formulating focus groups.

The Foundation is located within the boundaries of the St Patricks Uniting Presbyterian Church. The Foundation comprise of 10 volunteers, including the head organiser. The volunteers divide themselves accordingly within the project’s programmes namely; cooking and baking, sewing and gardening programmes. The community centre is usually occupied by community members who are beneficiaries of the programme, waiting for their bread and milk or occasionally soup. This project operates 3 times a week and all women who are involved are volunteers and none receive any income from the project.

The persons who were involved in the research process were the key role players in the project namely, the two funders Ikhala Trust, Community Chest and the head of the Seki Women’s Foundation. The volunteers of the project were also included such as those who were involved in the programmes as well as the beneficiaries who receive any form of assistance from the project residing in the community. The total number of people interviewed was ten (10); meeting the suitable number for the researcher.

For the focus group, two people were chosen from each programme and one or two were chosen as beneficiaries. Convenience sampling was seen as the best option since people that were available and knew the project well were welcomed in the research process as no strict criteria was used (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011).
1.6. **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.**

The research paradigm which is adopted by the research paper is of an interpretive nature. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011), the interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to gain adequate in-depth understanding of how participants interpret their social realities through consulting with the people within their natural settings.

According to Creswell (2013:44) “Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive or theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. It is the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns and themes.

The final written report includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem and its contribution to the literature or a call for change”.

The research took place in three phases. The first phase was divided into two sections where the researcher conducted interviews with the head of the Seki Women’s Foundation, the stakeholders from Ikhala Trust and Community Chest. The first phase of interviews determined the goals and objectives of the Seki Women’s foundation and how these objectives were being attained. In the second phase, the researcher interviewed the stakeholders regarding what constitutes the long term sustainability of the project since it has been in existence for eight (8) years.

The second phase was designed for the focus group. The focus group was formulated for the researcher to gain insight on how the volunteers and the beneficiaries of the programme have seen life changing transformation whilst being part of the programme and what challenges they face in the programme.

The third phase of the research process was a period where all the data had to be analysed. The researcher used a thematic analysis where the data gathered was categorised according to the main themes of the research which were community participation, empowerment through skill development and long term sustainability.
Coding or categorising data is a form of establishing thematic ideas important to the study (Gibbs, 2007).

1.7. **LIMITATIONS.**

The researcher experienced certain limitations concerning the study. It had to be noted that the knowledge and information the researcher obtained and analysed did not represent the whole of South Africa's poverty alleviation projects, thus the researcher had to be careful of generalisation. Participants involved in the interviews may not have shared sufficient information since some may not want to disrupt the relationship between the stakeholders and the volunteers, being afraid if they said something wrong about the project, they might be reprimanded. Participants may feel the urge to decline being part of the research process, thus the researcher must allow it in order to honour the ethics of the study.

Despite the challenges faced, this research with its findings will provide the much needed insight to prospective researchers, non-governmental organisations and government at large with regards to poverty alleviation projects and its success particularly in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth.

1.8. **DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS.**

Semi-structured interviews guided by open ended questions were used during the interviewing process involving the head of the Foundation, one of the Ikhala Trust and Community Chest stakeholders, as well as in the focus group. This type of structure allowed the interviewee to expand on matters which were of interest to them, but not moving away from the set of questions which governed the interview. Other insights were obtained from the interview and the conversations were natural in nature (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011).

Focus groups allow data to be more descriptive and process oriented (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). The data gained from the focus group concerned the volunteers and beneficiaries and how they have experienced transformation since being part of the project and the challenges they had experienced. The questions formulated were exploratory allowing different views simultaneously.
The data was thematically analysed where concepts were coded in order to obtain accurate information so that valid conclusions could be reached.

1.9. **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.**
The participants in the research process were approached and through their consent took part in the research. A consent letter was formulated with the help of the researcher’s supervisor. Once the consent of the participants was obtained, the researcher removed identifying information from the interview material. The participant would, prior to the interview process taking place, notify the researcher when they did not feel comfortable in being interviewed.

The confidentiality of the participants was treated with utmost dignity. The research study respected the participants and their views, regarding their knowledge as meaningful contributions in the process of understanding their social reality.
1.10. **OUTLINE OF THE STUDY.**

The research paper constitutes of six chapters. Chapter one is the umbrella of the five chapters where the introduction, problem statement, research questions, relevance of the study, a brief theoretical background and the research design and methodology, limitations as well as ethical considerations of the study are stated.

In Chapter two the conceptual framework of the study is positioned in an in-depth manner where concepts and theories that apply in the study are explored.

Chapter three of the study forms as the research methodology. Here the research design, sample and setting as well as the approaches adopted will be stated. This is where the interviews and analyses will be included.

Chapter four constitutes as a research findings chapter, where the findings and analyses which formed the study will be dwelt upon.

Chapter five is where the findings are discussed.

Chapter six is where the research paper is concluded.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.1. INTRODUCTION.
Development is about the people. Throughout history theorists have adopted different interpretations of development. These definitions only focused on single aspects of development whether political, social or economic. Only later in the development discourse did they strive to provide a holistically integrated definition of development which concerned the people, their circumstances, needs and efforts (Davids, 2009: 22).

This research paper sets out in evaluating the extent to which poverty alleviation projects contribute towards the alleviation of poverty in their own communities. An example of a project is the Seki Women’s Foundation situated in the New Brighton community in Port Elizabeth.

The researcher’s reason for interest on the particular topic emerged from the dissatisfaction in the practices of various poverty alleviation projects not being able to democratically meet the basic needs of the poor majority. The development promised by these projects is at a bare minimum and it does not ease the impact of poverty on the young and old. The essence of development is disregarded such as community participation, empowerment through skills training and the factors which determine the sustainability of any programme designed for the purpose of economic and social welfare.

This research chapter will be divided into four component parts. The first part commences by defining the concepts of development. Within the context of development, the chapter will briefly examine the theories that played a prominent role in how development was conceived through time namely, the modernisation and dependency theory. The main theory which forms as a discourse of this research study namely, the alternative development theory or paradigm, will effectively be examined. As a third component, community development and how it strives to alleviate poverty in the community will be briefly discussed. An example of New Brighton will be included. And finally, the three concepts which form the basis of this research study will be examined such as participation, empowerment and sustainable development.
2.2. DEVELOPMENT.

According to Weyman and Fussell (1996) as quoted by Fitamo (2003: 04) development is a process where people tend to make life easier for each other by effectively collaborating in the formulation of a vision for their intended future. They also mobilise collective action where they increase their abilities and desire with the purpose of satisfying their perceived needs (Gharajedaghi and Ackoff, 1986, as quoted by Fitamo, 2003).

Coetzee (2001:120) as quoted by Abiche (2004) states development thinking “as a form of social change leading to progress, the expansion of people’s choices, acquisition of knowledge and obtaining access to resources to ensure adequate standard of living by improving socio-economic and political dimensions of a society.” Development as a concept is multidimensional with various meanings and definitions. Development comprises of elements such as sustainability, empowerment, capacity building, the expansion of roles women play in development, participation, decision making, transparency, accountability and equity (Coetzee, 2001; Pieterson, 2001; Cypher and Diethz, 1997 as quoted by Abiche, 2004: 15).

According to Burkey (1993: 48) as quoted by Schenck and Louw (1995: 84) development is identified as a social transformation involving change in the awareness, motivation and behaviour of individuals, bestowing relations between individuals as well as groups within the society. In order for transformation to be a success, the motivation for change has to derive from within individuals and groups, not externally.

According to Kankwenda (2004: 04) development is built from within, from planning, implementation right through to the monitoring and evaluation process. This process is controlled by the beneficiaries of the respective development.

The differences derived through the process of defining development have contributed towards the unmanageable experience in finding suitable resolutions to the problems faced by the mass poor in developing countries. Being able to form a
consensus within the development discourse has, in some instances, been null and void (Monaheng, 2000).

Within the decades of development thinking, there have been numerous bodies of literature which record the archaeology of development from the establishment of the Bretton Woods Institution in 1944 leading through to the growth and modernisation, as well as the dependency and world systems theories. Thereafter neo-liberalism and alternative development approaches emerged (Kothari and Minogue, 2002). This chapter will briefly discuss two development theories, one being the modernisation theory and the other being the dependency theory.

2.2.1. **Modernisation theory.**

The modernisation theory emerged during the 1950’s and the early 1960’s (Evans and Stephens, 1998 as quoted by Fitamo 2003). Modern thinking strived to explain development by dividing societies where the one was seen as traditional and the other being modern. The traditional society whose ideas where seen as primitive, was expected to change its worldviews, norms and values in order to adapt to the modern westernised values which were considered as civil and would guarantee an effective path towards development. This path to development was characterised by a model which determined development through a set of stages known as the Rostow model where society moved through five stages namely: traditional society; precondition to take off; take off; arriving to maturity and age of high mass consumption (Davids, 2009).

Primitive traditional society could share the same development as modern society through contact by trade, markets and language (Webster, 1984 as quoted by Fitamo, 2003). One of the characteristics of modernisation was its belief on co-operation and joint action between states, endogenic societies and utilising evolutionary and non-evolutionary means towards development (Davids, 2009).

Davids (2009: 11-13) states some of the critiques of modernisation theory. The use of terms such as the traditional and modern by the former theory led to their vagueness for thinking societies could be defined according to those terms.
The theory projected the arrogance of the west in assuming that western civilisation is the only way to development, forcing its values on developing countries and disregarding any form of conflict with the developing countries. The Rostow theory assumed that it would be able to control development through predetermined strategies when implemented by the developing countries. Western materialisation was erroneously viewed as the ultimate goal to development (Davids, 2009).

2.2.2. **Dependency theory.**
The dependency theory emerged as a counter argument of what the modernisation theory stood for. It originated in Latin America in the early 1960’s as a notion to address the underdevelopment of less developed countries (Davids, 2009). The dependency theory’s claim to fame was the notion of underdevelopment which Frank disagreed that it was not a natural situation, but rather a consequence of the developed (core) countries exploiting the resources of the developing (periphery) countries for its own individualistic progress (Davids, 2009). Within the dependency theory, underdevelopment was a sheer result of capitalism of the West and the role played by colonisation (Davids, 2009 and Fitamo, 2003).

According to Evans and Stephens (1988 as quoted by Fitamo 2003:07) within the process of underdevelopment, the government and its agents played a role in its effectiveness. The theory called out to developing countries to de-link themselves from capitalists and their strategies and devise their own path which would contribute to their self-reliance (Davids, 2009).

