

**UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN ZIMBABWE: AN  
ASSET-BASED ANALYSIS**

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of  
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Technology**

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## DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the School of Education, Faculty of Arts and Design at the Durban University of Technology.

**I, LOVENESS MAKHOSAZANA MUSEVA**, declare that:

The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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.....

Signature

.....

Signature

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my late husband Stenford Museva, and my late father, Clement Nasho.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, my deepest gratitude goes to God for giving me the strength and wisdom to undertake and complete this research work even when all hope was lost.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is an investigation into the community engagement relationship between Zindowe Mberengwa community and the Midlands State University, drawing on the asset-based community development theory, supported by Heifetz's concept of adaptive leadership and Nyerere's concept of *ujamaa*. The nature of the study is centred on the relationship between the university and the community, focusing on the relationships of power, asset recognition, and collaboration during the decision making process. The region selected was the Zindowe village, under Chief Nyamondo, in Mberengwa South. The purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which the engagement and relationship between the university and the community facilitates community ownership over decision-making and shared ownership of knowledge with a view to developing greater self-reliance and sustainable development in the Mberengwa community.

This was a qualitative case study design, using the interpretive paradigm. The methods of data collection included documentary analysis and interviews with university staff. Community members were also interviewed using focus group discussions. Observations and a transect walk were undertaken with key participants in the community. The sample size was made up of 18 university staff members and 32 participants from the community. The total number of participants was 50.

The study used the adaptive leadership, asset-based community development and *ujamaa* theories to analyse the findings. The findings suggest that the initial approach to the community was consultative but needs-based rather than asset-based. Nevertheless, the community gained new skills such as bee keeping and literacy. However, the university leadership did not follow the principles of adaptive leadership which emphasise ongoing dialogue and clarification of competing goals and values and collective ownership over decisions. There was a tendency for the university to own the project to the extent that the *ujamaa* principles of family-hood and community self-reliance were under threat during a disorganised phase of tensions where there was community withdrawal from activities. A significant, and unusual outcome of this disorganised phase was the decision by community members to take control by creating their own constitution and appointing a community coordinator to act as mediator between the university and community. This resulted in the community realising their own assets and working towards self-reliance and a more sustained and equal partnership with the university.

Findings showed that there were number of challenges faced by the university and the community engagement process at the Midlands State University. These included limited communication because of a lack of community representation in the two major university committees which were responsible for the decision-making. Finally, it was evident from the findings that the university staff were overworked and they were not awarded an incentive for community engagement work which to them, came in as an extra load.

There was a sense that the community's indigenous knowledge was an asset to the university but it did not result in meaningful co-creation of knowledge that benefitted the community.

The study recommended that there should be stakeholder inclusion in strategic committees between those who crafted the policies and those who were supposed to implement them; thus ensuring listening to the community voice which would then lead to a more trusting relationship and finally the successful shared ownership of the project.

The study further suggested that the university should adhere to and implement policies consistently in order to minimise the tensions and misunderstandings and that the engagement process should encourage communities to realise their own assets from the outset.

As a result, there is a need to have a more value driven university community engagement, which will enable critical thinking and embrace sustainable development; for example, universities should play a leading role in incubating industries within the communities by providing education and skills so that the communities can solve their own problems and build expertise on a larger scale at community level with a view to expanding their economic empowerment.

Finally, the study also recommended that there is a need for the university to revisit the policy on university community engagement with particular attention to the lecturers' teaching loads and rewards or incentives. A model is offered as a guideline for the community engagement process.

In conclusion, it is important to note that the Midlands State University initiated this project in good faith with attention to the community's needs. The phases of 'forming', 'storming'

and ‘norming’ in many ways followed a normal growth process of group interaction. In spite of the challenges, the community did benefit in different ways as indicated by the women’s focus group when they said: “*we are now able to pay fees for our children.*” Any criticism of this project should therefore be taken in the spirit of critical inquiry with a view to improving the project.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AL	Adaptive Leadership Theory
ABCD	Asset-Based Community Development
CE	Community Engagement
CESIK	Community Engagement through Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ENACTUS	Entrepreneurial Action and Us
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GUNI	Global University Network for Innovation
HENCE	Higher Education Network for Community Engagement
IARSLCE	The International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge System
M15	Mberengwa Community
MFG	Men's Focus Group
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MSU	Midlands State University
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SA	South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIFE	Students in Free Enterprise



SPRU	Science and Technology Policy Research
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
U14	Midlands State University
WFG	Women's Focus Group
WRL	Work Related Learning
ZANU (PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZIM-Asset	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation

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## **CHAPTER ONE: SETTING THE SCENE**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter structures its discussion on universities and community engagement (CE) in the following manner: purpose and significance of the study, research questions, statement of the problem in the global context; in the African context; in the Zimbabwean context; and with regard to the Midlands State University (MSU) and its CE project.

### **1.1 FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The study sought to explore the nature and process of CE adopted by the MSU in the Zindowe Mberengwa project. The study focuses on how the MSU and the Zindowe Mberengwa CE relationship addresses the core issues of power relations, co-creation of knowledge and community ownership, with the aim for a change that promotes self-reliance.

### **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

There is limited research outside of South Africa, on the African continent, into the way in which universities interact with their communities or how communities respond to university involvement in their affairs (Preece et al., 2012; Biao et al., 2013). In particular, at the MSU although there are some isolated Masters' dissertations which explore the university's engagement in relation to HIV and AIDS, very little research has explored the university's CE process itself and there are no studies which have taken a community development theoretical perspective in analysing its CE activities. This study therefore intends to address the knowledge gap, both theoretically and empirically. These issues will be elaborated on in this chapter and in the ensuing ones.

### **1.3 KEY RESEARCH QUESTION**

The overall question for the study is, drawing on the theories of asset-based community development, adaptive leadership and self-reliance – how does the MSU – Mberengwa CE relationship address power relations, co-creation of knowledge and community ownership for change that promotes self-reliance? This will be addressed by the following sub-questions:

- How does the university interact with the community (ideology, processes, structures)?

- How does the community respond to the university's involvement (ownership over decision making, use of community assets, and the management of power relations)?
- In what ways can the community engagement process and relationships be improved in order to address issues of power, knowledge, decision making and conflicts?

## **1.4 GLOBAL CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY UNIVERSITIES**

As a contribution to building a better world, universities have taken it upon themselves to contribute to the development needs of communities around them through CE. Although universities have always articulated three missions – teaching, research and community service, the latter concept has, in recent years, become more prominent on the global higher education stage and is now usually termed ‘engagement’. This shift in the positioning of universities world-wide was most visibly propounded by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) regional development work between 2004 and 2007. As the organisation’s name suggests, its focus was largely economic (OECD, 2007). Its work was emulated by other organisations which have since then taken forward the concepts of ‘regionalism’ and ‘community engagement’ for broader social development reasons (Preece, 2011). The PASCAL International Observatory, amongst other organisations, has become a major player in CE through the development of a range of projects in various parts of the world. The Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) was created in 1999 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). According to UNESCO (2009) GUNI’s mission was to promote, improve and have a great influence on higher education globally. This was to be done through practices which demonstrate a strong commitment to engagement and interaction. There are other global organisations now concerned with CE and these include the Talloires Network which has more than 350 signatory institutions in over 40 countries (Talloires, 2005). Other organisations include the Higher Education Network for Community Engagement (HENCE), The International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE), Commonwealth Universities Extension and Engagement Network and Living Engagement Australia (Maurrasse, 2001), and the Organisation for Economic Community Development, (2007)

The United Kingdom's (UK) Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU) report (SPRU, 2002) confirms that universities have three missions which are: teaching, research and community engagement. Community engagement here is understood in terms of the various communities involved in any development which includes business, educational, sporting, charitable, and indigenous activities, the development of professional associations and local councils. As the SPRU said in its 2002 report for the Russell Group of universities in the UK:

Universities make contributions to government and civil society as well as the private sector, assisting not only with economic performance but also helping to improve the quality of life and effectiveness of public service. ... Universities perform a wide range of roles, responsibilities and activities. They cut across different economic, political and social networks ... measuring of their third stream activities needs a holistic approach that examines the main channels that bind universities to the rest of society (SPRU, 2002, p. 3).

The SPRU (2002) report addresses the communities' engagement in the context of the British public. It clearly stipulates the role universities should play in their respective societies. This report spells out the Business/Higher Education Round Table's vision on financing universities' CE. It shows how the British government supports plans of having joint ventures between the universities and industry utilising CE programmes. The report is an example of a renewed interest in CE in the more developed industrialised countries in the global 'north'.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2009) has also contributed to the debate and states that universities across the world must contribute more directly to the financial well-being of nations. The UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education raised the profile of university CE to that of being partly responsible for working with communities and nations on development work. It therefore means that universities have to play a pivotal role of engaging students and other stakeholders in their institutions as agents of development. Engaging students to be socially responsible citizens contributes to the university's role as a public good. The public good nature of universities means that the benefits of university education accrue to students being more committed to engaging in citizenship responsibilities and national development than someone who has not been to university. This means that universities have to go beyond their normal duties, that of

teaching and research, and contribute to sustainable development improving the communities as a whole (Howard, 2014).

This role is also evident in the core missions of higher education systems (to educate, to train, to undertake research and, in particular, to contribute to the sustainable development and improvement of society as a whole) which UNESCO has argued should be preserved, reinforced and further expanded, namely to educate highly qualified graduates and responsible citizens and to provide opportunities for higher learning and for learning throughout life. Moreover, higher education has acquired an unprecedented role in present-day society, as a vital component of cultural, social, economic and political development and as a pillar of capacity building, the consolidation of human rights, sustainable development, democracy and peace, in the context of social justice. It is the duty of higher education to ensure that the values and ideals of a culture of peace prevail (UNESCO, 1998b).

UNESCO (2009) further states that researchers from Japan, Hong Kong, Iraq, Israel, Finland, France and Italy have made policy changes aimed at reforming higher education for the national good, on the basis that universities need to avoid taking a defensive stance that can emanate from an inward-looking and self-referential academic culture.

Schuetze (2010) emphasises that universities in the United States and Canada also have the authority to involve communities in various and complex ways. For example, some are involved in the economic, social and cultural development of their societies.

Chapter Two outlines in more detail the evolving nature of CE. Although the third mission was always a feature of university activity it has been changing in its emphasis from one of 'outreach' and 'service' in terms of providing short courses or charitable activities. The current global context for CE is that universities are expected to contribute to regional and community development. This can be seen through the Madrid and the GUNI Conferences which have promoted CE in different universities worldwide including those in South Africa, Botswana, Malawi and the MSU in Zimbabwe just to mention a few. For example, the conference held in Madrid in Spain from June 14 – 16 (2011) was organised by the Talloires Network. Its title was '*Beyond the Ivory Tower*'. Its aim was to create a forum where interested participants could explore how universities could be involved in supporting societies in the quest to be self-sufficient. This would be done by universities pooling their

resources and helping communities solve their challenges such as promoting environmental sustainability, alleviating poverty, promoting health issues and thereby enhancing the quality of life. The perspective of the Madrid conference is an indication of universities demonstrating a more holistic outlook for wider developmental purposes than their traditional elitist image.

Cunningham (2009) also refers to the fact that universities have always had three missions which are: teaching, research and CE – but these missions have not always been given the same degree of attention. Cunningham and Taylor (2009, p. 1) state, however, that, “Universities have reached out and societies have reached in, in a relationship of mutual dependence and enrichment over the years. Universities are now reaching beyond the lecture hall.”

There now exists a two-way relationship between universities and societies which has been gathering momentum in recent years.

The need for the assessment of current policy on CE has been the subject of deliberation for some time by different universities, for example the University of Illinois in Chicago, Valparaiso University and Nova South-Eastern Universities as articulated by Skinner (2008). These universities have focused anew on addressing their mission and vision, ranging from a concern with self-examining ideas about knowledge creation to a concern for the influences of and effects on the societies in which universities work through community engagement. Universities are engaging with their surrounding communities in order to provide a knowledge base responsive to societal needs. Such engagement goes beyond communities seeking expertise from the universities who carry out baseline surveys as their major focus (Duke, 2009). The engagement relationship is now aimed at mutually acquiring knowledge, attitudes and skills through the process of solving problems in partnerships (Talloires, 2005).

In summary, Maurrasse (2001, p. 22) states that the rationale for CE is as follows:

Higher education is a stool, and the stool ‘... has three legs’ research, teaching and service. The service is there because it keeps the teaching and research honest. It keeps them connected to everyday problems that people have to address. And that is part of what the role of an institution of higher education ought to be.

Through CE people learn how they might address social, political and cultural issues. This promotes a sense of civic responsibility and encourages more socially responsible citizens having positive views on issues pertaining to life. This kind of exposure promotes new kinds of cross-cultural collaboration and greater multicultural understanding.

## **1.5 AFRICAN HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The notion of CE is not new in Africa. During the colonial era in the 1950s, a number of extra-mural departments were established whose purpose was to “take the university to the people” (Ajayi, Goma & Johnston, 1996; Preece, Croome, Ngozwana & Ntene, 2011). Former President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, is said to have strategically linked university education in the late 1960s and 1970s with nation building goals of ‘*ujamaa*’ a Swahili word which means ‘working together’. University students were expected to give something back to the communities where they came from. Students were expected to work in rural villages during their vacations as part of their degree assessment (Preece, Ntseane, Modise & Osborne, 2012). In the 1970s, students at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, had to spend part of their vacations in rural villages as part of their degree assessment (Mazrui, 1987). This was justified as a form of appreciation for the tax payer who was paying for their university education. Addressing students at Fourah Bay College in 1974, the then President of the country, Siyaka Stephens, said “As government, we expect every student, male or female to spend at least four weeks working with rural communities” (Leone Star, March 16, 1974, cited in Mazrui 1987). This was a reminder to the students to know where they had come from.

In Malawi in the 1960s, university students spent a whole term working among their rural communities as a way of thanking the tax payers for financing their education (Meredith, 2002). This was also alluded to by Preece et al. (2012) who state that most African universities have had a different trajectory from that of their colonial counterparts. Partly as a reaction to the elitist approach to higher education by their colonial masters, after independence the concept of CE (the university’s third mission articulated at the time as ‘service’ in many African countries) was directed towards seeing the role of universities as a public good for nation building. This focus extended beyond developing an academic elite

which has, until recently been the evolutionary trend of universities in Europe (Ajayi et al., 1996).

Due to the global oil crisis the World Bank stopped investing in higher education in Africa during the 1980s and 1990s. This was then followed by the structural adjustment policies which paid particular attention to a market led approach to education. Sawyerr (2004) reveals that there was a fast decline in the financial support which African universities used to receive from overseas universities. This then resulted in a 'brain drain' of African academic staff to overseas universities, which in turn encouraged further dependence on overseas universities. This decline in support for African universities had a negative impact on the wider development of African nations. More Eurocentric knowledge systems and research strategies were being acquired at the expense of the local indigenous knowledge for development. This had a negative impact on the Africans as they had limited capacity to address their own problems using their own solutions (Sawyerr, 2004). However, recent international interest in the CE role of universities by organisations such as UNESCO (2009) has resulted in a revival of recognition on the continent of the need for universities to be seen as a public good, particularly in the context of lifelong learning. One example of the need for universities to engage with communities as an aspect of lifelong learning is articulated by Otim (1992, p. 82) when he says that:

Unless this is vigorously continued, humanity will come under more attack from nature on so many varied fronts. The hitherto benign climate will turn hostile, good top soils will disappear more rapidly, deforestation will accelerate, aquatic life will diminish at an alarming rate and there will be no time to adapt. That will logically lead to greater confusion, conflicts, wars and finally human extinction. Universities owe at least this much to future generations from whom we have borrowed a fragile planet called earth.

Higher education institutions have been placed on the development map as evidenced by the African Regional Conference (Shabani, 2010). This was done through the mandate to universities to incorporate in their learning the following aspects: African indigenous knowledge, conflict prevention and resolution, encouragement of ICT, democratic values, sustainable development as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and for strengthening higher education governance and management (UNESCO, 2009a, item 2). The

following section outlines some policy contexts for selected countries, most of which are in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

## **1.6 SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY: POLICY CONTEXT**

### **1.6.1 South Africa**

Since democratic rule in 1994, South Africa has enshrined CE in its higher education policy as a post-apartheid agenda. (Department of Education (DoE), 1997; Council on Higher Education (CHE), 2006, 2008). One intention of this policy is to ensure students learn about responsible citizenship and appreciation of diversity. Community engagement in South African policy, however, requires its activities to be seen as part of teaching and research, rather than as a stand-alone activity. So, in South Africa, CE in the national policy is regarded as a scholarly activity (Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), 2013).

A recent publication by Raditloaneng and Chawawa (2015) outlines the policy contexts for four African countries in relation to an earlier Pan-African research project on CE as follows.

### **1.6.2 Lesotho**

According to Raditloaneng and Chawawa (2015, p. 27) the Lesotho policy context for university and community engagement is written in the *Lesotho Vision 2020: National Vision* for Lesotho (Government of Lesotho (GOL), 2001), *Kingdom of Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy* 2004/5 – 2006/7 (GOL, 2004), *Kingdom of Lesotho Education Sector Strategic Plan* 2005–2015 (GOL, 2005), and *National University of Lesotho Strategic Plan* 2007–2012 (National University of Lesotho (NUL), 2007). The other documents used in university community engagement in Lesotho are the Government's *Gender and Development Policy* (GOL, 2003) and *ICT Policy* (GOL, 2005) papers. In Lesotho the university policy on CE has included lifelong learning to address the developmental needs of the nation. This has been done through its mission statement which advocates for commitment to CE through consultancy work by its staff.

### **1.6.3 Botswana**

According to Biao (2010, p.4) Botswana “has a policy context for university community engagement at university level, which is one of the criteria for promotion for university of



Botswana staff.” The policy is inscribed in the *Botswana Vision 2016: National Vision for Botswana* (Government of Botswana (GOB), United Nations Development Programme/Ministry of Finance Development Plan (UNDP/MFDP) as well as its Poverty Reduction Strategy (GOB, 2004); and The Current National Development Plan 10 (GOB, 2004a). Some of the activities the university engages in are research, encouraging participation, democracy and self-reliance. As cited in Biao (2010, p.4) the mission statement is to “improve economic and social conditions for the nation while advancing as a distinctively African university with a regional and international outlook”.

#### **1.6.4 Nigeria**

In Nigeria the policy context for Nigeria’s development in relation to the University of Calabar, is located in the following documents: Nigeria’s *Vision 2020; National Empowerment and Economic Development Strategies (NEEDS)*, *ECOWAS Vision 2020*, *National Policy on Education 2004* and *University of Calabar Strategic Plan 2002–07* (cited in Raditloaneng & Chawawa, 2015).

The university facilitates community service through activities which include sustainable management of the environment and developmental goals. According to Raditloaneng and Chawawa (2015, p.29) the university’s vision which supports CE is, “to attain and maintain the highest form of excellence in teaching, research publications and service.”

#### **1.6.5 Malawi**

Malawi also has a policy context for university and CE written in these documents: *Malawi Vision 2020. National Vision for Malawi* (Government of Malawi 2000), *Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) 2006–2011* (Government of Malawi, 2005), *The National Education Sector Plan (NESP 2008–2017)* (Government of Malawi, 2007) and *The University of Malawi Strategic Plan 2004/5 – 2009/10* (University of Malawi, 2004). These are all cited in Raditloaneng and Chawawa (2015).

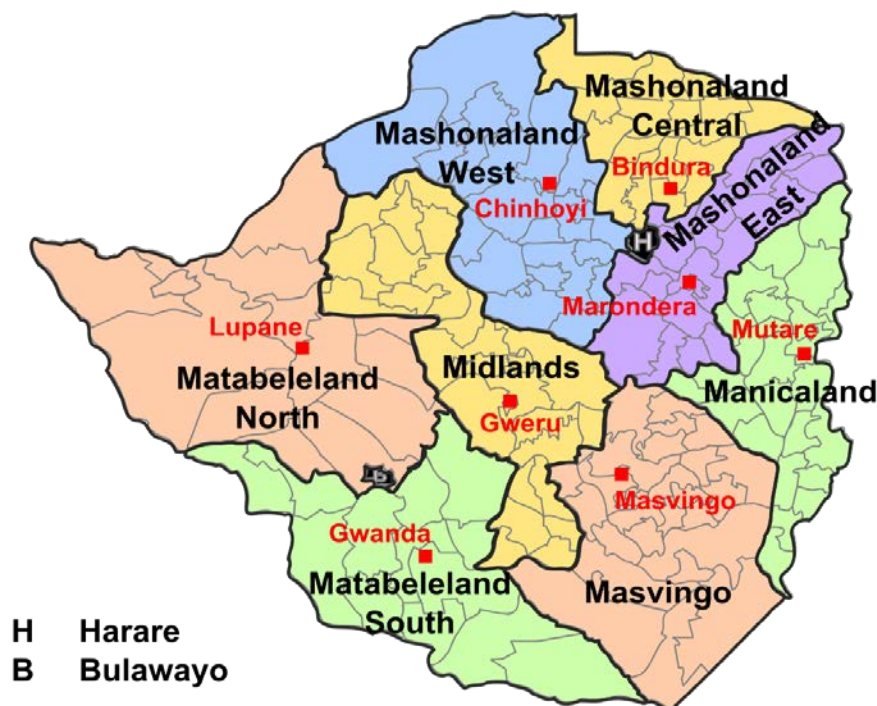
The university vision, which supports university CE, is “to be an academic institution providing relevant world class education, research and services for sustainable development of Malawi and the world (University of Malawi, 2004, p. 12, cited in Raditloaneng & Chawawa, 2015, p. 30).

These summaries indicate that university CE in contemporary African contexts is regarded as a necessary and core activity which should contribute to national development goals.

Since the focus of this study is the MSU in Zimbabwe, the remainder of this chapter provides background information to the Zimbabwe context.

## 1.7 ZIMBABWE CONTEXT

Below is the Zimbabwe Map showing the different provinces.



**Figure 1: Map of Zimbabwe indicating the different provinces in Zimbabwe**

(Source: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources>).

Neighbouring African country, Botswana, is positioned south west of Zimbabwe and South Africa is positioned south of Zimbabwe. They are all members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional groups of countries.

According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO, 2016) Zimbabwe is a land-locked country with a population of about 16.15 million people. The birth rate is, at 31.900 per annum, one of the highest in the world and is exerting pressure on the already depleted general economy (CSO, 2016). According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016) it is

ranked in the low human development category as 154 out of 188 countries, with a population life expectancy of just over 59 years, and 82.9% of the population living below the poverty line. The country is still largely rural with more than 67% living in rural areas where the literacy rates is 86.4%.

A report by Nziramasanga (1999) confirms that President Robert Mugabe became the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe at a ceremony which was officiated by Prince Charles in December 1987. The ZANU (PF) party was modelled on Marxist-Leninist principles and sought to develop a socialist and egalitarian state. Some of its goals were, “to make education a human right, to make education a major instrument for social transformation, to provide education for all and to abolish racial education and develop a common national identity and common locality” (ZANU PF, 2000, p. 10).

In 1980, soon after independence, Zimbabwe seemed to be heading for a great future; born out of civil war but now bursting with new ambition. Mugabe, the revolutionary leader who had embraced the cause of reconciliation, and who now sought a pragmatic way forward, saw rural community development as one of the practical ways of transforming the communities. The ‘developed’ countries donated funds towards development in Zimbabwe. Amid the jubilation, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania had this to say to President Mugabe: “You have inherited a jewel. Keep it that way” (Meredith, 2002, p.15). President Mugabe responded to the advice in the following way; at independence there was only one university in the country – the University of Rhodesia, now the University of Zimbabwe. Today there are ten state universities and five non-state ones built under the leadership of Robert Mugabe.

Beginning in 1980, the Zimbabwean government embarked on massive expansion of the educational sector, including the higher education sector. Ten universities were established and the vision of these state universities was academic excellence which would be manifested by the quality of graduates from each university. Nziramasanga (1999) suggests that President Mugabe advocated for technologically oriented universities which would engage in research and community activities to solve problems that were being encountered by the different communities in Zimbabwe. Continuous efforts have been made by the government in the various facets of the universities to improve on academic, research and community engagement excellence. The goal of CE in Zimbabwe in general is to lay a foundation for community development sustainability. Zimbabwe aims to nurture moral uprightness, and

produce creative and reflective community members who are able to manage and develop their communities with the aim of making them self-reliant (Nziramasa, 1999).

## **1.8 ZIMBABWEAN POLICIES**

In Zimbabwe, the different government ministries coordinate and manage relationships with the communities. Some of these ministries, just to mention a few, are: The Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development, the Ministry of Youth Development Indigenisation and Empowerment, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare. They provide services; develop skills, attitudes and policy in order to enhance vibrant sustainable communities (Government of Zimbabwe, 2004). For example, the Zimbabwe Agriculture Sector Policy Comprehensive Agricultural Policy Framework (2012 – 2032) was introduced in order to address many changes, and to generate income and employment, with a mission statement which is meant to equitably distribute and manage the agricultural land resources through the provision of the appropriate technical and administrative services for the sustainable socio-economic development of Zimbabwe.

The second policy document (Government of Zimbabwe, 2018) which is related to this study is the New Economic Blue Print, also known as the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim-Asset) (Government of Zimbabwe, 2018). This policy document was adopted by government to address socio-economic challenges in Zimbabwe. Its aim is to achieve sustainable development and social equity based on indigenization, empowerment and job creation. In this document, consultation was carried out with the different stakeholders such as ZANU PF Party, the government and the private sector and other stakeholders. The framework is anchored on four clusters as follows:

- food security and nutrition,
- social service and poverty eradication,
- infrastructure and utilities; and
- value addition and beneficiation.

This policy document calls for government and agencies, private sector and development partners and the nation to work together to implement the policy.

The vision of this plan was “Towards an Empowered Society and a Growing Economy Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic transformation October 2013 – December 2018” (Government of Zimbabwe 2018, p.3).” The mission is “to provide an enabling environment for sustainable economic empowerment and social transformation to the people of Zimbabwe” (ibid). The coordination of all activities on this programme is conducted by the Office of the President and Cabinet in order to ensure achievement of the goals.

The third policy document is the draft National Environment Policy (2003) from the Ministry of Environment. This policy deals with how to protect the natural resources in order for the future generations to benefit, embracing the former Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Number 2. These natural resources include wildlife, livestock, water, forests and minerals. The other purpose is to address challenges faced by communities in areas such as water pollution, sanitation and soil science. The policy works with other documents such as the Environment Management Act and Hazardous Substances and Articles Act 76 of 1996. However, it is important to note that the policy is still only in the second draft stage (Food & Nutrition Council, 2014).

However, the extent to which these ministries work in partnership with MSU and communities has never been addressed, particularly in relation to how power differentials are managed between the different agencies.

Zimbabwe has also enshrined community engagement in its higher education policy since independence in 1980 (Ministry of Education, 2004). Each state university has a CE component and among state universities in Zimbabwe it comes in various shapes and sizes often related to how it uses the natural resources where the university is located.

Boost Fellowship (2012) gives the following information about the CE projects that different Zimbabwean universities are engaged in. In the case of Bindura University situated in Mashonaland Central Province in Zimbabwe, Bindura town itself, is facing problems of uncontrolled sewage flows. As a result, the university has engaged in a waste water management initiative to solve the economic and environmental challenges being faced by the community. Some of the objectives were to partner with the community and different

stakeholders in combating the problem of sewage surface flow and to create a healthy environment. This resulted in the reduction of water borne diseases and an improvement in the standard of living.

The Catholic University was founded in 1999 and is located in Harare. In 2010 in this instance, the university started focusing on the empowerment of marginalised women in urban and peri-urban areas with the aim of improving their standard of living and quality of life by broadening markets.

After the Chetsanga Commission, which advocated technology as the corner stone to development in Zimbabwe the Chinhoyi University of Technology was founded in 1999. Part of its mission was to provide community service through quality teaching training and technologically oriented research. Chinhoyi University's project is meant to help the HIV and AIDs infected and affected women make meaningful decisions concerning their lives.

Community engagement at Gwanda State University, which is located in Matabeleland South supports development of farming, mining and cattle ranching because these are the main activities the surrounding communities are engaged in.

Solusi University, which is situated about 50 kilometres from Bulawayo worked with 20 women in Isimbili community which has limited water supplies which makes it impossible for the residents to grow any crops or vegetables. The university project has facilitated employment for the local youths and broader development of the community, therefore reducing their idleness. These projects have also brought in personal developments for individual community members through workshops and promotion of team work.

The National University of Science and Technology also offers different courses as per demand of the community, for example livestock management, business management and projects with church organisations, just to mention a few.

In addition to the Boost Fellowship report, Mpepereki (2013) claims that the University of Zimbabwe, which was established in 1955 and is located in Harare, works with farming communities in Harare in its CE. Some of the activities the University of Zimbabwe students

engage in are entrepreneurial and business skills which include management and funding (Munyanyiwa & Mutsau 2015).

Boost Fellowship (2012) further states that the Women's University, which was founded in 2002 and is located in Harare, targeted the Hatcliffe youths in entrepreneurship initiatives. This was done through vocational skills training in order to improve their standard of living and also to curb socio-economic and environmental ills. The result of this project was employment creation, promotion of a cleaner environment, and the reduction of hygiene related illness.

## **1.9 THE MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY**

The MSU is one of the ten government funded public institutions in Zimbabwe. Due to competing obligations and priorities on the part of government, the resources available have been diminishing, especially in view of the unfavourable macro-economic environment in Zimbabwe. The immediate location of the university is in Senga township, a high density suburb, which offers opportunities for engagement with under-resourced rural communities. The university is located in the Midlands Province, along the mineral rich Great Dyke. The key economic activities of the Midlands community include agriculture, and large scale as well as small scale mining. The bigger part of the province is semi-arid presenting formidable farming challenges to the community and numerous research and community engagement opportunities for the university.

Since its inception in 1999, the MSU has grown phenomenally both in terms of student enrolment and programmes on offer. The growth in student numbers has largely been in response to the overwhelming demand for university education in Zimbabwean communities. Currently the university has a student enrolment of more than 12 000, making it the largest contact institution of higher learning in Zimbabwe (Midlands State University Senate Minutes, 7 May 2013). In response to the socio-economic needs of the nation, the university has also grown in terms of the range of disciplines offered across its seven faculties, namely: Arts, Commerce, Education, Law, Natural Resources Management and Agriculture, Science and Technology, and Social Science. The university runs undergraduate programmes of study under four schemes, namely:

- the Conventional, which absorbs most of the A-level school leavers,
- the Parallel, which absorbs A-level school leavers who attend classes in the late afternoon and evenings,
- the Visiting School which enrolls those in employment; and
- the Block Release, which enrolls holders of the diploma in education and the diploma in agriculture, respectively.

As of 2012 the university had graduated 10 783 students in the various disciplines since its inception (MSU, 2012).

According to the Midlands State University community engagement policy document, *Final Draft Community Engagement Plan* (MSU, n.d.b, p.6), the following are the objectives for university community engagement:

- (a) To assist in the transfer of knowledge generated through theory, indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and research in the university for the benefit of urban and rural communities in Zimbabwe.
- (b) To periodically review, document, approve and supervise projects and activities of departments in various communities.
- (c) To carry out due diligence on all applications for partnerships from internal and external stakeholders and submit recommendations to the work-related learning committee.

The MSU also has students involved in CE. One project that the university is involved in was known as Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), now called ENACTUS. ENACTUS is a collection of the words ‘entrepreneurial’, ‘action’ and ‘us.’ The organisation was established in 1975 and is one of the largest university-based organisations worldwide. Thirty-six (36) countries in the world participate in this organisation. The name was changed from SIFE to ENACTUS on 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2013. It was meant to benefit communities around the university by engaging with them in activities which would change their lives for the better. For instance, in the ENACTUS project at MSU, students are engaged in using renewable energy sources, mainly wind and solar energy, for electricity generation and for rural development (enactus.org, n.d.). Windmills are now instrumental in the generation of



electricity for local rural industry and communities. This project focuses on agriculture and sustainable development through entrepreneurship activities. The purpose is to promote advancement in business by encouraging transparency in small business enterprises in the Senga, Nehosho communities around MSU. It is also intended to create employment opportunities and give skills to the communities.

Similar to the South African policy, MSU's approach to CE is that it should not be viewed as being separate from or unrelated to the teaching and research mission of the university but rather as a way of pursuing the teaching and research activities in collaboration with the community. The approach responds to questions raised by Boyer (2003, p.13) which:

... focus on how and why scholars might choose to become engaged in public work beyond the campus. What roles would scholars play? What contributions would they make as active participants in public work? What kind of challenges and barriers would scholars encounter in their efforts to become engaged in public work and how should they respond to them?

### **1.9.1 Commitment to University Community Engagement**

According to the MSU's community engagement policy document (MSU, n.d.b) the following positions are in place for CE for example, "at an individual level each lecturer is expected to perform the following duties: research, teach and engage the community."

On an institutional level MSU's CE is drawn from the philosophy of the university (MSU, 2000) which is aimed at making a difference to the communities around it. Community engagement at MSU is very organised. It is run by a Dean's committee which reports to the University Registrar. The Dean's committee produces a yearly budget for CE activities. The 'Work Related' department of the university is the secretariat to this committee which is represented by a member from each faculty. The role of this department is explained later.

The MSU's commitment to civic engagement is distinctly encapsulated in its vision. The strategic plan reflects a heightened consciousness towards social responsibility through collaboration with diverse stakeholders. In addition to the above mentioned ENACTUS project there is a community research and training centre at Zindowe in Mberengwa rural district. This was established by the university after observing the hardships experienced in

the locality due to global climatic changes in Eastern and Southern Africa. The project is designed to improve food security and health through education and training of youths and adults. Unreliable rainfall patterns have caused some rural communities to depend on food donations during drought years, despite the fact that the local environment traditionally supplied alternative food sources in times of such need.

According to the MSU's (2000) annual report, such CE projects allow community members to participate actively in developing a creative and morally sound nation, prepared to meet the political, social and economic challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is argued that any development initiatives need to start from the communities. Development in this context would mean development by rural people which liberates the society in order for them to understand their own situation. It means enabling people to examine their own problems, set their own goals and monitor their own achievements in order to add to sustainable development. The thrust of this is to empower people to become a self-reliant nation (Rogers et al., 2008). This approach enables people to understand their own problems and initiate local solutions. If all communities develop then the whole country would have developed (Mazrui, 1986). The philosophy of CE at MSU is drawn from a holistic approach to community development and is founded on the South African concept of *ubuntu* which reflects notions of responsibility, patriotism and moral uprightness and togetherness (Mazrui, 1986). It is a two-way process where the university and the community are sharing knowledge, information, skills and expertise.

As mentioned above, MSU has a Work Related Learning (WRL) programme, which is an integral part of its curriculum. Students in the WRL programme are on work placement for twelve months, during which period they work in the various sectors and organisations in practical learning. The above mentioned community activities are a part of the WRL programmes, with a view to increasing the sustainability of the civic engagement project by providing an ongoing supply of students and expertise to develop local skills. Some contributions from the different disciplines are as follows: The department of Adult Education conducts adult literacy classes to prepare members of the community at Zindowe village, in Mberengwa, for participation in various functional projects. Practicalities are conducted at the community training centre. Students from the Faculty of Natural Resources Management and Agriculture play a critical role in the implementation of the whole project while those from the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies ensure that the

environment is taken care of. Archaeology and Cultural Heritage students look into the preservation of cultural artefacts while Psychology students manage the change processes in terms of the counselling needs of the community.

The utilisation of these local resources and skills development can make a difference to the quality of life for the rural communities. Mazrui (1986), for instance, suggests that the majority of 'O' level school leavers migrate to cities and towns where they add to the pool of the unemployed. Others roam around the communities without employment yet opportunities for entrepreneurship exist within their rural communities. The university's community engagement project is intended to empower such individuals to become self-reliant.