According to Davids (2009:16) the dependency theory was more focused on how external factors contributed to the underdevelopment of developing countries and never allowing the chance of looking internally and analyse factors within that could contribute to the havoc. Its promotion of socialism in less-developed capitalist’s countries was criticised by those who were conservatives and supporters of capitalism in the less developed countries. And the de-linking strategy was thought to be more self-destructive than self-reliant since small countries with limited resources or lack of technological innovation would fail if they would de-link themselves from their suppliers being the West.
According to Sylvester (1999) the modernisation and dependency theory shared the same notion with regards to development that it was a process which was arrived at during the peak of national industrialisation, technological innovation and the adoption of scientific rationality as well as the distribution of resources through state and market processes. The marginalised such as women, the elderly and the middle class could benefit from the fruits of development through a process called the “trickle-down effect” or redistribution.

The competitive discourse between the theories never led to any progression in Africa, Asia and South America, the poverty gap was becoming wider and the period of their existence was known as a development tragedy since both theories could not improve the living conditions of people let alone creating any sustainable development. They both defined a development which was prescriptive in nature and a development that was oversimplified including macro-solution to the demise of underdevelopment in less developed countries. The theories never truly represented the societies it intended to represent (Africa and Asia) since it failed to notice the social realities of the countries, but focused on gross national products, economic growth and markets for development (Davids, 2009: 16).

2.3. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT.
According to Friedmann (1992: 31) “an alternative development involves a process of social and political empowerment whose long-term objective is to rebalance the structure of power in society by making state action accountable, strengthening the powers of civil society in the management of its own affairs and making corporate businesses more socially responsible. It insists in the primacy of politics for the protection of people’s interests especially those in disempowered sectors, women and future generations.”

According to Pieterse (1998: 346) alternative development emerged in the 1970’s and 1980’s as a counter-approach towards the conventional mainstream theories. The approach was geared towards the satisfaction of needs, endogenous and self-reliance as well as being in harmony with the environment. It concerned itself with development from below, in this sense, community development and non-
governmental organisations. Alternative development was participatory and people centred in nature (Pieterse, 1998).

Its values towards development included equity, participation, environmental sustainability and improving the physical well being of the people (Pieterse. 1998: 352).

The focus of alternative development approaches are not on production and profits which the conventional theories of development focused on, but it centres its interests on the people and their surrounding environment. Its long-term aim is to transform from locality to a more global view through political action. If it is not regarded within international levels, this would project restrictive powers that would disable alternative development from being the true genuine development it attains to become (Friedmann, 1992).

According to Dittmar (2008: 04) the purpose of alternative development is to reconsider the role played by the state, markets, civil society and multilateral organisations within the process of development. This approach redefines the objectives and values of development, builds new practices and arrives with a new focus on alternative agents of development than nation states alone for example, non-governmental organisations and the local people.

According to Tulpule (1996: 2993) poverty eradication ought to be the main goal of development. This eradication can only be attained when the goods and services of the poor are provided in equal quantities. These good and services should satisfy the basic needs of the masses known as food, clothing, shelter, health and education facilities. Thus the goal of alternative development is to satisfy the basic needs of society, which evokes previous notions of development which placed an emphasis on poverty before they were pushed aside by theories of modernisation and dependency. The new alternatives introduced a development which was endogenic in nature promoting community participation for self-reliance. It was presented as alternatives from market forces which were urged in neo-liberalism as well as states which failed to deliver development to the poor people (Sylvester, 1999).
According to Simon (1997:185) the development of people needs to be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and has to be empowering to such an extent where people manage and control the process through which they gain access to the means of accumulating social power.

Alternative development is an approach which is focused on the people’s capacity to effect social change, concerned with local development, establishing alternative practices on the ground and its long term goal of being recognised as a global alternative (Pieterse, 1998).

According to Pieterse (1998:344, 348) the alternative development approach has lost its distinctive nature from mainstream development, since most of its elements such as basic needs, participation, sustainability have now been considered by conventional theories of development (mainstream). This leads to a vague separation between alternative and mainstream development.

According to Pieterse (1998:349) since alternative development does not acquire sufficient theoretical cohesion, it would be difficult reaching a point where one would say alternative development is a paradigm. Thus, if attractive elements are put together, it would not necessarily mean it will add up to a paradigm (Pieterse, 1998).

According to Vattimo (1988) as quoted by Pieterse (1998: 349) like modernity, alternative development replicates “the value of the new” and brings hope that the future (alternatives) will redeem the present (mainstream).

According to Pieterse (1998) alternative development fails to produce a theoretical position. Alternative macro approaches, a perspective on the relation between micro-macro approaches and its loosely interconnected proposals and methodologies make it difficult to reach a consensus of whether it's a paradigm or not since it includes numerous elements some of which it fails to provide.
According to Friedmann (1992) with regards to policy implementation, alternative development requires a strong implementation of its policy by the state. This implementation must not be bureaucratic leading a top-down approach, but must be democratic, accountable and responsive by including all role players in the development process.

2.4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.
According to Pieterse (1998) most of the time alternative development revisits the concepts of community development which arose in the 1950’s and 1960’s.

Participation in community development was placed at the centre, due to the realisation that projects that were not implemented based on the element of participation failed. These projects were structured in a top-down approach and were designed by external forces from the community. These forces came with predetermined strategies and outcomes that were foreign to the community (Fitamo, 2003: 13).

According to Chambers (1982 as quoted by Fitamo, 2003) the indigenous language as well as the skills of the community should be placed at the centre, since the development is focused more on their needs and circumstances as well as their progress. Development workers should facilitate the process of learning, growth and the development of the people, enabling them in controlling the process on their own.
They should be the subject of development from the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process (Schenck and Louw, 1995).

According to Monaheng (2002) community development strives to enhance human development and is aimed at empowering communities by strengthening their capacity for self-sustaining development.

One of the potent characteristics of community development is that it adheres to an integrated approach when solving problems of poverty and development. This integration comes with two implications, one stating that the political, social and
cultural aspects of development should be treated in the same token as the economic aspects since they form a development which is multifaceted leading to their interrelatedness. The second part advocates the importance of the state, non-governmental organisations and the local communities working together for the maximisation of their development efforts as a whole. (Monaheng, 2000).

According to Taylor (1998, as quoted by Maistry, 2008) communities commit themselves in the process of development prior to the arrival of development practitioners and government intervention.

Thus community development practitioners should bear in mind that their role is not to bring or deliver development, but to intervene in a development process that already exists. This enables the people to make the most of their own social, cultural, economic and environmental resources rather than depending on external agents.

According to Holligan (2009) since New Brighton is acknowledged as one of the old and largest townships in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, the alleviation of poverty seems to be the main priority with the unemployment rate reaching 80 percent and the lack of fundamental service delivery such as quality basic sanitation, houses and food security. Apart from the development programmes which have been formed with the purpose of economic growth and redistribution, the Seki Women’s Foundation situated in the New Brighton community provides a different agenda towards development, one that is concerned with community participation in its development, the empowerment of volunteers and individuals through capacity building as well as the relationship the foundation has built with its funders leading to the projects’ long term sustainability. Its contributions towards poverty alleviation in the community have been locally recognised and acknowledged due to the transformation it has bought amongst the community (Louw and Schenck, 1995).

Numerous factors play a role in the failure of community development. The withdrawal of funds or aid by development agents in the community will lead to the demise of the projects if the people are not sufficiently empowered at being self-reliant even when the funds are withdrawn; when the fruits of development only cater for the rich, marginalising the masses that live in deprivation; when development
projects are planned at national level and solely implemented at the local level, the level of interest of the people is limited since they were not made aware of the basic concept of the project and decided whether it will meet their needs and the failure of government at not allocating properly trained development workers into the field leading to a lack of understanding of the role played by the development worker on how to facilitate development through working with the people (Monaheng, 2000: 130).

According to Monaheng (2000: 135) community participation, empowerment and sustainability are the prominent elements in community development. What is in theory does not always match what is in practice. This is the same as community development. Despite the potential it upholds in alleviating poverty in theory, there are limited accounts were it has shown immense success in practice. This becomes a shortfall which needs to be addressed.

2.5. **DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS.**

2.5.1. **Participation.**
As a development goal, participation refers to both the means and an end to community development by being able to share and work together effectively to reach the desired outcome. All community members should participate in the decision making, implementation and the evaluation process of the project (Schenck and Louw, 1995).

According to Swanepoel (1997:4-6) participation is accompanied by two views, that of liberals and radicals. The liberal view maintains that through participation, the local knowledge of the people could be used as a basis towards development. Development experts cannot arrive with ethnocentric attitudes towards the knowledge of the people. The people obtain a better view of how the social, economic, political as well as their cultural dynamics operate, and need to coordinate together to ensure effective development. If people do not participate in their own development, very few of the anticipated results will be achieved.
The radical view observes participation as a form of equity and a democratic right of the people. It is one thing to be present in community meetings and another to fully participate in all activities. The development worker needs to provide all the necessary information to the community in order to empower them with awareness and making decisions for themselves which needs to be placed as priority. The facilitator must always guide the poor from the elites and change agents who can easily undermine the views of the poor (Swanepoel, 1997).

According to Midgley, 1986 (as quoted by Abiche, 2004) there are two types of participation when concerned with the involvement of the community in decision making. The first one is known as authentic participation, which involves community decision making in the activities of setting goals, policy formulation, planning and implementation. The second one is pseudo participation and it limits the involvement of the community in decision making activities, or demands that the beneficiaries must only be involved in the approval of decisions that have been decided upon by external bodies.

The participation of the beneficiaries in the implementation stage would least likely be interpreted as community participation unless there is a certain degree of sharing of decision making with the community (Midgley, 1986 as quoted by Abiche, 2004).

All the people participating in development must be able to share equally in fruits of development (Davids, 2009).

According to Davids (2009: 19) some of the potential benefits of participation are that it can lead to people obtaining a sense of ownership which can result in sustainable development as well as enhance the confidence of the individual and how they relate to the activities and developing a sense of belonging. Marginalised groups are granted the opportunity to take part in their development ensuring maximum equity. It empowers people to take responsibility over their own development building capacity for self-sufficiency. It is able to create a basis where everyone is aware of affordability issues and take necessary steps towards cost recovery.
The downfall of participation is that it is time consuming leading to delays in projects start-ups and development not being achieved according the specified time. It increases the demand on project personnel and managers for the operation of the project. Conflicts may arise running the risk of the project being co-opted by certain interest groups (Davids, 2009).

2.5.2. Empowerment.
According to Monaheng (2000:133) the successful realisation of the objectives of community development lies where the poor are empowered in voicing out their opinion with regards to their needs and access to necessary resources. When the poor are empowered during the distribution of resources and opportunities, this leads them to gain insight or information which they could learn from, and which they could use for the betterment of their lives.

Empowerment must encompass a sense of capacity building where the community obtains knowledge and skills they need to produce goods and services to satisfy their immediate or long term needs. The poor must be encouraged to participate in programmes of education and skills training. Necessary institutions must be established with effective and efficient administration enabling capacity building. The communication and cooperation within and between the community and development agents must be strengthened (Monaheng, 2000).

Participation and empowerment cannot be separated since the two are interrelated. No empowerment can be achieved without participation. Through community participation as collective action, the people have the power to influence the direction in which development must take (Monaheng, 2000: 135).

According to Davids (2009: 21) empowerment has to come from within the populace and not forced by external experts. The power is not trickled down or distributed to the people, but people already have the necessary power to influence their path to development. They must be aware of the necessary resources they already have within the community and be encouraged and facilitated on how these can be best utilised (Schenck and Louw, 1995).
2.5.3. **Sustainability.**

According to Davids (2009: 22) the interaction of the community with their environment is crucial before, during and after development. By defining sustainable development according to the World Commission on Environment and Development report, it is the kind of development which meets the needs of the present people without jeopardising the ability of the future generation in meeting its own needs.

According Louw and Schenck (1995) sustainability reflects the efforts and durability of projects long after external development agencies have physically withdrawn themselves and their aid from the project. Communities can gain the confidence of owning projects and they feel that they have initially started and will continue for their betterment and the whole community.

According to Eade and Williams (1995) as quoted by Fitamo (2003) sustainable development relates to the capacity of an organisation or a set of activities that become self-sufficient.

Sustainable development is the maintenance and durability of economic and social projects in different communities. The degree of sustainability of a project in meeting the needs of the poor will be determined by the level of community participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the development process. The mutual relations between the facilitator and the community at large will contribute to the sustainability of the project (Abiche, 2004).
CHAPTER SUMMARY.

With development thinking, there is no definite meaning that would best encapsulate what development initially stands for. What one should comprehend is that development is focused on people whether it is their needs, environment or circumstance; development strives in enhancing what was once disempowered. The development of a community may take some time, but the impact will fortunately result in all benefiting from the fruit of development. All the elements of development are unique, but remain interrelated such as participation, empowerment and sustainability. Communities must be made aware of these values in order to influence effective development.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

3.1. INTRODUCTION.
The purpose of this research study was to investigate the extent to which the Seki Women’s Foundation, a poverty alleviation project, contributes towards the alleviation of poverty in its community that of New Brighton in Port Elizabeth. The objectives of the study were for the researcher to seek an in-depth detailed understanding concerning the aims, objective and values of the Seki Women’s Foundation as well as how they were achieved. The challenges which impeded the Seki Women’s Foundation from effective community development were sought after in the research study.

The research tried to seek out for the main determinants which contributed vastly in the long-term sustainability of the Seki Women’s Foundation. Another objective of the research was to determine, from the project’s volunteers and participants, the transformation and challenges they experienced since being part of the project.

In this chapter, the focal point is the appropriate research methodologies which the research study adopts in order to carry out a valid and reliable paper. As chapter three of the research paper this entails the research paradigm and methodology, research design, population and sampling method, the research instrument, data collection procedure, data analysis and interpretation, limitations of the study as well as ethical considerations of the research study.
3.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM.
According to Hennink and Hutler (2011:11) paradigms are a perspective which influences how people create their own reality. Paradigms are models applied for the purpose of observation as well as understanding, shaping the manner in which events and facts are seen and how they are understood (Babbie, 2007: 32 as cited by Hennink and Hutler, 2011).

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011), the interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to gain adequate in-depth understanding of how participants interpret their social realities through consulting with the people within their natural settings.

A paradigm consists of the researcher’s ontology (a belief system concerning what can be known, and how, regarding social reality), epistemology (a belief system about who can act as the knowledgeable body) and methodology (how knowledge can be collected about the social reality) perspectives. These shape how the researcher views and interprets certain events and facts, influencing the methods they apply in order to comprehensively understand the events that impact on their social reality (Hennink and Hutler, 2011 and Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011).

The paradigm this research study applied was interpretive in nature. According to King and Horrocks (2010: 11) the interpretive paradigm allows the participants to describe, in detail, certain aspects of their social reality, whether it be their circumstances, background, relationships or processes, these are conducted within their natural settings permitting the researcher to gain a thorough and in-depth understanding of the experiences that affect the participants as well as how, in turn, these experiences contribute in the manner they identify and define a phenomenon or reality.

The experiences and interpretations of the researcher are respected and valued, but are limited in relevance since the study is highlighting and generating subjective meaning on the experiences of those being researched. Both the researcher and the participant construct meaning through in-depth interaction, exploring ideas and facts which neither one could have developed individually (Creswell, 2013).
The researcher desires to understand and acknowledge the complexity of numerous interpretations which people apply to understand their social realities, thus relying more heavily on the perceptions of the participants (Creswell, 2013).

According to Creswell (2013: 25) the questions which are explored during interaction are broad and open-ended, thus providing an allowance for the interviewee to extend to other relevant issues that might be of help to the researcher at fully answering the research question or problem. With these new ideas being explored, the researcher still guides the interview in the intended direction.

The study conducted by the researcher interacted with the head and the stakeholders of the Seki Women’s Foundation with the goal of understanding the values and objectives of the project and how these were realised in term of strategies or programmes which were being implemented; the contributions that the stakeholders brought forth to the project, enabling its long-term sustainability and the empowerment of all participants and volunteers. The study held a group discussion in a form of a focus group, where the participants and volunteers would share their experiences whilst being part of the project. These were based on matters concerning community participation, empowerment through skills training and sustainability.

3.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

According to Hennink and Hutler (2011: 12) a research methodology pertains to how one acquires knowledge about the world with the goal of trying to make sense of every aspect. It is the collection and management of research data that will contribute greatly in answering the research question (Grbich, 2013).

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) as an active part of the research process, research methodology is an account of the social world and its influencing aspects. These accounts transcend further from what has been empirically investigated. Methodologies derive from our assumptions about the nature of existence, the manner in which we collect and manage data and the person or documents to be consulted to gain the required knowledge. Thus the research problems which the
researcher develops are linked methodologically with the social world as well as the methods chosen concerned with collecting data in order to answer the problem. This research study implemented the qualitative research approach since it was the most adequate approach that would attend to all the research questions which were posed in the research. The qualitative approach assisted the researcher in acquiring meaningful information with regards to the contributions formed by the Seki Women’s Foundation in alleviating poverty in the New Brighton community through information gathering from the Head, stakeholders and volunteers in the project. The data was gathered in its natural setting using explorative data collection methods such as interviewing and focus group discussions. The interviewing method was applied on the head of the project and stakeholders. The former explored questions pertaining to the values and objectives of the project and their degree of achievement and the latter explored the role it played on the sustainability of the project since its establishment in 2005. A focus group discussion was conducted including the volunteers of the project where they share their transformation experiences and challenges whilst in the project.

According to Creswell (2013:44) “Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive or theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. It is the collection of data, through the use of multiple methods, in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns and themes. The final written report includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem and its contribution to the literature or a call for change”.

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) and Grbich (2013) the qualitative research approach has certain characteristics that influence its design, data collection methods and traditions of inquiry with regards to analytic interpretation. Qualitative research upholds the subjectivity of data since it reflects the researcher’s and the participant’s worldview, working together at constructing meaning and building knowledge at the same time. The validity, reliability and generalisation of the research study have to truly reflect what has been interpreted by the participants,
apply an appropriate research design and involve the people since they hold much power. The research study has to be holistic in nature. This implies that all policies, documents and people need to be consulted so that the research is explored in-depth. The study is bound by time and context so as to avoid generalisation in the research.

3.4. RESEARCH DESIGN.
According to Mouton (2001: 55) a research design acts as a plan which proposes how a research should be conducted. It is an important instrument for research planning and ensuring the quality of the research results. A research design should also be a reflexive process which operates in each and every stage of a research project (Flick, 2007).

According to Creswell (2009:03) a research design is a plan or proposal on conducting research, constituting the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry and specific methods.

The research took place in three phases. The first phase was divided in to two sections where the researcher conducted interviews with the head of the Seki Women’s Foundation and the second phase with stakeholders from the Ikhala Trust and Community Chest. The first interview which was conducted with the Head of the Seki Women’s Foundation was to determine the goals and objectives of the project, how these objectives were being attained, challenges experienced in effective community development by the project and people or strategies which influence the long term sustainability of the project since its existence in 2004. The second sections of interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the Ikhala Trust and Community Chest. Since these two stakeholders were the main contributing factors to the sustainability of the Seki Women’s Foundation, the interviews strived to understand in-depth, the kinds of contributions made by the stakeholders and whether they contributed to the empowerment of all participants in the project.
The second phase was designed for the focus group. The focus group was formulated in order for the researcher to gain insight on how the volunteers and beneficiaries of the programme had experienced life changing transformations as well as challenges whilst being part of the programme.

The third phase of the research process was a period where all the data had to be analysed. The researcher used a thematic analysis, where the data gathered was categorised according to the main themes of the research which where community participation, empowerment through skill development and long term sustainability. The categorisation of data assisted in establishing thematic ideas which were of importance to the study (Gibbs, 2007).

The structure of the interview and focus group discussion questions were broad, semi-structured but open ended. Semi-structured interviews are more reliant on a specific set of question which they base their conversations on no matter how informal the interview might be. This structure of interviews allows the interviewee to state things that might of interest to him or her, it is the onus of the interviewer to treat this knowledge as meaningful as possible and contributing to the understanding of social reality (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011:102).

3.5. POPULATION AND SAMPLING METHOD.

3.5.1. Population.
According to Hennink and Hutler (2011: 16) a population study within a qualitative research tends to compose of a small number of participants or interviewees which are purposively selected.

The research study focused on one development project namely; the Seki Women’s Foundation situated at the Avenue A section in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. New Brighton known as the oldest township in Port Elizabeth, experiences similar problems as those of rural areas including illiteracy in the young and the old; little to no information access that would facilitate the community in making informed decisions regarding, for example, entrepreneurship, high unemployment rate as many depend only on social government grants, a high fertility rate in teenagers as well as the lack of food security.
Most of these factors lead to people being more dependent on drug and alcohol abuse resulting in increased crime rates (Holligan, 2009).

Since New Brighton is acknowledged as one of the old and largest townships in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, the alleviation of poverty seems to be the main priority with the unemployment rate reaching eighty percent (80%) and the lack of provision for basic services such as quality standard sanitation, houses and food security.

New Brighton is a township constituting of more than forty thousand (40 000) people living in various self built houses such as wooden and corrugated iron shacks as well as government built houses which were introduced during the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development policy framework after 1994 (Holligan, 2009). Apart from the development programmes which have been formed with the purpose of economic growth and distribution, the Seki Women’s Foundation provides a different agenda towards development that which is concerned with community participation in its development, the empowerment of volunteers and individuals through capacity building and the relationship the foundation has built with its funders leading to long term sustainability. Its contributions towards poverty alleviation in the community have been locally recognised and acknowledged due to the transformation it has bought amongst the community.