### **1.10 THE ZINDOWE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT**

The Zindowe village is located in the Mberengwa district in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. Mberengwa is the third largest district in the country. It is characterised by a very low rainfall. It lies in region four. Zimbabwe has five rainfall regions. The Zindowe community is in Chief Nyamhonda's area. The distance between the MSU and Zindowe Village is 250 km. Zindowe village is found in Ward 19 of Mberengwa. According to Dube (2013), it has a population of approximately 180 000 people. In 2010, MSU partnered with the Zindowe village in CE. The area was chosen for this project by the university because of the many challenges it faced such as persistent droughts and illiteracy. This was the first community engagement project for the MSU. All the other projects come after this one. The university together with the community established a training centre for the community. The training centre has rooms for students' residences with a library and an early childhood development (ECD) centre. The community has been trained to embark on small projects in livestock rearing such as goat keeping, chicken production, and cattle management. Gardening and the growing of indigenous trees were other activities that were established at the centre. The local community has gone through literacy classes with the help of two primary schools. The teachers have also received in-service workshops in the different subjects from the Faculty of Education at MSU (Gumbo & Nyamwo, 2014).

Selected Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), with the help of some community members have been instrumental in the drilling of boreholes in the Zindowe project. The

students from the MSU also donated cement and labour in order to construct two small dams in order to have water all year around for the community to engage in cash crop farming and for the animals to drink (Dube, 2013).

The above stated projects have generated proceeds which have also helped the community to be self-reliant (Gumbo & Nyawo, 2014).

Although the above writers have outlined the broad practical outcomes of the project, there has not been an in-depth study into the nature of the engagement process. The researcher wanted to analyse the different relationships that exist between the MSU and the Zindowe Mberengwa community in their engagement programme. This research aimed to establish whether these relationships contribute to co-creation of knowledge, community development and transformation and whether the engagement relationships enhance rural sustainability.

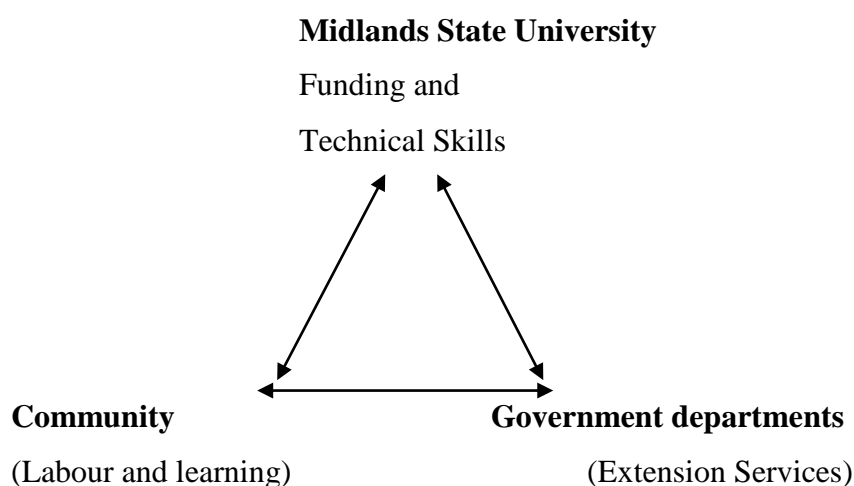
According to the MSU's (n.d.b) *Final Draft Community Engagement Plan* and the MSU's Minutes of the Community Engagement through Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge (CESIK) Committee (MSU, 2010, p. 5), the different players are: MSU, Zindowe community, Ministries of Agriculture, Women's Affairs, Environment and Development and Local Government. Their responsibilities are outlined as follows:

The main role of the Community Engagement Committee is the construction of infrastructure and this is achieved through the mobilization of the community to mould bricks, provide sand and required materials for the construction of the structures identified (MSU, 2010, p.5).

The following diagram outlines the three main players in the community engagement relationship.

The relationship is a mutually beneficial one and the diagram indicates how the three corners of the triangle are expected to work together.

The two way arrows depict an intentional two-way relationship between the different sectors.



**Figure 2: Diagram to illustrate how the community engagement operates at the Midlands State University**

### **1.11 MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY: FUNDING AND TECHNICAL SKILLS**

The university community engagement policy document states that the university intends to contribute to restoring people’s wealth of experience, confidence and wisdom about their environment through working with the community at grassroots level.

The stated enemy to CE and rural development is ignorance which the university is trying to remove through contributing technical advice but the community is expected to implement the advice on the ground for it to be effective. The university thus provides a leadership role in the tripartite relationship. This is in line with the Zim-Asset document produced in October 2013. The vision of the plan is: “Toward an Empowered Society and a Growing Economy” (Zim Asset, 2013, p. 9) The execution of this Zim-Asset Plan was guided by the following mission statement: “To provide an enabling environment for sustainable economic empowerment and social transformation to the people of Zimbabwe” (ibid). In line with the vision and mission of the Zim-Asset Plan, the university has other CE projects running in the Buhera District in Mashonaland East, Chivi District in Masvingo, Silobela District in the Midlands Province and Mangwe District in Matabeleland province. The modus operandi in these areas is very similar to the way the Mberengwa project is run, with the university mainly coming in with technical skills, the community expected to participate with labour and readiness to learn. The government departments such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Community Development, as mandated by the Zim-ASSET policy, provide

extension services. In Buhera District the community is mainly engaged in small animal production, in Chivi district there is fish farming. In Silobela district there is fish farming too. In Mangwe the university focuses on skills transfer and animal production. All these are done in order to augment government efforts in a bid to help and empower rural communities.

The MSU has access to a highly talented resource; for example, the different lecturers from all faculties in the university can provide and apply their knowledge and other university capabilities outside academic environments. The university workforces are, in this way, providing knowledge transfer. The university administration also provides funding. Funding is needed to enhance the facilitation process. The university administration nurtures and provides financial maintenance of the project and this helps to improve the quality of life in the community. There is thus intended to be a symbiotic relationship between the MSU and the communities it serves. However, the working relationships between the university as a technical resource and the communities have never been explored in terms of how the relationship is managed to enable community ownership over decision making. Since the Zindowe village in Mberengwa is the most established CE project, the researcher has focused on this village for its data collection.

Community engagement necessitates the involvement of the community members in the symbiotic relationship. Community members engage in issues and circumstances that concern their development (Moyo, 2005). For example, they may provide labour, finance, knowledge through skills, time, and accommodation for students and participate in development. However, the extent to which community members actually participate in decision making, needs investigating.

## **1.12 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In order to better understand the nature of CE by the MSU, the study adopted an asset-based community development theoretical approach (as articulated by Mathie & Cunningham, 2005), drawing in particular on Heifetz' theory of adaptive leadership, and Nyerere's theory of self-reliance as complementary factors to consider in the community engagement process.

This study looked at three interrelated theoretical perspectives which are explained more fully in Chapter Two. A brief outline follows here.

### **1.12.1 The Asset-based Community Development Theory**

The major theory, the asset-based community development theory, is the major part of the analytical lens because it is based on the premise that communities already have indigenous knowledge and assets and coping strategies which make them resilient to natural community stresses – and which are a potential source of strength for community building as well as a source of learning for the university. The aim is to ensure community ownership over decision making and use of knowledge. The key intended outcomes of asset-based community development theory can be summarised as self-reliance and empowerment, through shared decision making, respect, collaboration, working with and building on existing resources, using bottom up and democratic approaches, where people solve and understand issues from the community's perspective (Swanepoel & DeBeer, 2000; Chambers, 1997).

Ferreira, & Ebersöhn (2012, p. 38) suggest that the “the asset-based process includes raising awareness to the communities, enabling partnerships to collaboratively establish networks and monitor and evaluate the asset-based initiatives.” What it means is that the community is encouraged to be in charge of its situation. Ferreira, & Ebersöhn (2012) further emphasise that the asset-based relationship is identified by good communication skills which may include verbal and non-verbal communication, counselling skills, and teamwork, and good listening skills which will all convey a sense of belonging. The intention is to minimise conflict, and aim for peace and reconciliation.

In this study the researcher sought to establish whether the university CE relationship between the MSU and the Mberengwa community is utilising the characteristics of the asset-based approach.

### **1.12.2 The Adaptive Leadership Theory**

The second complementary theory was the adaptive leadership theory which was identified by Stephenson (2011) in his CE project in the United States of America (USA) as a context sensitive leadership approach that aims to promote change but also encourages exploration of competing goals and values among all partners. The key features of adaptive leadership are identified as respect, clarification of competing values, and collaboration, resulting in empowerment, social change, and an increase in community cohesion. It has been argued that

competing values must be constantly re-negotiated throughout the leadership relationship, in order to clarify what matters most, encourage social learning and change, and develop self-defined norms of responsibility. This approach claims that all participants share control of their situation, and they are in charge of their destiny. In other words, there is no coercion; hence shared ownership of change is eminent (Heifetz, 2001). This theory is relevant for the university CE process because of the inevitable leadership role played by universities in community relations. But the aim of the study is to analyse the extent to which shared ownership over action for change takes place.

Adaptive leadership moves beyond merely providing technical assistance and working towards facilitating community change. It is a way of seeking ways to share expertise and experiences. This study draws from Heifetz's (1994, p. 24) argument that it is necessary to involve communities "through the adaptive capacity of those with authority to mobilise for change". Universities have resources that can mobilise for and contribute to change in communities in order to produce 'socially useful outcomes.' Universities are well positioned to provide this leadership – hence the involvement of the MSU in Mberengwa.

A core desirable outcome of community development is the notion of self-reliance. In the African context this has been addressed through a theoretical approach known as *ujamaa* (sister/brotherhood) by Nyerere.

### **1.12.3 The *Ujamaa* Perspective**

Nyerere's theory of *ujamaa*, leading to self-reliance, has been chosen as a third lens because this is an embedded Africa-centric philosophy that aims to build communities through the use of local resources, a process of dialogue and interaction between universities and communities and practical application of knowledge. Furthermore, it is embedded in adult education principles of building on experience and starting where people are at in terms of their thinking (Nyerere, 1978). Although Meredith (2002) has argued that *ujamaa* failed in Tanzania, this was because there was an apparent lack of consultation amongst the parties involved, leading to the imposition of ideas, in spite of the ideological principles behind *ujamaa*. The people's diverse opinions were not respected and there was insufficient dialogue in the development process. The asset-based community development and adaptive leadership theoretical concepts serve as an analytical framework that encompassed the *ujamaa* principles whilst addressing its original failure to nurture community ownership.



The above development and *ujamaa* theories are compatible with the adult education philosophy of starting where people are at, promotion of dialogue, need for consultation promoting self-concept, self-identity, respect and drawing on existing experience to create new knowledge and understanding (Jarvis, 2012). The adaptive leadership theory is compatible with a collaborative approach towards change which recognises power differentials between the participating agencies.

The intention of the study was to develop an understanding of how all participants understand the CE relationship and whether their experiences reflect the rhetoric of the CE discourse.

While the formal structure and stated role is university led, the researcher wanted to see how much shared ownership there is at community level in the Mberengwa CE project and to what extent the leadership approach reflects an ‘adaptive’ one, as articulated by the theory of Heifetz (1994).

A brief outline of the methodology follows, which will be elaborated on in Chapter Three.

### **1.13 METHODOLOGY**

The interpretive paradigm was used in this study. It was an exploratory study. It was a case study of the CE project of the MSU with the Zindowe Mberengwa community using participatory research approaches. The population encompassed those involved in the Zindowe village of Mberengwa and university staff and students. Purposive sampling was used for university participants (a total of 18: three senior staff members and 15 lecturers) and three key community informants (namely the village chief, councillor and village head) were selected purposively. The snowball – or referral – technique was used to select 20 family heads and eight youths, based on recommendations in turn from those already interviewed. The data collection methods were interviews, focus group discussions, observations, transect walks and documentary analysis for triangulation purposes. People who were interviewed were the university staff, village chief, district councillor, government agent, project coordinator, businessmen and village head, while focus group discussions were held with family heads and the youth. Observations were used to observe interactions in the village between the community and the university participants, and of the community project

activities. Documents in the form of minutes, policy documents and agreements which illustrated the formal CE development process were also analysed. In addition, a transect walk with key village informants provided the opportunity for the community members to highlight their landscape, its assets and vulnerabilities. Data analysis was organised through the qualitative programme of Nvivo in order to inductively identify patterns of responses and themes that were relevant to the study and which could then be examined and re-categorised through the relevant theoretical lenses.

#### **1.14 THE RESEARCHER'S MOTIVATION**

The researcher's background as a university lecturer in adult education motivated the researcher to engage in this study because the researcher is in a position to meet and discuss community issues with students daily. All this puts the researcher in close contact with what happens in the communities. The researcher also teaches a module on community development which has raised issues regarding CE and its impact on community self-reliance.

From the assignments and research by the students whom the researcher teaches in the community development module there is evidence that in Zimbabwe there is some neglect of rural communities in terms of developing practical skills acquisition such as building, carpentry, welding and gardening. It seems that rural communities have also not been enabled to make meaningful decisions on issues concerning their lives, which has affected their ability to be self-sufficient or be in a position to solve their day to day problems. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO's) Institute for Statistics Report (2011) estimated that 83.6% of Zimbabweans aged 15 years and older were literate in 2011. This means that some rural community members are unable to read, write or calculate. This has resulted in rural communities experiencing high unemployment or absence of gainful activities which in turn is resulting in an exodus of the most able rural dwellers out of their communities. There is a need therefore to see how the university can contribute through CE to the learning needs of rural adults.

#### **1.15 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Although there is considerable research in South Africa, in North America and European countries, limited research has been done by universities and students on CE in Zimbabwe.

Out of the 2 399 repositories in the MSU library, only four were done on CE and those only explored engagement with churches rather than with the broader community. This study therefore develops the existing body of knowledge on CE practices by universities.

The significance of the study is that it contributes directly to community development practice within Zimbabwe. This is expected to inform the CE practice across Zimbabwe and in particular improve practices within the MSU and this has potential implications for CE policy in other universities.

The findings are likely to be of importance to the Zimbabwean field of higher education in view of the paucity of national research on the topic. They will also contribute to a small but growing literature on the African continent outside of South Africa and serve as a comparative contribution to the South African literature, on CE.

The findings are intended to provide the government and other stakeholders with better insights into how CE can address power relations and to find out the extent of co-creation of knowledge between the partnership and also whether self-reliance does manifest through the process of community engagement.

At community level the study helped the community to continually assess their strengths and weaknesses.

## **1.16 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The following definitions of key concepts are outlined here. They will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Two in relation to the theoretical framework.

### **Community development**

Bennet's (2010) definition of community development can be summarised as the deliberate attempt by community people to work together to guide the future of their community. It is a holistic approach used to address community needs. Community development starts with the people and is people driven in order to change their way of living for the better.

## **Power**

According to Browne (2009, p.257) power “is the capacity of individuals or groups to get their way in any given situation”.

## **Knowledge**

Gibbons (2006) defines two types of knowledge. Mode 1 is largely located in universities through discoveries of experiments in laboratories and by other authors. Mode 2 knowledge is linked to community-based knowledge and is related to problem solving. Smit and Masoga (2012) also identify indigenous knowledge which is a subset of the concept of knowledge. It is developed over time and associated with experience. In this study the researcher wanted to establish whether the Zindowe community accessed this type of knowledge and whether it was used in the engagement relationship.

## **Self-reliance**

Nyerere (1968, p. 319) coined self-reliance as an indication of community empowerment. He described it as follows, “The doctrine of self-reliance does not mean isolationism. For us self-reliance is a positive affirmation that for our own development, we shall depend upon our own resources.”

## **Rurality**

Rurality, according to Phillimore et al. (1992:32), means the “metropolitan/non-metropolitan” classification of counties; it is the “urban-rural classification of populations developed by the Census Bureau”. In this study rurality will be interpreted in terms of remoteness from urban centres; that is as those areas not classified as urban or metropolitan.

## **Public Good**

The public good aspect of universities, on the one hand, means that the benefits of university education accrue to more than just the individual who is able to access that education. A university graduate is expected to be more committed to engaging in citizenship responsibilities and national development than someone who has not been to university (Howard, 2014).

On the other hand, the public good role of universities extends beyond the students they admit to their degree programmes in the form of acting as an institutional observer to, and

agent of, community development (Preece, 2017). Universities themselves have traditionally embraced a ‘third mission’, besides their focus on teaching and research. This third mission has gone through several phases of interpretation but is understood to contribute to the public good.

### **Community Engagement**

Community engagement is defined broadly as, “the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their wider communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” by Schuetze (2010, p. 25).

The definition and understanding of CE and the university role has changed over time. This will be elaborated on in Chapter Two.

## **1.17 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS**

Chapter One described the background context which includes the motivation for the study, statement of the problem, global context and interest in community engagement, African context, SADC context, Zimbabwe policy context; the MSU policy context and a description of the administrative structure of the CE project and definition of terms.

Chapter Two focuses on the literature review of CE, its evolution as a concept, and the range of studies that have been addressed so far, particularly in relation to the African continent. It discusses key concepts that inform the study such as rurality, ideology, development and community development, followed by an outline and explanation of the complementary features of the theoretical framework.

Chapter Three outlines the research design, approach and methodology including sampling and data analysis, followed by an explanation of ethical considerations and ultimately a description of how the data was collected.

Chapter Four answers the first research sub-question. It presents and discusses findings in relation to the CE development process.

Chapter Five answers the second research sub-question. It explores and discusses key thematic issues such as power dynamics and community/university relationships.

Chapter Six provides conclusions and recommendations and answers the third research sub-question.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this study was to explore the nature and process of university community engagement (CE) adopted by the Midlands State University (MSU) in the Zindowe Mberengwa Project. This chapter reviews literature related to the topic, explains the evolutionary nature of CE terminology, provides a critique of development theories as they relate to the idea of CE and presents the theoretical framework that will guide the study. The structure of this chapter is as follows: definition of community, the historical evolution of the terms 'community service', 'outreach', 'community engagement', and 'service learning' followed by concepts that inform my study, and the theoretical framework.

### **2.1 DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY**

The concept of community has many definitions. Phillips and Pittman (2009, p. 3) define community in:

... geographic terms, such as a neighbourhood or town (place based' or communities of place definitions), or in social terms, such as a group of people sharing common chat rooms on the internet, a national professional association or a labour union (communities of interest definitions).

Indabawa (2006, p. 36) says:

Community is a social, ecological, geographical, legal, political and administrative unit which is equivalent to a society. There is sharing of interests such as language, culture, common values, beliefs and norms. People in a community may share a common interest such as the same religion.

Indabawa and Mpofu (2006) confirm that normally members of a community share a common vision for the development of their area. Edwards and Jones in Swanepoel and De Beer (2011) also define community as a grouping of people who reside in a specific locality and who exercise some degree of local autonomy in organising their social life in such a way that they can, from that locality base, satisfy the full range of their daily needs. This is a

geographical definition which has an element of self-governing. The development of a community may need outsiders and developmental agencies, who in this study is the MSU. This study can be identified as focusing on both a community of place and a social context of shared interest. There are several communities of interest in the Mberengwa community of place which provide different community services.

## **2.2 COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Community service is a concept that is used in a variety of ways and not necessarily in relation to universities. According to Perez (2000), community service was coined in the 1930s during the Great Depression period in Arizona in the USA. Community service was understood to be charity work done by individuals without asking for anything in return. However, community service can be understood from different perspectives depending on the type of institution involved.

Perez (2000) suggests that community service in educational institutions may be conducted for various purposes such as training communities to be responsible and students 'giving back' their time, resources and labour to the communities where they obtained their initial education. Perez (2000) further emphasises that community service may be done as an educational requirement. For example, if the student does not go on attachment he/she does not graduate. Community service may also be conducted for national duty.

Finally, community service can also be conducted as a correctional service for offenders. For example, an individual may be given a certain number of hours prescribed to do community service, maybe at a hospital or government offices. Perez (2000) argues that community service gives room for those involved to reflect on their contributions to society. He further suggests that those involved in community service have an opportunity to meet various kinds of personalities as they carry on with their different duties, environments and situations.

Community service in the university context seeks to improve the life styles of individuals outside the university and to also encourage critical thinking among students in their community service efforts. Perold and Omar (1997) assume that those involved in community service will develop a greater sense of citizenship responsibility towards others. Universities adopted this notion of community service as one of their three missions of



teaching, research and service, although it will be seen that the role and terminology for community service has changed over time. More recent terms in contemporary use are CE and service learning which has become a subset of CE. An alternative concept for community service is ‘outreach’.

## **2.3 ‘OUTREACH’**

Watson (2009) suggests that the concept ‘community engagement’ has changed its definition over the years from ‘outreach’ to ‘community service’, to ‘community engagement’ and more currently ‘community engagement/service learning’. Watson (2009) further suggests that universities have historically been more closely associated with their communities than is sometimes understood. He reveals how the higher education sector has had a multi-faceted approach to community engagement. For example, universities in the UK have always applied some kind of outreach activity since the mid-nineteenth century when their mission included training clergy in their parishes.

Jones (2009) emphasises that universities provided educational opportunities for the local population and all sorts of economic opportunities for the local entrepreneurs. In support of the above idea, Bender (2008) suggests that community outreach originated among the universities in South Africa with the main goal of providing services to societies which are not self-reliant and self-sufficient. The above authors seem to agree that universities have always engaged with their communities. However, Bender (2008) elaborates by mentioning the aim of university outreach. The implication from the above is that outreach is a university strategy to enhance its surrounding community’s life. It has also been argued that this kind of outreach facilitates the use of applied research and learning (Kensen, 2003; Strand, Manillo, Cutfort, Stocker & Donahue, 2003).

## **2.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **2.4.1 Definitions of Community Engagement**

Current CE definitions are as follows:

Community engagement is defined broadly, namely as the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of

knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity Schuetze (2010, p. 25).

In support of the above definition Hall (2010, p. 25) defines CE as follows but places less emphasis on the mutual benefits for university and community. His focus is on a:

... process of creating a shared vision among the community (especially disadvantaged) and partners (local, provincial, national government, Non-Governmental Organisations, higher education institutions, business, donors) in society, as equal partners, that result in a long term collaborative programme of action with outcomes that benefit the whole community equitably.

To add to the above Jones and Wells (2007, p. 407) define:

... community engagement as the process of working collaboratively with relevant partners who share common goals and interests or working collaboratively with and for groups of people affiliated by geographical proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people.

It is also understood to be a reciprocal process of sharing knowledge, information, skills and expertise between the university and the broader community, both internal and external (De Lange, 2012).

Erasmus et al. (2008, p. 61) suggest that the terminology has changed rapidly, particularly for South Africa:

The concept of community engagement in South Africa was unknown until the late 1990s when it became embedded in higher education policy as a response to redressing the evils of apartheid. The concept in South Africa has changed over the years from 'community service' to 'community engagement' and now to a 'scholarship' of community engagement.

Preece (2017, p. 18) summarises the current functions of university CE in the South African context as follows:

What has emerged is that community engagement, in its various forms – socially responsive research, partnerships with civil society organisations, formal learning programmes that engage students in community work as a formal part of their academic programmes, and many other formal and informal aspects of academic work – has become a part of the work of universities in South Africa.

The common features found in these definitions are that engagement is a reciprocal process, which entails partnering with the community, involving research with community participants, sharing of information and skills, learning from each other, development of social responsibility and building trust between community and university groups of people working together. Networking, collaboration between different stakeholders and community mobilisation are also some common features.

Schuetze (2010) suggests that the idea of engagement between universities and society complements the other two missions of the universities which are teaching and research. It is important to note that Schuetze (2010) suggests that in CE universities are committed to community partnership to address critical issues as part of their outreach missions. Community engagement is intended to benefit communities through partnership activities such as the development of effective community leadership, and the reduction of poverty by engaging in activities that would develop self-reliant and self-sufficient communities. Schuetze (2010) argues that CE is more than attending to society's needs. It is the social responsibility of universities. It has to do with the development of productive and responsible citizens who are able to make decisions for and with their community.

University CE has always taken place in different forms. It has always advocated for the wellbeing of communities. Bringle (1995) and Wolf-Wendel (2000) agree that university CE is not anything new.

Under the broad banner of CE studies with a wider focus concentrate on regional participation between institutions, such as the PASCAL International Observatory and its

learning cities concepts (Inman & Schütze, 2010). Others concentrate on local communities. Kruss et al. (2012), in South Africa, carried out a study on *Reconceptualising engagement: a conceptual framework for analysing university interaction with external social partners*. The aim of the article is to provide principles and how these could be used to guide empirical research, institutional strategic planning and national higher education policy processes. The conceptual origins lie in an unfolding body of research on the changing role of universities in economic development, using a national system of innovation framework. Kruss et al. (2012) regard CE as the university interacting and exchanging knowledge with the community.

Olowu (2012) discusses the challenges in standards for CE and the strategies that are used in South Africa. The aim of the article is to provide principles on university CE within the South African context. Some of the findings of the study were a need to pay attention to relationships when working together and to focus on barriers that would be met when collaborating. The study recommended learning from other universities' experiences, finding most effective ways in which universities should engage with their local societies and then making the necessary recommendations. This particular study becomes relevant to my study in that it focuses on issues of relationships and team work.

A common theme in the literature is how CE should link with the university curriculum as a mutual learning activity (Bender, 2008; Hlengwa, 2010). The authors suggest that the curriculum for CE should be needs specific. It should not be imposed on the community. It should be a two-way relationship where both parties are learning from each other. This would lead to opportunities to develop sustained relationships with the communities in which students have served. Furthermore, Bringle and Hatcher (2007) suggest that curricula for university CE should impact on the community.

Another theme in the South African literature are the models of CE (O'Brien, 2010; Kruss, 2011; Bender, 2006). For example, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) (2009) talks about three models. One is the 'silo' approach, whereby CE is done by isolated individuals rather than as a whole institution approach. According to Bender (2008), in this model community service and engagement are usually limited to community outreach. The 'intersecting' model has some involvement with teaching and research. The third model is called 'infusion' whereby a whole institution approach integrates teaching and research with CE activity. Bender (2008) elaborates on the three CHE models. She argues that the

institution needs to change its way of working so that the relationship is more reciprocal. She argues that all models involve different levels of power flows.

From the available literature it appears that the definition of CE has been changing over the years to suit the different educational aims. The shift can be seen to have moved from concepts such as ‘outreach’ and community service, to the more currently in use notions of CE and service learning and therefore CE goes beyond merely supporting extension programmes and the notion of ‘service’.

#### **2.4.2 Community Engagement Studies in Africa**

Nampota (2011) analysed the CE activities in four African universities which explored the extent to which CE would address the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Nampota’s (2011) analysis indicates that the activities that were carried out in the four country contexts did address national development priorities. In Nigeria, for instance, participatory development included training of female farmers in agricultural programmes. Raditloaneng et al. (2011), in the same pan African study, suggest that universities in Botswana have used their third mission to engage communities to participate in projects which address national development priorities. These projects are intended for self-empowerment, self-development and self-reliance. An example of such participation is found at a women’s cooperative called Odi Weavers. In this project the community produced different products such as wall hangings, tablecloths, jackets, and bedspreads which are hand-dyed. Students from the University of Botswana assisted them in developing their business and marketing skills. Further afield, Openjuru and Ikoja-Odongo (2012) describe a Ugandan university’s CE activities and cite an example of adopting a village to provide model farming methods. Horton (2014) also researched on the impact of service learning in a post-conflict society in Liberia. The outcomes of the research were that the service learning activities contributed to students experiencing a healing of wounds emanating from earlier conflicts.

In South Africa there have been studies mostly on service learning, for example pedagogical processes and service learning, student experiences and service learning and the benefits of community service learning for students (Erasmus, 2011; Hlengwa, 2010; Bender & Jordaan, 2007; Carvalho-Malekane, 2010). The concept is discussed in more detail in section 2.4.5. However, outside of South Africa very little research beyond the above pan African study has been carried out on CE on the continent. Zimbabwe is no exception, as indicated below.

#### ***2.4.2.1 Community Engagement Studies in Zimbabwe***

All the State Universities in Zimbabwe are involved in university CE work. Although reports have been produced to highlight the activities the different universities have engaged in, there have been few research-led reports. For example, at the MSU, the students have taken part in projects in Mberengwa and Senga, just to mention a few places. But there has been little in the way of follow up studies.

From the institutional repository (2012–2013), only four students at the MSU out of 2 399 in the degree and masters groups have researched on universities and community engagement. The areas covered were university involvement with church organisations, and university involvement with HIV and AIDS. Mabika (2012) also confirms that there has been little research done on the process of university involvement in community engagement. Not much is known about whether universities are applying community development principles in their engagement let alone whether these will work. The available existing literature in Zimbabwe has failed to address critical aspects of my study which is focusing on the CE process itself as a theoretical approach, the need for community voice, how power relationships are managed and a theoretical analysis of the CE process. This study attempts to partially address this gap in knowledge by exploring and identifying the nature of CE adopted by the MSU in the Mberengwa Rural Community project.

#### **2.4.3 Benefits of Community Engagement**

According to Holland (2005) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2001) some of the benefits of CE are strengthening public trust between communities and agencies, improving transparency, enhancing civic capacity and creating more sustainable development policies.

Holland (2005) argues that the other benefit of CE is that it helps to solve many interconnecting issues at a community level. An example is networking which promotes teamwork and acquisition of more information resulting in better solutions to problems. Holland (2005) also suggests that when universities involve community members, and encourage more participation at a grass roots level this has a positive influence on community ownership of the project. In other words, this ensures openness on the part of the participants

resulting in more participation, ownership and empowerment. The community feels accepted, valued and motivated in relation to development needs.

Holland (2005) suggests that conducive working relationships such as respect, openness, two-way communication, and commitment encourage communities to be self-reliant and creative. Relationship-building with communities provides good communication approaches that can be used in different contexts. Finally, collaboration between universities and NGOs can help NGOs and universities to assess, track and judge their own programmes. The researcher wanted to establish whether this is the same with the relationship between the MSU and the Zindowe Mberengwa community.

#### **2.4.4 Critiques of University Community Engagement**

University CE research has been criticised for not focusing sufficiently on the community voice and not addressing power differentials between the university and the community (Preece, 2016; Osman & Castle, 2006). Power dynamics, for example, affect the communication process, and how the community and the university consult each other in the process of CE. Sinclair et al. (2003) support Osman and Castle (2006) when they say that university CE has been criticised for power imbalances. Community and community-university relations are known for political and power struggles which may undermine the value of community engagement. Sinclair et al. (2003) further say that the disadvantaged and minority people are less likely to participate in the governance of projects. Participation is usually dominated by the more educated and wealthier members of a community.

Fryer (2012) also suggests that some of the challenges of CE concern the power dynamics. It is argued that universities hold more power than the communities they are in. For example, experiences of being judged or marked by professors, being criticised by professors and maybe even feeling intimidated by professors can sometimes be humiliating. This study wanted to find out how the Mberengwa community feels when working with the MSU doctors and professors and what impact it has on the partnership.

The other challenge, according to Fryer (2012), is caused by cultural differences between the academy and the community. People of a homogeneous culture will interact and share the same norms, values and beliefs. However, in a community relationship of different cultures people may break the rules of the other culture. If universities fail to recognise that they are

entering into a different cultural space and need to adjust their behaviour, they will alienate potential community collaborators.

Finally, Sinclair et al. (2003) say that supporting CE processes can drain resources, with the result that the activity takes too long and costs too much. Operational factors may include pressures which have to do with people's time, lack of funding, overcoming competing priorities and institutional differences and distances between campuses and community settings. There is a need for both partners to learn new skills. There is also a need to engage and maintain community involvement and commitment beyond the initial engagement phase.

More recently, researchers have begun to explore CE dimensions. Van der Merwe and Albertyn (2009) have carried out studies using community development theories which advocate for participatory approaches. Van der Merwe and Albertyn (2009) advocate for the emancipatory approach which is a useful and important tool for individuals to engage in learning through the transformation of experiences and self-understanding. They further suggest that the emancipatory approach is the best way to accomplish the goal of empowerment as it focuses on participation, dialogue, critical thinking and consciousness-raising.

In summary, university CE aims to be participatory in nature. Universities are seeking to generate, apply and use knowledge that is relevant to communities. It is linked to the university's 'third mission'. It is not a new idea though the terminology has changed over the years. Universities are perceived as contributing to and fulfilling historic roles in promoting 'the social purpose role of universities'. Community engagement entails collective involvement between the communities and universities. This means that there is a partnership relationship which may involve a number of agencies. The researcher understands that CE must have a two-way relationship that forms partnerships with communities which yield mutually beneficial outcomes such as driving social change. University CE also involves helping to solve some social issues among the disadvantaged and the development of the cultural and intellectual fabric of the community. It deals with responding to social ills and community problems and should be seen as a catalyst for positive action. It is also one aspect of universities' work to develop productive and responsible citizens. This represents the role that universities play for the public good. Public good refers to giving back to individuals, groups, and communities through teaching, learning and research. It also involves creating



dialogue, listening and acknowledging their experiences. This entails a social justice approach to knowledge creation to ensure that universities are more relevant to societies. The students also benefit by learning how to address social, political and cultural issues of a community. This encourages responsible graduates willing to work for the improvement of the quality of life for all sectors of society. As they learn, they also provide a service, which in many contexts is called ‘service learning’.

#### **2.4.5 ‘Service Learning’**

Service learning has come to be seen as a distinctive component of CE.

Bringle and Hatcher (1995, p. 112) claim that:

Service learning is a credit bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and students reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

The primary beneficiary in service learning is meant to be the community. However, the main goal for service learning is to facilitate students’ learning by rendering a service to a community. It therefore integrates community service with mainstream academic activities.

Bender et al. (2006), Wolf Wendel (2000), and Bringle and Hatcher’s (2002) understanding of the characteristics of service learning can be summarised as promoting academic learning by facilitating purposeful civic learning and ultimately social responsibility; impacting positively on the quality of life of the community and finally with the aim of achieving a course outcome.

There are several examples of service learning studies. They largely emanate from the United States of America and South Africa. One example is a study by O’Brien (2012) which aims to construct a service learning theoretical framework that is grounded in the South African context. She identifies different discourses of service learning which range from ‘scholarly’, ‘benevolent’ and ‘democratic’ engagement to ‘professional’ engagement, depending on the motives and behaviours of the university’s service learning approach (pp. 199-206).

Service learning has become a popular focus for South African universities. Most of South African academic literature focuses on service learning as a pedagogy (for example, Erasmus, 2011). This pedagogical philosophy draws on the experiential teaching and learning theories of Dewey, Schoen and Kolb (Bender & Jordan, 2007; Hamilton & Young, 2001). Service learning is incorporated into curricula (Hlengwa, 2010; Petersen & Henning, 2010). Other themes include the student experience of service learning. Such studies explore, for example, the benefits of community service learning for students (Carvalho-Malekane, 2010). Preece (2012) discusses the use of diversified methods and strategies when addressing community challenges and the idea of incorporating their views when dealing with challenges. Preece and Manicom (2015), in their study, focused on the lack of community voice and also learning spaces. Preece (2013) also focuses on the challenges of an adaptive leadership approach in CE and service learning programmes in South African universities. Some recommendations include the need for continuous communication which would include feedback, negotiating benefits for the community and listening to the community voice.

Bender, Daniels, Lazarus, Naude and Sattar (2006) suggest that service learning is for both the community and the students. Its main goal is to facilitate student learning by rendering a service to society. It includes regular, relevant and meaningful structured sessions/activities for students in the universities as well as placement time in communities. The activities are intended to impact positively on the quality of life of the community while students get a real world experience. Bringle and Hatcher (2002) argue that with service learning the societies become a laboratory for both research and learning. It therefore is not the same as having field trips.

The MSU runs a programme that is similar to service learning which is known as work related learning (WRL). Students are attached to organisations for ten months to do on the job training. After these ten months students get a report from their supervisor who is the lecturer and an assessment report, from the employer. Copies of the WRL report are submitted to the department three weeks before the end of the year. Students who fail to hand in the work related reports on time are deemed to have failed. Students who fail the work related programme will not proceed to the next level of the programme (MSU, 2016).

#### ***2.4.5.1 Critiques of service learning***

Butin (2006), Blouin and Perry (2009), Seider, Huguley and Novick (2013) and Bortolin (2011) suggest, however, that service learning focuses more on the student than the community. Hence the community voice is often not sufficiently considered. The approach did not give sufficient consideration to power dynamics in the community. Service learning may not even take cognisance of the diverse perspectives of the students.