The Seki Women’s Foundation operates programmes such as cooking and baking activities, sewing as well as gardening projects with the purpose of empowering individual participants in influencing their own social changes.

3.5.2. Sampling method
According to Flick (2007: 27) sampling in qualitative research is comprehended as a manner in which the researcher prepares a collection of cases, materials and events which are selected with the intention of constructing an assemblage of empirical examples in order to study the phenomenon of interest instructively. The researcher selects the people and the sites with the knowledge that they are able to purposefully contribute to the understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2013).
In a qualitative research, the inquirer is more interested in people who are concerned and experienced about the phenomenon being researched. These people must acquire the necessary knowledge, experience and position to accurately contribute in the study, assisting the sampling process to be as representative (different meanings and attitudes) as possible (Flick, 2007: 29).

Sampling in qualitative research is applied in order to manage diversity, thus the variety or variations the people may hold on the phenomenon of interest can be captured in the empirical material effectively (Flick, 2007: 27).

In the present research study, the researcher selected the people, sites and events with the clear conscience that they would contribute meaningfully in the understanding of the research study and the phenomena such as participation, empowerment and sustainability in the Seki Women’s Foundation within the New Brighton community.

The first section of interviews were purposive in sampling, where the researcher consulted with the main agencies namely, the Head of the project and the stakeholders from Ikhala Trust and Community Chest, who acquired extensive knowledge and experience about the project and assist in answering the questions at hand. The second section of interview applied a convenient sample, where the researcher held group discussion with the available participants, who obtained extensive knowledge and experience within the project and the community. The delegates who were part of the group discussions were from the different programmes operating in the project as well as beneficiaries.

The Foundation comprises of 10 women, including the head organiser. The women divide themselves accordingly within the project programmes namely; cooking and baking, sewing and gardening. This project operates three (3) times a week and all women who are involved are volunteers and none receive any income from the project.
The individuals who were involved in the research process were the key role players in the project namely, the two funders Ikhala Trust and Community Chest as well as the head of the Seki Women’s Foundation. The volunteers of the project were also included for example, those who were involved in the project’s programmes as well as the beneficiaries who received any form of assistance from the project residing in the community.

The total number of people interviewed was ten (10). The Head of the project and a stakeholder representative from Ikhala Trust and Community Chest were interviewed. For the focus group, a volunteer was chosen from each programme and one chosen as a representative of the beneficiaries. Convenience sampling was seen as the best option since people that were available and knew the project well were welcomed in the research process as no strict criteria was used (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011).

3.6. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT.
Since the research study was conducted in a qualitative manner and naturalistic (interpretive) nature, the researcher was required to obtain knowledge from respondents which would contribute immensely in answering one or all the main themes of the research study (participation, empowerment and sustainability). It was appropriate to use two tools in gathering information. These tools, namely, qualitative interviewing and focus group discussion (interview), enabled the researcher to acquire meaningful information with regards to the contributions that the Seki Women’s Foundation brought forth in order to alleviate poverty in their community.

According to Schwandt (2001: 135) qualitative interviewing is considered as a set of techniques used to gather and analyse data emanating from structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews within groups, respondents, participants as well as informants. It involves the exchange of views between the researcher and the researched regarding a theme of common interest, constructing meaning and knowledge at the same time (Kvale, 2007).
According to Kvale (2007: 11) qualitative interviewing seeks knowledge as expressed in normal language or setting. The interviewer’s aim is to interpret the complex meanings, attitudes and behaviour of the interviewed in order to understand how they construct their reality.

Semi-structured interviews guided by open ended questions were used during the interviewing process involving the head of the Foundation, one stakeholder from Ikhala Trust and Community Chest and the focus group discussion. This type of structure allowed the interviewee to expand on matters which were of interest to them, sharing ideas, but not moving away from the set of questions which governed the interview. Other insights which were obtained from the interview and the conversation were natural in nature (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011 and Kvale, 2007).

According to Creswell (2002: 208) “focus groups are panels which are facilitated by a moderator, who meet for a specified time period to exchange perspectives, knowledge and opinions on a particular topic. Groups are not more than a dozen members”. The eminent element in group discussions is the ability of the researcher to collect meaningful information from the participants’ discussion about the topic at hand. Just like the face to face interviewing, focus groups allow the participants to explore insight on other information which could be relevant for the topic at hand. There is no need for a common consensus or to force a single decision to be reached. The researcher brings together people who are from corresponding backgrounds and enables them to engage in meaningful spontaneous conversation which is of interest to the researcher in answering the research study (Given, 2008 and Barbour, 2007).

According to Barbour (2007: 02) a focus group is a data collection instrument that generates and analyses the interaction between participants, rather than just merely posing questions. The group is observed as participants who hold a corresponding point of view and the researcher encourages, listens and analyses the interaction. The participants must talk amongst themselves rather than directly with the researcher.
A focus group was utilised in order to gain information about the transformation and challenges which the participants of the project had experienced. The research would not have been complete if the voices of beneficiaries of the project were not included since the project was set out for their empowerment especially for those that were previously disadvantaged (Given, 2008).

By conducting the interviews and the group discussions, an in-depth understanding of the knowledge was attained. A thorough understanding encouraged the participant to explore the topic at hand without the researcher disrupting with predetermined, focused and short-answer questions. Even though the interviewee is able to share different insights which may still be relevant to the interest of the topic, the researcher still maintains control over the direction of the discussion and once in a while steers it back in the intended direction (Given, 2008).

The data gathered was thematically analysed where concepts were coded in order to obtain accurate information so that valid conclusions could be reached. The themes of the research were participation, empowerment and sustainability (Grbich, 2013).

3.7. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE.
Creswell (2013) defines data collection as “data collected in a natural setting, sensitive to the people and places under study and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive, establishing patterns and themes. The final written report includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem and its contribution to the literature or a call for change”.

The study was conducted in the urban area of New Brighton, Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape between March and October 2013. Before the researcher could commence with the data collection process, it was imperative that permission be obtained from the Head of the Seki Women’s Foundation, stakeholders from Ikhalo and Community Chest as well as the focus group participants.
The researcher constructed semi-structured open ended questions which allowed the interviewee to explore each question in a way they thought would be relevant, guided by the researcher. These broad questions posed by the researcher to the interviewee were unbiased and used limited jargon in order for the interviewee to fully comprehend the questions and respond accurately.

A letter of permission to conduct research and a meeting were sent to the volunteers and stakeholders, including the focus group participants. In the meetings, the researcher had the opportunity to disclose in detail the purpose and nature of the research, the importance of the interviews and focus group discussion in the research study, how the data would be used and what the researcher would do with it after the research had been completed as well as ethical considerations concerning the participants (Rapley, 2007).

During the interviews and group discussions, the researcher requested for the permission of tape recording for gathering data. By tape recording the interpretations of the interviewees, the researcher was permitted a space where she could listen more attentively to what the researcher had to state as well as observe the body language of the interviewee in certain instances. The tape recording was accompanied by note takings where the researcher noted the most important statements that were relevant to the research study. This note taking occurred throughout the research process.

During the interviewing process, the knowledge gathering occurred within the natural setting of the participants. The research was conducted in isiXhosa and English. IsiXhosa was used when interviewing the Head of the project and the participants of the group discussion, since they were all Xhosa speakers and amongst the volunteers some did not understand nor speak the conventional language due to educational backgrounds. These interviews were later translated in English. With the stakeholders, the interview was conducted in English.

The researcher was to collect data from ten (10) participants, namely the Project leader, the two stakeholders and the volunteers as well as beneficiaries of the project.
Due to circumstances which were beyond the control of the researcher, data was collected from five individuals, being the Project leader of the Seki Women’s Foundation, the two stakeholders and two volunteers, who were previous beneficiaries of the project.

These volunteers where highly involved in the sustainable programmes such as baking and gardening. The main representative of the sewing project was suffering from a long term illness and thus could not participate in the research. The researcher depended highly on convenience sampling and had to ensure that the data was not partial, but represented the views of the participants.

3.8. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.

The research data was analysed and interpreted utilising an approach called thematic or themes analysis. According to Grbich (2013: 17) thematic analysis is a “process where data is segregated, grouped, regrouped and re-linked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation before it is published.” King and Horrocks (2010: 150) note it as themes that are recurrent, posing classifiable characteristics of the accounts of participants, which the researcher deems as relevant for answering the research question.

According to Gibbs (2007: 38) this analytic method of thematising, coding or categorising involves the identification and recording of passages of data which exemplify the same theoretical or descriptive idea. In a simpler form it can be comprehended as searching for patterns in data that reveal interesting phenomena in relation to the research study. Throughout the research process, a structure in the data develops whereby the research moves a step closer at understand the problem issue, the natural setting of participant as well as the field its working in, which in this research study is poverty alleviation through community development, and applying meaning to the interpretations the research has received from participants (Flick, 2007).

According to Flick (2007: 101) with regards to categorising the patterns and themes, “the main activities are to search for relevant parts of the data and to analyse them by comparing them with other data thus, naming and classifying the data”.

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Within the research process, the data gathered was thematically analysed where concepts were coded applying the numerical order technique to obtain accurate information so that valid conclusions could be reached. The themes which were of interest to the research in answering the research problem were participation, empowerment and sustainability.

3.9. **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.**

The researcher experienced certain limitations concerning the study. It had to be noted that the knowledge and information the researcher obtained and analysed did not represent the whole of South Africa’s poverty alleviation projects, thus the researcher had to be careful of generalisation. Participants involved in the interviews were not sharing sufficient information since the majority respected their relationship with the Head of the Seki Women’s Foundation and the stakeholders. The beneficiaries and volunteers were afraid that should they state something negative about the project they might be reprimanded.

The researcher allowed participants who felt the urge to decline being part of the research process, to refuse participation in order to honour the stipulated ethics of the study. Despite the challenges faced, the research findings provided the much needed insight to prospective researchers, non-governmental organisations and government at large with regards to poverty alleviation projects and its success particularly in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth.

3.10. **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.**

The participants in the research process were approached and through their consent took part in the research. A consent letter was formulated with the help of the researcher’s supervisor. Once the consent of the participants was obtained, the researcher removed identifying information from the interview material. The participant, in the meeting, prior to the interview process taking place, notified the researcher when they did not feel comfortable with being interviewed.

The confidentiality and well-being of the participants was considered with utmost dignity. The research study respected the participants and their views, treating their knowledge as meaningful contributions in the process of understanding their social reality.
The researcher made sure that no omissions were made in the process of gathering and analysing data so as to truly represent the statements of the volunteers and stakeholders as well as the beneficiaries.