Mahlolomaholo (2006), Keene and Colligan (2004), Butin (2006;2010), Blouin and Perry (2009), Bortolin (2011) and Seider, Huguley and Novick (2013) all allude to the fact that service learning has its limits. Some of them, just to mention a few, are: that it is short term, it does not contribute to long term goals of sustainable development and as a result it does not sufficiently empower communities to be self-sustaining. There is potentially promotion of inequality through the different power dynamics. Bortolin (2011) contends that with service learning the community is mostly not considered as a partner, students and the universities are the beneficiaries. This means that the community voice is not incorporated in all the activities undertaken. Preece (2017), among others argues, therefore, that service learning is best accommodated when it is incorporated into a wider CE project.

Now follows a brief discussion of development theories which have evolved over time and how these relate to CE.

## **2.5 DEVELOPMENT THEORIES WHICH HAVE INFLUENCED THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP**

In formerly colonised countries, as a condition of independence, financial aid required ‘development plans’ from recipient countries. The Merriam Webster’s Learner’s Dictionary (2008) defines development as the act or process of growing or causing something to grow or become larger or more advanced. It is an act or process of creating something over a period of time. The dominant development theories that have been used in the African context and in the form of the background to my study are modernisation, neo-liberalism, populism and human development theories.

### **2.5.1 Modernisation Theory**

Modernisation theory, is based on a top-down approach, and assumes that people need to be trained with new skills because the skills or expertise that they have are not regarded as

useful for the capitalist economy. Modernisation focuses on change – socially, economically, culturally and politically. It is premised on the idea of transforming backward peasant economies into ones with technological skills and it has been criticised for being Eurocentric in its approach, not being relevant to the African context and likely to lead to a dependency syndrome (Brown et al., 2009), whereby expertise only comes from outsiders. Many well-intended economic and human resource development projects have gone to waste in Africa because of wrong perceptions, assumptions and presumptions in their planning and implementation phases (Otim, 1992; Ferguson and Lohmann, 1994). The top-down approach was adopted by the colonial masters in dealing with Africans. It was an erroneous but deliberate misconception that economic and human resources development could be brought about by rejecting African indigenous traditional institutions, knowledge, experience and culture. This was so because everything African was perceived as ‘backward’, ‘uncivilised’ and ‘primitive’. Because of this attitude, there has, until recently, been little attempt or effort to develop an alternative socio-political system or mechanisms which could be based on African cultural settings to promote participatory economic and human resources development. The belief that the inherited colonial institutions were capable of promoting rapid economic and human resources development encouraged raw directives from the top to be handed out to the grass-roots people in total disregard of their knowledge, experience, cultural values and socio-political institutions. As a result, a gulf of perceptions has often led to the failure of projects because of silent resistance within those countries (Ferguson & Lohmann, 1994). The side effects were the failure of these very programmes that were meant to help the poor people. It is now argued that rural people are not naive nor naturally poor. Their current condition and poverty is the product of having unsustainable development strategies imposed on them by different developmental agencies (Ferguson & Lohmann, 1994).

### **2.5.2 Neo-Liberal Theory**

According to Youngman (2000), neo-liberal theory was a follow up to the modernisation theory. He suggests that the neo-liberal theory is market oriented, with a focus on the free market and survival of the fittest. Its emphasis is still on skills training in order to contribute to development and still operates on a deficit model whereby skills in rural communities are deemed to be lacking and in need of external intervention. Furthermore, the concept’s main focus came about in the wake of structural adjustment programmes and financial instability. As such it is mostly imposed on communities and fails to take account of local needs or

resources. There is therefore an implicit assumption with these development theories that development has to address community deficits.

### **2.5.3 Populism Theory**

After the modernisation and neo-liberal theories had failed to improve the quality of people's lives, the populism theory emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with different ideas on what development is meant to achieve. The theory calls for people centred development. In this type of development, the people are involved in the decision-making processes. They are part and parcel of the development process. The idea of involving grassroots groups is important in this theory. The theory advocates for dialogue between development agencies and the ordinary people. It was advocated by adult educators such as Paulo Freire. However, although it achieved some success at a local level (Kirkwood & Kirkwood, 1989) it did not capture the imagination of development advocates at a more universal level (Youngman, 2000).

### **2.5.4 Human Development Theory**

The human development theory reflects on a more recent evolution of the concept of development as an organic process. The human development theory is now more commonly used by development agencies. Its emphasis is that one has to be in control of one's own development within the norms of the society. Its emphasis is towards a more bottom-up, community centred approach (Youngman, 2000). This latter theory is captured in community development discourses that argue for an asset-based approach to development (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012) and is in response to substantial criticism of the other theoretical approaches. This theory is the one more relevant to the notion of self-reliance and helped to inform my study as it advocates that the starting point in any development project should be to listen to and learn from the people who are seeking development. It is argued that the top-bottom approach to development ignores people's wealth of experience and wisdom about their own environment. Development therefore should take cognisance of the people's experiences and culture (Ferguson & Lohmann, 1994). The human development approach is people centred. The human development theory encourages participatory development in order to improve people's standard of living thereby bringing about self-reliance to communities and increasing personal knowledge of the people involved. Streeten (1992) suggests that human development theory has a multi-dimensional vision where social, political and environmental perspectives are clearly encompassed.

The current university CE philosophy also claims that the CE relationship is a collaborative, mutually beneficial partnership whereby all parties learn from each other (Schuetze, 2010). Although the CE philosophy has evolved over time from being a more unidirectional approach of ‘outreach’ and ‘service’ the current focus on engagement represents a departure from the dominant development approaches of international organisations that have defined development in terms of community deficit. The new community development and CE discourses argue for learning mutuality alongside community empowerment.

This rationale explains the intervention of the MSU in CE which endeavours to adopt a consultative development approach to empower poor people. However, before discussing the theoretical framework in detail it is necessary to introduce some key concepts that help to inform the study and the theoretical framework.

## **2.6 CONCEPTS THAT INFORM THE STUDY**

### **2.6.1 Community Development Theory**

Community development is a community based application of development theories which have evolved over time.

The key elements of community development are given in the following definitions.

Bennet (2010) refers to community development as the deliberate attempt by community people to work together to guide the future of their community. De Beer (2011, p. 17) supports this notion by using the term ‘collective effort’ and adds that the focus should be on achieving a ‘better life’. The UN’s definition (in Biggs, 1999) emphasises that community development is a process and that it also requires communities working with governmental authorities with a view to contributing to national progress. From the above definitions the authors seem to agree that community development is a grassroots process which is meant for poverty alleviation thereby improving the quality of life. The community through community development is also assisted to become accountable to itself and others. This suggests that the community development process will lead to an ability to manage change. The idea that people and government authorities need to work together suggests the need for a holistic approach to address community needs. Community development is both a process and an outcome (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2011). It is often seen as requiring professional intervention (Phillips & Pittman, 2009) though Brennan (2013) also states that community development

can come from actors from within a community. Community development however, has also evolved in terms of approach and understanding.

#### *2.6.1.2 Early History of Community Development*

Phillips and Pittman (2009) state that community development has its roots in social movements which emanated from the 1840s, that is in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They contend that in America, community development was coined 'civil society' or community regeneration. The main players were both government and NGOs. According to Phillips and Pittman (2009) not much was done towards community development between 1890s up to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1950 and 1960 community development corporations were formed. This started with the USA housing act of 1949. Mayo (1975, p. 130) alludes to the fact that in the UK community development was seen during the 1950s as a:

... response to the growth of nationalism, and, in part an outcome of a desire to increase the rate of industrial and economic development. During the 1950s the United Nations made use of the British literature and experiences in Africa and India.

According to Brennan (2013), by the 1970s most northern countries were engaged in community development with the aim of establishing community organisations among grassroots communities that would use a more bottom-up approach which would result in ownership, participation and self-sustainability. Community development involves the participation of networks, groups and individuals. Around this time two journals were established. These were *Community Development* in the UK and *Community Development of the Society* in North America. Aspects covered were social, physical environmental and economic.

The early community development models were based on the notion that communities had needs and these deficits had to be addressed through interventions by professional workers. The process has occurred throughout history for as long as there was a society (Phillips & Pittman, 2009).

In the global 'South', community development became important as a colonial initiative in the 1920s in East Africa. It was understood as a way of helping local people better their quality of life. In later years community development became popular in many southern countries and resulted in a number of initiatives such as the Swaraj Movement in India, *ujamaa* in Tanzania, adult literacy programmes in Brazil by Paulo Freire and education with production in Zimbabwe.

Although community development started as a colonial initiative in the 1920s, the focus in this study is on recent literature which highlights community development principles in contemporary development contexts.

Community development in recent times bases its overall strategy on concepts of respect for community members and democratic participation for collaborative working for change. Brennan (2013) states that dialogue, listening, respect, good relationships and networking are important ingredients for community development. These play a vital role in the organising of the activities and the learning process. For example, creating a trustworthy relationship between the partners aims to promote engagement as a truly shared venture.

Gilchrist (2004, p. 25) stated that:

The development of a community is about strengthening and extending networks of relationships between individuals, between organizations, and just as importantly, between different sectors and agencies. Working to establish and maintain these networks is fundamental to effective community development work.

#### ***2.6.1.3 Principles and Functions of Community Development***

The principles of community development appear to have shifted in the last 20 years. Maser's (1997) focus was on the need to establish developed communities which are sustainable, based on social justice and mutual respect. The results of this approach are identified as leading to improved economic, social and cultural conditions of the community. Maser (1997) suggests that this would lead to the community members contributing fully to national progress and being able to develop solutions to its problems.



Swanepoel et al. (2011) built on Maser's ideas. They argue that when principles of community development are utilised, the result is active involvement by the society on issues concerning their lives. They outline their different principles of community development as follows.

Swanepoel et al. (2011) claim that in community development projects, it is important to start where the people are at. They further elaborate that the training should be done in a locally acceptable way in terms of methods and facilities. For example, the language used by the facilitator and dress code should be compatible with community culture. Swanepoel et al.'s ideas facilitate the element of inclusiveness, embrace diversity and promote the participation of minority groups such as people with disabilities and women.

The other principle emphasises building relationships over time between the community and the development agent. This is important as the process focuses on ensuring the agent has a deeper understanding of the community, its culture, values, beliefs and norms; for example, having knowledge about a community's rest days and different activities to engage in.

In relation to this study, understanding the different religious systems in the Mberengwa community, such as different belief systems were of great importance. Knowing the value systems of the community may assist in reducing conflicts and help community members come up with their own ideas for the relevant programmes which are suitable for their requirements.

As was articulated by Swanepoel et al. (2011), community development requires cooperation with government. This can be done by acknowledging whichever political leadership is in power. In this study, this was done by liaising with the local leadership structure such as chieftainships, headmen, councillors in the Mberengwa community in order to get their support.

Finally, Swanepoel et al. (2011) suggest that small scale initiatives are more effective because the community is able to see achievable outcomes in a relatively short space of time. The principle of learning is learning by doing. All involved in community development must learn through participation in practical activities and decision making. Community development theories which focus on a bottom-up, community-led approach to community

empowerment reflect adult learning principles of starting where people are and building on their existing knowledge and experiences (Knowles, 1980). In this particular study the researcher wanted to establish whether the MSU was adopting such community development principles in its CE work.

Since the Zindowe community is located in a rural area, the following section discusses the concept of rurality.

### **2.6.2 Rurality**

A literature search on definitions of rurality has indicated that the definitions vary widely. The inconsistency and failure to state exactly what is meant by 'rural' makes comparisons between the different studies difficult (Hlalele, 2014; Balfour, 2008).

Coming up with a clear definition for the concept 'rural' has apparently been a conceptual problem for some time. Coladarci (2007, p.2) suggests that, "there is no singular or multifaceted definition that will suffice to satisfy the research and policy communities that employ the concept."

Budge (2004, p. 5) suggests there are four variables in rurality. These are "labour, space, place, (which may include connectedness, development of identity culture, activism and engagement) and time". Budge states that studies on rurality cover areas such as rural teachers, challenges of rural teachers, rural learning and teaching. Howley (1995) emphasises that rural areas always lag behind developmental issues as a result of the little research being carried out in these areas. Kline et al. (2013) also confirm that studies on rurality have been covered in the same areas as highlighted by Budge (2004). However, the available literature fails to address adequately the extent of involvement between the rural communities and the universities; for example, the relationship between the MSU and the Zindowe Mberengwa community. This study attempted to address this gap.

O'Brien (2008), Butler and Menzies (2007) talk of rural communities as areas on the periphery which have valuable rich indigenous knowledge that is critical to development. Hence the need to attend to the community voices in development strategies. Since the Zindowe Mberengwa community is in a rural location, this study investigated the nature of university CE paying particular attention to the population size, land use patterns, social

characteristics, and remoteness from urban centres and socio-economic classification. The study also wanted to find out whether indigenous knowledge systems or Eurocentric ideas have an influence on rurality as observed by Moletsane (2011) in her inaugural lecture on rurality. A range of agencies, such as the religious or tribal authority structures, agricultural systems, and the will of the community, are taken into account in this study. Each of these organisations have powers of their own and so it is relevant to briefly discuss the concept of power.

### **2.6.3 Power**

Power, according to Browne (2009, p. 257), “is the capacity of individuals or groups to get their way in any given situation”. Power is viewed as a process with many outcomes and relationships. Browne (2009) further suggests that power is the ability to act. For example, one group may prevail over the other such as in the political sphere and in the economic sphere. Alternatively, values and beliefs of the rich may be imposed at the expense of those who are poor. The rich may dictate ideologies to the poor through force, threat and coercion. The rich dominate power at all levels according to Albertyn and Daniels (2009) and Bringle et al. (2009). This view is also supported by Keene and Golligan (2004) who state that universities are better placed than communities in terms of power over materials, knowledge and know-how. Maintaining a balance between the two is therefore a challenge for CE activities.

On the other hand, Foucault’s (1980) focus on power is that it is a relationship rather than an act. Foucault (1980) further argues that power relations are held in place through normative discourses that are supported by regulatory procedures. The above definitions reveal that power can be a discursive influence or force. Depending on how power is used, it may lead to productive, destructive or integrative outcomes. Foucault (1980) suggests that dialogue can be the main expression of power relations. There are several types of power to which I now turn.

#### ***2.6.3.1 Types of power***

Browne (2009) asserts that there are two types of power; these are termed unilateral and relational. Unilateral power is basically power over a people used by government and large corporations. Relational power is reasoned power. It is power based on charisma. It is a

higher form of participatory power. Relational power can entail organising people around common values, relationships and issues so that they can bring about the change they desire. Browne (ibid) further talks of mutual power which falls under relational power. This power will respect each other's power and positions, working together for common objectives. It is a negotiating exercise of power. There is also what is known as reciprocal power where each party is of equal strength and is equally participative in the decision-making process.

#### **2.6.3.2 Use of power**

Browne (2009) suggests that power may be used positively to educate, negotiate, manipulate, influence, work together, to be proactive, make decisions, to identify constraining factors in daily operations, to set the agenda. This can lead to empowerment. Empowerment entails more than having the power to make decisions. It requires the knowledge and understanding to make the correct decisions. In its purest form, empowerment means the acquisition of power and the ability to give it effect (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2000). This is key to rural sustainable development. Chiva (2003) also supports the above when he says that power, politics, conflict, collaboration, dialogue and culture are vital factors in the learning process. Since power relations shape activities on the ground this concept is relevant to this study as the research focus is to explore who is benefiting in this engagement relationship. Whether power differences are built in the Zindowe community or whether the Zindowe community has control over their social, cultural, economic and political lives was yet to be verified. However, it is speculated that the way communities use their power can result in them being rich or poor.

#### **2.6.4 Poverty**

Indabawa and Mpofu (2006, p.120) define poverty as “an individual's inability to meet the basic needs for food, shelter, education and health”. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2000) sees poverty as a feeling of powerlessness and the inability to be heard. UNDP (2007, p. 21) further alludes to the fact that “poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity”. According to the World Bank (2012), males see poverty as associated with a lack of material possessions while females see poverty as a lack of food security. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the UN (2015) estimates that about 780 million people (12.9%) in developing countries live on less than USD 1.25 a day.

Poverty may also be categorised into two types which are absolute poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty refers to where an individual lacks all the basics of life such as food, water, health; shelter and education. Relative poverty is defined by Schackleton et al. (2003, p.37) as a situation:

... where income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living considered acceptable in the society in which they live. Because of their poverty, they may experience multiple disadvantages through unemployment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care and barriers to lifelong learning, culture, sport and recreation. They are often excluded and marginalised from participating in activities (economic, social and cultural) that are the norm for other people and their access to fundamental rights may be restricted.

Usually people who experience poverty are the unemployed, old, sick, women and disabled since these groups are likely to have little or no resources. Both absolute and relative poverty levels are applicable in a developing country context (UN, 2008).

According to the World Bank (2001) and others (Bryceson, 2005; Aliyu, 2002), the main causes of poverty are unemployment due to lack of skills, droughts and floods, wars and violence, lack of income and assets with which a person secures basic necessities, lack of opportunity to participate in decision-making resulting in powerlessness, low productivity due to political instability, inability to harness local resources for development, misappropriation of state resources meant for people's needs, unequal distribution of wealth, and laziness. The World Bank (2016) claims that poverty levels have remained at around 41% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa. There have been signs of progress, since the mid-1990s. However, there is uneven distribution of resources across the region. Nevertheless, the UN (2008) in its report on poverty suggests that rural development has a great chance of reducing poverty. This may be done by engaging in sustainable projects which may enable communities to build better livelihoods. This study reflected on how the MSU CE initiative is contributing to reducing poverty through collaborative efforts with the Zindowe community through promoting awareness, sharing practices and promoting capacity building.

### **2.6.5 Ideology**

According to Browne et al (2009 p 4) ideology is regarded ‘as a set of ideas and values shared by a social group that:

- Provides a particular vision or way of seeing and interpreting the world;
- Presents only a partial, incomplete or false view of reality;
- Expresses and justifies (legitimizes) the interests of particular social or political groups.

From the above definition it can be assumed that the MSU community engagement project, through its development plan was based on a set of shared ideas and values about the role of CE based on a set of assumptions or view about the reality of the Mberwengwa rural community as a community in need of intervention. It can also be assumed that the community also shared a set of expectations and ideas about the university and its potential relationship with them. The study sought to examine how these relationships were articulated by different participants.

We now turn to knowledge creation which is a focus of CE.

### **2.6.6 Creation of Knowledge**

Different communities have different ways of producing knowledge. Gibbons (2006) states that there are two modes of knowledge production. These are Mode 1, and Mode 2. Mode 1 refers to knowledge production that is data oriented, scientific and research-oriented. This type of knowledge production uses a lot of data tools which rural areas do not have for various reasons such as a lack of electricity and laboratories.

Mode 2 is locally acquired knowledge or ‘socially robust’ knowledge because it has emerged through experience says Gibbons (2006, p. 28). At the project site in Zindowe, this is how knowledge has been traditionally produced. Hierarchy plays a major role in the production of this knowledge as it is alleged that the older one is the more wisdom one has and the more effective one is in communication and the more that person has knowledge which can be shared through effective team work in the community. Mode 2 is said to produce its knowledge socially through gatherings and meetings. Through socialisation both the young and the old learn. At the project site in Zindowe Mberengwa a lot of knowledge production is passed on socially as elders meet often to share ideas on how to make the project more

productive and to chart the way forward. The young learn from the old who are considered wise.

To the Zindowe community, indigenous knowledge reflects their life style and their relationship to the environment, how they structure that indigenous knowledge of cultural beliefs and history to enhance their lives (Mabika, 2012). Some of the knowledge the Zindowe community has used is the flora to produce medicines, organic fertilizers to fertilize the fields, fauna for meat and skins. Game hunting was highly selective and indigenous knowledge systems educated their young only to hunt during the dry season when the animals were mature and out of season. Young and pregnant animals were only killed by mistake. They knew the breeding cycle of different animal species, their feeding habits and their daily and seasonal movements. Seasoned hunters were skilful wildlife ecologists. Habits of birds were linked with the various layers of shrubs and trees; canopy. The people made sure these canopy structures were not destroyed. The practice of shifting cultivation was based on established ideals and obligations other than avarice and profit, as is the case today. The age-old and self-regenerating agricultural practice embraced culture as well as the moral and socio-political demands of society, whose organisation considered land not as a private property but as the basis of community life. Shifting cultivation, intercropping agro-forestry and long rotational crop-livestock systems were embodied in indigenous agriculture, representing unique efforts by peasant Africans to manage and protect their environment and biodiversity. The reckless destruction of forests was not allowed (Mabika, 2012).

#### **2.6.7 Participation**

Participation is a vital element in any developmental programme as it helps the local population to take part in decision-making. Participation entails communities taking collective responsibility in shaping their own future and solving their own problems (Seers, 2004). De Beer and Swanepoel (1998, p. 6) say participation may mean that:

Communities are allowed direct and ultimate control in taking decisions concerning their affairs. Participation requires recognition and use of local capacities and should avoid the imposition of priorities from the outside. Some of the characteristics of participation are identified in the literature as having a say in matters that affect that community on a day to day basis, getting involved from the initial stage of the development project, having a

sense of ownership and acquiring skills in order to create better quality of life.

The benefits of participation include learning, sharing skills, knowledge and experiences. It entails being able to resolve conflicts at different levels.

Cornwall (2008) cites Pretty (1996) by identifying different types of participation which I now discuss.

#### ***2.6.7.1 Typology of participation by Pretty (1996) cited in Cornwall (2008)***

*Passive* participation means that community may be in attendance at the project but withdrawn, for example, just attending activities and not making meaningful contributions in terms of decision-making in relation to their day to day issues. It may also mean accepting announcements by management but with no input by the community. The people's voice is not heard. '*Consultation*' participation means that individuals and societies are involved by being consulted. In this participation, however, the views of the community may not be taken into account. '*Manipulative*' participation is when the people are encouraged to believe they are participating but they do not have power so participation is more of a pretence than a reality. Participation '*by material*' is where the community is participating through their labour; an example would be food for work projects. This is where people are entitled to food handouts after having worked or laboured.

The researcher wanted to find out whether any of these typologies of participation were experienced at the MSU CE project and what the effects were on the project.

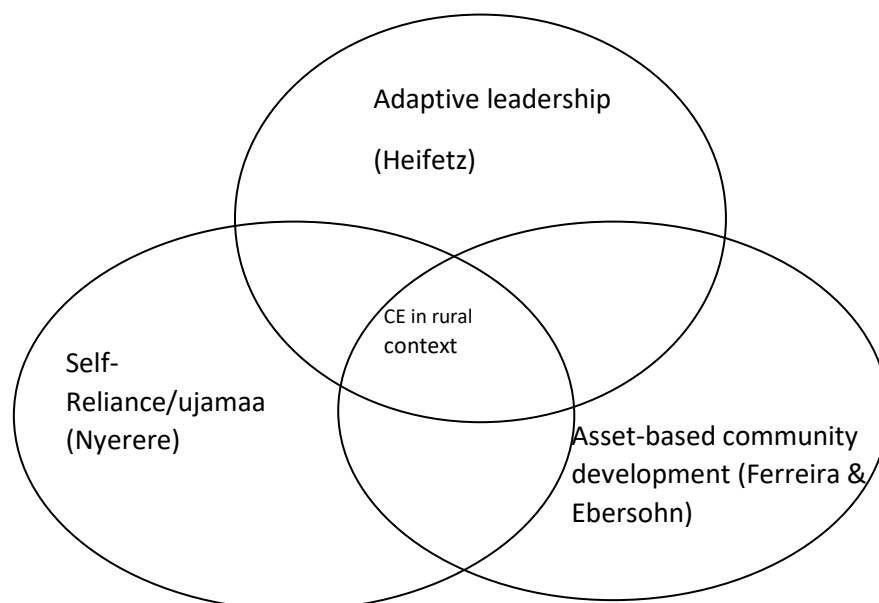
## **2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this particular study the researcher used the following theories as a framework to analyse the findings. These are asset-based community development theories supported by Nyerere's notion of self-reliance and *ujamaa* and Heifetz's notion of adaptive leadership. The diagram that follows suggests how they interface to contribute to an assessment of CE in the Mbrenywa rural context.



In order to better understand the nature of CE by the MSU, the study adopted an asset-based community development theoretical approach, drawing on Heifetz’s theory of adaptive leadership and Nyerere’s theory of self-reliance as complementary factors which reflect a human development approach to CE.

Preece (2017) and Bullen (2007) state that there are a number of community development models such as promotion of community action, leadership and skills development (adult education and/or participation in community development process) and strengthening community connectedness. In recent years, however, there has been a shift in terminology towards the notion of asset-based development, as a reaction to the needs-based models which work on the basis that communities are in deficit, are vulnerable and require ‘fixing’ by external agencies. The asset-based approach starts with the premise that all communities have assets and strengths.



**Figure 3: Interface of the three theories for community engagement**

The above diagram indicates the three theories shared similar concepts. These are summarised in Table 3 later in this chapter. Example concepts that were shared include, respect, collaboration, and participation in decision-making with shared goals of empowerment and increased autonomy.

### **2.7.1 Asset-based Approach**

Asset-based community development was popularised by Kretzman and Knight in 1993 and strengthened as an approach by Mathie and Cunningham during the early years of the new millennium. These authors state that the key features of the asset-based approach are that it is person centred, it builds and uses local knowledge and it focuses on relationship building amongst the partners involved, so that the community is empowered in areas such as decision making, planning and prioritising identified needs. Inclusion of the disadvantaged is also a key element of the asset-based approach, which aims to nurture and strengthen societies through teamwork. Mathie and Peters (2014), Brennan (2013), Ferreira and Ebersöhn (2012), Yeneabat and Butterfield (2012) and Foot (2012) all argue that the asset-based approach makes use of local resources and indigenous knowledge in order to introduce change and enhance the quality of life. Examples of these assets would include professional expertise, workforce and infrastructure. The principles of asset-based community development are internally focused, relationship driven and asset-based (Wu & Pearce, 2012).

The asset-based approach is a developmental philosophy that seeks to identify strengths within the society for sustainable development. It is concerned with how the communities can utilise the asset-based approach for promoting development ‘of’ instead of ‘in’ communities with an emphasis on independence, effectiveness and empowerment (Yeneabat & Butterfield, 2012; Chirisa, 2009; Wu & Pearce, 2012).

McKnight and Pandak (2004) state that one takes the following steps when engaging in asset-based community development:

1. identifying the gifts, skills and capacities of the people, in an inclusive way;
2. recognising community assets and mapping assets within communities;
3. mobilising assets through social life such as involving religious groups, political groups and informal groups.

Ferreira, R., & Ebersöhn (2012) suggest that the process includes encouraging communities to recognise their own strengths, and to use partnerships to work collaboratively and map out their own assets.

Hence the first theory, asset-based community development theory, is a core feature of the analytical lens because it is based on the premise that communities already have indigenous knowledge and assets and coping strategies which make them resilient to natural community stresses – and which are a potential source of strength for community building as well as a source of learning for the university. The aim is to ensure community ownership over decision making. The key features of asset-based development theory are asset mapping, self-reliance, empowerment, decision making, respect, collaboration, working with and building on existing resources, using a bottom-up and democratic approach, where people solve and understand issues from the community's perspective (Ryan & Roche, 2016; Mathie & Peters, 2014; Swanepoel & De Beer, 2011; Wu & Pearce, 2012; Chambers, 2013).

#### *2.7.1.1 Critique of asset-based community development*

According to Nel (2006) the approach has had many critics, especially in the developing world, since it is based mostly on work in first world countries, particularly in the US.

Mason and Beard (2008) seem to suggest that the asset-based approach does not take into account power dynamics, and promotes inequalities as it separates the society and groups from each other. Furthermore, it is difficult to use as it does not have an effective evaluation tool (Foot, 2012).

Nevertheless, it is a potentially useful philosophy when supported by the principles expressed in the African-centred *ujamaa* concept and the notion of adaptive leadership, because it provides a comprehensive set of concepts that can be used to evaluate the Zindowe project. It has not been used much in Africa but does fit in with African value systems such as those advocated by *ujamaa*.

#### *2.7.2 Ujamaa*

Nyerere's philosophy is essentially humanist and grounded firmly in African value systems. His concern was to promote the development of schools, learners and the community. Nyerere (1980) advocated for a school curriculum that would prepare citizens for life by giving them the necessary skills to make them responsible citizens. He believed in education that was meaningful and relevant to all aspects of life. According to Nyerere (1980) proper education had to be directed at helping people to develop themselves and be more reliable.

Such education had to encourage people to be critical thinkers who were able to make meaningful decisions that concerned them. He further stated that education should result in people working together, reduction of idleness and with the emphasis on developing a work ethic in the society as a whole. To this end he introduced the *ujamaa* villages.

*Ujamaa* is the Swahili word for family-hood and it reflects Nyerere's economic and social policy when he was the President of Tanzania, between 1964 and 1985. According to Stoger-Eising (2000) and Osabu-Kle (2000), *ujamaa* was rooted in traditional African values. It is based on three essentials which are freedom, equality and unity. It is a very radical philosophy but it was, however, introduced without the proper training and understanding on the part of the people of Tanzania. When he became President, Nyerere had to steer a very difficult course. Tanzania was at the time one of the world's poorest countries. It was suffering from a severe foreign debt burden, a decrease in foreign aid and a fall in the price of basic commodities (Sadler, 1999). To solve these problems, Nyerere introduced the collectivisation of agriculture, villagisation and large-scale nationalisation, including the nationalisation of the banks and industry, which was seen by many scholars as a unique blend of socialism and communal life. The whole vision was set out in the Arusha Declaration of 1967. The focus of the whole vision was on rural development where more than 70% of the population lived. At first people were encouraged to live and work on a co-operative basis in organised villages. The idea of *ujamaa* was to extend traditional values and responsibilities around kinship to Tanzania as a whole (Mulenga, 2001).

*Ujamaa* as a policy was not intended to be merely a revival of old settlement schemes. These villages were based on the post Arusha Declaration understanding which was based on the need to develop people and not things. People needed not to be developed by others but to develop themselves. In this respect Nyerere's ideas for development concurred with the principles of asset-based community development because they emphasised building on the assets that people already had and the idea that villagers should help themselves. These villages were intended to be socialised organisations created by the people (Nyerere, 1980). They were to be governed by those who lived and worked in them. Only those people within these villages had any say on how they were to be organised and run. No one was to be forced to go into these villages on principle, although in practice some people were forced to go in. Basic skills were imparted to the people before and after they entered the villages. Education was vital for understanding the full concept of *ujamaa*. People were to join these

collectives because they had understood what the collectives meant for their lives and families. According to Mulenga (2001), it would seem the two broad purposes of *ujamaa* were the link between intellectual and manual labour and the development of a humanistic ethics of care.

Agriculture was key to the success of the *ujamaa* villages. The land tenure system needed to be reformed to stimulate progress towards a more permanent strategy which would eliminate the current state of affairs where individuals or families had very little influence on long term decisions. When land was controlled by government or by a powerful few individuals the majority had little motivation for environmental protection and sustainable development. Cultivation of the land was based on established ideals and obligations other than avarice and profit. Land was to be for agricultural practice which embraced culture as well as the moral and socio-political demands of society. Land was not considered as private property but as a basis of community life. Hence land was to be shared by all the community members through the allocation by political institutions of authority. The equitable distribution of land among the members of the village or community was the guiding principle. It was considered immoral to leave any member of the village landless. Even after sharing the land, if any member experienced crop failure for one reason or another, those with a good harvest made a contribution to the unfortunate member to see him or her through to the next harvest. The cooperative spirit was therefore well entrenched in the *ujamaa* village culture (Mulenga, 2001). The biblical spirit of 'love thy neighbour as you love thyself' was the enduring foundation for this approach.

Nyerere had realised that it was much easier to provide services such as health care, education, water, electricity and other essential services when people remained in their villages. As a result of *ujamaa*, Tanzania created high literacy rates because schools were within walking distance. Parents were also able to build their own schools through collective action. Tanzania was also to halve its infant mortality rate through access to medical care and education (Stoger-Eising, 2000).

Gelfand (1999), in the context of Zimbabwe, shares Nyerere's African philosophy on the concept of brotherhood, the love of a good family life and close support for its members including good neighbourliness as the pillar of the Zimbabwean culture. According to Mulenga (2001), in South Africa the concept of *ubuntu* shares similar aspirations.

### 2.7.2.1 Self-reliance

Self-reliance was a core feature of Nyerere's approach to adult education. This became a key element of his philosophy of involving universities in the development of communities. But the aim was to ensure that students learned from their communities as well as communities benefiting from the students' engagement in community development.

Since self-reliance was a key feature of Nyerere's philosophy this section looks at this concept in more detail, with a view to identifying how it relates to the more recent ideas in asset-based community development theory. Self-reliance is an aspect of *ujamaa* in that the concept of family-hood implies the principle of inclusion, cooperation, participation, unity and working together for a common purpose. The communities learn to work for themselves which will result in greater self-sufficiency.

Nyerere (1968, p. 319) coined this as 'self-reliance'. This is supported by his words: "The doctrine of self-reliance does not mean isolationism. For us self-reliance is a positive affirmation that for our own development, we shall depend upon our own resources."

This means that education should be able to provide people with skills and knowledge to make and execute decisions and to meet their daily needs. Such skills would include, for example, gardening, poultry, building and weaving, just to mention a few. The term 'self-reliance' means many things to different people depending on one's background. The Merriam Webster Dictionary (2010) refers to self-reliance as having confidence in and exercising one's own powers of judgement. Analysis of the above definitions shows that self-reliance is the ability to depend on one's self to get things done; meaning meeting one's needs using one's own efforts, abilities and resources; having confidence in and exercising one's own judgment. What then did Nyerere see in self-reliance which he thought could help his country Tanzania?

According to Nyerere (1968), the truth is that our rural people are not naïve nor naturally poor. Their current predicament and poverty are the product of having been muzzled by unsustainable development strategies imposed on them – hence development should be for

‘man’ (people), by ‘man’ (people) and of ‘man’ (people). Nyerere wanted to see an education system that would work for the common good, foster co-operation and promote equality. There is an overlap of ideas with the asset-based community development theory in terms of self-reliance, empowerment, collaboration and ownership.

Nyerere (1968) proposed an education system for Tanzania that would bring about changes in the following: rural issues, a process where both the facilitator and learner would be involved; primary education which would have to start at seven years when the learners were old enough to engage in self-reliant and productive work; and that education was to produce critical thinkers and self-reliant learners.

Nyerere’s educational reforms as articulated above met with some success and some failures. The policies, like many new policies, were never fully implemented for various reasons. One of the main reasons was shortage of resources, as Tanzania was one of the poorest countries in the world and there was a lot of resistance from the people (Kassam, 1995).

Kassam (1995) states that Nyerere advocated that facilitators and learners should engage in productive activities. Learners were to participate in the planning and decision-making process of organising the activities. The active participation of learners was key to any success of self-reliant activities. Nyerere’s intention was that, once the learners became active while in school, they would continue these activities after school. Communities would become owners of these projects because they would be involved from the initial stages and they would then participate at all levels of these projects’ development. This philosophy is also reflected in progressive adult education philosophies. For instance, Freire (1972) also notes that teachers should actively involve the learners in the learning process. An emphasis on active participation is expected to encourage the idea of self-reliance.

Nyerere, as cited by Akinpelu (1981, p.122), stated “The object of teaching must be the provision of knowledge, skills and attitudes which will serve the student when he/she lives and works in the changing socialist state, it must not be aimed at university entrance.”

Nyerere wanted education that learners could apply to the real world as has been pointed out. His philosophy was a reaction to the colonialist regime which, as Otim (1992) says, greatly undermined their indigenous cultural heritage, their capacity for collective self-reliance and

coached them into becoming greedy profiteers. Valuable indigenous systems of conserving the continent's biodiversity, prevention of environmental degradation and promotion of sustainability have since been eroded, wrote Otim.

Nyerere lamented the destruction of indigenous institutions and the structure of the authority of elders by the colonial powers. The destruction, according to Nyerere, undermined the pride and prestige of the local rulers and their people. According to Mulenga (2001) and Rappaport (1987) Nyerere was against Western education which to him was Eurocentric and promoted communities to be dependent on hand-outs from other countries so that they became beggars and lost their respect and dignity. With their traditional powers removed, the elders could no longer enforce environmental protection measures according to indigenous rules. That marked the beginning of what Nyerere saw as the rural development crisis. This is what Nyerere wanted to address through his concept of *ujamaa* and self-reliance. Because the majority of Africans were agriculturalists, Nyerere felt that education was supposed to be geared towards agriculture.

To this effect, Nyerere stated that "Agricultural progress is indeed the basis of Tanzanian development. ...We need in this country more citizens, who know modern productive agriculture, and are prepared to undertake hard work which is involved in increasing our agricultural output (Nyerere, 1968a, p. 105)."

Thus self-sufficiency and self-support were critical to Nyerere's thinking and teaching. The people of Tanzania were urged to produce their own food, build their own schools and clinics in order not to rely on foreign aid. Hence this saying by Nyerere: "do not give man a fish but teach him how to catch a fish".

The whole thrust of the Zindowe Mberengwa project, the focus of my study, is based on Nyerere's concept of self-reliance. The university ideology for this in the community engagement plan is not to impose ideas on the community. It aims to be there to learn and share ideas with the community. Thus the MSU aims to learn about indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) as well as impart new innovations from research to the community, all aimed at making the community members self-reliant (MSU, 2001). The university CE project, on paper, aims to emulate many of these ideas.



The Zindowe Mberengwa project is situated in a different era in history. Capitalism is now perceived as almost the only viable world order (Jarvis, 2007). Resources are still scarce in Zimbabwe, but various political initiatives have been undertaken that still reflect Nyerere's overall vision, which to a certain extent, creates a potentially conducive climate to the principles of self-reliance.

For instance, in relation to self-reliance in Zimbabwe, Hansard (2017) argues that various women empowerment and income generating projects are funded by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development. Hansard documents that women's cooperative groups are given loans to embark on projects such as agriculture, mining, bakeries and cross-border trade, amongst many others. Gono (2007) elaborates on the national infrastructure community development programmes in Zimbabwe that have received funding from the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. Twenty-six of the country's local authorities benefited in the re-orientation programmes such as agricultural development activities, construction of small and medium size dams, dip tank construction and re-forestation projects. The main thrust of these projects is to promote self-reliance and community empowerment to enable the people to take responsibility for managing and maximising the sustainable use of their own natural resource base, with a view to sustainable socio-economic and rural development. The MSU's mission statement emphasises its commitment to enhance the quality of people's lives through new ideas and skills for the sustainable utilisation of resources, thereby resulting in the self-reliance of communities (MSU, 2001). This study aimed to find out whether this vision played out in reality with the Mberengwa Project.

The authors cited above who discuss self-reliance share the words empowerment, decision making by the participants, active participation by the learner, use of local resources and critical thinking. Nyerere (1980) emphasises that communities should be empowered with the right skills and attitudes in order for them to be able to come up with meaningful decisions that affect their daily lives. The final picture of what self-reliance is can perhaps be summarised as follows. Education must encourage the development of people to become free citizens and be self-sufficient. The community must thrive to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes for it to be self-reliant. Self-reliance goals should help communities to avoid the donor syndrome but instead be able to live independently and freely with others.

Self-reliance is an outcome and a reflection of communities working as a family to bring about change and development. Mathur (1986) also supports this idea when he says that self-reliance should help communities to live independently and freely with others. Self-reliance relates to this particular study in that the study sought to find out ways in which the Mberengwa community was being empowered to be a self-sufficient society.

Any new innovation is not without some disadvantages and *ujamaa* is not an exception. As a result of *ujamaa*'s focus only on villages, transportation networks declined drastically through neglect (Major & Mulvihill, 2009; Kassam, 1995). It became extremely difficult to travel from rural areas to major towns. Produce from the villages was thus very difficult to sell to markets in urban areas. Industry and banks were seriously crippled due to nationalisation. Production in the villages was very low due to a lack of cooperation on the part of the villagers which resulted in food shortages. Not much produce was exported which meant that Tanzania had to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. As a result, *ujamaa* left the country seriously dependent on international aid. Swahili became the official language for the country which led to a lot of people failing to speak English which in turn made it difficult for many Tanzanians to work outside the country. All teaching in schools was done in *kiSwahili*, so many people found themselves unable to speak English.

The removal of English administrators also crippled the smooth running of the country as most of the people who were appointed had very little knowledge, if any, of administration (Major & Mulvihill, 2009). All these were setbacks which Tanzania is still grappling with to this day. This study therefore sought to see if such disadvantages could be avoided in the Zindowe Mberengwa project.

The tables that follow focus on the key characteristics of *ujamaa*.

Self-reliance relates to this particular study in that the study sought to find out ways in which the Zindowe community in Mberengwa can be empowered to be a self-reliant society. University CE at the MSU aimed to develop similar goals to those articulated by Nyerere in terms of self-reliance and *ujamaa* (MSU, 2001).

**Table 1: Key characteristics of *ujamaa***

Concept	Interpretation
Unity	People living in villages as one family. People working together as teams. Good family life, oneness/harmony. Unity was considered as power.
Freedom	Human relationships Individual rights/morality Culture Human dignity
Equality	Fostering of care. People's welfare Emphasis on equality of possessions Close support, sharing /benefiting from each other

**Table 2: Key characteristics of self-reliance as an outcome of *ujamaa***

Concept	Interpretation
Self determination	People solving their own problems.
Empowerment	Multi- dimensional social processes of helping people gain control of their lives.  It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and their societies by acting on issues they define as important.
Critical thinking	The ability to think clearly and rationally, it includes ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking.  It includes: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• weighing what is good or bad;</li> <li>• identifying common mistakes and reasons;</li> <li>• solving problems systematically;</li> <li>• identifying relevance and importance of ideas;</li> <li>• reflecting on justification of one's own beliefs and values.</li> </ul> <p>Critical thinking can also be defined as reasonable, reflective, responsible and skilful thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe and do.</p>

However, while the asset-based community development theory and *ujamaa* provide complementary principles for community self-development, they do not dwell on the challenges of leading communities to attain these goals. Recent literature has explored the

concept of adaptive leadership as a potential resource to facilitate community development and this concept is also included in the theoretical framework.

### **2.7.3 Adaptive Leadership**

#### ***2.7.3.1 Its origin***

Heifetz is an organisational theorist who claims that his theory can be applied in a wide range of contexts including community organisations. In 1994, Heifetz's adaptive leadership theory was introduced to the world of leadership study. Heifetz (1994, p. 45) states that:

Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilising people to tackle tough challenges and thrive. It is about making changes that enable the capacity to thrive. Such changes are founded on the past rather than jettisoning it. Adaptive leadership is about will and skill. The single most important skill and most undervalued capacity for exercising adaptive leadership is diagnosis which translates to mission analysis.

The interpretation of the above quote is that there is a need for a professional to be a mediator, to interact and communicate with those experiencing particular challenges. The key points in adaptive leadership are self-organisation, and the ability to work with less bureaucracy, more participatory approaches and open channels of communication.

Heifetz (1994, p. 46) suggests that "adaptive leadership includes being a change agent". Heifetz (1994) suggests that this means helping other members of the organisation, especially the key leaders, to recognise that an environment is changing and building consensus as change is occurring. This perspective relates to community development in that professional community development workers aim to improve people's lives by exposing them to more dialogue, respecting them and involving them in decision making. This entails working with the local leadership and key informants to bring about awareness and to identify the change needed. Adaptive leadership provides a model for major social change. Adaptive work consists of learning to address conflicts in the values people hold. Heifetz (1994) views adaptive leadership as a practice in which the leadership does not provide solutions to the challenges. Instead the practice gives the community the mandate to solve its own problems, thereby encouraging community ownership of solutions. Heifetz (1994) states that the

adaptive leadership theory requires learning how to manage communities, respect them, and allow for diversity in order to introduce social change.

According to Heifetz and Linsky (2004), adaptive leadership demands several conditions. Some of the core features of adaptive leadership are respecting conflict, applying good listening skills, a willingness to negotiate, respect for a diversity of views within a community but with a view to working towards community cohesion. More core features are the development of norms of responsibility, learning and innovation, keeping social distress within a bearable range and the inclusion of competing value perspectives and collaboration.

According to Schmied et al. (2010, p. 322), some of the key elements of collaboration include, “Having a ‘shared vision and value’, valuing each other’s contributions; attention to power issues in relationships, securing sufficient resources and time to build the necessary relationships between participants and ensuring suitable communication.”

Holladay (2012) emphasises that one of the characteristics of collaboration is treating individuals with respect. He further elaborates that individuals have different perspectives on different issues which need to be taken into account in any collaboration. Heifetz (1994) further suggests that the leader is expected to establish collaborative, robust networks with others and must ensure fairness and equitable access to the system’s wealth and opportunities. Dialogue will be crucial, and dialogue around the values of sustainability will be central to any effort to effectively bring about social change. He further says there is a need to trust and reflect on whatever is going on in the community. Adaptive leadership ultimately aims to result in community ownership over decision-making.

There are examples of studies on CE in universities which have used adaptive leadership theory. Stephenson (2011) drew on adaptive leadership theory to build a more collaborative relationship between his university and neighbouring communities. He found adaptive leadership useful as communities consist of complex relationships and issues which require a participatory approach between a range of actors. Hlalele et al. (2015), Preece (2013), and Preece (2016) have used adaptive leadership theory in analysing university CE. It is argued that universities have research skills but do not necessarily see their communities as research partners. The study, by linking adaptive leadership to CE explored how the university performs its leadership role in a community context.

The issues that the adaptive leadership approach seems to be addressing are pertinent to the Zindowe Mberengwa context which is beset with conflicting views and ethnic divisions. It was decided therefore that many of the adaptive leadership approaches and skills were relevant to an asset-based community development approach to facilitating change.

The key points in adaptive leadership of self-organisation and the ability to work with less bureaucracy, more participatory approaches and open channels of communication, are key to managing conflict and ethnic divisions. Heifetz (2010) states that adaptive leaders assess the prevailing situation in order to identify key issues which lead to the needed strategy to achieve the change. This approach would fit well with the asset-based community development theory which emphasises the need to conduct an asset mapping exercise as the first step to exploring how the community can contribute to its own problem solving. Heifetz goes on further to say that the adaptive leaders have to be comfortable when entering unfamiliar environments and be critical thinkers. The other role of a leader is to “identify the essential elements critical for performance in each new situation, the ability of a leader to change practice or unit by quickly capitalising on strengths and minimising weaknesses” (Heifetz, 2010, p. 26). As stated earlier, he emphasises that the leaders have to cultivate good listening skills, advocate for dialogue, and value other people’s ideas before coming to conclusions. These are key strategies for community development as outlined in the community development literature. Although there is no universal blue print to reform, almost all successful reform episodes in developing economies have one common feature: they have been crafted by dynamic leaders who shepherded changes through complicated political terrain (Heifetz, 1994). Leaders must, as Heifetz (1994) points out, instil a sense of common purpose that minimises polarisation. But the community development theory also articulates that that common purpose must come from within the community rather than have it imposed on them. This is where the asset-based approach guards against relying too heavily on a leadership dynamic that may forget where ownership over decision making should lie.

Adaptive leadership theory and community development theory are similar in that the two theories start where the people are at in terms of their thinking. This includes involving them, participating in all aspects of the development project through dialogue, planning, decision-making and evaluation. The shared purpose is that the community will become self-sufficient, so that it takes responsibility for improving life styles and resulting in greater self-reliance.

Adaptive leadership is a context based leadership approach that is meant to promote change but also encourages exploration of competing goals and values among all partners. The key features of it are respect, collaboration, empowerment, social change, increase in community cohesion, and the clarification of competing values. These values must be constantly re-negotiated throughout the relationship, in order to clarify what matters most, encourage social learning and change, and developing self-defined norms of responsibility. This approach claims that the members are in control of their situation, and they are in charge of their destiny. In other words, there is no coercion, hence community ownership over change is eminent (Heifetz et al., 2004). This theory is relevant for the university CE process because of the inevitable leadership role played by universities in community relations. But the aim is to ensure shared ownership over action for change. It is a practical leadership framework that helps communities to adjust to their working environments.

#### *2.7.3.2 Criticisms of the adaptive leadership theory*

McCrimmon, quoted in Heifetz and Laurie (2011), suggests that adaptive leadership theory has been criticised for failing to reflect conventional views on leadership which emphasise that the role of a leader is to influence others. The other criticism by McCrimmon is that Heifetz is not proposing a theory so much, but is offering tools that can be used. Baylor (2011, p. 30) critiques the adaptive leadership theory, suggesting that it favours corporate and charismatic persons, masculinity and Western culture. He further suggests that it is “threatening to organisations and could elicit different forms of resistance”. It requires experimentation for the discovery of new knowledge; the strategies encourage risk-taking and creating a sense of disequilibrium in order to force a change within an organisation. In this study, however adaptive leadership is complemented by additional theories in order to emphasise its focus on shared ownership over action for change.

## **2.8 HOW THESE THEORIES INFORM EACH OTHER**

The rationale for using asset-based community development as the primary theory is because its emphasis on participation and bottom-up processes is the assumed focus of CE. Adaptive leadership advocates for participation as a feature of leadership and Nyerere’s concepts of *ujamaa* and self reliance offer an African perspective of participation through the notion of familyhood and use of indigenous knowledge. While asset-based community development is the focus, the two complementary theories broaden the lens of analysis in terms of exploring

the nature of the university's and community's leadership behaviours, but taking into account the African context and end-goal of community self reliance.

The theories inform each other in that they share common characteristics but also offer different insights which together make a useful lens to understand the university community relationship. For instance, Stephenson's (2011), and Preece's (2013) reference to adaptive leadership in university engagement demonstrates recognition of the unique and unequal power relationship between the university and its surrounding communities in a context which needs to understand the need to facilitate community ownership over decision-making. In adaptive leadership, the theory focuses on the co-creation of knowledge, clarifying competing values, social change, helping communities to become active in addressing their issues or concerns, and the sharing of responsibilities. Leaders are no longer the ones who are solving problems. There is an element of the sharing of information and the management of conflicting views and values. Adaptive leadership involves participation by communities which aims to improve responsiveness, creativity and innovation by organisations.

Universities have traditionally been known as 'Ivory Towers' in Africa but have always played a leadership role during fights for independence. They often excel in fundamental and applied research as well as the practical work of social relevance (Otim, 1992). Their leadership in community projects is often respected which explains their involvement in community projects (Preece, 2013). The adaptive leadership theory provides a potential framework for guiding how universities should do this. Bates (2005) supports this view when he states that adaptive leadership theory focuses on eliciting full participation from community members to devise previously unknowable responses to difficult and complex questions. Complex and difficult questions can often be solved through participatory research – hence the involvement of universities in CE. Universities, it is argued, have the expertise to develop such skills in communities.

Adaptive leadership and asset-based community development do have contradictions. In adaptive leadership there is a tension. Its focus reflects a top down approach. It may appear too direct for communities; it is still an intervention approach even though there is an element of collaboration. On the other hand, community asset-based development is a grassroots method. It is designed to encourage a bottom-up perspective. Communities are encouraged to create their own power. In the asset-based development theory, the focus is on communities



understanding issues from the community's perspective. The process focuses on interaction, dialogue, feedback, modifying and the reviewing of plans in the same way that is encouraged by adaptive leadership but the community has a more direct participation resulting in community ownership of the problem and its identification. This therefore means that the combination of these two theories provides an additional lens to explore precisely what is happening in the MSU CE approach. The differences add value to the theoretical approach in that they provide complementary features that reflect the particular nature of a university's relationship with the community. The differences add value because they may reflect different relationship issues in the partnership process which is a particular feature of university CE where power differentials are already embedded in the relationship. Community asset-based development focuses specifically on the participatory learning process. It is characterised by partnership and building on existing assets so that the community members are able to co-construct knowledge rather than have new knowledge imposed on them. However, the power dynamics of universities engaging with their communities also means that universities draw on the resources of knowledge and understanding within the communities whilst at the same time, providing leadership that encourages community ownership over decision making.

Finally, Nyerere's theory of *ujamaa*/self-reliance was chosen as a third lens because this is an embedded Afrocentric development philosophy that aims to build communities through use of local resources, a process of dialogue and interaction between universities and communities, and the practical application of knowledge. Furthermore, it is embedded in the adult education principles of building on people's experience and starting where they are (Knowles, 1980). Although Meredith (2002) has argued that *ujamaa* failed in Tanzania this was because there was an apparent lack of consultation amongst the parties involved, leading to the imposition of ideas in spite of the ideological principles behind *ujamaa*. The people's diverse opinions were not respected and there was insufficient dialogue in the development process. The asset-based community development and adaptive leadership theoretical concepts serve as an analytical framework that encompasses the *ujamaa* principles whilst addressing its original failure to nurture community ownership.

The above development and *ujamaa* theories are compatible with the adult education philosophy of starting where people are at, promotion of dialogue, need for consultation, promoting self-concept, self-identity, respect and drawing on existing experience to create

new knowledge and understanding. The adaptive leadership theory is compatible with a collaborative approach towards change which recognises power differentials between the participating agencies.

Drawing on these three theories, the study aimed therefore to explore the nature of the MSU CE relationship by asking:

How does the MSU and Zindowe Mberengwa CE relationship address power relations, co-creation of knowledge and community ownership for change that promotes self-reliance?

The intention of the study was to develop an understanding of how all the participants understand the CE relationship and whether their experiences reflect the rhetoric of the CE discourse. Findings highlighted gaps in understanding or performance and informed future CE practice in the university. Since all state universities in Zimbabwe are mandated to provide CE, the findings also had implications for how other universities should address their engagement relationships.

The above authors share the following common terms. These are: dialogue, participation, self-reliance, collaboration empowerment and decision-making. However, the same authors adopt different emphases in relation to the CE process. These differences are in the following terms: clarifying competing values, social change, and two-way communication beyond the lecture halls and listening.

The following table outlines the similarities and differences of the theories used in this study.

**Table 3: Similarities and differences between the theories used in the study:**

Author	Theories	Shared concepts	Differences of focus
Nyerere (1988)	<i>Ujamaa</i>	Self-reliance, empowerment, ownership, decision making on issues concerning their problems, problem solving.	Problem solving
Swanepoel and De Beer (2000)  Chambers R (2000)  Ferreira, R., & Ebersöhn (2012)	Community development	Self-reliance, empowerment, decision making, respect collaboration.	Asset-based
Heifetz (2009)	Adaptive leadership	Respect, collaboration, empowerment, social change, increase in community cohesion; develop norms of responsibility, participation,	Clarifying competing goals and values.

## 2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter has outlined the evolution of terms, definitions of community and CE. The benefits and critiques of CE were also covered. Theories that would enable the researcher to examine the CE relationships were also discussed. A review of the literature has shown that little research work on this topic has been carried out in Zimbabwe – hence this study aims to address the gaps of understanding about the nature of the MSU’s involvement in the Zindowe CE project. The theories of asset-based participation, adaptive leadership, and *ujamaa*/self-reliance together provide a lens through which to explore the findings in my study.

The next chapter looks at the methodology.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This study sought to explore the nature and process of community engagement (CE) adopted by Midlands State University (MSU) in the Mberengwa Project. The previous chapter focused on the literature review and theoretical framework. This chapter presents the research methodology. The research employs a qualitative approach to identify the nature and process of CE adopted by the MSU. The interpretivist paradigm was found to be the most suitable for this study. Headings that are covered in this chapter include the research paradigm, the research design, the population and sampling procedures. Sampling size, interviews, observations, documentary analysis and the transect walk are also discussed. Issues of trustworthiness are then also outlined in the study. Different forms of ethical considerations are presented such as confidentiality, informed consent and anonymity. Data analysis, the researcher's role and challenges experienced are also discussed.

### **3.1 LOCATION OF THE STUDY**

This study was carried out at the MSU and at Zindowe village in Mberengwa South.

### **3.2 AIMS OF THIS STUDY**

This study intended to highlight key issues that need to be addressed in order to progress towards sound CE by the MSU in the Mberengwa District. It is hoped that the study would be thought-provoking to all who would read it, particularly those who are at other universities, so that they may engage in similar projects. The study also intended to provide the opportunity for a critical reflection among the members of the Zindowe village Community and to help them to articulate their thinking and contribution all to the specific issues of development in their own particular areas.

### **3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The overall question for the study was: drawing on theories of asset-based community development, adaptive leadership and self-reliance – how does the MSU and the Zindowe Mberengwa CE relationship address power relations, co-creation of knowledge and community ownership for change to promote self-reliance? This was addressed by the following sub-questions:

1. How does the university interact with the community (ideology, processes, structures)?
2. How does the community respond to the university's involvement (ownership over decision making, use of community assets, and the management of power relations)?
3. In what ways can the community engagement process be improved in order to address the issues of power, knowledge, decision making and conflicts?

### **3.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

This study adopted an interpretive research paradigm as the researcher wanted to explore and gain an understanding of all the issues concerned (Henn et al., 2006). Patton (2002, p. 26) defines a paradigm as a “world view, a general perspective, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world.” This is further supported by the works of Pring (2006) and Bailey (2009) who argue that a paradigm denotes the researcher's worldview and provides background information on what obtains or what exists in relation to a phenomenon and how it can be studied and understood. This refers to the ways of thinking about and seeing the world. The paradigm influences one's sense of the nature of the world and how one can generate knowledge from such a world. In any research there are several different paradigms that people use in order to understand how things work in their field of practice. Paradigms are normally used by researchers as guides on how to ask questions and what they consider to be the truth (Dills et al., 1997). Any research is about discovering the truth but the different paradigms understand truth differently. Paradigms can also be seen as frameworks for how we interpret things we observe or learn about. From the above it is now important to give a brief account of paradigms so as to explain how the paradigm within this study was conceived and conducted.

There are three main research paradigms which, according to Cohen et al. (2010), are: the scientific paradigm (also referred to as positivism), interpretivism and the critical paradigm. Cohen et al. (2010) emphasise that positivism has been a recurrent theme in the history of Western thought since the ancient Greeks. It is historically associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher, Auguste Comte, who was the first thinker to use the word for a philosophical position. According to Beck (1999), Comte's position led to a general doctrine

of positivism which held that all genuine knowledge can be advanced only by means of observation and experiment. Truth is obtained as a result of scientific rigour.

Cohen et al. (2010) suggest that it should be noted that positivism is less successful for the study of human behaviour, because such behaviour cannot be controlled under laboratory conditions, hence researchers may adopt the critical or interpretivist paradigm depending on their research goals.

In the interpretivist paradigm, reality is not seen as something that exists independently of the researcher. Interpretivism emanates as a contradistinction to positivism in an attempt to understand and explain human and social reality from the perspective of the researched.

Pring (2006, p. 47) argues that ‘realities’ are not objectively ‘out there’ but ‘constructed’ by people as they attempt ‘to understand’ their surroundings (because surrounds do not exist independently of them anyway). Reality is therefore constructed by interested ‘knowers’ such as researchers. The world or such ‘constructed’ reality is totally subjective and value-laden. The question usually asked is: why is the paradigm called interpretivist? The reason is that researchers in seeking to understand the world in which they live, have to interpret this world in terms of its actors and the meaning which such actors attach to their experience of the world.

This study adopted an interpretivist research paradigm. This is an approach emphasising that people’s personal beliefs, values and interpretations (see Browne, 2009) influence the way they act. Interpretive approaches hold the view that there are multiple truths as interpreted by individuals. To understand society, it was therefore necessary to conceptualise the meanings people give to their behaviour, and how this influences their way of life (Pring, 2004). Interpretivism tries to understand and interpret what their actors say and also to predict future meanings from these actions. Such meanings could be linked to existing theories or new theories could be generated from these meanings. The data are usually collected using methods such as interviews, observation, questionnaires, and documentary analysis which largely fall under the qualitative research approach or style.

Since the aim of this research was to ‘discover’ and not to ‘prove’, I found this to be the most suitable paradigm to use since it was concerned with ‘discovering’ social actions. The focus

of the current research was on the individual or small groups of individuals rather than the overall structure of society. Rather than studying general development trends in the area of study, my focus is on the partnership between the MSU and the Zindowe Community in bringing development to the area. The people's behaviour was viewed as being driven by the beliefs, meanings, feelings and emotions that they gave to situations. Their definitions of situations or the way they saw things and therefore behaved, become very important. For example, some people might interpret the involvement of the MSU in their development efforts as a sign that the university is bringing a lot of money to the area or that the government has seen their predicament and is now taking action through the MSU. The effectiveness of the university's CE would depend on how the community defines the situation. In order to understand the community's behaviour one has to understand the meaning the community gives to the university's involvement and whether it appreciates the services the university gives or not. The interpretivist paradigm, using the qualitative research approach, aims to uncover and interpret the meanings and definitions individuals and groups give to their behaviour (Olowu, 2012).

As suggested by Creswell (2014), the interpretive lens helped phrase my research questions in this study.

### **3.4.1. Critique of the Interpretive Paradigm**

Cohen et al. (2013) emphasise that the study of human subjects is totally subjective and interpretivism has been criticised by positivists because of its subjective nature. Critics have wasted little time in pointing out what they regard as the weaknesses of the interpretive approaches. Their argument is that the whole thrust and purpose of social science cannot be based on interpretations only.

Titchen and Hobson's (2005) criticism is directed at the ways in which meanings are negotiated by the actors involved. What is overlooked, according to Titchen et al. (2005) is that there are several factors which affect the way people live, some of which are political, economic or social factors. Political and economic factors have played a major role in people's lives and the way these have been defined always, or in most cases, comes from the politicians themselves. There is therefore a risk, according to Titchen et al. (2005), that interpretive approaches tend to view groups in isolation from the rest of the population which

puts artificial boundaries around these actors. Just as positivistic theories can be criticised for their macro-sociological persuasion, so interpretive and qualitative theories can be criticised for their narrowly micro-sociological perspectives (Cohen et al., 2013).

Despite all this criticism, the interpretive paradigm is deemed the most suitable for this study because the researcher is interested in the micro interpretations. But the review of related literature and introduction, in Chapters One and Two, provide the macro context in which such a study takes place and the literature review can serve as a comparison resource during the data analysis.

Creswell (2008) suggests that in order to understand other people requires understanding the interpretations which they give of what they are doing. What people do cannot be understood as observable behaviour alone. It must be given some interpretation – hence the use of the interpretive paradigm. The behaviour of people should be explained for understanding to take place. We need to know their intentions and motives. For instance, the Zindowe Mberengwa community, in order to fully appreciate what the MSU is doing in their community, have to understand, first, the university's motives and, secondly, its intentions. Once the motives and intentions are understood, full participation and cooperation is expected to take place. The university also needs to know how the community interprets its presence among them. Because of this reason, researchers talk of the subjective meanings of those whom they are researching. We each inhabit subjective worlds of meaning through which we interpret the social world. Indeed, that social world is nothing other than our interpretation of it.

### **3.5 APPROACH/STYLE**

Bertram (2010, p. 36) defines an approach “as a way of doing research”. In this study the researcher chose to use the qualitative approach which was descriptive and interpretive in nature. This was because the researcher wanted to find out the nature and process of university CE between the MSU and the Zindowe community. According to Bertram (2010, p. 35), the qualitative approach entails “textual or verbal data which are collected when depth is required”, such as an in-depth description of the university CE project. The reasons for using a qualitative approach were that it resulted in information which can best be explained in words, and it used multiple sources of data, which, for example in this study included interviews, observations, documents, focus group discussions and transect walks. Qualitative



methods were iterative and gave a holistic account of a phenomenon which involved many perspectives (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell (2002, p. 58), “the qualitative approach is useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon.”

### **3.6 METHODOLOGY**

Methodology according to Chilisa and Preece (2005, p.3) is “the research design, which encompasses both worldview and method”. According to Karfman (as cited in Mouton, 2014, p.16) methodology is a “theory of correct scientific decisions”. Methodology includes design, population, sample, instruments, ethical considerations, reliability and validity, data presentation, data management and data analysis.

### **3.7 THE DESIGN: CASE STUDY**

According to Creswell (2014, p. 12) research designs are, “Types of inquiring within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches that provide specific directions for procedures in a research design.”

Case study research is often detailed in nature, a rich method of collecting data over a period of time (Cassell & Symon, 2004).

This study design was in the form of a case study. Yin (2003a, p. 23), states that a case study “is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.”

Nisbet and Watt (1984, p. 72 -74) concur by defining case study in this way: “A case study is a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle. It is the study of an instance in action.”

A case study is thus a study and analysis of a unique case or a unique group. Cohen et al. (2010) and Stake (2005) also confirm that a case study provides a unique example of real life situations which enable readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by representing them with abstract theories or principles. It is a rich description of events, in an effort to understand perceptions of events. Stake (2005) further outlines the different types of case

studies as intrinsic, instrumental, multiple or collective where a number of cases are studied. The intrinsic case study is there to figure out qualities of a case and the instrumental case study is there to inform, clarify or interpret existing theory. Stake (2005) further says that the collective case study is there to perfect or improve on existing theory.

According to Yin (2003), the exploratory case study is mostly used in the social sciences as it is normally known for coming up with new ideas. The exploratory case study is employed to explore a situation which is not clear and has limited literature.

### **3.7.1 Reasons for the Case Study Design**

The reason for choosing the case study design was that the researcher could investigate in depth a particular case such as the one in Zindowe village in Mberengwa. The researcher would be able to explore, explain and focus on what would be happening in that particular context or case. The case study was also chosen because it was analytical rather than statistical in nature (Rule & John, 2011). The case study could develop or elaborate on a theory which could help the researcher to understand other similar situations (Olowu, 2012; Yin, 2003; Babbie, 2010; Rule & John, 2011).

Cohen et al. (2010) suggest that one of the strengths of the case study was that it observed effects in real contexts, recognising that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects. Sturman (1999, p. 103) argues that: “A distinguishing feature of case studies is that human systems have a wholeness or integrity to them rather than being a loose connection of traits, necessitating in-depth investigation.”

Creswell (2008) supports this view when he says that a case study can be used for developing an in-depth analysis of a single case. Community engagement is all about human systems and how they operate in a particular location, which explains the choice of a case study in this project. Hitchcock and Hughes (cited in Cohen et al., 2010, p. 253), suggest that “case studies are distinguished less by the methodologies that they employ than by the subjects of their inquiry”. They further suggest that more value is added in the case study when the researcher has little interference in the activities being studied.

Another strength relating to using the case study is that it provides a good source of ideas about behaviour, makes use of lay man’s language, catching unique features of the

phenomenon and the methods used enable people to present their multiple truths or interpretations of the situation under investigation. The case study enables the researcher to examine contemporary events and it is used because of its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence such as documents, interviews and observations (Gray, 2017; Yin, 2009).

Rule and John (2011, p. 16) stress the importance of identifying what the study would want to accomplish since this would help to “identify the focus and chose an appropriate case or cases to investigate.”

**Table 4: What is the case?**

<b>Title of thesis</b>	<b>What is the case or unit of analysis?</b>	<b>What is the focus within the study?</b>	<b>What is it a case of?</b>
University community engagement in Zimbabwe: an asset based analysis	Mberengwa Community and Midlands State university’s engagement relationship	University Community Engagement in the Mberengwa community	How does the university interact with its communities in terms of the process, structures, decision-making? How does the community respond to the university’s involvement in the community engagement process?

### 3.7.2 Critique of Case Study

Flyvberg (2007, p. 398) cautions that a case study “maintains a bias towards verification, understood as a tendency to confirm the researcher’s preconceived notions, so that the study becomes a doubtful scientific value.”

Nisbet and Watt (1984, p. 79) suggest, furthermore, that: “The results of a case study may not be generalizable, they are not easily open to cross-checking, hence they may be selective, and highly subjective.”

The researcher may develop high chances of possible biases in data gathering and interpretation as it is assessed single handedly. The case study may therefore be prone to problems of observer bias. To overcome this, the researcher in this study shared her findings with her supervisor and also made use of member checking.

The study design for this research is in the form of an exploratory case study because this facilitates the observation of the nature of some of the engagement relationships and processes taking place at the project centre (Chilisa & Preece, 2005).

### **3.8 POPULATION**

Somekh and Lewin (2011, p 327) say that a population refers “to all the people or phenomena under study, from who a sample will be selected for research”. In this study the population was the MSU staff and all the Zindowe Mberengwa community members that were engaged in the project. These were made up of 12 village heads with about 200 families in Chief Nyamondo’s Zindowe village of Mberengwa South and 350 teaching staff from the MSU participating in the Zindowe Mberengwa project.

### **3.9 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES AND SAMPLE SIZE**

A sample is a sub-set of the total population; it is a representative of the whole population (De Vos, 2002). The focus in this study was on collecting rich, in-depth data. The first and most necessary sources of information were people who were brave enough to tell the researcher their problems and how these came about. A study of this nature needs people who know the history of the area and who can articulate their problems. There are people in positions of leadership who are able to articulate the nature of the CE that the community wants to experience.

The researcher initially used purposive sampling because, as Creswell (2005) asserts, purposive sampling will ensure that only those who can provide useful and maximum information that can assist the researcher to understand the research problem may be selected for the study. Purposive refers to the purpose of the study and in this case, it focuses on the identification of people involved in the individual projects on site such as bee-keeping, chicken rearing, vegetable gardening and goat breeding. The criteria for selecting the purposefully sampled individuals were that they were involved in a specific aspect of the project, and would provide an equitable balance of male and female participants.

The researcher also made use of purposive sampling for both the vice-chancellor and the registrars who were hand-picked for the research due to their specific status (Denscombe, 2007). At the project site snowball sampling was also used. Bertram (2010) states that snowball sampling is non-probability sampling which is referral in nature, simple and cost-

efficient. The headmen, for example referred the researcher to the chief or councillor or even Chief Executive of the Local Authority. The researcher was also referred to the Minister of Local Government on matters of policy. These referrals helped the researcher to decide on whom to interview or observe. A sample of 49 was ultimately selected to participate in this study as follows:

- 16 participants from the university (three senior staff members, seven lecturers, five students and one government agent) selected purposefully for their role in the project.
- 33 community members as listed below:
  - one chief
  - one counsellor
  - one village head,
  - one project coordinator
  - 20 family heads
  - one business owner
  - eight youths

The researcher used purposive sampling for the chief and business owner as a result of their leadership positions. For the counsellors, family heads and youths, snowball sampling was used.

### **3.9.1 Organising the Research and Accessing People at Midlands State University**

The overall planning was organised on the university premises. This was done through arranging appropriate budgets, making appointments with the different people involved, buying food-stuffs such as drinks, fruits and water. The appointments were all made from the researcher's office at the university. A budget for transport to the area, food and accommodation had to be prepared before going to the project site. The researcher had to make appointments on different days of the week with the different individuals involved. There were challenges in getting an appointment with the vice-chancellor. It was not possible to interview him because of the nature of his office which involves his attendance at many meetings. Among workmates who are always interacting with one another, the creation of relationships with staff was not difficult. The researcher received overwhelming support from all the university staff, for example the registrar, the director of work-related learning, dean,

lecturers and the students. All the people interviewed from the university were very cooperative and it was possible to collect all the necessary information that was deemed necessary. The atmosphere during interviews was non-threatening and the information collected on university CE was useful and of value.

The research meeting and discussions with the director of work related learning was particularly useful because he then availed the minutes of different meetings that had been held. Policy documents were also made available from both the registrar and the director of Work Related Learning (WRL). The effects of such assistance were that these documents were of great help in providing background information to the data collection.

### **3.9.2 Accessing the Zindowe Mberengwa Community**

Gaining access to the Zindowe community did not present a challenge either because of the existence of training sessions which were running at the village training centre. The researcher met the Zindowe community thrice during their training sessions with the university. Since the researcher had been involved in some of the training sessions with the community, relationships had already been sufficiently established to enable cooperation from community members. The signing of consent forms was achieved without concern as the researcher had explained clearly the purpose of the visit and its benefits. The community members were more than willing to participate in the discussions. Focus group discussions were held with the different groups who were interviewed or questioned for their views. Men were interviewed on their own, women on their own and youths on their own. This is because Zimbabwe is a patriarchal society, and women would not feel comfortable to speak among their male counterparts. Youths would also not make meaningful contributions in the midst of their parents. Focus groups were also used as a way of soliciting information from large groups. All the people interviewed were recorded.