When the research process was completed the researcher consulted with the participants with regards to the data that was interpreted by the researcher. A minority of the participants were interested on the feedback whilst others trusted the process without requesting feedback.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND FINDING.

4.1. INTRODUCTION.

The main objective of this chapter is to present the data which was collected from the project leader and the volunteers of the Seki Women’s Foundation as well as the stakeholders. The data was collected through qualitative in-depth interviews and a focus group.

After the transcription period, the researcher analysed and interpreted the data utilising the thematic analysis method. Gribich (2013: 17) notes thematic analysis as a process where data is segregated, grouped and regrouped and re-linked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation prior publishing. As mentioned in Chapter 3, this is a method which searches for patterns in research data that reveals interesting phenomena which relate to the research study (Gibbs, 2007: 38). The research question, objectives and literature review assisted with obtaining the themes namely participation, empowerment and sustainability which would inevitably emerge from the data as well as new patterns unknown by the researcher.

The collection of data from the participants was conducted with the main purpose of responding to the research question which investigated the contribution of the Seki Women’s Foundation towards poverty alleviation in its delegated community, with specific reference on community participation, empowerment and sustainability. The objectives of the research interviews was to respond to what the values, aims and objectives of the Seki Women’s foundation are and how are they attained; what challenges are faced by the Seki Women’s Foundation towards effective community development and who or what are the determinants of the long term sustainability of the project. The researcher also desired to gain the participants’ perspective on what constitutes community development. In this research paper, the identity of the participants will be kept anonymous by only referring to the interviewees as “participant A” or “stakeholder A”.

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BACKGROUND.

The Seki Women’s Foundation project, headed by Mrs Pella Bono aged 76, started in 2004 as a soup kitchen and a home based care project as a result of noticing the immense impact poverty had around the New Brighton community with high rates of unemployment, crime and HIV/AIDS. The project started with 15 volunteers, but the number decreased due to unfortunate deaths or illnesses, leaving 10 volunteers operating at present. In order to try and help alleviate poverty, project volunteers, who came from neighbouring areas within New Brighton, formed as a collective group which created skills by identifying the core needs of their community, in order to empower. These skills, known as sustainable programmes, were baking and cooking, sewing and gardening, which involved the community by creating employment. The majority of volunteers in the project are elderly women between the ages of 35-82 years. While providing meals and wellness assistance to more than 200 community members, the project focused mainly on elderly people, orphaned children (from the two schools, namely David Vuku and Samuel Nongoko primary which the project adopted) and those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.

The interviews with the project leaders and volunteers revealed that during the early days of establishment, the project volunteers worked hard with little success in providing meals to the community. Money was contributed by the volunteers and members of the church in order to keep the project operating as now the importance of the project was apparent in meeting the needs of the community. The project depended on donations made by socially responsible companies who donated the necessities which were required to run an effective project. The idea of building a community centre came from the members themselves as they saw how the need of the project was gradually growing in some cases having to serve the beneficiaries in days of pouring rain.

The project leader sought sponsors who would help build the centre. It was not long until organisations and companies such as the St Patricks Uniting Presbyterian Church, South African Breweries, Spar, Clover, Community Chest, Ikhala Trust and the former Premier of the Eastern Cape made donations that contributed to the project’s main goal.
These donations ranged from providing a piece of land, cement, bricks, roofing and burglar doors, large containers to keep products and the Siyabonga baking oven. Some of the companies which donated their products have established a strong relationship with the Seki Women’s Foundation which is still in effect.

The focus group revealed that, as these women work without the provision of a monthly stipend, the little profit they receive from the baking, gardening and sewing programmes contribute towards the purchase of other daily expenses such as gas, soup and food. Once a year, when one of the funding stakeholders donates money to the project, the project leader divides it amongst the women and also provides food when the project receives food donations. Recently, the project has built a library for the orphans as an after school facility in order to help them learn to read and write as well as assist with their schoolwork.

4.2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.
As the research interviews revealed, the goal of the Seki Women’s Foundation was to empower its community through skills training enabling the individuals to be self-sufficient and create a cycle of sustained development for the people and the next generation. As a chosen theme, community development comprises of key elements such as participation, empowerment and sustainability, which have been incorporated into the goals of the Seki Women’s Foundation project through participating with the community in trying to alleviate poverty, empowering them to be self-sufficient through skills training and creating strong partnerships with stakeholders which will assist in the long-term sustainability of the project.

During the interview process between the project leader, volunteers and stakeholders, the researcher sought for the participants’ own understanding with regards to community development and how they recognise the Seki Women’s Foundation as a positive contributing factor towards poverty alleviation and community development.
4.2.1. **Knowledge of Community Development.**

When the volunteers and the stakeholders were asked by the researcher to define community development, they shared the same sentiments as the elements and ethics of community development were embedded in their goals and objectives. This was indicated by responses such as the following:

“To support development initiatives by building relationships, enhancing capacity and facilitating access to funds…communities influencing their own development and to make use of local assets…benefiting from improved and expanded services from their community-led organisations. Community development is the foundation of social change and improvement and addresses a broad range of social ills simultaneously…to ensure that at the centre and heart of our interventions the dreams and aspirations of organisations we support come first and that we listen to what it is they want, acknowledge what they have already achieved using a broad range of assets and support them on their development journey to achieving goals” (stakeholder A).

“Community development is important for us in a sense where we are not trying to teach, but we want to help people to a degree where they will be able to sustain themselves bringing in their own fundraising efforts so that we can be able to have room for new developing ones and take them further. We do not want to give the fish to charities, we want to teach them how to catch the fish so that they can sustain themselves, that is where development comes in” (stakeholder B).

With the participants, community development concerned the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of government in meeting community needs and how an individual who is considered as a community member and as a representative of the community is able to identify the needs of the people effectively. Another factor pointed out by the participants is how they considered community participation and empowerment as essential to community development, as indicated by the following:

“Community development is helpful because government does not have sufficient means to reach out and help those in need. Government cannot reach those places. Government does not live amongst the people in order to understand their situations.
To be a community member and a project, you are the one within reach of the community, because you can identify the needs of the people beyond what government can identify. A community project should be within the reach of the people…and you empower the people stricken by poverty” (participant A).

“It is to work together in one spirit doing something right and showing the way, with nobody doing everything for his own benefit. All must be transparent, secrets should not be allowed, I really do not like secrets” (participant B).

“It is to motivate others to have a skill so that you can get a breakthrough…what is important in the situation that we find ourselves is that we must have skills, at least when we have the skills, we see the light” (participant C).

4.2.2. Recognition of the project on poverty alleviation and community development.

Through the work that the project does, it has gained positive recommendations from its stakeholders and community members with some applauding the project in how they have managed to work with just so few resources to a certain degree in creating a result that many people will benefit from. These opinions are illustrated through the responses from stakeholder A and B:

“The project will always be around as they have been over the years and are one of the few who are not driven by receiving stipends for their work with the community” (Stakeholder A).

“…long existing charity and is well maintained that started small and bloomed. We will continue supporting the project as there is a need for them to reach out in their community” (Stakeholder B).

The researcher asked the participants about how the programmes namely; baking and cooking, sewing and gardening, contribute to the alleviation of poverty and forming development in the community. The participants responded as follows:

“These programmes empower them (community), even the beneficiaries who we select a number which we will teach gardening skills, they can use them where they live…the women you see baking were once beneficiaries” (Participant A).
“The garden helps us very much, because as we plant spinach and onions, we usually provide the women in the kitchen to add on in the meal of the day. We do not have to buy some food” (Participant C).

When the researcher enquired about the sewing programme, limited information was gathered as the project leader maintained that the sickness of the women who headed the programme hampered the programme’s effectiveness as there was no one to train those who would be interested. Participant A also noted how the Seki Women’s Foundation has been an asset to the church when congregational functions are held.

4.3. PARTICIPATION.

As a development goal, participation refers to both the means and the end of community development by being able to share and work together effectively to reach the desired outcome. All community members should participate in the decision making, implementation and the evaluation process of the project (Schenck and Louw, 1995).

Thus participation in terms of involvement of the community members in the development processes of the project, which entails involvement in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, is essential. Decisions should be made and finalised through the consensual involvement of all members who are a part of the project and who are able to witness the transformation of the project as well as the impact it has in their lives and in the community as a whole.

4.3.1. Project planning and decision making.

When the participants were asked about their involvement in the daily operations of the project and the power provided in the process of decision making, they pointed out mostly towards their involvement in the activities that are already initiated and not so much on the planning phase where they participate in the process of influencing funding.

Such a conclusion was obtained from the response of participant A and B:

“With the decision making, the women were involved, but I used to go alone to these companies” (Participant A).
“We meet every Wednesday where we start with a prayer. She (project leader) starts the agenda with a topic and we freely voice our opinions” (Participant C).

Being able to allow the participants to voice out their own understanding of issues that arise concerning the project is also a part of participation, but authentic participation is when one allows the community members to be a part of the formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project (Midgely, 1986 as quoted by Abiche, 2004). One of the stakeholders noted:

“(The project leader) is a key person who is the one who is able to unlock the donations that they receive and I would be concerned when she is not there as I am not sure if the other ladies have the same connections” (Stakeholder A).

The responses from participants and the stakeholder with regards to community participation and decision making have led to the conclusion that even though the opinions of the volunteers are considered when meetings are held to discuss the agenda of the day, the full participation of the volunteers in all development processes of the project is not fully considered. One example can be shown in the search for sponsors as this responsibility is solely in the hands of the project leader. It would be empowering to involve all the volunteers of the project which becomes another form of empowerment as they broaden their network and become more self-sufficient even when the project leader retires.

4.3.2. Impact of project on volunteers (beneficiaries).

The researcher investigated the impact of the project in the lives of the participants and how they have used this impact in benefitting other beneficiaries. With the question being stated, the researcher saw full commitment to the project as participant C stated:

“God never registered it in our minds that we are suffering, all these years we wake up and come to work voluntarily as we have seen that there are those that suffer way more than us. We thank God that He gave us the strength as there are many projects that lack in faith.”
Participant B noted how her involvement in the project will not only benefit her alone, but the whole community. To be able to have an impact on others, participant B stated that she had to look within herself to find the capacity to help others and herself simultaneously.

Both participants who were involved in the focus group agreed that the effect of the project, has led to feelings of liberation and loving others regardless. It became apparent how the participants connected their involvement in the community with their spirituality and realised a sense of belonging at the same time:

“You firstly look at yourself whether you have the skill and for you to develop, you have to meet with the others and share ideas and build something. What we do, we do not do it for individuals, but for the whole community. We all experience this poverty. There are people, who are above me, but God has given me a particular skill, why can’t I use it to better the life of my neighbour and not keep everything to myself. Seki Women’s Foundation has brought freedom and to be able to give love to others.”