However, the government agent was not part of the focus group. He was interviewed separately because the researcher felt that that the officer was better informed about the project and had useful information which would help make meaningful contributions to this research since he worked with the community on a day-to-day basis.

### **3.10 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

According to Cohen et al. (2010) research, facts and truth are interlinked. Realism and accounts of reality and truth are difficult to separate. Any research is meant to unravel facts which lead to the unravelling of truths. The ways in which realism and accounts of reality and truth are unravelled is what in this study will be referred to as methods. We get to know things through experience which we call empirical knowledge, and through reasoning, which we call rational knowledge, and research (see Mouly, 1978). These methods of knowing work together and often overlap. In our efforts to understand our complex world, we often depend on the sources and types of knowledge at our disposal which may be obtained from revealed knowledge, experience, or rationalisation. In this CE project the study sought to investigate facts and truth as perceived by the different participants.

In this study data were collected using a variety of data collection methods. These were interviews, focus group discussions, observations, transect walks and documentary analysis. The reason for using several different methods was for triangulation purposes (Cohen, 2010; Yin, 2009). What follows, are the reasons given by the researcher for the use of each method.

#### **3.10.1 Interviews**

Cohen (2010) defines an interview as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. This implies that interviews are a process of getting responses from respondents through face to face verbal exchange. It is a conversation between the researcher and the respondent. Chiromo (2009) also proposes that interviews are data collecting tools. The researcher found it necessary to use interviews as this method facilitates further probing, ensures a high level of response and the researcher can observe bodily expressions/nonverbal clues such as tone variations, facial expressions and gestures. The other reason for using the interview in this study was that the researcher wanted to solicit detailed, in-depth data on the Zindowe Mberengwa project from the respondents. The detail of the data was captured by making use of a digital recorder (Bertram, 2010). A total of five interviews were conducted between the September 25th of 2014 to January of 2016 with the businessman, government agent, university registrar, dean, lecturers, and students. These were arranged in two phases in order to accommodate the changing situation at the centre. They were done in the following order:

The first trip to Zindowe village in Mberengwa was on September 25th, 2014, and its main purpose was for logistical arrangements. A second trip was from October 20th until 24th, 2014, for data collection in Zindowe Village in Mberengwa District. The third trip was on January 5th until the 9th, 2015. The purpose of this trip was for verification of information from the different people who were involved in the partnership. A fourth trip in October of 2015 was in order to verify information with the different respondents. The fifth data collection round was in January of 2016 at the MSU and the purpose of the trip was to verify information from the lecturers and a senior staff member who had been interviewed.

Bertram (2010) points out there are different types of interviews in research. One of these is the structured interview. It is characterised by structured questions, where the researcher uses an interview schedule with a set of closed-ended questions that require yes/no answers. The other interview Bertram (2010) puts forward is the unstructured interview. In this interview the researcher simply introduces the topic. Additional characteristics of the unstructured interview are the use of open-ended questions, probing, flexibility and the fact that it gives freedom to the respondents when answering questions. The semi-structured interview is a qualitative strategy of using open-ended questions to collect in-depth data but in a focused manner. The researcher used open ended interview questions in the form of semi-structured interview in order to ensure uniformity in terms of data from respondents (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012; Pharm, 2014). The interview guide also helped the researcher on time management. The interview began with an introduction of the researcher and then a brief background of the study. The study made use of a digital recorder and then the verbatim transcribing was done immediately after the interviews. This was in order to control bias and encourage reliable data (Saunders et al., 2009). The interviews ranged from 30 to 50 minutes in length. The major reason for using the various data collection methods was for triangulation so that responses could be verified or cross-checked.

### **3.10.2 Focus Group Discussions**

Krueger (1999) defines a focus group discussion as a qualitative research technique where people from similar backgrounds or experiences gather to discuss a specific topic of interest under the guidance of a moderator. Focus group discussions provided an opportunity for the researcher to explore a wide range of opinions and views on university CE. Focus group discussions were held with the men, women, headmen and the youth groups. The researcher made use of the focus group as it would cover many topics in a short space of time and



information could be easily varied. The focus group discussions were organised to give all groups a fair and equal opportunity to air out their views on the university CE project at Zindowe. This was easy to organise and facilitated the different gender groups to express themselves in the process.

### **3.10.3 Observation**

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) state that observation is a core method used in research for data collection. Cohen (2010) supports this view when he states that an observation is more than just looking. It involves looking systematically, noting events, behaviours, settings and routines among other things. Chiromo (2009) similarly agrees with the above authors when he says that observation is a process of ascertaining what people think and do by watching them in action as they express themselves in various activities. Casley and Kumar (1998) support this idea when they say that during observation the observer is probing the beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and motives of the people involved. The researcher observed the Zindowe Mberengwa community (in the different homesteads in the community), at the training centre where most activities took place, at the two schools involved in the literacy programme, and at the Matedzi Business Centre.

The reason for its use in this study was that observation provides an opportunity to record information as it occurs in a natural setting and the researcher obtains first-hand information. For instance, in this study observation was carried out on the youths, adults and families in the Zindowe Mberengwa community. The researcher observed university community interactions, community project management activities and how the community was benefiting from the project. The other benefit for using the observation in this study was there was no need for direct interaction with the respondents and the researcher managed to observe those issues that would have easily been missed if only interviews had been relied on. Another reason for employing the observation method was to get a better understanding of the Zindowe community.

There are different types of observations according to Lee (2000). The first type is ‘observer as participant’ where the researcher interacts with and develops a rapport with the participants. In this case the researcher is free to ask questions. The other type of observation is known as the ‘participant as observer’ whereby the researcher negotiates a way into the group and becomes part of the group. The advantage of this is that the researcher can observe

more detail. Non-participant observation was used in certain areas of this study. Non-participant observation is a process where the observer observes and makes notes without interacting. This means that the researcher has two roles, that of being a participant observer sometimes and at other times a non-participant observer.

In this study the researcher was at times a participant observer. The researcher tried to experience the communities' lived experiences such as going to fetch water from boreholes, and collecting wood for fuel in the forests. Time was spent observing how people behaved in their natural settings, observing a wide range of activities at the Zindowe Mberengwa centre, and observing human and interactional settings. For example, there was planned and unplanned communication with people from different social groups. The researcher helped the community members with certain tasks such as watering in the gardening, feeding the chickens and even making bee-hives. Through this, the researcher learnt a lot from the communities involved. The communities in Zindowe were visited by the researcher and their lived experiences studied. The observation was carried out on the youths, adults and families in the Mberengwa community. The researcher would try to experience the communities' lived experiences such as going to fetch water from boreholes and looking for fuel wood in the forests in the region.

Finally, the programme settings such as resources and their organisation were observed and this gave the researcher an opportunity to yield more authentic data rather than relying on inferential or second-hand sources Hammersely and Atkinson (2007). Time was spent observing events, the organisation of the people and their behaviours, the environment, human and interactional settings. This gave the researcher an opportunity to experience the process in its totality. The observations revealed behaviour patterns, social and economic processes and environmental factors which the community did not necessarily describe in detail.

The observation used in this study contributed to providing rich qualitative data, sometimes described as 'thick descriptions' (Patton, 2002). For example, where relevant the phenomena were observed and detailed field notes recorded on how people interacted, and with whom, as well as what they did. The observations in this study were also used to cross check data obtained from other methods of data collection.

The one challenge the observation had was the Hawthorne Effect whereby the respondents may change their behaviour once they know that they are being observed (Bertram, 2010). In this study the researcher overcame the above challenge by triangulating data collecting tools such as interviews, documentary analysis, observation and the transect walk.

#### **3.10.4 Documentary Analysis**

Bertram (2010, p. 142) says that “documentary analysis involves analysis of existing documents without the engagement of active participants”. Documentary analysis was undertaken in order to find out the historical process behind the Zindowe Mberengwa CE at the MSU. The researcher used policy documents, memoranda, minutes of meetings from different committees such as Community Engagement through Scientific, Indigenous Knowledge (CESIK) committee, progress reports, administrative documents and agreements from both parties. Then careful analyses of the documents served to assist the examination of the validity of the data that was emerging from other methods (Bryman, 1989).

#### **3.10.5 Participatory Appraisal: Transect Walk**

Denscombe (2007) states that transect walks are tools for describing and showing the location and distribution of resources, features, landscapes, and main land uses along a given transect. In this study a transect walk was used for triangulating data collected through other tools. It was used with the key informants who were the village heads, family heads, youths and adults participating at the project site in Zindowe Mberengwa. The transect walk was used to elicit information on the history of the place under study and it assisted in giving a unique meaning to the study as alluded to by Machin and Mayr (2012).



**Figure 5: Geographical map showing the project centre and location of transect walk**

**Key**

A	Dam
B	Church
C	Project Centre
D, E, F, H, I, M, P	Villages, Grazing Lands
G	Secondary School
K, J, Q	Hills
L	Matedzi Business Centre: Primary School, Clinic, Shops, Agritex offices
N	Jena Primary School
O	Bayayi Secondary School

The purpose of having the map was to provide a visual image of the geographical area. The transect walk was conducted in the company of two community members (James and John, pseudonyms) along with the researcher. These two gentlemen had lived in this community since their birth. The transect walk was conducted over three days covering a distance of about 22 km. Since the researcher was the only female participant in the transect walk group,

there was a need to have a male counterpart for security reasons. The researcher was therefore accompanied by a student from the agriculture department. This would help reduce the chances of being abused.

The researcher undertook this walk with two senior members of the community. As they walked brief notes were made regarding what they saw. The table below points out the different data collection methods used in this study and how these marry with the different research questions.

**Table 5: Data Collection Methods**

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Source of Data</b>	<b>Methods</b>
What is the nature and process?	MSU Staff and Community members, documents	Interviews, observation, transect walks, focus group discussions
How does the CE partnership address power differentials?	MSU staff members involved in the project and Community members.	Interviews, observation and focus group discussion
To what extent is there co-creation of knowledge?	MSU Staff and Mberengwa Community members	Interviews transect walks and focus groups discussions
In what way does self-reliance manifest itself in community outcomes?	Community members	Interviews and focus group discussions for the youths, men and women participants
How can the CE process be improved to reflect these three dimensions?	MSU staff and community members	Interviews focus group discussions For the dean, lecturers, men and women groups at the project.

### **3.11 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Bertram (2010, p. 101), data analysis is “the entire process of organizing, analysing and interpreting data.” Basically there are two forms of qualitative data analysis. These are through the inductive process which identifies patterns and relationships through reading and re-reading the data. One of the advantages of inductive research is its flexibility because it allows themes to emerge intuitively from interpreting the findings (Crowther & Lancaster, 2008). According to Saunders et al. (2009) and Hart (2009) the deductive approach to analysis uses the theoretical framework. Data analysis was organised through the qualitative programme of Nvivo in order to inductively identify patterns of responses and themes that were relevant to the study and which could then be examined and re-categorised

through the relevant theoretical lenses. Data analysis in this study was done initially inductively and then deductively. The interview items were codified and organised by grouping together the related responses. Patterns were identified and careful study of the data and emerging themes were highlighted (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The first thematic analysis phases were therefore inductive and these thematic findings were compared with the theoretical framework for a second level of analysis. In addition to analysing interview and focus group transcripts the analysis included data from observation, field notes and photos from the transect walks.

### **3.12 THE LANGUAGE**

Gadamer (1998) speaks about the critical importance of language in research. “It is through language that understanding occurs” he says (1998, p. 938). Pring (2006) also says that the meaning of the conclusions of a piece of educational research is in one sense, the same for both the writer and the reader, if both are using the same language. The intentions which the researcher has embodied in actions or gestures or words require an interpretation by someone else. In this case the two languages, English and Shona, were used. Jens, Abma, Jonsson and Deeg (2010), in their study, suggest that language differences in qualitative research can pose a challenge. Van Nes, Runge and Jonsson (2009) also identify the translation of quotations and translation back to the original language as additional challenges which may result in losing meaning in translation especially when there are two or more languages used. Jens et al. (2010) comment that even the use of a professional in translation may lead to the loss of the intended suitable expressions during the translation process. Translations took a long time, and the process was time consuming and tedious. This is because translation can be an interpretive act. To overcome this, the researcher ensured that she recruited Shona language experts from the African Languages Department at MSU to obtain a second opinion on the translations and to cross check the translations for accuracy.

Aside from translation issues, the ‘language’ of qualitative research tends to involve the interpretation of data which may not always be accurate (Van Nes, Runge & Jonsson 2009). Finally, the case study produces large amounts of ‘thick data’, and tends to be time-consuming and costly. In spite of these challenges it is the researcher’s belief that she took relevant precautions to avoid bias and gather sufficient data to ensure the credibility of the findings.

### **3.13 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Qualitative research prefers the term trustworthiness in order to assess reliability and validity. Trustworthiness has four elements which are: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). In order to provide overall credibility in this study the triangulation of data sources and data types was used. Intense exposure to the subject under study aimed to facilitate access to multiple perspectives.

“Triangulation is the use of a combination of research methods in a study” says Bertram (2010, p. 99). For example, this study used interviews, focus group discussions, observation and documentary analysis. Triangulation can also be done by asking one question more than twice or asking the same question to different participant groups. Herbert and Shepherd (2001) suggest that triangulation is mainly used for validation purposes and to reduce biases. Triangulation in this study was used not as a tool or strategy for validation; however, it was used as an alternative to validation in order to add breadth and in-depth understanding of the investigation in question. Methodological triangulation meant that several methods would be utilised such as interviews, focus groups, observation and documentary analysis (Babbie, 2001).

#### **3.13.1 Credibility**

Cohen et al. (2010) emphasises that credibility of the data is very important in qualitative research. Stringer (2004) suggests that credibility in qualitative research entails making results believable from those involved in the research. To ensure credibility in this study the researcher made use of member checks in order to be able to verify the research findings. The researcher also drew on triangulation by using different data collecting methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, observation and transect walks.

#### **3.13.2 Transferability**

Lincoln and Guba (2005) suggest that transferability is the applicability of the research to other similar situations. It is about transferring findings. Transferability is demonstrating that the methods and approaches used in this research study can be applied in other studies. Transferability leads to the potential for generalising of the findings. In order to ensure transferability, the researcher provided transparency of methods and data to allow for the replicability of the study.

### **3.13.3 Dependability and Confirmability**

According to Lincoln and Guba (2000), dependability is making sure that the research findings are consistent and can be repeated. They further say that confirmability questions how the research findings are supported by the data collected. In order to prove the dependability of the study, the researcher ensured member checking to assess the correctness of the data collected. Furthermore, the researcher was sensitive to the above issues in order to arrive at worthwhile results that would help make meaningful conclusions and contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of university CE (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

### **3.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics is the branch of philosophy that deals with morals (Shamoo et al., 2003; Creswell, 2014; Cohen et al., 2000). These authors further suggest that ethics are also principles, rules of conduct and guidelines that help the researcher uphold the things that are of value. They educate and monitor researchers to ensure a high moral standard. However, “Ethical considerations are thought to be greater for those conducting qualitative research, given the direct contact researchers have with people, their personal lives and the issues of confidentiality that arise out of such studies” (Grix, 2010, p. 121). The researcher ensured that the respondent or interviewee had received a full picture beforehand of the nature of the study, the potential risks, the benefits and alternatives with an extended opportunity to ask questions. For an informed consent to be ethically valid, the following components were present. Participation was voluntary and the participants each gave consent to participate in the study. The researcher ensured that the participants received a thorough explanation beforehand of the benefits, rights, risks and dangers involved as a consequence of their participation in the research project. From the researcher’s view, therefore, informed consent has four elements which were competence, voluntarism, comprehension and full information.

Other ethical considerations that were applied were informed consent from different gatekeepers such as community leaders and university management, as well as from individuals. In this study the individual participants involved gave written consent for their participation. In each case participants were promised anonymity in the reporting of any findings, and confidentiality of information provided that it would be used for the purpose of this study only. Some of the information which the participants provided to the researcher was seen as highly confidential and so data was kept on a password protected computer. The



researcher also made use of a memory stick and password as a way of protecting data. Pseudonyms were also used in order to hide the identity of the participants.

The salience of informed consent in this study arises from the research participants' right to freedom and self-determination. As the researcher I ensured that in all cases permission had been guaranteed such as getting individual consent, institutional permission from MSU to carry out the research and permission from the relevant community structures. In order to assure the research subjects of anonymity and confidentiality no names of participants were required to appear on the interview schedules. The language which was used in the interview schedule did not include technical jargon. It was simple, straight forward language. The languages that were used in the documents were English and Shona. This ensured that all the participants would be able to understand what was required. They were also given a chance to ask questions and were given answers by the researcher.

The assurance of confidentiality for the participants had practical benefits for the research project. With high levels of confidentiality, the participants from the Zindowe project were more likely to participate in the study. They were more likely to give honest and valid responses to questions. However, Nachmias and Nachmias (2001) suggest that whilst respecting confidentiality and anonymity are core principles of social research they are not absolutes. In this study the researcher was careful that information about other respondents was not divulged to the wrong audience without permission. Ensuring protection of confidential information required that appropriate data security procedures and precautions be adopted. In this study the precautions included collecting just adequate data and not being too excessive, keeping the data secure at all times and committing the information to be kept for no more than five years as per the university guidelines. Additionally, since some answers revealed sensitive community relationship challenges, the identity role of certain participants has been disguised in order to protect their anonymity whilst still remaining true to the data.

### **3.15 THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE**

In the interpretivist paradigm they say that knowledge is socially constructed (Cohen et al., 2013). The researcher's role in the university as a lecturer was to direct and issue instructions to other lecturers and students. However, in carrying out the research, she was both a participant and a researcher. Issues that came to play were ethical considerations, gender

issues, professional issues and status issues. This meant balancing community involvement and professional issues whereas, as a lecturer, the researcher was used to directing and sometimes issuing instructions which students have to respond to religiously. There were therefore some conflicts of interest between my role and that of the participants. Some of them were as follows:

Culture and the role of women among men in a patriarchal society, particularly in a rural setting, demands that women be subservient to their male counterparts. Culture also demands that the voices of elders override those of the younger people. As a young woman the researcher had to deal with both older women and men whose voices the researcher had to listen to without questioning. Some issues the researcher had to deal with were quite sensitive which needed ethical probity to handle and deal with. Potential conflicts could, especially in CE, be a minefield which could have resulted in failure to collect data. As a result, the researcher kept vigilant to avoid such conflicts. Fairness in all the researcher's dealings with the community was the watchword. Sensitive issues were also handled in a manner that did not make a bad situation worse. Dealing with traditional leaders such as councillors, headmen and chiefs was a potential conflict area which the researcher always tried to handle in a very careful manner. However, participants saw the researcher as a young mother, a lecturer and a researcher. They also saw the researcher as a friend. The researcher felt her status as a female lecturer possibly facilitated her ability to interact with a variety of people because the researcher was not holding a high office in the university; she was already known to the community and, as a female, she would be seen as non-threatening by both female and male participants.

However, when it came to the level of education there was a gap between the researcher's qualifications and those of most community members. In order to alleviate that gap the researcher had to create friendship with the community members. The researcher ensured, as far as possible that the environment for our interactions was non- threatening, and done at a time and place to suit the participants.

### **3.16 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED**

These were some practical difficulties which the study faced which included financial and material resources, distance between the community project centre and the university, finding

overnight accommodation and transcribing. Transcribing was the most demanding part of the methodology because it took three times longer than the interviews took.

Two major problems were the distance to the Zindowe village in Mberengwa and the roads to the project site which were in a very bad state. The roads were rough and rocky with large potholes, as most of the soil has been washed away. The distance from the MSU to the Centre is 250 km. Consequently, it was not easy to visit the centre as often as the researcher would have liked to. This was a practical limitation to the study, and its impact on this study meant that contact hours were reduced with the community. The MSU was unable to issue transport to visit the centre under such conditions, so the researcher had to use her personal car. The car broke down on her way back to Gweru and the researcher had to seek help from the nearest town which was Zvishavane. Accommodation was a challenge as the MSU has accommodation for students only at the Centre in Zindowe. There was no overnight accommodation for staff who may want to carry out research at the centre. The nearest accommodation one may find is at Mataga Growth Point which is 15 km away from the university community engagement centre. This inconvenienced the researcher in terms of time and travelling costs. In order to minimise the costs, she had to make sure that all the research activities were carried out within the stipulated four days.

Stake (2005) points out that the methodology used in this study, which is the case study, faced some challenges. Some of these were that the case study normally is a single unit with a small sample. Findings of such studies are very difficult to generalise due to the small samples. For example, this study cannot be generalised to all the universities in Zimbabwe.

There is more likelihood to promote bias when using this method (Flyvberg, 2006). The immersion of the researcher in the social context that is being studied potentially leads to a lack of objectivity and a propensity to use personal opinion instead of evidence to support arguments. For example, this study required the researcher to submerge herself in the culture of the Zindowe society with the aim of finding patterns of power. By collecting sufficient data from a variety of sources the researcher hoped to avoid bias.

#### **3.16.1 Sickness and Death of my Husband Stenford Museva and Mother-in-law**

A major personal challenge was the impact of sickness and death of two family members of the researcher during this time period. It was in May 2014 that her husband was diagnosed

with cancer at stage 4. They were forced to close the Gweru home and move to Harare to give her husband, Stenford Museva, all the care and assistance he needed. He had to undergo an emergency operation which was then followed by chemotherapy and radiotherapy for six months. The researcher was forced through circumstance to abandon her studies altogether so as to give all her attention to her husband. It was a struggle, a challenge and a threat.

However, on 25 May 2015, one year down the line, her husband was readmitted at Midlands Private hospital. This time the cancer was more aggressive than before. He was transferred to Harare Avenues Hospital. His condition deteriorated and he passed away, on 22 June 2015 at 9.15 am.

After the death of her husband, in June 2015 her mother-in-law was diagnosed with cancer at stage 4. The researcher tried to continue with her studies at the same time as caring for her. Her mother-in-law passed away on 2 June 2017, one and a half years after the death of her husband.

### **3.16.2 Finances**

As a result of the sickness and death of her husband in 2015 and mother-in-law in 2017, it was not financially possible for the researcher to meet all her educational needs. This meant that the researcher had to find other means to help her to complete her studies. Funds were not easy to come by for travel, maintenance and accommodation.

## **3.17 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter looked at the overall research methodology for the case study of the Mberengwa CE project with the MSU. The study located itself in the interpretive paradigm through a case study design so as to have an in-depth understanding of the project. The instruments used in this study were interviews, focus group discussions, observation, transect walk and documentary analysis. The instruments which had been chosen linked very well with the interpretive paradigm. The researcher was provided with the chance to explain and explore the different issues and probe further where necessary. This helped the researcher obtain an overall picture and in-depth understanding of the issues under study. The participants also had chances to ask questions on the different issues being studied. The chapter concluded by discussing the ethical considerations that were considered in this study. Some of the ethical considerations that were discussed were the informed consent from different gatekeepers

such as individuals, institutions or professions, anonymity, and confidentiality/privacy. Some of the ethical challenges which the researcher met were also discussed.

The next chapters discuss data presentation and analysis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: THE PROCESS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter outlined the methodological approach for this study. The purpose of the study was to examine university community engagement (CE) in Zindowe village, Mberengwa with Midlands State University (MSU), Zimbabwe. This chapter presents, interprets and discusses data gathered through interviews, observations, focus group discussions, documentary analysis and the transect walk from participants involved in the CE project. The presentation of findings is organised in answer to the first research sub-question:

How does the university interact with the community particularly in relation to the processes involved in the running of the project?

A brief profile of all the participants is provided highlighting their characteristics and specific social contexts of the university CE process. After a summary of the participants a brief history on how the project was set up, supported by quotations, is given. To discuss findings in this chapter, texts and detailed descriptions are provided and then analysed in relation to the literature and theoretical framework.

A total number of 49 participants were interviewed. For the purposes of anonymity pseudonyms and codes are used in this study in order to conceal the names of the participants. A number of official titles are removed for the same reason. In this chapter interviews took place over three phases because of an evolving partnership relationship in the project. The first reflects a formal embryonic phase controlled by the university. Then there is a middle and less organised phase and finally a more formal phase where the community members themselves played a stronger role in the relationship.

### **4.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS**

As background information this section provides a brief description of all the participants who were sampled in the partnership between the university (code: U14) and the community (code: M15). It also outlines the different backgrounds and specific social contexts of the university CE process.

**Table 6: Profile of the interviewees:**

<b>Name of respondent</b>	<b>Code number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Educational Qualification</b>
Senior Academic Staff 1	R1	Over 50 years	Master's degree
Senior Academic Staff 2	D2	Over 50 years	Master's degree
Peter	L3a	Between 40 and 50 years	Master's degree
Joe	L3b	Over 50 years	Master's degree
Lee Roy	L3c	Over 50 years	Master's degree
Hope	L3d	Over 50 years	Master's degree
Trust	L3e	Over 40 years	Master's degree
Malvern	L3f	Over 50 years	Master's degree
Sebastain	L3g	Over 40 years	Master's degree
(Government Agent) James	GA4	Over 50 years	Diploma in Agriculture
Senior Academic Staff 3	D5	Over 50 years	Master's 'degree
Ellen	WG6a	Between 40 and 50 years	Form 3
Mary	WG6b	Between 40 and 50 years	Grade 7
Joy	WG6c	Between 40 and 50 years	Grade 7
Praise	WG6d	Over 50 years	O Level
Pinky	WG6e	Between 40 and 50 years	O Level
Loreen	WG6f	Between 40 and 50 years	O Level
Tracy	WG6g	Over 50 years	Grade 7
Betty	WG6h	Between 40 and 50 years	Grade 7
Mercy	WG6i	Between 40 and 50 years	Grade 7
Nyasha	WG6j	Over 50 years	Grade 7
Robert	MG7a	Over 50 years	Diploma in Education
Adam	MG7b	Over 50 years	Degree
Tony	MG7c	Over 50 years	Diploma in Education
Wallace	MG7d	Over 50 years	Diploma in Education
Joe	MG7e	Over 50 years	O level
Noah	MG7f	Over 50 years	Vocational Skills
Arron	MG7g	Over 50 years	Grade 7
Sten	MG7h	Over 50 years	Grade 7
Eddy	MG7i	Over 50 years	Vocational Skills
Blessing	MG7j	Between 40 and 50 years	Vocational Skills
Community Leader 1	CH8	Over 50 years	Grade 7
Community Leader 2: Elijah	C9a	Over 50 years	Diploma in Education
Community Leader 3: Brian	VH 10a	Over 50 years	Form 2

Businessman Owen	B11	Over 50 years	Bachelor of Education
Students George Sally Mirriam Taku Ano	S12a S12b S12c S12d S12e	22 years 21 years 20 years 19 years 21 years	Agriculture Local Governance Development Studies Agriculture History
Senior Academic Staff	D13	Over 50 years	PhD
Midlands State University	U14		
Mberengwa Community	M15		
Betty Kudzi Pretty Molly Tendai Cleo Benjamin Robson	Y16a Y16b Y16c Y16d Y16e Y16f Y16g Y16h	16 years 17 years 17 years 18 years 17 years 16 years 19 years 16 years	Grade 7 Grade 7 Grade 7 Grade 7 Grade 7 Grade 7 Grade 7 Grade 7
Max	PC17	50 years	Bachelor of Education

### Participant One (R1)

Participant one (R1) was the custodian of all the policies and regulations at the University (U14). He holds a master's degree and has a lot of experience in managing projects. At the time of this interview, he was on the main committee of the University's CE at U14. At the time the researcher interviewed him he had been championing or directing many different CE projects for the university in more than four districts. For this reason, he was better qualified than any other person at U14 to answer questions on university CE. When asked about the reasons why the university was embarking on CE, he said: "*Universities need to give back to the communities they are situated in as a service to these communities.*" He gave his thoughts on what he deemed to be an ideal notion of CE:

*The university was not going to the M15 community to teach them what to do, but it is adopting a people-centred approach. We want the community to identify their needs, challenges and how to deal with these challenges. We*



*also want to get information from their side and blend it with scientific information.*

His views were also expressed by other university participants.

### **Participant Two (D2)**

Participant two was interviewed because, firstly, he was the chairperson of the main university engagement committee and secondly because he was a ‘guru’ in agriculture which was a department that had a lot of input on what was happening at the project site in M15. He holds a Master’s Degree in Agriculture and therefore was well suited for the engagement position. Asked what he thought the project would do for the two communities (U14 and M15) this is what he had to say: *“The university will learn a lot from the community in areas of indigenous knowledge systems and the [M15] community will benefit from the research from the university. In this way, there will be some co-creation of knowledge.”* He continued to say that: *“It is a wrong perception to think that the community did not know how to treat their own animals using various herbs or treat them for various ailments.”* He was able to articulate his vision for the future and expressed his hope that this project would be a success.

### **Third Group of Participants (L3a, L3b, L3c, L3d, L3e, L3f, L3g,)**

The third session of interviews involved seven lecturers L3a, L3b, L3c, L3d, L3e, L3f and L3g. These were very senior university lecturers at the university. They were all involved in the university CE programmes. They participated in the project through students’ supervision and training of community members at the centre, in goat keeping, sisal making, vegetable growing, cattle management and poultry keeping. The researcher asked one of these lecturers (L3c) why he would want to spend a lot of his time in a remote area such as M15. His response was very clear and measured:

*I was born, bred and educated in a rural area and my parents all live there. They educated me from the money they got in a rural environment and I simply want to give [back] my service to them. ... These are our parents and we have an obligation to give our best to them.*

At the time of interviewing these three lecturers, the project was still in its infancy. The operations were characterised at this stage by a number of challenges such as finance, the location of the plot and poor leadership. Several lecturers were still finding their way into understanding what was happening within the project.

#### **Participant Four (GA4)**

Government agents are government employees who work with the rural communities. This agent was a diploma holder from an agricultural college. He had been trained to work with rural communities. His mandate in this project was to give technical advice to this community engagement (CE) project. During the interview, which was also during the initial phase of the project, he revealed that he had experienced some sour relations with the university administrator who was in charge of the project. He was a government employee for that community and when he tried to give advice to the community, which was within his mandate, the university administrator saw this as interference. Hence, he said that there was a need for tolerance, dialogue, respect and humility when working with communities. *“I am here to do the job for which I am paid and someone sees this as interference,”* he stated.

#### **Participant Five (D5)**

D5, a senior university staff member, works for U14. He holds a Master’s Degree. He held the view that this partnership between the university and the M15 community was beneficial to them both. According to him, the community would provide indigenous knowledge to the university, while the university would carry out research which would benefit the community. For example, he stated that the M15 community had long realised that the survival of their agricultural civilization depended upon their ability to retain soil fertility. The periodic abandonment of over-cultivated land and overgrazed areas to allow regeneration of natural vegetation and rebuilding soil fertility before re-use was a clever practice that promoted soil and vegetation conservation. So he felt that both the university and community would benefit from the partnership.

#### **Sixth Group of Participants (WG6a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j,)**

This was a group of ten, economically poor women from within Zindowe village who had very little education with very little experience in CE and were, as a result, a marginalised sector of the community. They joined the project with the hope that they would improve their

lives and those of their families. In the words of WG6a: *“We are in this project because we want to learn new skills through the functional literacy programmes.”* Most of this group were illiterate, but were keen to learn. Due to them not being educated, they were not employed and struggled to make ends meet. They saw the coming of this project on their doorstep as God-given and a blessing. They fully participated in the different projects at the centre such as poultry farming, gardening, beekeeping and mat making which were sources of income for them. *“The money we get through these projects is helping us to send our children to school, to hospital when sick and above all to have food on our tables”*, said WG6b. The coming of the university engagement project was therefore seen by this group as a way of empowerment through skills training and acquisition from the various projects and activities at the centre.

### **Seventh Group of Participants (MG7a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j,)**

This focus group of ten males participated fully in the project at the centre. This was a group of males with varying experiences. Most of them were retired former teachers who had taught in primary schools. A few of them were primary school heads who had some experience in administration. Some were local businessmen in the community who had experience in running some projects and were useful in leading others in project and financial management. For this group, the coming of the U14 with the projects that would raise money was seen as a boost to their own businesses. This group knew very well the importance of having such a project in their community. In the words of one former headmaster MG6c: *“This is what this community had been seeking for a long time. This engagement, if taken seriously can transform the whole complexity of this community and M Primary School.”*

A businessman at M Business Centre also reported: *“This project will boost our market and enable many people to have some money in their pockets which will enable them to develop economically, socially, culturally and politically.”* This group knew and were aware of their rights and entitlements and did not want to be taken for granted in any way.

### **Participant Eight (CH8)**

Participant eight was a community leader who represented government in the rural areas. He was the custodian of the rural policies and regulations in the community. He was a General Certificate “O” level holder. All other junior community leaders reported to him. As far as his

work was concerned, he was highly experienced. When asked what his functions were in the partnership, he said:

*My major function is to encourage responsible development by all the concerned partners. This includes land distribution, settling disputes and engaging in community development projects with different organisations and individuals such as this one with Midlands State University.*

#### **Participant Nine (VH 10a)**

Participant nine was a junior community leader. The officer had just attained primary education. He had five years' experience in his current job which included mobilising the community for labour, calling and chairing meetings, and carrying out any delegated duties from the senior community leader in developing the community. This is what he had to say when asked about his role in the project: *"My role in the university engagement partnership is to facilitate dialogue between the different stakeholders by attending meetings with both the university and the community"*. He further said that his other role in partnership was: *"to cascade information to the community structures on developmental issues after attending meetings."* This was also reiterated by participant eight who shared similar views.

#### **Participant Ten (C9a)**

The participant operated under the community leader in the council offices. He was a member of the community and held different offices such as teacher, headman etc. Some of his duties were similar to those of other community leaders, such as attending council meetings and representing the senior community leader in different forays. From the interview conducted it was apparent that the member was from a particular family, (identified in this study as the xxxx family) though staying in a different location.

#### **Participant Eleven (B11)**

He was a diploma holder in education and a retired headmaster from a local primary school. He was running a local grocery shop. His educational qualifications put him at an advantage in his business dealings. For example, he had good management skills which included good communication and good public relations. He also displayed good entrepreneurship skills when dealing with the community. During the interview, this is what he had to say about the partnership:

*The villagers who participate in the partnership have had their lives transformed; for example, they have improved their life styles by having food on their tables, managing to send children to school and buying groceries for the family thereby boosting business and contributing to the development of the community.*

#### **Twelfth Group of participants (S12a, S12b, S12c, S12d, S12e)**

These were the students from U14 who participated in the interview. During the interview this is what they said concerning their duties: *“Our major duties include impacting skills, knowledge and attitudes to the community.”* They continued to say: *“We also take a leaf from the community as we learn from them through their indigenous knowledge systems and culture.”* Both the community and the students were to learn from each other in the process. They were all to benefit from the learning situation. However, some of the students who had been deployed at the centre had to be sent back to the university as they were not regarded as useful for the centre’s needs. The male participants/men’s focus group (MFG) had confirmed that the students did not have the required qualifications, such as agricultural know how and experience, to help the community. For example, one student who was from the department of local government had been wrongly deployed. What emerged from the data was that the university had found a dumping ground for those students who were unable to get work related placements.

#### **Participant Thirteen (D13)**

A senior academic officer at the U14 was intended to be participant 13. The researcher’s original intention was to interview this senior academic but he ultimately did not participate. At the time of the interviews he was in charge of the day to day running of the university business and all its programmes. He was a professor and had accumulated considerable experience in university work both as a lecturer and administrator. At the time of the interview he was chairing the UNESCO education committee. He had also attended the World Conference on University Community Engagement. He had contributed immensely in putting U14 on the world map of education. As a result of his busy office, participant thirteen could not be interviewed despite many appointments the researcher made. The researcher even went the extra mile to make an appointment after hours but his busy schedule could not permit it. All the participant said was, he was restructuring the university CE department at the university in order to engage with communities on a very large scale.

**Participant Fourteen (U14)**

This is the MSU which is engaging with different communities in university CE.

**Participant Fifteen (M15)**

This represents the Zindowe village in the Mberengwa district in which the university community engagement was located.