Participant C noted:
“We have the skills such as baking, sewing, gardening, home-based care, HIV and AIDS as well as child abuse. I am old and would not do much about them, but I know that when the project decides to come to an end and I have the strength, I will have something to help me with meeting my needs.”

Participant C added:
“And we have the love of communicating with people, helping them and wanting them to feel like they have more even though they have nothing”

4.4. EMPOWERMENT.
Empowerment as identified in the research findings is concerned with skills training and how those skills will lead the volunteers to be self-sufficient in creating their own development path.
Stakeholders may assist in different respects, but their main goal is to empower those who have nothing and rekindle the dignity and value of an individual who is seen as the one full of capacity to develop. This empowerment evokes a sense of sharing amongst the community members as they share their skills and information with other community members who will pass it on to others with the same needs to develop themselves.

4.4.1. **Empowerment through skills training.**

The participants where enquired about their empowerment through any skills training that was provided to them. This formed as their response:

“Clover came in order to teach us how to garden as we were just doing it with minimal proper skills. Over a period of three years, they come and show us new skills of gardening” (Participant C).

“Clover contributed to our development through skills for example, baking skills. They would come from Johannesburg to train us and we would invite people from the community to join the training and receive certificates” (Participant B).

The participants that were interviewed through focus group revealed a sense of sharing in the project as they would invite others in the community to take part in the training. The challenge that they faced with this was that people never stayed for long in the project due to their own expectations.

“I teach others who would like to do gardening, because we were taught to share our skills, but we teach people and once they see that there are no benefits (stipend) they leave” (Participant C).

The researcher also asked the stakeholders about their contribution towards the empowerment of the participants in the project and whether their role met the project’s needs. This was the response of the stakeholders:

“Yes, it does meet their needs as our grant means that they do not have to use any of their own finances to support their activities...this group is quite a strange one in that they are not so keen on training and happy to just do what they do as volunteers...
for the community, however some have attended project management and our Grantee Conferences where they get to meet with other organisations to share experiences and lessons” (Stakeholder A).

Stakeholder B stated that their main function was to provide financial assistance to community projects, thus they would provide the assistance and place the onus on the project to do their own development even if it concerns skills training. But one skills training programme they facilitate is the early childhood basic training of practitioners from Pre-schools and Edu-care centres where they have partnered with the Early Learning Centre.

Both stakeholders agreed that their contribution, which is mainly through financial assistance, empowers the participants of the project. They contribute a portion which leads to the realisation of the objectives of the project as there are other donors who assist the project.

One interesting factor brought up by one of the participants is how their age, as they are getting older, has left them in despair as present employment opportunities favour the youth who are young, but possess similar skills training as the participants. This leads them to show disinterest in any other future trainings presented to them by the Project Leader:

“But what will we do with the certificates as they continue to fill our houses, because we are old and jobs of today only prefer the young ones and that leaves us with no hope and not being interested in anymore training. I tell Mama (project leader) to go find some else for the training” (Participant B).

Participant B’s response connects with stakeholder A’s response of how the participants “are not so keen on training” as participant B mentioned the lack of employment opportunities for those that fully qualify, but are disadvantaged due to their age.
4.5. **SUSTAINABILITY.**

Sustainability reflects the partnership between the Seki Women’s Foundation and its stakeholders and how they contribute towards the long-term sustainability of the project. The Seki Women’s Foundation has been operating since the year 2004 and one of the contributing factors is the strong relations with its stakeholders and how the stakeholders have assisted the project through distributing important information and assistance which will lead towards the development of the community.

4.5.1. **Relations between project and stakeholders.**

According to Abiche (2004:84) partnership refers to shared responsibility, authority and accountability with the stakeholders. All agencies of development such as the community, government, non-government organisations and donors pool their financial and human resources in working together to achieve common goals. This partnership can increase local commitment in sharing responsibilities and decision making opportunities. It can also make use of community knowledge and resources and provide improved delivery services to the community (Abiche, 2004).

With regards to networking, Abiche (2004) notes it as the facilitation of the flow of information among the stakeholders such as government, NGO’s and the community. The role of the non-governmental organisations is to facilitate communication between project beneficiaries and government in helping to identify and express community needs, supporting participation and group formation, training and building the capacity of community groups as well as channelling resources at the community level (Bank, 2004 as quoted by Abiche, 2004).

The Seki Women’s Foundation project has proved to have links with numerous organisations that are willing to assist them with any of their needs and are proud to be associated with the project as it strives to be a representative of its community. The stakeholders act as ‘middlemen’ by bridging the gap between companies who might need the assistance of community projects and the project itself as it requires the exposure. As noted by stakeholder B:

“When companies call and are in need of charities, we provide them with the charity listing where they choose suitable charities to assist in the specified events.”
The well maintained nature of the Seki Women’s Foundation is the result of their value for accountability and transparency as they always ensure that the stakeholders are well informed in regards to how their funding or assistance is being utilised through financial reports. The stakeholders themselves refuse to be just financial providers, but give heed to the holistic welfare of the project and being able to lend a shoulder when situations get tough.

Both stakeholders agreed to the challenge of not receiving funding from donors, as donors are now cutting out the ‘middleman’ and are using their own connections to liaise directly with the projects, stating it as being socially responsible:

“There is a whole shift of change; companies are not friendly as previously when providing for donations. Companies give money to the projects and cut out the representatives” (Stakeholder B).

Although the stakeholders might experience challenges of funding, the relations they have built with the project have indeed proven to be beyond the value of money for sustainability. They see the project as a necessary support services and thus they would help in order to develop the community in alleviating poverty regardless.

4.6. **SUCCESSES.**

Whilst conducting an in-depth interview with the Project leader in order to establish the successes of the project which the leader was most proud of, she noted a few amongst the numerous achievements the project has attained over the years. As the number of orphans who receive meals and school work assistance at the centre’s library gradually increases, the teachers and foster parents have noticed how mentally sharp the children have become due to being able to concentrate in class and showing interest in learning. By being able to assist the underprivileged children in providing school stationary and uniform, the children are happier to go to school.

The home-based care visits have proven to be more effective as the volunteers would visit the homes of the orphans infected or affected by HIV and AIDS as well as the elderly, who are not able to attend to the centre.
They check whether they attend the clinics to receive their medication and whether their nutrition, social grants and well being is taken care of by their foster parents or guardian. The project has also built a relationship with the nearby clinic in helping them with their monitoring.

One major success of the project is the ability to build a community centre from the floor-upwards with minimum assistance from the government, but which succeeded through the help of donations.

4.7. CHALLENGES.
One of the challenges of the project apart from funding and donations, is that their containers where they keep clothing and other essentials as well as the gardening tools which were recently donated to them by the Department of Agriculture have been burgled and stolen. The participants who were interviewed suspect some of the beneficiaries who visit the project to receive the meal of the day. They believe that the justification for this behaviour is not drug abuse, but alcoholism.

Another challenge is how the project’s unsecured garden has fallen victim to rats and people who pull out seedlings and vegetables which they think might be food to eat, but they refuse to lose hope and continue their work as they have seen that, although others may be biting the hand that feeds them, more people are in desperate need of the project’s assistance:

“People have become a problem as this is not the church’s project, but the people’s. They pass through the garden and take all that we have stocked. Even though we do not have a properly secured place for our garden, we continue with our work not loosing strength, but we do get disappointed at times as we would like to see the results of the work we are doing” (Participant C).

When the volunteers would try to sell the vegetables they received from the garden, most community members would not buy or pay for the produce when given in debt.
CHAPTER SUMMARY

The findings presented in this paper were from the qualitative in-depth interviews and a focus group which were conducted with the Head and volunteers of the Seki Women’s Foundation as well as its stakeholders namely Ikhala Trust and Community Chest. The purpose was to investigate the research question posed in the research paper and introducing new knowledge which might be of importance in the research.

The findings contributed a great deal of knowledge towards the participant's understanding of the term community development as most of its elements were embedded in the Seki Women’s Foundation project and the stakeholder’s goals, objectives and values. The project’s recognition as a contributing factor towards poverty alleviation and community development was assessed. The involvement of the participants in the processes of development in the project and the impact it had on its beneficiaries was assessed. This chapter analysed the empowerment of the project’s participants through skills training and the role the stakeholders play in contributing to this empowerment.

The determinants who contributed towards the sustainability of the project were assessed by highlighting the relations between agencies of development namely, the project and the stakeholders on how their relations have introduced new opportunities to the project by providing essential information and how the project has remained transparent towards the stakeholders. The successes and the challenges which were faced by the project were analysed.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.

5.1. INTRODUCTION.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the main findings from the research data as presented in Chapter Four. The research findings were presented in order to try and answer the research question: To what extent does the Seki Women’s Foundation contribute to the alleviation of poverty in the New Brighton community? The main themes are participation, empowerment and sustainability.

According to Monaheng (2002) community development strives at enhancing human development and is aimed at empowering communities by strengthening their capacity for self-sustaining development. Community development adheres to an integrated approach when solving problems of poverty and development, thus it is important that the state, non-governmental organisations and the local communities work together for the maximisation of their development efforts as a whole (Monaheng, 2000).

Participation, as a development goal, refers to both the means and the end of community development by being able to share and work together effectively to reach the desired outcome. This requires all community members to participate in the decision making, implementation and the evaluation process of the project (Schenck and Louw, 1995).

According to Monaheng (2000:133) the successful realisation of the objectives of community development relies on the fact that the poor are empowered in voicing out their opinion with regards to their needs and access to necessary resources. When the poor are empowered during the distribution of resources and opportunities, this leads them to gaining insight or information which they could learn from and which they could use for the betterment of their lives.

According Louw and Schenck (1995) sustainability reflects the efforts and durability of projects long after external development agencies have physically withdrawn from the project including their aid. How communities can gain the confidence of owning projects and feel that they have initially started and will continue for their betterment and the whole community.
Sustainability also reflects the mutual relations between the development agencies and the project as well as the community at large which will contribute to the sustainability of the project (Abiche, 2004).

5.1. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.**

In the beginning of the interview process, the researcher investigated the awareness of participants and stakeholders of the term *community development* and the recognition of the project as a contributor towards the alleviation of poverty and community development in the New Brighton community. It was important for the researcher to focus on this particular area as it is the largest community and it is filled with immense poverty influenced by unemployment, crime and substance abuse. A majority of households depend on the provision of social grants. It is an area which needs the assistance of community projects, one such as the Seki Women’s Foundation, in order to evoke the spirit of participation between community members in realising their own goals, empower the community members in being self-sufficient and influence a cycle of sustainability where the community members and the positive work they do, influence the durability of the project as well as maintaining the positive partnership with its stakeholders.

5.1.1. **Knowledge of Community Development.**

The results demonstrated that the participants and the stakeholders were well aware of the term *community development* as they all shared the same sentiments of imbedding the core elements of community development in their goals, missions and values. The stakeholders cited how community development was about building relationships, enhancing capacity and facilitating access to funds for the communities to be able to influence their development by using their own local assets. Community development is seen as the cornerstone of social change and addresses past social ills (Schenk and Louw, 1995). Community development practitioners should not have pre-determined concepts of how development should occur in a community, but must listen to and identify with the aspirations of the people and help attain them. As stated by Mulwa (1987: 107) community development is about placing people and their capacity as central (Mulwa, 1987 as quoted by Schenck and Louw, 1995)
The participants explained how community development was not far from the concepts of participation and empowerment as it meant that people had to work together in one spirit, by being transparent and motivated to empower themselves and others. Community development, from the responses of the participants, is concerned with the inability of government in reaching all communities in terms of the provision of basic services in order to satisfy their needs effectively and efficiently. Thus, community members and projects are the representatives of the area and are knowledgeable of their needs and resources which will help in attaining goals.

5.1.2. Recognition of the project in term of poverty alleviation and community development.

The results from the findings depict the Seki Women’s Foundation as a project which is well maintained and has managed to achieve positive approval over the years from the stakeholders. This was evident as they have seen the importance of the project in their community and how the volunteers are committed in reducing poverty without receiving a monthly stipend.

With regards to the sustainable programmes and their influence towards poverty alleviation in the community, the results show that the main purposes of these programmes are to empower the volunteers and the beneficiaries as they engage people in the community to participate in the skills training offered, enabling them to utilise the skills in their own surroundings (Schenck and Louw, 1995 and Swanepoel, 1997). The gardening project has enabled the project to save in purchasing food as it contributes vegetables to serve in the daily meals of that particular day. One project that has lagged behind is the sewing project as the woman has been sick, hampering productivity as those that were still in training had to wait. The project has not only been as asset in the community, but has rendered assistance to the church as well, by permitting the church to hold functions.
5.2. PARTICIPATION.

As the researcher investigated the level of participation in the project with regards to the involvement of the project volunteers in the development process of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as with the overall decision making, the researcher gained a great deal of knowledge.

The researcher also gathered information with regards to the impact of the project in the lives of the volunteers which were interviewed through conducting a focus group.

5.2.1. Project planning and decision making.

The results demonstrated that the involvement of the volunteers in the decision making and the development processes of the project were limited. The volunteers were mainly involved in the implementation phase of the project, whilst most of the planning in terms of funding for example, was headed by the Project leader. For the volunteers to be able to express their opinions on certain issues that are brought to their attention is considered as participation, but authentic participation is when all volunteers are involved in the decision making with regards to attaining goals, policy formulation and implementation (Midgley, 1986 as quoted by Abiche, 2004). For the volunteers to gain a sense of ownership and to be able to empower themselves if they desire to establish their own community projects, it seems, they must be exposed to all development processes and decision making done so that their projects could be as effective as the one that groomed them (Davids, 2009).

5.2.2. Impact of project on volunteers (beneficiaries).

The results revealed how the volunteers have become committed to the work that they do and how their involvement in the project has not only led to their progress, but the progress of the whole community as they had to seek within for the capacity to develop others whilst in return developing themselves, through learning new ways of managing people, the project and obtaining new information on how to operate the programmes offered by the project. The project has led to the liberalisation of the volunteers in terms of empowerment and cultivating feelings of love and care as they desire to enhance the dignity of the people who have nothing, through empowerment and participation with the community through skills sharing. The project also enables
the women to possess something (skills) which will help them in meeting their own needs once the project decides to come to an end.

If the volunteers hold this conception in their minds, that the project has offered them with skills that will help them meet their needs, it is important that they be exposed to organisations and stakeholders who are agencies of development that would help them in their prospective projects in influencing their own development path. This could be achieved through strengthening the aspect of decision making in terms of involving the volunteers when searching for funding, instilling confidence in the women to be able to access stakeholders when in need and strengthening networks between the project volunteers and potential stakeholders.

5.3. **EMPOWERMENT.**

The researcher questioned the participants and stakeholders with regards to empowerment through skills training and the role the stakeholders play in order to ensure the empowerment of all participants in the project.

5.3.1. **Empowerment through skills training.**

The focus group that was conducted with the participants demonstrated that the volunteers obtained development through skills training from a stakeholder who visits over a period of three years in the gardening programme and over a year period in the baking programme. The stakeholder arrives and introduces new information and skills into the project, which the volunteers may utilise in order to enhance their own skills and expand their services to the community. The volunteers would invite other members of the community to receive training and to be an asset in the project, but due to their own expectations of receiving a monthly stipend which is not fulfilled, they leave the project. This hampers the manpower desired by the project as the findings revealed that there is a programme that is lagging behind due to long term illness of the leader heading the programme. The volunteers develop a sense of disappointment, but they cannot force individuals to be part of development as it has to be derived from within. They project has however, contributed to the development of community members in providing skills such as baking and gardening.
The responses of the stakeholders with regards to their contributions in the empowerment of the project’s participants both revealed minimum empowerment in terms of skills training as both prioritised their main purpose which is financial assistance. With the financial assistance, they would place the onus on the project to use the money to influence their own development in terms of training and purchasing what is needed for the project in order to meet their needs. Different donors will help where they can as they all contribute a part that will help attain the goals of the Seki Women’s Foundation project. This means that the project possesses a sense of ownership, as they influence their own skills training and successfully manage their finances as they use it for the sole purpose of developing the project. This also strengthens the relations between the project and the stakeholders as the latter will always be willing to lend a helping hand when needed. This contributes to the long term sustainability of the project (Schenck and Louw, 1995).

As one stakeholder observed how the volunteers are not so eager on training and are content with the work that they do, one participant from the focus group noted how they have lost interest in training as employment opportunities are only open to the youth and excludes the older generation as they presume that they will not perform according to the standards expected from them by the employment company, although they possess the same skills as the youth. This could be solved by exposing the women to other agencies of development whereby they would expand the services they offer to the community by establishing community projects and focusing on different groups of people with needs in the community as they have the capacity and training, for example rape prevention and basic teaching.

5.4. SUSTAINABILITY.

The purpose for the enquiry of the volunteers and the stakeholders regarding their relations was to gain information about the determinants that contribute towards the longevity of the project. This longevity should not be controlled by money or any other materialistic expectations, whereby the durability of the project will depend only on donations and sponsors, but must be influenced by the strong partnership between the agencies of development (Fitamo, 2003 and Abiche, 2004).
5.4.1. **Relations between the project and stakeholders.**

The results retrieved from the findings demonstrated the strong links the Seki Women’s Foundation had with other non-governmental organisations, companies and local departments (Abiche, 2004 and Schenck and Louw, 1995). The stakeholders who were interviewed demonstrated their commitment in assisting the project with its needs as their presence in the community of New Brighton is important in order to curb the impact of poverty. They act as the representatives of the project as they help link the project with other companies that might need the assistance of the project or would like to assist in terms of funding. The shift where companies no longer consider the “middleman” when distributing funding to projects, has been a challenge to the stakeholders as their funding diminishes and they would have to consider other alternatives for fundraising in order to assist those projects that are in dire need.

The ability of the project in being accountable and transparent to their stakeholders has contributed to its successful maintenance as they ensure that stakeholders are well informed about their expenditures and how the funding is being utilised through formulating financial reports. The stakeholders always try to remain aware of the holistic welfare of the project (Schenck and Louw, 1995).

5.5. **CHALLENGES.**

The negative impact which the project faces is that they have become victims of crime in their gardening project as their recently donated gardening tools have been stolen and community members invade the community garden without mutual consent and steal vegetables which assist in the kitchen when preparing for a meal. When the volunteers decide to sell the vegetation to the community in order to generate a little income to buy soup and other limited staples, they do not get paid. This affects them as they would sometimes have to depend on stakeholders for providing the soup and garden seedlings which they feel are matters they should be able to resolve within the community, but unemployment has struck hard. As much as they do receive donations and sponsorships from different stakeholders, the Seki Women’s Foundation volunteers always see the need for further funding from as many stakeholders as they can reach.
CHAPTER SUMMARY.

The analysis of the research findings have demonstrated the Seki Women’s Foundation as a project which endeavoured in implementing some of the principles of community development. It has attained its goals of building a community centre in order to curb the impact that poverty had in their community through creating empowering and sustainable skills namely; baking, sewing and gardening. The work the project produces has empowered the individuals in the community through skills training and has also focused on the young through promoting the importance of education, especially at a young age.

Stakeholders have acknowledged the skills that the project volunteers have possessed and work to build on the existing knowledge by introducing new information and skills that will help the project in expanding its services to the community.

In ensuring the full participation of all volunteers in the project, the volunteers should participate in all the development phases of the project and not only in the implementation phase as this enables them to obtain a sense of ownership and truly empower the volunteers. Nonetheless, the project has had a positive impact in the lives of the volunteers as their skills enable them to become essential assets in helping their community alleviate poverty and enhance the lives of their neighbours and themselves. Though faced with challenges of funding, people not purchasing the produce of the project due to unemployment and having an unsecure garden which has become a victim of burglary, the women continue to serve the community as many people, especially the elderly and the orphans, are in dire need of the help brought by the Seki Women’s Foundation.

The relationship which the Seki Women’s Foundation project has formed with its stakeholders has resulted in the successful maintenance of the project as the project leader remains accountable in terms of how funding is spent by formulating financial reports and stakeholders visiting the project site to identify any needs which they can provide.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.

6.1. INTRODUCTION.

According to Coetzee (2001), Pieterson (2001), Cypher and Diethz (1997) development has been universally defined as an apparent motion towards progress by moving from a state which was considered underdeveloped to a higher more sophisticated state. Development consists of aspects of sustainability, empowerment, capacity building, and the expansion of the role played by women in development, participation, decision making, transparency, accountability and equity.

According to Nyathi (2012) poverty alleviation, as it seeks to reduce the extent of poverty amongst a group of people or a country, concentrates on the assets and resources that obtain bearing on the livelihood of the poor. Thus, the purpose of poverty alleviation projects is to focus on improving the capital income of the poor or eliminating the poor’s dependency on external sources. Poverty alleviation projects should empower the community through the realisation of their own powers in order to stimulate effective development and avoid dependency on government (Schenck and Louw, 1995).