**Sixteenth Group of Participants (Y16 a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h.)**

In this study the ‘youths’ were a group of eight youth learners, three males and five females at a local secondary school. Their age range was between 16 and 25 years of age. They came to the project with their parents and helped in many ways such as digging in the gardens, feeding chickens, moulding bricks, fetching water to water the vegetables and other related chores. They were much more energetic and wanted to associate with university students since they hoped one day they too would be university students. They played a major role at the dam construction which received cement via the university students. They also had a feeling that the project would be passed on to them by their parents, some of whom were already old. They were a very active and vocal group who stated that they gave a lot to the project in the form of labour (as articulated by Y16a).

**Seventeenth Participant (PC17: The Project Coordinator)**

This is one of the community leaders who took over in the final phase from the first project coordinator. He has worked with the community in different posts. He was the councillor of the ward when the project started and was the headmaster of the local secondary school from where most of the youths came. He holds a Bachelor’s degree and is very active both at school as head and in the community as a councillor. He was appointed by the community as project coordinator in 2014. He is carrying out community service duties on a voluntary basis refocusing the community into the project. He is giving the needed education and training to the community on the benefits of the (CE project and also teaching them how to manage conflicts within the project.

The next section focuses on the ‘forming’ stage of the history of the partnership project between the U14, the State University, and the M15, the community. The process of setting up and running the CE project went through three phases. The phases followed a similar trend

to the ‘forming’, ‘storming’ and ‘norming’ phases of any group (Tuckman, 1965). In other words, groups are expected to function at varying degrees of harmony as the members establish relationships and learn to interact with each other. These phases are reflected in the processes (practicalities) as well as the relationships which are discussed in Chapter Five.

## **4.2 THE HISTORY OF THE M14 PROJECT**

Information on the history of M15 was obtained from the Strategic Plan (MSU, 2000) of the university.

The Midlands State University (MSU) was established in 1999 by an Act of Parliament (MSU, 2000). Its vision was to be a unique, developmental oriented, pace-setting and stakeholder driven university that aimed to produce innovative and enterprising graduates. Its main objective was and continues to be the advancement of knowledge through teaching, research and CE. In order to be true to its mission, vision and objective, the university sent its senior staff member D5 to a university in the United States of America in 2010 to study, among other things, CE. He (D5) was in the USA from January to March of 2010.

Armed with some knowledge on CE, D5 returned to start working on a document to be presented to the vice chancellor on the broad concept of CE. The vice chancellor on his part, after reading the report from the senior staff member D5 was motivated to start such a project at MSU. Also armed with a few ideas on what CE could entail, the vice chancellor was invited to attend a meeting organised by the Talloires Network in Madrid in Spain in 2011. This is the meeting which gave the vice chancellor the determination to come up with a CE programme at the MSU. He immediately tasked the registrar of the university to form a committee which would start discussing CE at the university.

Since there was a report by the senior university staff member D5 from his visit to New Hampshire dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010, the vice chancellor asked the CE committee to make use of the D5 report to produce its own CE comprehensive document (MSU minutes of the CE committee dated 11 May, 2011).

The membership of the Midlands State University (MSU) Community Engagement (CE) committee is as follows:

- Vice-Chancellor (Ex-Officio)
  - Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs and Research (Ex-Officio)
  - Pro-Vice Chancellor Business Development and Administration (Ex-Officio)
  - Committee Chairperson (As nominated by the Vice-Chancellor)
  - Executive Dean: Natural Resources Management and Agriculture
  - Executive Dean: Students Affairs
  - Director: Works and Estates
  - Director: Work Related Learning/Community Engagement
  - Director: Information and Public Relations
  - Deputy Dean: Natural Resources Management Agriculture
  - Student Development Fellow
  - Bursar's Representative
  - A representative elected by each Faculty Board
  - One Student Representative Council member
  - Administrative Assistant: Work Related Learning (Secretary)
  - Chairperson: Centre for Entrepreneurship Studies
  - Chairperson: Gender Studies Centre
  - Representative: Department of Local Government Studies
  - Representative: Department of Development Studies
  - Representative: Department of Agricultural Economics and Development
- ITS Representative (MSU, 2011).

The committee was tasked to produce sub-committees. Some of these sub-committees were the planning committee which was to provide the layout and activities of the project, and a legal sub-committee which was tasked to deal with the issue of ownership of land. A finance sub-committee was tasked with the responsibility of looking into budgets, and monitoring whether the funds were used for what they were intended. The sub-committees formed at the university were to be replicated at community level with similar functions. According to the CE document the hope was that the community would learn how to do their management through committees. According to the university CE minutes dated the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011 the senior university staff member D5 had already earmarked a piece of land in his village for the project. He was very willing to give that four-hectare piece of land to the university for its CE project. This, then, explains why the project was set up at D5's home area and in his village.



The ‘storming’ (Tuckman 1965), or unharmonious, stage emerged over time in relation to issues around the lease and ownership of decisions. The university committee wanted to be given a lease agreement before the project started since it was set up on someone’s land. The lease agreement took a long time to be prepared and signed which brought about some confusion and controversy. The minutes of the community committee meetings held in January 2014 showed that some community members argued that the university could not develop someone else’s private property without the necessary papers. This resulted in some community members refusing to take part in the project. Their argument was that there was a lot of state land where the project could have been set up which needed no lease agreement. Participant D5 argued that the ideas of the university were his, so they could not be taken away from his village. However, according to the Mataga Rural District Council Resolution Minute of February (2015) a lease agreement has since been issued. The university now has the lease agreement which was issued by the Mataga Rural District Council.

During the ‘forming’ stage the university played a strong leadership role in terms of initiating actions. The minutes of the university committee meetings held on 11 January, 2011 showed that the university committee started having meetings with university staff and community representatives (PC17 before he became project coordinator) to discuss various issues related to CE. At the beginning, because there were many issues to discuss, there were two-weekly meetings. The Chief Executive Officer of Mberengwa Rural District Council attended the first three meetings. He attended the meetings on behalf of the community of Zindowe. He assured the first meetings that a lease would be offered, but some members did not believe him. But true to his word, a lease agreement was finally given in 2015 and the university now pays the Rural District Council US\$34 per year as tax for use of the land.

This ‘forming’ stage, although initiated by the university, was intended to be in response to community led concerns. According to senior academic staff (R1) the university did not go to Zindowe Mberengwa to impose itself on the community or to impose any project on them. To this end, in its 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting the CE committee decided that a needs assessment survey be conducted at the project site. This survey was conducted with the aim of helping the community to shape their own future and to be aware of the services which would provide answers to their problems. To this extent it follows some principles of the asset-based community development philosophy (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). However, the survey

seemed to focus on needs rather than community assets. This was done at a nearby secondary school on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2011. The meeting was attended by 132 community members who included the councillor of ward 29 where the project is located, the chief of the area and the four headmen of the village. In the meeting participants listed a number of projects that they wished to be developed. Items on this list were then prioritised based on what was possible and feasible to do. The community for instance identified that they only had shallow wells which served them well during the rainy season but dried up during winter, so they needed boreholes and this is why boreholes were drilled. The community had their own traditional chickens which took long to mature and so requested the university to help them with fast growing chicks which took six weeks to mature. The university's response was to provide the chicks and the market for them at the university for students and staff. So, all the projects that the university is implementing or had implemented on the project site were derived from community-led ideas for projects. However, there are some projects which were prioritised but which could not be implemented. The one such project which has still not been implemented but which was top on the community list, is the mushroom project. At the time of data collection, it was not clear why this had still not been implemented. These outcomes in the 'forming' phase indicated there was initially agreement between the community and the university on most of the major areas of this project.

The literature suggests that universities have traditionally been considered as 'Ivory Towers' whose roles were primarily teaching, and research but also included work of social relevance (Otim, 1992). They often excelled in fundamental and applied research as well as the practical work of social relevance (Otim, 1992). Their leadership in any community project is highly respected, which explains M14's involvement in community projects. Universities are traditionally well placed to provide leadership in CE projects, but what had not been ascertained was the nature of that leadership in this project. For instance, adaptive leadership theory places emphasis on encouraging dialogue with followers to encourage the clarification of competing goals and values (Heifetz, 1994). The needs analysis shows evidence that dialogue initially took place to clarify the community goals but it is less clear as to whether the university clarified its own goals in the process. The university initially turned its attention to building infrastructure at the centre for the students and for the different activities. This was after the university produced a budget for the whole university engagement project as revealed by D2 who said that: *"There was a budget which was given in 2011 for the university community engagement project."* This budget was then used to

develop infrastructure such as accommodation, training shed, boreholes and fowl runs as shown below.



**Figure 6: Students' accommodation**



**Figure 7: Training shed**



**Figure 8: Toilets**



**Figure 9: Borehole and water tanks**



**Figure 10: Water tanks**



**Figure 11: Fowl run**

In addition to infrastructure, basic education was provided. Although Zimbabwe is said to have a 86.4% literacy rate according to the United Nations Development Programme report (UNDP, 2016), rural villages are more likely to have low literacy rates because of lack of access to regular schooling. In view of this the community members specifically asked for literacy classes. From the data presented by one of the community leaders (C11): “*literacy classes were opened at M and J primary schools.*” The purpose of these classes was to empower the community in terms of their literacy, skills and knowledge base. These classes were organised by the university who acquired the necessary personnel to teach the community, and provided teaching venues and resources such as allowances, books and



stationery. Muller (2000) and Edwor (2001) highlight that generally females still suffer lower literacy rates. This was perhaps evidenced in this project by the fact that more females showed interest in literacy classes than their male counterparts. Of particular interest to this study, however, was the ongoing nature of the CE process. The next section therefore discusses the findings of the study in more detail in relation to the overall research question and specifically research question one.

### **4.3 FINDINGS**

From the interviews with the different groups, there emerged a number of themes. The findings are hereby presented thematically by drawing on the interviews, focus group discussions, transect walk, documentary evidence and observations. The themes are organised in response to research question one. To these findings we now turn.

#### **4.3.1 Research Question One: How does the University Interact with the Community?**

The answers to this question are divided up as follows: the ideologies in the university and in the community; the actual processes of interaction that were identified as taking place, and the formal structures and designated interaction arrangements between relevant parties. These answers were given during the initial data gathering phase and largely reflected the ‘forming’ stage of the CE process (Tuckman, 1965), although there was also evidence of the ‘storming’ stage emerging. The next section looks at the ideology of the university CE project.

##### **4.3.1.1 Ideology of university community engagement**

Interviews which were conducted at the U14 and at the M15 enabled the researcher to elicit views and experiences regarding the ideology being followed with regards to the university CE partnership. The respondents were given an equal chance to respond regarding the ideology behind the partnership between the university and the community. From the responses by some of the senior academic staff members, the university had a university policy on CE as affirmed by (R1) when he said: *“The university does have a policy on university community engagement as it is part and parcel of our philosophy.”*

He further stated that:

*The university is not going to impose new ideas, 'no' it is going out there with an open mind. The university is going out to learn. We also want to get information from their side and blend it with scientific information.*

A community leader VH10a highlighted that *“This partnership was to be a training centre where different activities would be taught, for example bee-keeping and poultry management.”*

The community leader further reiterated that *“skills which would be acquired from the centre were meant to help us by replicating them at our homes”*.

Comments from the respondents suggest there seemed to be different ideologies in the partnership. Data seemed to suggest that there was a contradiction of purpose and expectation between the two parties. The university senior academic R1 indicated that: *“The institution wanted to learn and not to impose ideas on the community”*, while the community participants indicated that they wanted the university to give them new skills. In other words, they expected a transfer of technical knowledge and skills from the university to the community.

The university's purpose seemed also to contradict the reality of how the relationship seemed to operate. The lecturers acknowledged this when asked the question “Is there co-creation of knowledge in this partnership?” This is an example of what they said: *“It should be like that but at present it's hazy. Some of these projects that are being done are meant to benefit the communities more than the university.”* (L3a)

A senior academic staff member denoted as D2 made a similar comment when he said: *“Currently most of the activities were from the [university's] proposal which was a top down approach which is not very effective at the time.”*

Again, this was confirmed by another community leader C9a who highlighted that: *“Not much empowerment has been done to the community by the university as we are still waiting for the mushroom project.”*

Nevertheless, according to the community leader denoted as VH 10a, part of the assumed CE ideology was that the university and community would work in partnership, through shared decision-making. The community leader denoted as VH 10a indicated that there were some opportunities for working together through formal arrangements as well as practically when he said: *“The community participated in the partnership by attending meetings, using local resources and provided the necessary labour for example during the gulley reclamation in the villages and during the dam construction.”*

These exchanges of information indicated that the ideology of a collaborative, shared relationship was mixed. In some cases, community members felt empowered and involved in decision making, but there were other instances where both academic and community members felt the ideology had not been fully realised to date.

While the ideology of CE considered what participants expected the university community relationship to be, the following theme and the process, provides evidence of the formal enabling structures for that relationship and some of the practical challenges that impacted on the activities that were involved.

#### **4.3.1.2 The Process**

This theme is divided into sub-themes, the first of which is:

##### **Formal university structure**

Data collected during the interviews revealed that the university academics claimed that there was a formally constituted committee structure which enabled a two-way flow of communication through committees. This was explained by the following three respondents (D2, D5, L3a) from the senior academic staff:

*A committee was formed by the university which was then named Community Engagement through the Scientific Indigenous Knowledge Systems (CESIK). All the faculties were represented in this committee. We were appointed by the faculty planning meeting to represent the faculty in the CESIK committee. The aim of the committee was to transfer knowledge and technologies to the community. (D2)*



*We do have a committee in the university that discusses and plans about the university community engagement and I am the coordinator* was said by D5.

*We are members of a committee that was tasked to run a project called CESIK standing for Community Engagement through Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge by the university. We were actually nominated by our faculty boards into the committee* was the comment from L3a.

However, there seemed to be a discrepancy between what the senior academic members felt was happening and what appeared to be the case for lecturing staff. One of the lecturers for instance, felt that the formal structure was not known to all university staff members. It appeared that the reason for these discrepancies in understanding was that the senior academic staff members were more involved in policy design, while the lecturers experienced the policy as an implementation issue. Furthermore, D2's comment indicated that the university committee did not see CE as a two-way process.

### **Formal community structures**

There were, nevertheless, formal decision making structures connected to the CE project at community level. These, in parallel with the way the university committee operated, were only comprised of community members. The community had its main committee in charge of all project commitments, as mentioned by D2 who confirmed that there was a communication route from grass roots community level up to the university committee. He said:

*The community had a committee which was formed in 2011. The committee was made up of a representative from each village. The aim of the committee was to spear head activities around the centre. We [the university] realized that we would not make decisions on behalf of the community. The chairperson of the committee would then liaise with the full-time member of staff working at the centre, who would give the university feedback on what was happening at the centre and appropriate action would be taken.*

From the data it was evident that the dialogue passed through several hands. This idea was also affirmed by the youth (Y16h) who said that:

*Different committees made up of representatives from each village head are in place. These then communicate the different issues to the community. For example, the indigenous knowledge committee which reported that they had marula fruit trees, with bees all over which just needed to be tapped. They also had manure to use in the plot instead of inorganic fertilizers. They also had access to indigenous poultry breeds. All these local resources were identified by the community for use in the partnership between the centre and university.*

He, (Y16h) continued to say: *“The other committee in place is that of the different chairpersons of different activities at the centre”.*

The men’s focus group (MFG) concurred with the efforts at community level to provide inclusive representation when they said this during the ‘forming’ stage:

*All committees are made representative by selecting a member from each village which is headed by a headman. We also try as much as possible to accommodate tribal and ethical issues. Language differences are also taken into account in order to reduce conflicts. We believe that only when people can live together, work together, have mutual respect for one another and speak freely to one another can the Zvamatohwe [Zindowe village] community hope to protect its environment and establish sustainable development.*

Although the community appeared to ensure representation of different community voices at community level, and the university included a cross section of academic staff, it would appear from the findings that there were communication gaps in the partnership as evidenced by the lack of cross representation of both the community and the university members in the different committees. This suggests that the power differentials between community and university had not yet been resolved. This was also confirmed by the women’s focus group (WFG) when WG6e said: *“We accept all things the university brings or tell us. We now have a library and a zero grade class for our children”.*

In other words, there was a sense that community members received, rather than negotiated, university involvement.

The literature highlights that CE is rarely supported strongly in university structures (UKZN, 2014; Sinclair et al., 2003; Osman & Castle, 2006). In the MSU's case there was some evidence of good support in terms of coming up with a budget in 2011 for the university CE as stated in the university CE document and by the senior academic staff (R1) who affirmed that: *"Community engagement is embedded in the university's philosophy. The university came up with a budget in order to build infrastructure and to develop the project."*

From the data it was however clear that staff were not always given sufficient resources, time and information to implement CE activities. This was revealed by one of the lecturers who said that:

*Every time we went to the centre we would probably use the Work Related Learning Director's vehicle or go by bus, so in the process the type of interaction which we really wanted and the type of decisions we expected to have taken would not happen to our satisfaction. (L3c)*

The lecturers elaborated on this concern when they said travelling from bus stop to the centre would take a lot of time. And once at the centre it was difficult to reach all the places due to travelling on foot (L3a).

These findings suggest that there was a commitment towards the process at both a community and university level because meetings were held and interactions took place. But some of the practicalities, such as transport, constrained the degree of interaction. Similarly, the actual exchange process between the university and community suggested that some community members at least were passive recipients of, rather than actively influencing university contributions.

### **Formal communication hierarchy**

These formal communication structures were put in place by the university at the initial 'forming' stage of the project in 2011. Both the university and community participants made

similar comments about formal communication. They stressed that there were different communication structures in place at U13. For example, an academic respondent commented: *“Formal communication is done through the CESIK committee, senate, faculty and department meetings. The whole system is run on a committee system.”* (L3a)

Participant D2 also affirmed another strategy used by the university. He said that: *“A full time member of staff works at the M14 centre. His functions are to communicate information from the centre to the university on issues at the centre.”*

While this structure provided a direct link between the community and university, the implications are that communication mechanisms were running in parallel, rather than in synergy with each other. The university staff member still expected a university staff member to be the link person between the community site and the institution, rather than a community representative. At the community centre, however, communication was operating through community members. According to the WFG interview this is what they had to say: *“We were invited to this partnership by the councillor through our (VH 10a) headman.”*

A senior academic staff member (D2) also highlighted that although the university did not want to make decisions for the community, the structures in place were accepted as separate rather than integrated, suggesting that perhaps the level of trust between the two entities was still fragile, in spite of the intended good will from the university:

*The community had a committee which was formed in 2011. The committee was made up of a representative from each village. The aim of the committee was to lead activities around the centre. We realized that we would not make decisions on behalf of the community.*

The youth (Y16a) also confirmed that communication structures at the community were in place and had this to say:

*Different committees made up of representatives from each village head are in place. These are the planning, and finance committees. These then communicate the different issues about the project to the community. The*

*other way of informing people is through the different chairpersons of different activities at the centre.*

The WFG confirmed that these structures operated separately, but they felt the decision making systems complemented each other. For example:

*Both the university and the community make decisions when it comes to the project; for example, the community made the decisions on which days different villagers would come to work at the project site, whilst the university made decisions on resource persons to train the community.*

The WFG continued to say that decisions: “Were also made through the votes at community meetings held called for by the councillor. For example, voting for which project should come first – poultry or mushroom.”

These findings suggest that the communication structures in place in the partnership served different purposes. They had evolved over time, so that the formal community level arrangements provided the necessary link with the formal university structures. The university communicated with the community’s project coordinator on intended plans at the centre such as plans for workshops and training. The other means of formal communication which was in place could be identified through the minutes from the different committees on the partnership. Minutes were exchanged between the two committees, that is the university and the community committee. This exchange meant that all parties could share information about the happenings at both ends.

Another form of communication also functioned in the form of research. According to the MSU (2006) CE minutes (MSU, 2006), students on attachment were also mandated to conduct interviews, and capture data from the community which would then be forwarded to the university for processing (but not necessarily discussed with the community).

#### **4.3.1.3 Challenges in the Process**

Different challenges were identified. The challenges that emerged from the interviews with the participants are presented below.

### **Non-representativeness**

A key challenge in the formal community engagement process was that of non-representativeness of the community membership on the CESIK committee. According to R1 the university was going to the community with an open mind but the community was not represented at all in any of the university CE meetings.

The above was also confirmed by the youths (Y16c) who said that: *“Yes, the community is also consulted by the university, however, the university does not invite the community to attend the main committee where most of the major issues on the project are discussed.”*

It would appear that there were two major university committees. The two committees were CESIK and the main university engagement committee. The community had no membership in the two committees which made it difficult to know how and why decisions were made on their behalf.

The MFG also identified lack of representation as a challenge in the partnership. For example, they said that they were not represented in the WRL, budget committee, and in CESIK. This resulted in decisions being made by the university on behalf of the community. This was evident in the comment made by MG7j when he said:

*The university is the one that prioritises activities at the centre depending on the availability of resources such as financial, material and human. The university should involve us in all the committees as this will help address relevant and pressing needs of the community.*

The same sentiments were echoed by the Headman (VH 10a) who also suggested that the: *“Midlands State University should always include the community in their planning meetings in order to cascade to the community correct information.”*

Data from the June (2015) minutes and observations made on October 23, 2015 indicated that the attendance at CE meetings had gone down in some faculties. At the inception of the project all faculties were in attendance. At the time of collecting the data, attendance was

mainly by the WRL office and maybe three or four faculties out of the whole university. Not much attention was being given to the partnership by January 2016.

There were three other major challenges that impacted on the process of project interactions. They are identified here as transport, location of the plot where the activities took place in the community, and leadership issues.

### **Transport**

Different respondents acknowledged that the relationship experienced challenges which impacted on the effectiveness of the CE process. According to one senior academic staff (D2) the following was said: *“There was no vehicle allocated for the project which is 250km away from the university.”*

This view was also echoed by lecturer (L3a) who said: *“When we have to go to Mberengwa we use a bakkie [van]. We are talking of five lecturers in an open truck.”*

The lecturer (R1) further said: *“We cannot go there as often as we would want to and therefore we cannot interact with the community as often as we would want to. There is need to have a vehicle dedicated specifically to the project”.*

One of the students (S12e) also revealed that: *“The project centre was far, and the only means of transport available was a bus”.*

It was widely agreed that transport was a challenge by R1, D2, L3 and S12 in this university CE project. This therefore minimised the interaction between the two parties. A vehicle was needed at the centre to transport staff to the centre, transport materials to and from the centre, and transport produce from the centre to the market.

### **Location of the plot**

The community highlighted a number of concerns regarding the use of donated land for the project from a university staff member who was also related to the community. The land was identified and donated to the university for the CE project by the senior university academic staff member, D5. It then was apportioned out to community members by the councillors who were from the same family which had donated the land to the university.

Concern had been raised by the majority of the participants, who included the extension worker, youth, men's focus group (MFG) and women's focus group (WFG), on the legal status of the land on which the project was set up. This was noted in the following response:

*The centre is located on land which belongs to the xxxx family and this was a cause for concern. The community would have preferred the council to allocate state land for this project. This would work well for the project as there would have been no ownership problems. (Y16d)*

During the data collection period, the WFG felt that they were abused by the xxxx family before the community constitution was in place. This was based on the women's reporting of the family's statement to them as: *"You are my people on my piece of land"*.

This did not go down well with the community as they felt belittled. The women felt this was abusive to the community members. However, after the 'storming' stage, the WFG's representative (WG6i) stated that the: *"issue of land ownership had since been resolved by the District Council which had issued a land lease to the university."*

Comments from the respondents suggest that despite the successful adoption of the university CE relationship with the university by community members the above identified challenges affected the smooth running of the process. In particular, leadership challenges surfaced.

### **Leadership issues at the centre**

From the data collected, before a new community constitution was put in place, an action which characterised the 'norming' phase (during the early establishment of the project when relations were relatively harmonious), the youths (Y16a, b, c, d) suggested that: *"There were elements of poor management skills, nepotism and corruption in the community engagement leadership at community level."*

One of the youths (Y16b) said: *"There is need to change leadership in the university community engagement. We need leaders who will be willing to rotate. Almost all the leaders came from the xxxx family."* (Y16b)



The MFG also agreed to this and said:

*Corruption was rife at the centre. For example; appointment of teaching staff at the Early Childhood Development Centre. The majority of the teachers were related to the xxxx family with no teaching qualifications for the early childhood development programme.*

The result of this was the withdrawal of children from the Early Childhood Development Centre as a result of a lack of trust. All this had a bearing on the project because this indicated that the community had lost its faith in what was happening at the centre.

The WFG echoed similar sentiments of poor management when one of them (WG6d) said: *“Leadership should have positive attitude towards the project. The leadership should be able to influence the community and bring about change.”*

Lecturers also complained about the work overload, which reflected lack of leadership in the institution concerning how CE work was managed in relation to other staff roles. This is what one of them (L3c) said:

*Over and above the full university load of teaching, setting and marking examinations, research supervision and work related supervision there are no incentives for people to stretch a little mile further. The lecturers are already overwhelmed. University community engagement comes in as an extra burden.*

Finally, another challenge that was identified was that of the discrepancy between practice and policy. Normally such issues of university CE require a council resolution and in many cases this procedure was not followed which showed poor leadership on the part of the university and the community. That is to say that the structures in place should be functional. For example, in this project there was need to have vehicles specifically allocated to the project and overnight staff accommodation at the centre. This was not the case as stated by one of the senior academic staff (D2) who said: *“The type of interaction which we really wanted and the type of decisions we expected to have taken would not happen to our satisfaction.”*

It would appear that from its inception the university CE experienced teething problems. Some of these problems had a negative impact on the project and a demotivating effect on the university and community participants. This led to passive participation from the community at the centre, especially by the males and this will be discussed more fully in Chapter Five.

The 'norming' stage was characterised by the introduction of a community constitution. The constitution was initiated by the community in October 2014 after the university had approached the community to set up the partnership and after the community experienced a period of disorder and conflict at the centre as noticed by the project coordinator (PC17) who said:

*The community had to come up with a constitution in order to bring in sanity and peace at the centre because it provided guidelines of what was to be done, by whom, when and why. The problem of mixed cropping in the vegetable garden was solved through the constitution clearly stating what had to be planted in the garden at certain periods of the year. The constitution had to be taken as a Bible at the centre. Whenever there is a problem the community refers all such matters to the constitution. So, the constitution is now the law – hence it brought sanity and peace at the centre. For example, the agricultural department stopped all mixed cropping in the vegetable garden. This was done to reduce the spread of diseases and because it made pest control difficult.*

The community could thus demonstrate mobilisation skills and apply community values in terms of caring for and supporting each other. These were processes that did not seem to have been recognised by the university as a necessary contribution to the university structure.

It would appear communication systems required a close understanding at grass roots level of consultation structures that enabled community members to feel a sense of ownership over decision-making.

## 4.4 DISCUSSION

This section discusses the results under the following headings: ideologies, community engagement structures, communication structures, formal communication hierarchy, needs assessment, and self-reliance in the community.

### 4.4.1 Ideologies

Comments from the different respondents suggest that there seemed to be competing ideologies within and across the relationship between the university and the community. For example, the senior academic staff member (R1) said: *“The university wants to learn and not impose but the community wants the university to give them new knowledge and new skills.”* What was on paper as policy and what was taking place on the ground appeared to be at variance with implications for how the university CE process was implemented. The university entered the community with authority and status because it was able to produce material, human, and financial resources. Some community participants indicated that they were happy to be passive recipients of whatever the university was willing to provide.

The committee structure also perpetuated this kind of relationship because decisions were effectively made without community members being present. This resulted in some projects being re-prioritised according to university values, rather than according to the community preferences so that, for example, the requested mushroom project did not materialise. Data indicated that there was a limited follow-up consultation by the university. Hence, its involvement indicated more of a top-down approach.

The university did not realise the strengths of the community, as was revealed by Stephenson Jr (2011) in his study in the USA where he argued that the universities have a tendency of marginalising the communities by identifying them as poor with nothing to offer so they become passive recipients of technical university expertise.

What seemed to be apparent in this study was that there was limited use of communication including feedback between the stakeholders, resulting in a lack of respect in the relationship and inadequate team work. Heifetz (2004), Chambers (2007) and Nyerere (1984) argue that interactive communication, negotiation, collaboration, respect, and clarifying values are vital in the empowerment process of any initiative for development and change. Scholars such as Ryan and Roche (2016), Mathie and Peters (2014) Rule (2015) and Preece (2016) who

discuss CE communication and relationship issues in their studies all concur or support the above view by saying that dialogue and relationship issues are important aspects which lead to re-negotiations and trust building in university CE activities.

#### **4.4.2 The Community Engagement Structures**

The findings identified that the university adopted a needs-based approach but with the intention of enabling economic self-sufficiency among community members. This was done through the establishment of a budget for the project by the university. As described, the process involved the establishment of formal committees both at the university and community levels, such as the University CE Committee, CESIK and WRL. From the literature, Bringle and Hatcher (2007), confirm similar findings on communication structures, that in CE, leaders should encourage communication, interactions and feedback to all stakeholders. It was expected that both formal and informal communication lines would be opened to enable both parties to communicate freely when the need arose. In terms of communication structures, policies were formulated in this study before the ‘storming’ phase which cemented channels of communication through regular meetings. The aims and objectives of the university CE were also clearly spelt out at a community level.

This was reflected through the different committees made up of representatives from each village head. In order to share information both the university and community committees were used as conduits of information. These then communicated the different issues about the project to the wider community.

The adaptive leadership approach does assume that management takes an initial leadership role, as would be the case with the university, but the aim of adaptive leadership is to encourage the building of relationships and multiple communication channels (Heifetz, 2001). In that respect, formal structures do appear to have been established in the university to allow for cross-institutional communication, but the indications from the lecturing staff were that decisions were still largely taken by senior management.

However, there was not always trust as evidenced by the WFG. There were tensions about who made decisions in different areas such as what to plant in the garden. In fact, there were instances of poor transparency (records of petrol receipts) and one-sided decision making (allocation of land).

Furthermore, in relation to leadership there was an expectation by the WFG that the leadership should lead and influence the community for change but the level and process of influence in terms of adaptive leadership principles (clarifying competing goals and values) was not always evident. Bryson and Carroll (2007), Stephenson Jr (2011), Preece and Manicom (2015) and Heifetz (2001) all agree that continuous communication is paramount in CE activities. It should be a two-way communication which should flow to and from both partners providing feedback.

However, from the data provided by community and university members, although there was evidence of formal structures that allowed dialogue, the way in which that dialogue was experienced would vary between the participants. The community who were supposed to implement strategies were deprived of the opportunity to articulate CE needs at community level in the main university committee called the CESIK committee. This resulted in important decisions on university CE being made without the input of the community. Thus, this raised the question of how easy would it be for the community members to relate to these structures? The limited representation from all related structures resulted in the community not being well represented at strategic levels.

#### **4.4.3 Communication Structures**

This section discusses the different communication channels that were used in the study. Data revealed that the university formed committees which were designed to operationalise the whole project. The first three meetings were attended by the local councillor, the chief, the university registrar, assistant to the vice chancellor, some deans and representatives from the university's nine faculties including the university bursar. This was a pointer to the fact that the university considered the project as important. There was a strong, upward reporting mechanism for committees at university level.

Data showed that the university set up sub-committees to ensure that the project started with a strong institutional commitment. The findings indicated that from the inception of the partnership the university management took an initial leadership role. In that role the university communicated to, rather than with, the community, although it provided clear channels of communication within the university and provided a university based contact within the community to facilitate top-down and bottom-up dialogue. In that respect formal

structures appeared to have been established at the university to allow for communication within the different layers of the university. In this study the formation of the different committees such as the planning, legal and finance at community level also enabled participation at community level. The rationale for establishing these committees was to encourage a two-way communication process which was meant to create opportunities for dialogue. There was also evidence of setting up of duplicate committees at community level such as planning and finance thus encouraging bottom-up communication.

Mansuri and Rao (2012), and Bandy et al. (2016) found that listening to the peoples' voice in developmental programmes facilitated community involvement, and empowered the community in a more meaningful, productive manner for economic development. Ni (2015) and Garcia and Longo (2015) in their studies on community voices for social good also concur with the above when they said that listening to the community voices results in harnessing the community's wisdom, leading to continuous involvement by the community thereby building trust, getting insights and direct feedback. Furthermore, they said that listening to the communities' voice was important as it encouraged the community to think for themselves.

For example, informing people was done through the different chairpersons of committees that oversaw the different activities at the centre. This was affirmed by the WFG who said that decisions were also made through the votes at community committee meetings which were held by the councillor. For example, voting for which project should come first: – the poultry or the mushroom project.

The findings revealed that some aspects of communication were working in the university CE structures such as having a university link person at the centre, a parallel committee and village meetings with the headmen and councillors. These findings were similar to those articulated by Miller (2009) in the Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education which discovered that the development of communication structures in university CE activities is of necessity if the intended goals are to be achieved.

However, the study also indicated that some aspects of communication were not working such as having no community representation in the two major university committees dealing with the major concerns of the university CE process. This led to a lack of community voice

in all major decisions. Lack of continuous communication and feedback was also noted as a constraint in the communication process.

Studies by Mathie and Peters (2014) and Green (2006) revealed that communication is a mighty tool, needed to link up communities and mobilise resources in developmental practices. They point out that there is a need to listen to what societies care for. Other scholars such as Sinclair et al. (2003), Bender (2008), Chirisa (2009), Preece (2011) and Erasmus (2011) have indicated in their studies that there is a need to pay particular attention to communication procedures in CE partnerships in order to listen to the community voice. A UKZN (2014) report on CE activities points out that communication would vary depending on the different stakeholders' requirements and needs to be an ongoing, open process. Thus, the findings in this study suggested that there is a need for continuous communication which would reflect interactive engagement. This has also been confirmed by Wong (2004) who argued that the ability to communicate and understand a mission is an essential aspect if trust and commitment are to be achieved in CE.

In essence, the findings noted that the university had consultative structures in place though these were insufficient in terms of community representation. For instance, the university students pointed out that the only formal liaison person between community and university was a university staff member and this was hampered by the fact that transport was not freely available so community visits were limited.

However, the study seemed to highlight some contradictions in relation to the formal communication arrangements. It seemed to suggest that although the university leadership created the committees at community level, the intended goals of facilitating a two-way communication process, did not materialise. Moreover, although the university did provide one member of staff to act as liaison link, not much was achieved as he encountered transport challenges when it came to transmitting the community views on time to the university committees at the main Gweru campus. This meant the community voice would sometimes not arrive at all and at best it would be filtered through a university voice rather than direct engagement in the ensuing communications. Although there was clear evidence of initial grass roots engagement, the formal communication structures separated this communication process out for the ongoing relations.

Such processes in action therefore, fell short of the recommended communication and dialogue as articulated by Mansuri and Rao (2012) and Bandy et al. (2016). Furthermore, they failed to capture Heifetz's (1994) idea in his adaptive leadership theory to encourage interactive communication and information sharing at all levels of participation in an organisation or development relationship. Therefore, the findings did not seem to reflect aspects of the adaptive leadership, and community development theories which place great emphasis on communication in order to build trust, respect, empowerment and to be value driven.

The next section focuses on needs assessment.

#### **4.4.4 Needs Assessment**

Results from the study suggest that the university send a delegation of men and women to go into the community, to hear their needs. It was noted that the university conducted a needs assessment or baseline survey which was attended by 132 community members. From the findings, there was not a sense that the university adopted an asset-based development approach at the inception of the project. What makes the asset-based community development different from the needs-based approach is that the asset-based approach starts by identifying the strengths of a community instead of its negatives. The asset-based approach aims to avoid promoting a donor syndrome, rather it aims to help the community to solve their own problems.

Coker and Obo (2012) and Enwo-Irem (2013) reveal that some of the successes of the asset-based community development approach are that it eliminates poverty, creates employment and the elimination of inequalities. They further suggest that the asset-based community development approach eliminates some of the challenges of ownership and decision making as the stakeholders are involved in the development process. However, in this study the failure to both discuss more extensively and to recognise community assets, triggered some discontent amongst the community members and the indigenous development was not fully realised as observed by Chirisa (2009). Hipwell (2009) who studied in Taiwan on the empowerment of the poor marginalised people economically, politically and culturally argues that starting with community assets is vital, in order to identify their existing strengths and to create a more sustainable means of empowering poor or marginalised people.