According to De Beers and Swanepoel (1998) community development, which was the main focus of this research, dealt with fundamental aspects of development which considered the participation of the community in development; development which is sustainable and the support or facilitation of government agencies, non-government organisations and voluntary organisations on the role played by community individuals in the development of the community. The process of community development would be null and void if the formulation, planning, implementation and evaluation was not headed by the community itself (Schenck and Louw, 1995).

The purpose of this research paper was to evaluate the extent to which a poverty alleviation project, such as the Seki Women’s Foundation, contributes towards the alleviation of poverty in its community, with specific reference to aspects of participation, empowerment and sustainability.
Concluding this research paper, this chapter will revisit the secondary research questions and observe whether an answer has been provided during the course of research and pose a recommendation to the project that was utilised in the research.


This research set out to answer the question: To what extent does the Seki Women’s Foundation contribute towards the alleviation of poverty in the New Brighton community?

In order to answer this primary question, the following secondary questions were investigated:

What are the values, aims and objectives of the Seki Women’s Foundation?

The aims and objectives of the Seki Women’s foundation was to meet the needs of the people effectively and efficiently in reaching where government was not able to, by using their own local and external resources through donations and involving members of the community to be patriots of their own development as they would be able to identify the needs of the community.

The project desired to empower community members and effectively advocate the importance of acquiring skills and education. The Seki Women’s Foundation promotes some of the principles of Batho Pele namely; openness and transparency, the utilisation of resources effectively and efficiently and the ability to respond to the needs of the community it serves.

The project upheld the values of working in one spirit, creating something positive for the benefit of all. Transparency and honesty are also upheld amongst the members and beneficiaries.

How are these values, aims and objectives being attained?

These objectives and values are attained through the establishment of sustainable programmes such as baking, sewing, and gardening. These programmes enable the project to work together with community members, empowering them through education and skills training and striving to redress the effects of poverty.
All these programmes and the development of a community centre came from within the people as they identified their own needs and saw the problems which contributed to their demise.

The promoters of the work executed by the Seki Women’s Foundation namely, Ikhala Trust and Community Chest, have worked hand in hand with the project in facilitating information and training opportunities, providing information which may lead to the project’s expansion and obtaining improved resources.

As one would ask whether the project truly represents the needs of the poor, the conclusion derived from the findings would agree as the project empowers through skills training and job creation for those who were previously unemployed. This employment opportunity has been undertaken by those who have identified the need for such a project in order to alleviate the rate of poverty influenced by unemployment, crime and high rates of those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS in the community.

The project has been an asset in the community, most especially on the elderly, those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS and the orphans as the project strives to restore their dignity, well-being and promoting the value of education and learning.

**What are the challenges faced by the Seki Women’s Foundation towards effective community development?**

Apart from the challenge of securing funding with other potential stakeholders, the Seki Women’s Foundation has been a victim of burglary which the participants believe is headed by community members who frequently visit the project as beneficiaries. Their behaviour, they agree, is influenced by the habit of alcoholism. These beneficiaries steal vegetables in the community garden and the garden tools which were donated to the project. The insecure garden is also a challenge as it has fallen prey to rats and community members.

What was concluded from the results derived from the research findings was that a number of the beneficiaries do not, in a sense, acknowledge the work done by the project and are rather biting the hand that is able to go the extra mile to ensure the wellbeing of all community members.
The challenge of funding faced by stakeholders might affect the productivity of the project, but the volunteers have shown no signs of backing down.

*Who or what are the determinants of the long term sustainability of the project?*

The determinants of the long term sustainability of the project are the sustainable programmes namely, baking, gardening and sewing (the latter has not been effective due to the illness of the volunteer who headed the programme) and the stakeholders who contribute the little they obtain in helping the project realise its goals. The strong partnership built between the Seki Women’s Foundation and stakeholders such as Ikhala Trust, Community Chest and Clover have gone further than the sustainability which is dependent on money. The Seki Women’s Foundation has remained transparent and accountable towards the stakeholders by accounting in every action it undertook through the formulation of financial reports.

The Seki Women’s Foundation has contributed towards poverty alleviation in the New Brighton community through creating skills such as baking, sewing and gardening which promotes the participation of the community by sharing the skills and distributing information as well as encouraging learning for the orphaned children who are still at school. One of the project’s main objectives is to re-establish the value and dignity of the people in the New Brighton community who are affected by poverty. The Seki Women’s Foundation empowers the volunteers by creating employment for those who were previously unemployed to help in the operation of the project’s programmes and also teach those who would like to learn the skills taught in the project. The strong relationship between the Seki Women’s Foundation and its stakeholders namely, Ikhala Trust and Community Chest, has further promoted the importance of the project in its community by tirelessly assisting the project with funding which they will effectively use in providing the needs of the project and helping to alleviate poverty and promoting the development of the New Brighton community.
6.2. **Recommendations for the Seki Women’s Foundation.**

The level of participation of all community members towards the development of the community and the project ought to be considered. Authentic participation must be implemented where the ordinary voices are permitted to express their opinions regarding, policy formulation in terms of funding and any other matter which may arise.

The volunteers should not only be empowered in the implementation phase, but in the planning, monitoring and evaluation phases of the development of the Seki Women’s Foundation.

The project volunteers must work towards reasoning with community members in order to instil trust and honesty and to avoid being victims of crime. People should be questioned concerning the stolen garden tools, vegetables and seedlings, whilst in the process trying to highlight to them how stealing the tools and vegetables will hamper the project from providing the meals of the day and also training as there will not be tools to facilitate the training. The community should know that the project is not for the volunteers, but it belongs to the community as a whole. The people must be involved in securing their own garden by asking community men to use their skills in creating fencing for the garden and rat traps.

The project could sell their vegetables and tailor made products in other neighbouring communities or form relations with community shops who will buy the produce from them and sell it at a reasonable price to the community, in this way, some income can be generated which they can use to buy the project’s essentials and also assist the community members with their immediate needs.
CHAPTER SUMMARY.

The Seki Women's Foundation’s contribution towards poverty alleviation is through skills training, promoting learning for the school children and trying to ease the effects of poverty on the elderly, those affected and infected by HIV and AIDS and orphaned children. The project upholds values of transparency and accountability by ensuring that the work done by the project has a positive impact in the community.

As the project implements some of the principles which constitutes community development, it would have to work at involving all volunteers in all processes of development, especially where decisions have to be made concerning funding. The volunteers have to be empowered in accessing networks with potential stakeholders, enabling them to feel confident when searching for funding. The long term sustainability of the project will always exist as stakeholders have applauded the work done by the Seki Women’s Foundation for the benefit of its community, thus promising to always assist the project where help is needed.
REFERENCES.


**APPENDICES.**

**Appendix A.**

**Permission letter to the Seki Women’s Foundation, Ikhala Trust and Clover.**

**Enquiries:** Yolisa Lawrence

Department of Development Studies

Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa.

Cell: 073 662 4023

**Date:** 13 June 2013.

**To:** The Head of Seki Women’s Foundation/Ikhala Trust and Clover.

Dear Sir/Madam.

**Re: Request for permission in carrying out a Research.**

My name is Yolisa Lawrence currently pursuing a Masters degree in Development Studies under the supervision of Dr Samantha Leonard at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in South Africa. My research topic stands: *To what extent does the Seki Women’s Foundation contributes to the alleviation of poverty in the New Brighton community, Port Elizabeth?* By conducting this research, it requires me to gather immense information from persons who have contributed in the sustainability of the foundation and to what extent.

The data collection instrument which will dominate in the study is qualitative interviewing which enables I, as the researcher, to obtain meaningful information from various individuals with regards to the research themes or topics which would help me answer the research problem at hand.

Every insight of data gathered will be transcribed and regarded with high confidentiality when published in the research paper. Once the research is complete, the notes will be terminated. The names of all participants will not be included in the
study without their full consent. Thus your full participation and honesty in answering the questions will be, at the most, highly appreciated. If you wish to withdraw from the data gathering process, it will be accepted since participation in the study is voluntary and not permanent.

I therefore humbly request your full participation by allowing me to conduct interviews with you at a time which is of your convenience. I would also request your permission to engage with the project’s participants in a form of a group discussion to find out of their transformations and challenges whilst being involved in the project. With your permission the interview will be recorded or transcribed to help with data gathering.

Please find attached a copy of some of the issues I would like to know more about the project.

Should you experience doubt and would like to enquire about the authenticity of this research study, please do not hesitate to make contact with my supervisor, Dr. S. Leonard at (041) 504 4603 or (041) 504 1331.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours faithfully

...................................... ......................................

Yolisa Lawrence Date

S209063282@live.nmmu.ac.za

209063282
Appendix B.

Consent Form
Terms and Conditions for the Study.

1. The interview and focus groups will be tape recorded accompanied by field notes that will be handed to the participants after the study has been completed.

2. There shall be no financial benefits from participating in the research study, but the contributions will be treated with utmost dignity.

3. Anonymity and the confidentiality of the participants will be respected.

4. Participants are free to withdraw from the study, but should consult prior with the researcher in private.

5. Photographs that may be taken in the study will solely be used for the purpose of the research study and will, after completion, be handed back to the participants.

Name: ……………………… Date: ……………………………

Signature: ……………………… Researcher…………………………
Appendix C.

Questions for the Head of Seki Women’s Foundation.

1. What are the values, aims and objectives of the project?

2. What was/were the reason/s behind the establishment of the project?

3. What does the term ‘community development’ mean to you?

4. What role does the project play in the development of the community as well as poverty alleviation?

5. How many people are involved in the project?

6. How do the people participate in the day to day activities of the project?

7. What is the main objective in the establishment of the programmes?

8. How effective are the programmes in empowering the volunteers and local community?

9. What are the achievement results of the programmes so far?

10. What strategies are used in ensuring the sustainability of the project, how effective are they?

11. Who are the main stakeholders and what is their contribution to the project?

12. How are the stakeholders accountable?

13. What are the challenges faced by the project in its mission on developing the community?

14. How could these challenges be improved?

Any question from the interviewee will be welcomed.

Thank you for your cooperation.
Appendix D.

Question for stakeholders of Ikhala Trust and Clover.

1. What are your aims and objectives as stakeholders?
2. What is your understanding of the term ‘community development’?
3. What is your purpose towards community development and poverty alleviation?
4. Explain your role in the Seki Women’s Foundation project?
5. Does your role meet the needs of the project, how?
6. How does your role seek to empower the participants of the project?
7. What are the shortcomings faced by you as stakeholders?
8. Any questions from the interviewee will be welcomed.

Thank you for your cooperation.
Appendix E.

Questions for the group discussion.
1. What impact has the project had on your lives?
2. How involved are you in the daily operations of the project (decision making and programmes)?
3. How does the project meet your daily needs?
4. What shortcomings do you or have you faced since being part of the project?
5. What do you wish to change?

Any questions from the interviewee will be welcomed.

Thank you for your cooperation