A stronger focus on identifying assets would have allowed the community to first perceive their strengths and then utilise those strengths to improve their environment according to their own terms. In other words, the community was not encouraged to highlight their strengths such as human skills, indigenous knowledge and natural environmental resources before highlighting their needs. This perhaps contributed to the initial passivity of the community members, such as that expressed by the women. Thus, the needs assessment alone did not capture aspects of the asset-based community development approach which acknowledges that communities do have resources that might be used to solve their problems (Beaulieu, 2002; Eleberi, 2012). The university's role of working from 'inside' the community, as advocated by Mathie (2002), seemed not to have taken place; rather the university led the analysis of needs, albeit consulting widely in the process.

This meant that the community's own abilities to organise themselves such as creating their own constitution only emerged after some time from within the community, as a result of their frustrations with the university leadership. This initiative, provided evidence of grass roots leadership emerging as a natural progression, almost by default in response to the ownership concerns. As a result of taking the initiative to address their own concerns, the community participants stated that they learned to respect and care for each other. The activity by the community of devising its own constitution, reflects arguments by authors such as Sigerson and Gruer (2011), Hatcher and Erasmus (2008) and Swanepoel and DeBeer (2000) who affirm that focusing on community assets promotes empowerment, decision-making and respect, by encouraging grass-roots led democratic approaches and the use of indigenous knowledge. In this case, although the university did not consciously promote this approach, the conflicts that emerged as a result of insufficient community ownership over the university strategy ultimately paved the way for the community to utilise their own assets to empower themselves.

The data revealed that the community identified their own needs in response to the university needs analysis but at a later stage then identified their own local assets. This idea of identifying local assets, however, appeared not to come from the university. This resulted in challenges of university-community relationships and the ownership of ideas. This suggested that perhaps the university was too focused on the community in terms of its deficits to recognise the resources that were already embedded in the community (Stephenson, 2011; Hipwell, 2009).

The findings therefore did not entirely reflect the literature on asset-based community development which calls for the identification of local resources in community development which would in turn, help in creating the agreed goals and enacting the shared values in order to accomplish a higher-level of participation resulting in a positive change in the community, as cited by Ryan and Roche (2016), Sewamala et al. (2010), Kretzmann and McKnight (1996). Ferreira and Ebersöhn (2012) in their book (*Partnering for Resilience*) suggest that it is possible to encourage a more asset-based foundation if community members are encouraged to see their assets before their needs.

The purpose of the university CE was to encourage the mutual exchange of knowledge and to learn from one another through dialogue as equal partners. The findings seem to suggest that rather than the co-creation of knowledge, there was a considerable transmission of university knowledge to the communities. This happened through meetings, workshops and seminars at the centre. For example, training for several projects such as livestock, management (cattle and indigenous chicken projects), bee-keeping and small grain production was provided and at the point of data collection, these projects were still operational. Nevertheless, these projects benefited from university knowledge input. The findings appear to indicate that such activities have improved the economic and social conditions of the inhabitants. It was evident therefore that the needs-based approach did create some opportunities for self-sufficiency and economically empowered community members to an extent that they could pay for school fees for example. This suggests that although the asset-based community development approach is advocated in the literature as a more appropriate development strategy there were still positive outcomes from the more traditional needs analysis strategy.

#### **4.4.5 Self-reliance in the Community**

Nyerere (1968) defines the development of self-reliance as providing learners with skills in appropriate vocations and with self-employment skills. The purpose of self-reliance is to encourage critical thinking both in the individual and the community. The development of self-reliance involves encouraging people to learn from each other. The characteristics of self-reliance are skills that enable people to solve their day to day problems. There was evidence that the community built self-reliance in two ways.

On the one hand, the skills training they received from the university did provide them with income generating projects that enabled them to become economically more self-sufficient, as evidenced in their assertions that they could now purchase essential items and send their children to school, for instance.

On the other hand, the community, through frustration with the lack of community voice in the decision-making structures generated an organic growth of self-reliance within themselves when they organised themselves to create a stand-alone constitution to assist community members to work together and in harmony. This was a good example of the community making decisions and drawing on their own assets in terms of understanding and sensitivity to the local context. The community members encouraged decision making by getting people to prioritise what they wanted, in the way of help. This process at community level showed there was respect for community needs and it enabled a bottom-up contribution towards decisions about land allocation for example.

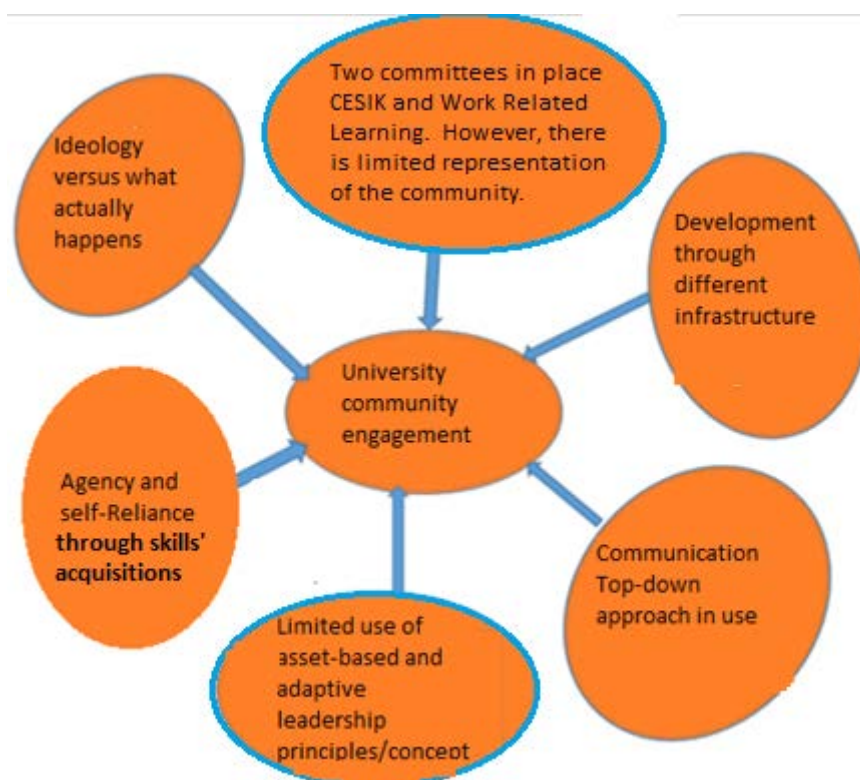
From the studies that were reviewed there was no evidence of any other communities taking their own initiative in the way that happened at Mberengwa. This was the first of its kind. Studies by Kadenyi and Kariuki (2011), and Twalo (2010), for instance, just identified the different elements of self-reliance which were bottom-up growth and education that liberates societies from slavery. However, these studies did not provide any evidence of communities taking their own initiative in the way that happened at Mberengwa.

The university's leadership in any community project is traditionally highly respected which explains their involvement in community projects. However, Stephenson (2011) argues that for universities to avoid a technical and dominating approach, the principles of adaptive leadership should be adopted so that communities feel a greater sense of ownership over decisions and so that projects can address competing goals and values of the two different entities (community and university). Preece (2013) and Bates (2005) support this view when they state that adaptive leadership theory focuses on eliciting full participation from the community members in order to get their input, negotiate difficulties and have all stakeholders benefitting from the engagement. In this study, although there was evidence in the initial stage of wide consultation and involvement of community members through the needs analysis, the process fell short of fully engaging with the principles of adaptive leadership and asset-based community development theory in terms of ensuring an ongoing

opportunity for dialogue and clarification of expectations or recognition of community strengths that could contribute to decision-making.

## 4.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The main findings of this chapter can be summarised as shown in Fig 12 below:



**Figure 12: Summative model of the findings on how the university interacted with the community.**

Below is a brief explanation given on what the diagram is saying about the CE process.

### University Committees

Two major committees were established with representatives from each faculty. These two committees were in charge of the operations of the MSU CE. These were the University Community Engagement and Work Related Learning (WRL) Committees. These committees were linked to different activities during the engagement. However, the community as an equal partner was not represented in these two main committees leading to a lack of community voice.

### **Development of Infrastructure**

After the university introduced the engagement, structures were put in place to make the project function. These were student accommodation, toilets, a training shed, fowl runs, a library and boreholes just to mention a few.

### **Ideology**

Some of the interviews alluded to the ideology that the university and community were coming into the partnership as equal partners. However, when it came to operationalising the partnership there was evidence that the university did not fully recognise the community as an equal partner in terms of funding the project, knowledge sharing and decision-making.

### **Limited use of asset-based and adaptive leadership principles/concepts**

It was evident from the data collected in the study that there was limited use of the asset-based community development approach and an adaptive leadership perspective. This was evidenced by the use of needs-identification instead of asset-mapping by the community to identify the strengths of the community. There was also a lack of continuous direct dialogue and feedback in the engagement. As a result of the conflicts that took place at the early stages of the project, there were limited elements of trust, respect, and unity. There was also limited documentation to explain the procedures of the engagement, for example, there was no written agreement on essential expectations such as payment of travel and subsistence and how officers were to travel to the centre in the absence of a vehicle allocated for CE purposes.

### **Agency/Self-reliance**

Data showed that the community had acquired the necessary survival skills from the partnership resulting in them having disposable income for payment of school fees for their children, payment of medical bills and providing food on the table. This was done through the different activities such as bee-keeping, poultry, livestock and gardening. These outcomes were a positive impact of the project. Self-reliance and agency were also evident in the way the community took it upon themselves to initiate a constitution.

### **Communication Structures**

At the inception of the engagement the university established communication structures through committees. These were also duplicated at community level. However, during the

partnership there was clear lack of continuous and direct communication with the community. The university tended to use the top-down approach instead of the bottom-up approach thereby limiting the consultation process.

### **Challenges**

A number of challenges were experienced in this project. The major challenge was the issue of land on which the project was located. Lack of transparency in the leadership and corruption were also cited. The other challenge was that of transport to travel to the centre. The distance between the centre and the university was too far. The university had not allocated a vehicle specifically for this project. Finally, the heavy workloads for lecturers such as teaching, marking, examinations, project supervision, and WRL supervision made it impossible for lecturers to accommodate another extra load of university CE.

## **4.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TRAINING AT UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY LEVEL**

Although there was evidence of good will from both sides, there was little evidence of a theoretical approach to CE or of the potential contribution an asset-based approach might provide beyond a needs-based approach. This has implications for how future projects might be set up and for how CE partnerships might be encouraged to operate on an ongoing basis.

Zimbabwe is a signatory to the former Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In this project a focus was on the MDG which deals with sustainable development. If self-reliance is well applied in communities as evidenced in this project, it would enable communities to have an educated populace with a disposable income. There would be poverty reduction and businesses would grow. This goal has implications for how communities should be trained in order to be self-sufficient, and have the ability to solve their problems by making use of the locally available resources.

Another implication for CE training is that, as people continue to dialogue and communicate, relationships improve resulting in a better understanding as already shown at the project after the introduction of the new coordinator.

## 4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The study has revealed that the university put in place infrastructure, and formal communication structures such as the CESIK, the WRL, Planning and Finance committees. These were essentially top down initiatives but with wide consultation concerning needs at the project's inception. However, there was limited representation of the community within the university, leading to a lack of community voice on an ongoing basis. The study also indicated that the university community engagement used a needs-identification instead of an asset-based approach with limited engagement of an adaptive leadership approach towards community development. Differences emerged in the project between the intended ideology by the university, versus what was actually happening on the ground at the community centre. The needs-based approach has been criticised in the literature for insufficiently addressing challenges such as communication, power dynamics, and community ownership so that passive acceptance of contributions may hinder self-reliance and community empowerment. However, despite these negative elements there was strong evidence of an evolving community-led empowerment process through the creation of the community's stand-alone constitution and appointment of their own liaison person in the process in order to improve the communication between the university and the community. The next chapter focuses on the feelings of the community about the community project in terms of power relations, self-reliance and decision-making.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: POWER RELATIONS AND DECISION MAKING**

### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter analyses the project in relation to two distinct phases, the ‘messy phase’ (storming phase) and the ‘reorganised phase’ (the norming stage). The ‘messy phase’ was characterised by haphazard decision-making processes, lack of clear goals, many contradictions of opinions, many tensions as a result of power dynamics, many ownership wrangles due to the location of the project and the lack of leadership. Most issues in this phase were centred on the xxxx family which donated the land on which the project is located. There appeared to be a substantial amount of favouritism, nepotism and corruption during this phase as most decisions favoured members of the family which had donated the land. The situation reached the point where the chairperson of the project (the headman and brother of xxxx family) was given a vote of no confidence by the community. Action had to be taken to save the project. A decision was then made by the community to have a constitution for the community engagement (CE) project. Once this was in place there appeared to be a new sense of order in the project. A new set of leaders was elected who then brought new ideas which were guided by the constitution. The new phase which was guided by the constitution is what I have termed the ‘reorganised phase’. The constitution improved the power tensions, but there were still a few areas which caused tensions.

The focus of this chapter is on the second research sub-question which asked:

How does the community respond to the university’s involvement (in terms of the ownership over decision making, use of community assets and the management of power relations)?

The study aimed to discover the feelings of the community towards this project in terms of decision-making, the utilisation of local assets and the management of power dynamics.

I now discuss the two phases that characterised this project after its inception, the process which was largely outlined in Chapter Four.

### **5.1 THE ‘MESSY PHASE’**

The ‘messy’, ‘storming’ phase started in 2012 after an initial period of consultation. It will be seen later that although this phase is characterised as starting when the land was donated,



there was a brief two-month period of harmony during the ‘forming’ phase when all the participants were motivated to progress with the project. This ‘messy’ phase started when a family piece of land was donated to the university for the project. The donor of the land argued that the whole idea of CE came from him. For instance, he told the researcher in an interview that *“this is my idea which I brought from the United States of America where I attended a conference.”* So he saw it fit that he donated the piece of land for the project. The challenge of having the donation of the land by an individual compounded other issues at the centre. For example, many leadership positions in the university CE project were held by xxxx family members as was affirmed by a youth focus group member who said that:

*The xxxx family continued to enjoy some privileges in the project as a result of the land donation. An example is the appointment of early childhood development teachers. These were not appointed on merit but on the basis of family affiliation. Lack of transparency made the community see this as a ‘family project’ (Y16d).*

As reported by the Women’s Focus Group (WFG) the repercussions extended to other activities: The following was said by WG6e *“At its inception, the project managed to attract 50 children who enrolled for the early childhood development programme”*. By the time of data collection, however, less than 10 children were in attendance. The reason for this decline in numbers was due to the fact that no consultations had been made regarding the appointment of teachers who taught in the Department of Early Childhood at the Centre. They were all appointed by the local leadership (D3 from the university) independently without any input from the university and the community. Even though the university CE project had acquired toys and equipment they were not used. The teachers who had been appointed did not have the requisite skills. Their appointment was vehemently resisted by other community members including the women’s group who were involved in withdrawing their children from the Early Learning Centre; one of whom, WG6k had this to say:

*We cannot accept a situation so full of nepotism and corruption. All these teachers are from one family. If they had the requisite qualifications no one would bother, but most of them do not know what they are doing. Why should we bring our children here to spend the whole day doing nothing?*

Meritocracy was not taken into account in any of the appointments made at the centre which led to the poor management of the whole project. Project goals were not set and there were no targets to be met which resulted in the project having no direction. Power played a major role in how the project functioned. The university which initiated the project through one of its senior members of staff had power because the initial funding came from them. Power in the study was vested in the chief, councillor and headman but their power was less than the university's power. Managing these power houses was critical in the success of the whole project. Foucault (1980) says that power is fluid. So, by saying power is fluid, Foucault was implying that the dynamics of power can change. Understanding participation involves understanding power. That is, the ability of the different people and their interests to achieve what one wants. Power, however, can simply be authority to have a say in what they want (Wilcox, 1994), which reflected the university status in this project.

Data seems to suggest that in this initial stage many leadership positions were held by family members of those who had donated the land on which the project was located. It was evident from the data that there was nepotism in the way certain people were appointed into key roles.

The major issues were decision-making and power dynamics. They are discussed here in relation to the following themes: -

#### **5.1.1 The Land**

The land on which the project was situated was offered by the xxxx family member who was an MSU senior academic as alluded to above. This family member was directly in charge of what was happening at the university CE project. He had donated a piece of land and the understanding of ownership of this project became suspect because of the land on which it was located. This soured the relationships between the university and the community and also within the community itself as those outside the family felt that the project was not their own. The university, because it had a small budget for the project, also felt that the academic staff should control the activities at the project centre. Some of the tensions therefore centred on the ownership of the project and its land. In a statement, one man (MG7h) in the focus group had this to say:

*There is a lot of state land at Mataga Growth Point which could have been used for this project. Why did we have to use an individual's piece of land? There is nothing special here, no water, no shops or even transport to bring us here. There are shops at Mataga Growth Point, water is plenty as there is a big dam and transport and shops are also there. Why should we spend money drilling boreholes when we could get free water at the Mataga Growth Point?*

The xxxx family had immense power in terms of influence and authority and they sometimes interfered with the happenings at the centre. Fuel was kept at the xxxx family home and the generator was kept there too. Food for the students on WRL was also kept at the xxxx family home. The xxxx family appointed their family members to most leadership positions at the centre as indicated by the youth focus group (YFG) who said: *"There is need to rotate the leadership positions in order to bring in a variety of new ideas and accommodate diversity."*

The same sentiments were expressed by the government agent who alluded to the fact that: *"It was important to be inclusive and avoid having a group of people supporting an individual or a group in a project. Unity is power."*

There are different ways in which power manifested itself as identified in the literature – rational power, mutual power, unilateral power and power in terms of aggression (Browne, 2009). Another power dynamic that prevailed at the centre was in the form of verbal abuse which might be understood as aggression power. The WFG revealed the power dynamics they had experienced at the centre and had this to say:

*The xxxx family verbally abused the community because their relative (the senior academic staff member) donated the land on which the project is located. They called other community members names and abused the generator and fuel. This resulted in tensions at various levels which resulted in many men pulling out of the project thereby creating a gender imbalance. This also created tensions in communication within the project.*

The MFG (MG7h), perhaps reflecting a rejection of unilateral power commented on the location of the plot, and stated that: *"We are not comfortable with this type of arrangement."*

*We do not want to develop somebody's place. What we mean is, for example, working in xxxx's field."*

The headman had this to say:

*We wanted a neutral ground where every member would be free. Because of this location the xxxx family interferes too much with the happenings at the centre. Sometimes activities are done behind the community committee's knowledge.*

The male members having pulled out, adopted a 'wait and see' attitude towards the project. They became passive participants in terms of involvement (Lund et al., 2013). Women soldiered on without their male counterparts and were seen doing most of the activities at the centre. This was observed by the researcher who noted that most of the planting, cultivating and watering of gardens was done by the women and the youth. All this created animosity among the community members which resulted in further tensions. Work at the centre stalled to the extent that members started asking questions on what could be done to motivate the men to come back.

This statement from the youth (Y16g) is insightful:

*There were disagreements on many issues particularly in the way decisions were taken by the xxxx family and the committee that ran the affairs of the project. Decisions were made and the community members were consulted afterwards.*

This shows that the style of decision taking during the 'messy phase' was autocratic. According to Everard (2004, p. 51) autocratic decision-taking is "when the decision is taken without consultation, then others are informed of what is to be done and what is expected of them". The xxxx family in conjunction with the committee made the decisions and then told the members what to do (the implication is that these committee people were part of the xxxx family).

The male community members refused to accept this type of leadership which is the reason why the majority of the men pulled out. Even the data collected clearly highlights that the autocratic decision-making style was used in the project. Most decisions were taken without consultation, the community was simply informed of what was to be done and what was expected of them; for example, what was grown in the gardens was imposed on the community members. This caused more tensions.

The land donation by the senior staff member D5 at the university was instigated without consultation. Mostly male community members tried to resist this decision but without success as indicated in this quote during the interviews when they said “*we do not want to develop somebody’s place such as working in the xxxx family field*”. When some community members also wanted to donate their pieces of land to the project, the senior staff member, D5, refused as evidence by his quote “*this is my idea and I cannot give my ideas to someone else or have them in someone [else]’s field*”. This caused suspicions on the part of those members outside the xxxx family. As a result of this, most men in the project refused to fulfil their agreed financial obligations to the project resulting in the financial resources dwindling and creating more conflicts at the centre. These financial resources were meant for the acquisition of the fuel used to pump water at the centre and for the transportation of the fuel.

These scenarios indicate that there was a clear lack of dialogue in the leadership style. The preferred leadership styles identified by Heifetz (1994) are understood to be democratic and situational where there is consultation and ongoing dialogue.

#### **5.1.1.1 Allocation of gardens**

The study also highlighted that there were issues of unequal distribution of land at the project which caused more tensions. There was no formula or consultation used in the allocation of gardens by the senior university staff member D5 whose family had allocated the piece of land on which the project was located. The senior university staff member D5 independently allocated the gardens. This was affirmed by the WFG who indicated that “*there was unequal distribution of land at the centre*”. They pointed out that members of the xxxx family were allocated more land than others. For example, members of the xxxx family had been “*allocated between six beds, to four beds each while others from the community had been allocated two beds each.*” It was not clear why this was the case but my investigation

revealed that all those who had more land were members of the xxxx family. As a result of this unfair practice, those with more beds had naturally more yields than those with fewer beds. This finding appeared to support the women's concerns which indicated that there was indeed a rampant practice of unprofessionalism, favouritism and nepotism at the centre. The village heads were from the same family who were accused of allocating themselves and their families bigger pieces of land at the centre than the rest of the community. This was also evidenced by WG6 who said: *"The distribution of land was not fair. The centre had 65 beds and (but) the distribution varied between one to six beds per individual."*

This unequal distribution of land resulted in the community becoming frustrated, feeling that they were being 'used' in relation to the concept of CE.

### **5.1.2 Government Agent and his Role at the Project**

Government agents are employees of the government of Zimbabwe who are experts in different extension fields. From the data that was collected from the government agent he was a trained agriculturalist. Regarding the operating procedures at the training centre it would appear that government agencies were part and parcel of the project. This Zindowe Mberengwa community had their own government agent who was paid by the Zimbabwe Government to advise farmers on what to grow, when to grow and how to grow. He also visited the project gardens to give his advice on the happenings there and to give support. This is supported by the government agent himself who confirmed and said that:

*I was invited by the university to come and give technical advice to the community on crop production, forest production and livestock. I was also tasked to improve and control pests in the garden for example, by rotating the crops. I also sit on the planning committee at the project centre.*

However, it appeared that the leadership at the centre thought that the government agent was becoming too popular and gaining too much power and attention. This was again confirmed by the government agent who had this to say:

*When I gave instructions on how activities should be done in the garden, the instructions were always reversed or side-lined. You also found that there were people who would do things outside the main committee's knowledge.*

*The implication was that these people were party of the xxxx family. It was a [i.e. resulted in] two layers of committee membership.*

The government agent who had been barred from contributing to the university-CE project also further suggested that:

*For the project to succeed, there was a need to appoint to key positions in the project people who did not belong to a certain group or people who were not biased towards a certain individual. This [experience of appointing relatives of the headman] causes divisions within the community. People tended to personalize issues. For example, most of the headmen came from the xxxx family and were accused of allocating themselves and their families bigger pieces of land at the centre than the rest of the community*

He also further highlighted that: *“I have not learnt or benefited anything from the university-community engagement as a result of the conflicts which degenerated into sour and unprofessional relations.”*

The above views were also confirmed by the community leaders (CH 8, C9a, VH 10a), most of whom are members of the xxxx family, when they said that: *“Activities are sometimes done behind the committee’s knowledge. There were more clandestine activities at the centre leading to more confusion and conflicts.”*

To explain the above quote this meant that consultations and decisions were made and cemented at family level. When the decisions came to the community they were expected to simply ‘rubber stamp’ the decisions. It then became more of a business family than a community project. The WFG also affirmed the above sentiments by saying: *“There was no order in the garden. There was too much mixed cropping in the garden and pest control became a major challenge (WG6d).”*

When the government agent advised against this mixed cropping, his advice was resisted by the senior staff member in the university, D5.

The senior academic staff member D5 suggested a different view however. While confirming power struggles at the project he suggested that the problem of power dynamics lay within the community itself when community committee structures were not followed. This is what he had to say:

*There was a committee appointed to run the affairs of the project. But at some stage the elders, village heads and other elders could give instructions which were not sanctioned by the committee. This led to communication break downs and conflicts in the partnership.*

Data seem to suggest that in the early stages of the university CE project, key figures were from the community but they, however, had strong connections with the senior university staff member who influenced the project activities too heavily. Data also suggests that there was much tension and animosity at the centre between the government agent, community, relatives to the senior university staff member and the senior university staff member D5. The senior staff member in the university D5 appeared to influence his family members to resist everything the government agent was advising. This resulted in the community dividing into two camps – those who supported the senior staff member in the university D5 and those who supported the government agent. According to the findings the relationships were very sour at the centre to the extent of the senior academic staff D5 removing the government agent from carrying out duties in relation to the university CE project.

These tensions ultimately led to the subsequent removal from the project of both the senior academic staff D5 and the government agent. The senior academic staff D5 was removed by the university administration while the government agent had already been barred by the senior academic staff D5. Furthermore, community relations between the university and the community showed evidence of deterioration through the refusal of some men to participate in the project. The community members developed negative attitudes towards the project which resulted in communication tensions and gender imbalances when it came to participation. The project appeared to use the unilateral type of power which essentially reflects power over a people and not relational power which focuses on negotiation and respecting each other's position particularly in the decision-making processes (Browne 2009). Heifetz and Laurie (2011) indicate that respect, negotiating for dialogue and building



relationships are some of the aspects of the adaptive leadership theory, which did not appear to be evident at this stage in this particular university CE project.

### **5.1.3 Financial Accountability**

A further challenge that impacted on the ‘messiness’ phase at the centre was the lack of accountability for all payments made by the community to the community leadership as a way of contributions towards the project. This was clearly stated by the WFG which revealed that:

*There was no financial accountability or feedback on financial matters from the leadership at the centre when it came to issues of the budget on items such as chickens, fees at the Early Childhood Centre and transport. No receipts were issued, leading to mistrust and no transparency (WG6d).*

The government agent also affirmed the above views when he was asked about financial matters at the centre. This is what he said:

*There is a need to always evaluate and monitor projects for their value for the sake of transparency. Without this monitoring there would always be elements of mistrust, instability and resistance to contributions towards the engagement (GA4).*

This was the case at the university CE project. Data collected seemed to suggest lack of professionalism in the way the project was run, leading to mistrust by the community of those in leadership. What seemed to be apparent from the data was the idea that there was initially great negligence, in terms of financial accountability, and no proper reporting structure.

### **5.1.4 Book Donations and Deployment of Work Related Students**

The university continued to make some surprising decisions in relation to the M13 community. This is what the MFG had to say in terms of the relevance of the work related learning students and library donations. The MFG suggested:

*The community should be allowed to make contributions by bringing in their views on the calibre of students they want placed at the centre for work related purposes. This*

*is because both the student and the community have to benefit from each other by learning from each other.*

They continued to say:

*Books in the library were not relevant for our needs. They were all meant for tertiary education and not community development or secondary education. We are not a dumping ground. Before the university sends books to the centre, they should consult us.*

All these challenges led to different forms of passive participation by community members.

### **5.1.5 Passive Participation**

Participation in community development contexts is understood to be “involvement by a local population and at times, additional stakeholders in the creation, content and conduct of a programme or policy designed to change their lives” (Seers, 2004, p.46). It is based on the belief that citizens can be trusted to shape their own future. Participatory development uses local decision-making and capacities to steer and define the nature of an intervention. Participation requires recognition and use of local capacities and avoids the imposition of priorities from the outside. It increases the odds that a programme will be on target and its results will more likely be ‘sustainable’ (Museva, 2012).

Passive participation in this context refers to people who are members of the community but who do not take any part in the activities at the centre (McMullin, 2014). They do not make any financial contributions which other members make and they sit at meetings and contribute little or nothing towards the project. The government agent effectively became a passive participant because he no longer felt able to give advice on the project even though he was paid to do so. Instead he concentrated his efforts on advising adjacent communities. This was revealed when the government agent said that: *“I no longer contribute in any way to the Zindowe Community project since I was asked to stop working with the community by the Senior Academic Staff D5”*.

In this project, there are also men who were passively participating because they were only coming to attend skills training and not participating in the activities at the centre as a result

of the land issue. Lecturers, too, had official status as CE officers in the university but did not fulfil that role because the university did not provide financial or career incentives to spend time on that role. The lecturers also highlighted the challenges in the transport and funding to travel to the centre as another cause of passive participation, as discussed in Chapter Four.

The lecturers further indicated that: *“University-community engagement was coming in as an extra burden after the teaching, supervision of research and marking of examinations” (L3c)*. This university CE work offered no added incentive to staff. It had no motivation aspect. Transport challenges led to less activities taking place at the centre as the lecturers were not able to visit the centre as often as they wanted to. Students who were inappropriately placed in the community for WRL could also be categorised as ‘passive’ participants.

There are several studies in the literature on CE which highlight these challenges such those by as Olowu (2012), Cloete, (2011) and Mahlomaholo and Matobako (2006). Questions often asked according to Olowu (2012) can be summarised as: What exactly would constitute CE; what are the most effective ways in which higher education institutions should engage with their local communities and the means of evaluating the effectiveness of community engagement initiatives?

The findings indicated that many of the initial problems such as nepotism, corruption, abuse, power tensions, passive participation and unprofessionalism came as a result of land ownership tensions, before the decision to create a community constitution and decision to issue a land lease. This resulted in a number of derailments at the project centre until the Mataga Rural District Council in Mberengwa decided to issue out a land lease to the university.

The ‘messy phase’ caused tensions which needed to be resolved. After months of hard-thinking by the community, a decision was made by the community members to identify a new coordinator and draw up a constitution for the project. The researcher now turns to the second phase in which the community drew up their constitution which spelt out corrective strategies that made for better CE after learning from the mistakes during the ‘messy phase’. The result of this was that a new team to run the affairs of the project was appointed by the university which then changed the power dynamics at the project. The Mberengwa Rural District Council, which had the overall power over the land, gave the university a lease for

the land on which the project is situated, thereby taking away all the power from the xxxx family.

This led to the ‘organised’ (or rather re-organised) phase to which I now turn.

## **5.2 ‘(RE)ORGANISED PHASE’**

As mentioned in Chapter Four this phase began mid-year 2014 after the ‘messy’ phase (Zindowe Community Minutes July 2014). After the ‘messy’ phase the community made a decision of passing a vote of no confidence in the original chairperson of the project. Some community members decided one day that enough was enough and they started to organise matters among themselves. The community then decided to create a stand-alone constitution to assist community members to correct the mistakes they had experienced in the ‘messy’ phase, and work together in an orderly fashion and in harmony.

### **5.2.1 The Community Constitution**

One of the community leaders, the project coordinator (PC17) stated that the community decided to create a stand-alone constitution in order to assist community members to work together. This was done in October 2014. The constitution was in response to issues that had been raised about inequality, participation and dialogue at the centre. The project coordinator suggested that the whole community was involved in the drafting of the constitution whose aim was to improve the lives of the members in particular and the community in general. According to the constitution the objectives of the community engagement partnership were to promote the economic and social needs of the community through various agricultural and food processing activities. To achieve this the community was to engage in a number of activities such as: cattle raising, small grain production, establishing vegetable and herbal gardens, bee-keeping, utilisation of indigenous resources to improve people’s health and growing indigenous fruit trees at the Zindowe Community Project (November 2013, Zindowe Community Committee Minutes). The membership included all interested members from the Zindowe community and two Ex-Officio Members who included technical resource persons who were non-voting members. All these were stationed at Zindowe Community Project. The constitution included the appointment of a project coordinator. The project coordinator was to be the link person between the university and other stakeholders. The women’s focus group highlighted that this appointment had improved the way the community engagement relationship functioned and one of them (WG6d) said: *“Since the appointment of the project*

*coordinator at the centre most male community members now participate in the different activities at the centre and there seem to be better attitudes towards the CE. project.”*

One man who had just come back to the project after leaving during the ‘messy’ phase had these words to say: *“A sense of purpose which now characterises the project now is like gravity – a continuous force that moves the project in a particular direction. We can now see where we are coming from and where we are going.”*

Collaboration and team work were also evident in the partnership as indicated by the WFG who said:

*We have benefitted from collaboration and team work. Students donated 200 bags of cement for dam construction which was a form of collaboration and the community donated free labour. We learnt from each other sharing ideas, experiences and attitudes.*

This phase was characterised by persuasive, consultative and co-determinate decision-making processes which were very accommodative of the community. Decisions were made by all members of the group who were community members of the project. Relationships appeared to take greater priority in this phase. Most of the single-handed decisions were stopped. Decision making became a multi-solution process between all concerned. Those men who had left the project due to the tensions which characterised the ‘messy’ phase started coming back and once more there was life in the project. The gender imbalance began to disappear. Leaders were now elected and not appointed. The observation notes by the researcher in January 2016 support this change of behaviour and atmosphere as detailed below. *“The messy phase was described because the leaders were not appointed on merit. In comparison with the organised phase, it is observed that the organised phase was doing a very good job”.*

Meritocracy was the guiding principle. A new dispensation seemed to have been ushered in and both the community and the university started benefiting from the now very cordial relations. Students sent to the project by the university were the ones who had something to do with community engagement (CE), unlike in the past where students who had no idea of CE were sent there. This was revealed by the MFG whose member (MG7b) indicated that:

*“The university was now deploying relevant students to the centre, who were useful at the project centre”.*

Allocations of gardens were streamlined to meet the demands of the situations. For example, the women’s focus group (WG6h) stated that *“Everyone in the project was allocated two beds each”*. There was equity in the distribution rather than favouritism and nepotism. The role of the government agent was clearly spelt out in the minutes of the meeting dated October 2015 and he was now able to resume and execute his duties accordingly. The advantages of this participatory clarification process are affirmed by Peters and Waterman (1995, p. 85) in their book, *In Search of Excellence*, when they state that: *“The in-building of purpose is a change to creativity because it involves transforming men and groups from neutral, technical units into participants who have a particular stamp, sensitivity and commitment.”*

The constitution changed the whole organisation of the project. The project now had clear goals, objectives, targets and success criteria. The councillor (C9a) also made similar comments concerning the appointment of a coordinator at the centre when he said:

*After the university restructured the Work Related Learning department, coordination of activities became much better. Attitudes towards the engagement improved, more males participated in the different activities at the centre. We now dialogue, resolve conflict, forgive and care for each other. We are now working as a family, for example, we look after each other’s plots when it comes to watering. This was a result of the education that was given to the community by the project coordinator.*

A significant change in the CE process, therefore, came about with the introduction of the community constitution and which emerged during the second phase of data collection. This initiative was an outcome of the ‘storming’ stage whereby the community in particular reacted negatively to some of the CE relationships.

The community’s initiative to produce a constitution was an example of the community making decisions and drawing on their own assets in terms of understanding and having sensitivity to the local context. This is a process that will not be achieved over a short period

but indications show that the community was changing from passive participation to becoming active agents for their own development. Another characteristic of this phase was in the area of decision-making. At the inception of the project the university did some consultation. However, during the ‘messy’ phase follow-up consultation seemed to fizzle out. The leadership style seemed to become more autocratic. There was a perceived need to change the decision-making styles of this phase to one that was persuasive, consultative and co-determinate to which we now turn.

### **5.2.2 Consultative and Co-determinate Decision-making Styles**

The fact that we have to take a decision implies that at least two alternative courses of action are available, even if one alternative is to do nothing (Everard, 2004). In the case of the Zindowe Mberengwa project there were several alternatives, which needed consultation to ensure that all the modalities to make this project a success, were in place. There was therefore a need to consult the stakeholders. The university had to consult and the community too, had to consult. The partnership was made up of two very different communities which needed to understand each other in order to create a level playing field. They also had different expectations which needed to be explained in some detail.

Everard (2004, p. 51) states that: “There are four styles of decision-making. These are persuasive, consultative, codeterminate and the autocratic style”. The appropriate style will depend on the people and the circumstances.

- The Persuasive Style is where the decision is taken before consultation and then is ‘sold’ to others.
- The Consultative decision-making style is where the views of others are sought and taken into consideration before a decision is taken, and
- In the case of co-determinate decision-making decisions are taken on either a consensus or majority basis.
- The autocratic style occurs when decisions are imposed on people.

The university had originally mooted the idea of working among a choice of several communities. The Zindowe Mberengwa community came forward because they had people working at the university who were persuasive enough to make the university buy the idea of

CE in their community. So, one can argue that the project and where it is located, is a result of a persuasive style of decision-making.

Insights gained from the study, as outlined in Chapter Four, appear to suggest that in spite of the subsequent messiness of the initial phase there was evidence of initial consultation during the decision-making process by both the community and the university concerning issues that affected the running of the project. The identification of projects on the ground which is called 'needs assessment' was done through a consultative style of decision-making. A meeting was called where the community was asked to prioritise the projects they wanted to see implemented. Their views were sought and taken into account. The university did not impose any of the projects at the centre. All the respondents listed below made similar comments concerning consultation and decision-making. The councillor (C9a) stated:

*Most of the projects at the centre are our own projects as a community. The university did not impose any of these projects on us. These are our own projects which will benefit us and our children.*

The Senior Academic Staff D2 supported the above view when he commented that a report on the needs assessment had been developed at the inception of the university CE project by both the university and the community.

During the 'messy' phase this consultation process did not continue but after the 're-organisation' phase this consultation process was picked up again – as confirmed by the WFG who concurred with the above view when they said:

*Both the university and the community make decisions when it comes to the project for example the community makes decisions on which days to work at the centre, whilst the university makes decisions on which resource persons to train in the community.*

The WFG continued to say that: *"These decisions are made through votes at meetings. For example, voting for which project to come first – poultry or mushrooms."*



Comments from the WFG suggest that the women acknowledged the university as taking into consideration their viewpoints as stated below:

*Yes, the university does take the community viewpoints into consideration.  
Yes, Midlands State University considers us when implementing the needs.  
Our needs are taken into consideration. For example, identifying projects at  
the centre and implementing them at our homesteads like the indigenous  
chickens, bee-keeping and the vegetable gardens.*

In a statement, one of the women, reflecting Nyerere (1984), further said that: “*African culture does not allow any member of the community to impose her or his decisions on others. For any programme or project to be sustainable decisions should be taken on either a consensus or majority basis.*”

The MFG confirmed the sentiments of the WFG when they said: “*The community puts ideas together and then vote for the best idea. This is done by the committee which runs the project using the baseline survey.*”

The senior university staff member D5 also was in agreement when he described the initial consultative phase of the project:

*We met the community at Gomututu Secondary school in Mberengwa to  
discuss community needs and identified their problems. The decision to  
accept the project was from the community. The community decided on which  
projects should come during the 1<sup>st</sup> phase, 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase and so forth.*

The consultative and co-determinate styles, reflect the kind of decision-making processes that Wightman (2013) in asset-based community development theory advocates. These styles also reflect the adaptive leadership approach as advocated by Heifetz (1994).

The study seemed to reveal that there was a mixture of both bottom-up decision-making and top down decision-making in the university CE process. At inception it was bottom-up and top-down because during needs assessment and community meetings both styles were used. During the ‘messy’ phase there was very little of the bottom-up approach. After the

(re)organised phase and throughout the project, it was now the bottom-up approach that mostly prevailed although there were a few cases of the top-down approach in such cases as to what activities were to be done at the centre and by whom and what lecturer was to visit the centre using what vehicle. It seemed that there were organised mechanisms in place to facilitate consultation. For example, there was consultation which was carried out by the community mainly through the different committees. The different committees were made up of representatives from each village. Meetings were held once every month for decisions to be made on various aspects at the centre. The purpose of the meetings ranged from choosing of leaders for the various activities, identifying literacy programmes for the community such as reading, writing and arithmetic skills, identifying days to engage in the gulley reclamation and dam construction programmes. The reason for this long process of decision making was the fear within the community of being wrong and being called upon to account by their own community members.

However, it looked like there were some independent decisions being made even after the constitution which did not necessarily follow due process. For example, when the university was carrying out training sessions, there was very little consultation that took place with the community. For example, a member of the MFG (MG7e) revealed that: *“The community was not consulted when it came to the prioritization of activities at the centre”*.

A key consideration in consultative community development is whether community assets are taken into account (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012). The next section therefore focuses on the use of local assets by the partnership.

### **5.2.3 Mapping Community Assets**

Mapping community assets is a process in which a community assesses and mobilises what the community has (Cunningham et al., 2002). It involves identifying resources, skills and talents of a society. According to authors such as Cameron (2000) and Bergdall (2003) the value of mapping community assets is recognising skills, abilities and experiences that may strengthen the community; building on what already exists. The process is relationship driven, that is, drawing on social networks within the community so that decisions are community driven rather than by external agencies, and resources within the community are valued.

Chapter Four revealed that the needs analysis did not take an asset-based community development approach. Nevertheless, there were indications that local assets were both recognised and used at various stages in the CE relationship. For instance, the women's focus group and men's focus group identified that they had been encouraged by the university to draw on their local indigenous knowledge to produce goods that could be sold and used to generate income and relieve poverty. The WFG and MFG revealed that: *"Sisal was used when making crafts such as door mats, table mats and even handbags during their functional classes."*

The men's focus group also added that: *"The community used local resources such as stones, marula fruit, organic manure, indigenous chickens, traditional herbs, water and sand."*

Participant D2 acknowledged that skills and knowledge that were already embedded in the Zindowe community were identified as a contributing resource to the project's development such as the moulding of bricks by the community for the different structures and transporting all the building materials to the project centre.

From the observations done during the transect walk carried out in October 2015, with the community members it was evident that a variety of local resources had been identified for use at the project. This is what one of the community members had to say during the transect walk:

*Some of the resources that might be used at the project are the aloe, a herb used for medical purposes for their indigenous chickens and treating ailments in human beings. Other resources may include land, sand, stones and water for the dam construction, and wild fruits which have been used before to make sweets and sour drinks (CH8).*

Trees were used to produce wood for different purposes during the construction of buildings. In one instance in this study, there was evidence of the co-creation of knowledge whereby the community shared knowledge with the university by identifying a raw resource of fruit trees. The university then used its scientific expertise to convert these into commodities. The Zindowe Mberengwa community identified fruit trees to the university which then processed these fruits into modern day cereals and sweets. In this case the university, however, seemed

to be exploiting local knowledge. The university generated income from the sale of the cereals and sweets and kept the money as an institutional gain. This was an example of co-creation of knowledge but without mutual benefit.

Central to the CE relationship and development is the management of power dynamics and their contribution to community empowerment (Preece, 2016; Camacho, 2004; Osman & Attwood, 2007).

Attention now turns to the empowerment process at the centre.

#### **5.2.4 Empowerment and Power Relations**

According to Foucault and Gordon (1980), De Pree (1989), and Brennan and Luloff (2007), power is influenced by the one who is in control in terms of information, finance and position. But power is also a relationship that can be altered. In this study such power relations of control were very evident at the initial time of data collection. The government agent was at that time not allowed to engage in any activities at the centre as stipulated by the senior university academic staff D5 who was in charge of university CE. However, the power dynamics shifted once the community took the initiative to turn the relationship round.

The drafting of the constitution by the community and the appointment of the liaison officer altered the earlier, and less equitable, power dynamics. The team running the project is now a completely new one which is no longer influenced by the donors of the land as the project is now using council leased land. Men who had left the project are now returning.

The findings of the study confirm the views of Tynan, et al. (2013) in their study on listening to diverse community voices in Papua New Guinea who say imbalances of resources, ethnic tensions and leadership influences are some of the obstacles to community participation. Brennan (2013), Osman and Attwood (2005, 2007) and Olowu (2012) are some of the scholars who argue that power dynamics and instability often happen in community development projects and these dynamics can generate resistance between the different stakeholders. The point of interest for this study, however, is that the community managed to address these negative power dynamics in spite of the university's locus of status and authority to know. The desired extension of power dynamics in CE is community empowerment.

Daft and Marcic (2016, p. 682) define empowerment as:

... a management practice of sharing information, rewards, and power with employees so that they can take initiative and make decisions to solve problems and improve service and performance. It is based on the idea that giving employees skills, resources, authority, opportunity, motivation as well as holding them responsible and accountable for outcomes of their own actions will contribute to their competence and satisfaction.

This definition indicates that empowerment includes the management of power relations. Chambers' (2007) indicators of empowerment include showing confidence in the project through trust, and holding meetings where the community can freely express themselves and exchange ideas. Another indicator is the evidence of different committees recording all the proceedings of the meetings held and access to information. The above mentioned findings suggest that power relations had been managed by the community members through taking the initiative to challenge the top-down process that had characterised the 'messy' phase. From the data there seems to have been some participation by both the community and university members. According to the researcher's observation there seems to have been more collective participation in the '(re)organised' phase by both the community and university members. For example, when the community took it upon themselves to mobilise the assets they had they moved forward with the university CE project which had been characterised by conflicts only. Similarly, the university was now working with the project coordinator. The senior academic staff D5 and the senior academic D2 appeared to be actively participating in coordinating and ensuring that the project becomes a success.

Empowerment, however, can also be seen as an outcome of the development or CE process. The findings of the study suggest that there were significant empowerment outcomes as a result of the project. The findings revealed that the community members had benefited immensely in that they were now implementing the knowledge and ideas which they had gained at the centre. For example, team work was evident in projects such as bee-keeping, gardening, poultry projects and functional literacy. Most elderly members were now able to read and write as a result of literacy programmes and were now able to have food on their tables through the sale of honey, vegetables, mats and poultry products. The community felt

they had acquired some skills to apply in their homesteads in different activities such as gardening, chicken projects and bee-keeping. This was stated by the WFG members who jointly said that: *“We now can afford a plate of food on the table and also pay fees for our children.”* The women further stated that they had been empowered during the literacy classes. This is what they said:

*We can now read our messages on the phones from our children and relatives, and sing songs at church since we can read. We can even read our Bibles at home and church. This has improved our communication. We no longer have to ask someone to come and read for us letters from our children, because of the functional literacy project.*

Empowerment is also an expression of self-reliance. Chachage and Cassam (2010), quoting Nyerere, say that self-reliance means reliance on one's own capabilities, judgement or resources and being independent. This is a reflection of empowerment. Once one is self-reliant, one is able to stand on her or his own resources. Different definitions of self-reliance were given by different participants. For example, the senior university academic staff R1 defined self-reliance as: *“When a person or a group of people are to depend on themselves for their survival. Depending on themselves for their survival. People are to use their knowledge, skills to make a living – for me this is self-reliance.”*

The senior university academic staff D2 had this to say when asked what was the definition of self-reliance:

*Whenever I want something on my own I can afford it. This means not depending on someone else. For example, we drilled 2 boreholes at the centre; when the community saw that it is possible they went on to ask for money from their children in Harare, the diaspora and so forth and they went on to drill ten boreholes. They used the same company because we had the same contacts and the company drilled the boreholes for a less charge so I will cite that as one point that had the biggest impact at the centre.*

Participant S12c pointed out that his definition of self-reliance was:

*Whereby somebody is a subject and not an object. This means that one has to be creative in order to solve problems. When we talk of self-reliance we mean that people must have solutions to problems, for example the issue of drought in Zindowe village and then people deciding to build a dam to harvest water.*

Participant L3b also defined self-reliance as: *‘Living my own life without depending on someone else.’*

Respondent WG6d, again, defined self-reliance as *“being able to apply what we have acquired at the training centre which is changing our life for the better. For example, I can now grow vegetables, I am now keeping broilers at my home stand”*.

As an outcome reflecting self-reliance, this is what many women at the project centre were quite vocal about and they had this to say:

*Water is no longer a problem because we now have two dams and several boreholes at the project centre and in the different wards. Families in the community are now running different projects such as poultry and goat farming, as well as gardening because of the availability of water. We are now benefiting from the water supplies. We can manage to grow vegetables throughout the year because of a good water supply. We are also now able to pay school fees for our children and buy them school uniforms. We are now able to stand on our own.*

Examples of self-reliance were evident during the transect walk and observations. The researcher noted that some villagers had managed to drill boreholes in their homesteads with the help of their families. These were now enjoying having water all year round to do different agricultural activities.

The business community also benefited. They consisted of business people like the millers, butcher men, grocery owners, carpenters and bar owners. Apparently, these were all men, hence businessmen were involved in different businesses such as selling food stuffs, meat, beer, sugar, uniforms and school stationery. From the findings both the businessmen and the community were profiting from the university CE outcomes as affirmed by B11 and C9a who said: *“Business is booming, the community can now afford to buy goods from our shops”*

(B11). *Before this project was established in this area, the community had no money to buy from our shops because they had no disposable income*” (C9a).

The youths were also full of praises for this project in their community. Statements such as *“we are much better off with this project in our midst”* meant that the youths acknowledged acquiring skills, knowledge and new attitudes. This had helped to motivate and make them responsible and accountable citizens responsible for their own actions. The youth participated mainly by planting, cultivating and watering at the project centre. This was part of the empowerment process for the youth. They continued to say that they were also upbeat about the project with statements like: *“I thought that I was poor because I had no shoes and school uniform, but now this is all history. ... No one is laughing at me at school because I now have all these because of this project”* (Y16c, and e).

Findings from the (re)organised phase also highlighted that men were full of praise and were actively participating in the programmes at the centre. The men were involved in training workshops, gully reclamation and dam construction. The men were heard commenting during the transect walk that: *“We now have water for our cattle nearby. We used to walk 28 km to find water for our cattle during winter. This is now a thing of the past”*.

Again, from the transect walk the two gentlemen reported that: *“Peasant farmers in the community had organized themselves into village self-help groups with the help of Non-governmental organisations, churches and now the Midlands University.”*

They reported and showed the researcher that the community had drilled boreholes, built two small dams and the villagers were running market gardens and supplying the local businessmen with vegetables throughout the year. This had improved the quality of their life partnership and had reduced laziness and gossip. They expressed the feeling that the community members were now able to make informed decisions on issues that concerned them.

Finally, the two gentlemen highlighted their gratefulness to the MSU, who had empowered the community regarding access to water. The women who would previously be walking distances ranging from one to 15 km in search of water and firewood had their distance reduced.



However, these achievements were on a small scale, as alluded to by the lecturers, who said: *“Not much had been covered in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes due to lack of transport, distance and travelling and subsistence allowances (L3b).”* This resulted in limited content, or new skills being given to the community. There was need to *“train on a larger scale in order to get better results”*, stated the senior academic staff member, D3.

In his publication “Thought of the Day” on August 9, Paolinetti (2014) said “limitations live only in our minds, but if we use our imaginations, our possibilities become limitless.” The imaginations of a constitution for the project brought new possibilities. We now turn to these possibilities through the discussion of the findings.

### **5.3 DISCUSSION**

The discussion focuses on the following areas:

- Empowerment and self-reliance;
- Participation.
- Decision-making;

Attention now turns to empowerment and self-reliance

#### **5.3.1 Empowerment and Self-reliance**

As indicated in Chapter Four, Nyerere (1984) defines self-reliance as the ability to rely on one’s own resources rather than those of others. This is closely related to the concept of empowerment which is a process of personal development and taking initiatives (Rappaport, 1987). In this study different definitions of self-reliance were solicited.

After comparing the different responses and the definitions given in the study it appeared that all the respondents agreed on one definition which was advocating for living life without depending on someone else; or people coming up with their own solutions to problems. The community indicated they were fully participating in the project in order to change their whole life style.

The findings also revealed that there was a loud and clear call for self-reliance. The WFG said, “*community members are now able to fend for themselves*”.

The findings validate Nyerere’s (1984) views on self-reliance when he emphasised that people need to work together (through *ujamaa*/familyhood) thus promoting the African culture. There was evidence of the different aspects of self-reliance in this engagement. The community had acquired skills such as breeding poultry, bee-keeping, gardening skills and knowledge from the literacy class such as being able to read the bible and communicate on mobile telephones with family. The aspects of self-reliance were also indicated in the drilling of boreholes in their homesteads which supplied water all year round. This empowered members and also better enabled them to serve, share and care for others.

It was clear that the community did not wait for the university to do everything for them. Having been given some direction to do things on their own, they produced their own constitution to make themselves fully operational. The community independently elected their liaison officer, the community coordinator, who assisted them to address the conflicts they encountered and educated them to work together, helping the project to move forward. The community coordinator acted as a go-between interfacing with the university and community.

New knowledge was also provided by the university to the community. The partnership enabled gully reclamations to save the community environment for future use, drilled boreholes for personal use in their homes leading them to have their fields green throughout the year. All these steps were a strong and good indicator that the CE relationship had increased self-reliance and bottom-up growth. Self-reliance was developing, as evidenced by the women who now had sufficient funds to send their children to school. Scholars like Ebersöhn (2014a), and Ferreira and Ebersöhn (2012) in their literature demonstrate similar positive outcomes in terms of income generation as a result of the CE partnerships.

There was also evidence that the university benefited from community knowledge about fruit trees, although the extent to which the community benefited from the university’s exploitation of that knowledge was less evident. In terms of self-reliance, however, there was a sense that the community still relied on university knowledge and power to know, as evidenced by the funding of the different activities at the centre such as the mushroom

project. There was a sense that with more participation, more could have been done, more people could have been empowered and the project would also have grown on a larger scale.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the data revealed that the university did not directly empower the communities to strengthen their decision-making process. They encouraged decision making in terms of getting people to prioritise what they wanted in the way of help which showed there was respect for community needs; they used a bottom-up approach as far as asking the community to identify those needs, but the process was not continuous. University level decisions were made without community participation and there was at first, little recognition of indigenous knowledge. While the process appeared to engage with the community and encourage community ownership of ideas for development, there was not a sense that the university adopted an asset-based development approach – in other words the community was not encouraged to highlight their strengths before highlighting their needs. This perhaps contributed to the initial passivity of the community members, such as that expressed by the women on male non-attendance. Nevertheless, there was evidence of grass roots leadership emerging as a natural progression in response to ownership concerns. Again, the literature by Chambers (2007) and Ferguson (1994) emphasises the need for grass roots ownership for development to be sustainable.

### **5.3.2 Decision-making**

Robbins (2010, p. 463) defines decision-making as the act of choosing between two or more courses of action.” He reveals that characteristics of effective decision-making include appropriate information and openness and reliable information. The findings under this section indicated that the university CE had to make vital decisions in this process such as setting goals, planning how to achieve them, or coping with the issues which arise in organising and carrying out day-to-day activities. Making things happen (and preventing unwanted events) depended on the ability to take and implement decisions. The university took a decision to go to Zindowe Mberengwa and the community took a decision to welcome the university to partner it in a CE relationship. Decision-making can be a painful process since it usually involves change, conflict and the risk of being wrong and being called to account (Larry, 2009). The university made decisions which the community implemented. Thus, both top-down and bottom-up decision-making processes were evident at various stages in the data collection. The three stages of communication/consultation could be identified as the initial consultation, the ‘messy’ stage and the ‘(re)organised’ phase, thus

reflecting Tuckman's (1965) assertion that all groups go through similar phases of 'forming', 'storming' and 'norming'.

In terms of the ideological goals of CE (see Schuetze, 2010, for example) there was evidence of mutual gain. The university benefited from the views of the community while the community got advice from the university on technical and research issues. As highlighted in the data, the leadership initially solicited views from the grassroots, by cultivating listening skills and dialogue through various means. When the project functioned at its most consultative, it reflected the aims of the adaptive leadership theory which encourages multiple communication channels (Heifetz, 1994). In that respect formal structures do appear to have been established in the university to allow for cross institutional communication, but the indications from some staff were that decisions were largely taken without consultation, particularly in the 'storming' or 'messy' phase. Heifetz et al. (2009) argue that whatever form of decision-making is used, the important things are that the form of decision-taking should be 'open' and clear to all concerned; it should be consistent with reality; and the decision-makers should understand and establish the conventions of a particular form of decision-making. This helps all concerned to be accountable to their own actions.

Again, these findings and observations support other theorists such as Stephenson (2011), Heifetz (1994), Chambers (2007), Nyerere (1980) and a study by Martin and Mathema (2010), who all argue for a multi communicative approach in community development projects which encourage collective action where societies take charge of their lives in their own context. In this particular study this was done through the appointment and use of the project coordinator at the project centre. This was a positive community initiative and it would seem, from the researcher's view, that the project coordinator had to create opportunities to educate and support the community on what they intended to do and then helped them to solve conflicts at the project instead of allowing endless in-fighting with no mutual benefit. This helped the community to embrace the Nyererean principles for university CE. For instance, Nyerere's philosophy for adult education emphasised mutual sharing and cooperation for the collective good of society. The principle of dialogue was not just about getting things done but it was about generating a spiritual/caring commitment to each other. This was in line with the theory of African hospitality, which was to extend traditional values and responsibilities around societies (Nyerere, 1984). An example in this study was that of the community and students working together and showing a team spirit

through watering and caring for each other's gardens when other members were not well. Such actions are also embodied in the South African concept of *ubuntu*, which aims to realise dignity and respect between individuals and communities (Mulenga, 2001).

### 5.3.3 Participation

Participation was one of the issues that the study has highlighted. To quote from Pearse and Stiefel (1979, p.1) participation is: "the organized effort to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in a given social situation on the part of groups or movements hitherto excluded from such control." In this study different members participated at different levels and in different ways as indicated by different respondents. The community participated for a number of reasons, some of which were economic or social and to gain respect and recognition (Cleaver, 2001). Active participation has been revealed through the WFG when they were planting, watering and weeding in the garden and then applying these activities in their homesteads. Attending meetings in different committees and sharing ideas and experiences, resolving conflict, moulding bricks and repairing the roads were further indicators. The women further alluded to the fact that they participated in decision-making for example in relation to which projects to embark on. The findings are in agreement with the asset-based theory which advocates for active participation of the community in order to enhance decision-making, skills acquisition and ownership of the project as put forward by Brennan and Luloff (2007). It is also worth noting that scholars such as Atkinson, Vallely, Fitzgerald, Whittaker and Tanner (2011), Hickey and Kothari (2009) and Chambers (2007) seem inclined towards the idea that active participation in community development activities builds trust, empowers and benefits the marginalised who are the voiceless to improve the quality of their lives. Martin and Mathema (2010) also argue that participation of communities in solving their own problems builds trust and offers them a feeling of self-respect and self-worth. They further say that if members of the community are actively involved in community development activities this will help to reduce the dependency syndrome that affects many community development initiatives. In this project this was evidenced by members applying what had been learnt at the centre in their homesteads. They produced their own food such as vegetables, indigenous chickens and the surplus was sold to help pay school fees for their children.

However, the data indicated passive participation by some respondents would arise when there was absence of shared decision making. For instance, during the 'messy' or 'storming'

phase, lecturers did not participate fully when they were not getting transport to the centre or travelling and subsistence allowances. Similarly, the extension officer, after he had been barred from the centre, failed to participate fully in his role as advice giver. The student who had been inappropriately placed for WRL did not actively commit to the project because his interests were not aligned to the project needs. The reasons for this passive participation seem not to concur with those identified by Lund et al. (2013). In their study they identified timing, cultural and social norms as hindering factors in community participation. The lack of participation in this project seemed to hinge around power relations. Thomas and Wilcox (1998) offer alternative reasons for passive or lack of participation. They suggest that leadership styles have a strong influence and should be adapted to the prevailing situation. They also argue that recognition of personal characteristics is an essential ingredient in community development projects especially when dealing with adults who require dignity and respect during their learning process. These authors concluded that lack of handling of the community in a hospitable manner will result in dissatisfied participants, with negative comments and the voluntarily withdrawal from activities or result in passive participants. Although there was clear evidence of such behaviour in the Zindowe Mberengwa project, the community themselves managed to reverse this dynamic. Examples of similar such community-led initiatives were not found in the reviewed literature.

#### **5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

It can be concluded that the MSU Zindowe Mberengwa project took a hybrid approach in terms of the theories of asset-based community development, self-reliance and adaptive leadership. Some aspects were evident but some not. The consequences of the positive evidence were bottom-up decision making through the production of a stand-alone constitution for the community and appointment of a liaison officer who was named the project coordinator. Training sessions organised by the coordinator thereby reduced conflict at the centre. The consequences of negative evidences were lack of open communication, nepotism, corruption and a lack of motivation on the part of lecturers, particularly during the early phases of the project.

Lessons learnt in this study were that there was insufficient dialogue as an ongoing process in the project. The university appeared not to have planned the CE with sufficient attention to identifying the community's assets beyond some practical contributions such as labour. In

reality, the community demonstrated they had significantly more assets in terms of understanding and insights as to the roles they could play.

The university exploited the community in terms of recognising their indigenous knowledge, for example not sharing the financial benefits from the fruit juices and sweets which had been developed as a result of the community sharing their knowledge with the university.

Furthermore, the lecturers clearly indicated that the time consuming nature of the CE was not reflected in the workload allocations or financial incentives which impacted on their motivation.

The findings therefore have implications for improving the CE relationship and process on a number of issues such as dialogue and mapping of assets.

There was a sense, nevertheless, that both the university and community had shared goals. The catchment area for university student enrolment was the rural areas. Most of the university students were rural based. So, when students went to the project, it was as if they were going back home. Most lecturers also had rural backgrounds, so going to the project was like going to help their parents.

The next chapter focuses on the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations that emanate from the study.

## CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the study and its findings, presenting final conclusions and a list of recommendations. This was an investigation into the community engagement (CE) relationship between Mberengwa community and the Midlands State University (MSU), drawing on the asset-based community development theory, supported by Heifetz's concept of adaptive leadership and Nyerere's concept of *ujamaa*. The nature of the study was the university CE process and relationships, focusing on issues of power, asset recognition, and collaboration in decision making. The location was in Zindowe Village under the Chief Nyamondo in Mberengwa South. The purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which the university CE relationship facilitates community ownership over decision making and shared ownership of knowledge with a view to developing greater self-reliance and sustainable development in the Mberengwa community.

### 6.1 KEY RESEARCH QUESTION FOR THE STUDY

The overall question for the study was: drawing on the theories of asset-based community development, adaptive leadership and self-reliance – how does the Midlands State University–Mberengwa community engagement relationship address power relations, co-creation of knowledge and community ownership for change that promotes self-reliance? This was addressed by the following sub-questions: -

- How does the university interact with the community (ideology, processes, structures)?
- How does the community respond to the university's involvement (ownership over decision making, use of community assets, and the management of power relations)?
- In what ways can the community engagement process be improved in order to address issues of power, knowledge, decision making and conflicts?

The first two sub-questions were answered in chapters four and five respectively. Chapter Six will answer the last sub-question as a reflective analysis of the findings followed by recommendations.



## **6.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS ONE TO THREE**

Chapter One highlighted that universities have traditionally had three missions which include teaching, research and CE (Social Policy Research Unit, 2002). This chapter focused on the evolution of terminology for CE. The researcher also gave the contemporary global context of university CE. It was highlighted that universities globally are expected to contribute to the developmental needs of communities around them through CE. Some of the organisations involved in this at an international level are the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (OECD, 2007), The Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) (UNESCO, 2009), and the Higher Education Network for Community Engagement (HENCE) (Maurrasse, 2001). Conferences on the topic have been organised for universities by UNESCO, GUNI and the Talloires Network, to encourage universities to contemplate on how they could participate in helping communities around them solve their challenges such as poverty alleviation, sustainable development and health issues. Universities were to be seen as contributing to national development socially, economically and culturally. The chapter also looked at the African historical context which included Nyerere's work in Tanzania (Nyerere, 1980), and activities in countries such as Malawi, Botswana and Nigeria (in Preece et al., 2012). Attention then turned to the South African context which has incorporated CE in its Higher Education policy (Department of Education (DoE), 1997).

Finally, attention was given to the Zimbabwean context where the university CE policy according to Nziramasanga (1999) is enshrined in Zimbabwe's Education Act of 1991. However, there has been limited research on university CE in Zimbabwe. The MSU is one of the state universities in Zimbabwe. Community engagement is drawn from the philosophy of the university which focuses on contributing to societies around its different campus locations (MSU, 2000). The MSU runs several CE projects. Zindowe village university CE project which is located in Mberengwa, is the first CE project, followed by Chivi project which specialises in fishery, then Silobela project on agriculture, and the Buhera project on poultry. This study explored the process and nature of CE used by the MSU in the Zindowe Project in Mberengwa.

Chapter Two summarised a review of literature that has reported on the different aspects of CE. The main literature findings were discussed, including the definition of the concept of CE by scholars such as Kruss (2012) Schuetze (2010) and Hall (2010). The benefits of CE,

which included solving many issues at a community level and strengthening public trust, were highlighted by OECD (2001) and Holland (2005) for instance.

The chapter also looked at projects for CE in Africa as given, for example, by Nampota (2011) and Raditloaneng et al. (2011). The projects included the university of Botswana supporting a women's cooperative such as Odi Weavers. Studies on exploring the community voice in service learning were conducted in South Africa (see Preece, 2016a for example). However very little research had been done on university CE in Zimbabwe, as alluded to by Mabika (2012). This chapter also looked at some of the critiques of university CE. For example, Sinclair et al. (2013) and Fryer (2012) criticised university CE in relation to power imbalances.

In consideration of concerns about insufficient attention to the community voice and issues of power, the chapter discussed development theories which have influenced the development of CE approaches such as modernisation theory, neo-liberalism, populism and human development theory (Youngman, 2000). The chapter also paid attention to the concepts that informed the study. These were: rurality according to Moletsane (2011), power as outlined by Williams et al. (2016), and poverty as described by the World Bank (2012).

This study selected three complementary theoretical perspectives as a framework through which to analyse the CE process and its impact on the community. Asset-based community development (ABCD) theory (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003) is an approach to community development in reaction to the more traditional deficit development model which assumed that communities only have needs and problems. The ABCD theory places emphasis on the assets (resources, skills, knowledge) that communities already possess and which can be harnessed through CE. In order to embed the project within its African value base, this theory was complemented by Nyerere's philosophy of *ujamaa* (familyhood) which focuses on the concept of the African lifestyle as communitarian and collective (Nyerere, 1979). Finally, in recognition of the university's power relationship and potential conflicting interests in CE, the concept of adaptive leadership was also used because of its focus on the need to recognise competing goals and values. All three theories therefore provided complementary lenses through which to analyse the university's CE process.

Chapter Three outlined the methodology and research design. This was an exploratory, qualitative case study (Rule & John, 2011; Yin, 2003) of the CE process between the MSU and the Zindowe village under Chief Nyamondo in Mberengwa South. It was embedded in the interpretive paradigm (Pring, 2004) since it is a study on human behaviour and action. The population was the relevant staff involved in CE at the university and Mberengwa community members who were involved in the partnership. Sampling was initially purposive (Creswell, 2013) to select only those people that provided information that would address the research questions. Purposive sampling was used for university participants. There was a total of 18 participants including one vice chancellor, one registrar, one dean and 15 lecturers. In the community three key informants, namely the village chief, the councillor and village head, were selected purposively. The snowball – or referral – technique was used to select 20 family heads and eight youths, based on recommendations in turn from those already interviewed.

The data collection methods were interviews, focus group discussions, observations, transect walks and documentary analysis for triangulation purposes (Cohen, 2010; Chiromo, 2009). People who were interviewed were the university staff, the village chief, the councillor, and village head, while focus group discussions were held with family heads and youth. Observations were used to observe interactions in the village between the community and the university participants, and the community project activities. This was done to gain a deeper understanding of the study in its natural setting (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

Documents analysed were in the form of minutes of meetings, policy documents and agreements which illustrated the formal CE development process. In addition, a transect walk (deZeew & Wilbers, 2004) with key village informants provided the opportunity for the community members to highlight their landscape, assets and vulnerabilities. Data analysis was organised through the qualitative programme of Nvivo in order to inductively identify patterns of responses and themes that are relevant to the study and which were then examined and re-categorised through the relevant theoretical lenses (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

### **6.3 FINDINGS: RESEARCH SUB-QUESTION ONE**

Chapter Four sought to answer research sub-question one – how does the university interact with the community (ideology, processes, structures)?

### 6.3.1 Ideologies

There seemed to be two competing ideologies in operation. For example, the university wanted to learn and not impose, but the community wanted the university to give them new knowledge and new skills. The university entered the community with authority and status because it was able to produce material, human, and financial resources. Interviewee WG6d indicated that they “*were happy to be passive recipients of whatever the university was willing to provide*”. There was also a discrepancy between the ideology and practice. For example, what was on paper as policy on university-community engagement and what was taking place on the ground were at variance. The literature indicated that this scenario was not unusual (for instance Stephenson, 2011). Stephenson (2011) further revealed that universities often marginalised the communities and identified them as poor with nothing to offer so they were understood to be simply on the receiving end of university interventions. This attitude appeared at one level to be the case for the Mberengwa community. For example, the principles of adaptive leadership as an ongoing process of clarifying competing goals and values (Heifetz, 1994) and asset-based community development principles (Chambers, 2007) which emphasised exploring community assets were not central to the community engagement (CE) process at Zindowe Mberengwa, even though the ideology indicated that the process should be a mutually beneficial partnership. These findings suggest that there is a potential for the further understanding of how to facilitate the community empowerment process.

### 6.3.2 Processes

The findings suggested that although the university motivation to engage was ideologically based on collaboration and knowledge sharing, the reality of the overall process was top-down until the community members themselves took the initiative to formulate their own constitution.

While the top-down approach is common in university CE initiatives (Stephenson, 2011; Erasmus, 2011 for example), it was evident, as will be elaborated on in the ensuing sections, that there were three distinct phases which showed different forms of participation and communication between the participants. These phases followed a commonly understood process of ‘forming’, ‘storming’ and ‘norming’ as identified by Tuckman (1965). So, it could be argued that at one level, the evolution of the CE relationship was a natural process.

However, there were indications that this evolutionary process was hindered by the university's own communication structure and practice.

These findings suggest that establishing community assets were not the primary goals of the university. Eleberi (2012) and Beaulieu (2002), for instance, highlight that the communities do have assets that may be used to solve their problems. Hence, the implications of the findings suggest that the community could have been encouraged to take more responsibility for their own actions at the outset of the engagement relationship, such as the community mapping their local resources and abilities before engaging on projects.

### **6.3.3 The Community Structure**

The findings seemed to suggest that there was a strong institutional commitment of establishing CE through the various committees such as those for the university CE and WRL (MSU minutes, 17 November, 2011). The university took responsibility for initially establishing a whole university committee structure that was also replicated at community level in order to facilitate communication.

It was expected therefore that both formal and informal communication lines would be open to enable both parties to communicate freely when the need arose. Policies were formulated which cemented official channels of communications through committees and regular meetings. Communication structures were put in place to enable community members to represent their concerns and needs on the ground. This was reflected in the different committees made up of representatives from each village head. In order to share information both the university and community were used as conduits of information via committee meeting minutes. However, neither community nor university were represented in their counterpart committees so that the two committee structures seemed to run in parallel with each other rather than as an integrated whole. The nature of this committee structure indicated that on the one hand the university was committed to the notion of CE, but on the other hand there was less understanding of how the two sides (community and the university) could interact for mutual benefit. The findings reflect similar whole university approaches to CE elsewhere – for instance at the University of the Free State (Preece, 2017) and at Makerere University (Openjuru & Ikoja-Odongo, 2012). However, the structure seemed to fall short of addressing the principals of asset-based community development theory as outlined by Ebersöhn and Fereirra (2012), or of Nyerere's principals which required a much

closer interaction between community members and the university curriculum (Nyerere, 1968). The implications of these findings suggest that limited access to open and ongoing communication structures for free flow of information and feedback might have hindered meaningful decisions by both parties at certain stages of the project.

#### **6.3.4 Communication Channels**

The findings of the study revealed that different communication channels were used in the study. For example, people communicated through the different chairpersons of committees that oversaw different activities at the centre. This was affirmed by the WFG who said that: *“they made decisions through the votes at meetings which were held by the counsellor”*. An example which was cited was that of prioritising projects at the centre such as poultry, gardening or mushrooms. In essence, the findings noted that the university had created consultative structures though these were insufficient. The findings which indicated that consultative communication structures had been created were similar to those by Mathie and Cunningham (2005) which found that the development of communication structures in university-CE activities is of necessity. This was also confirmed by scholars such as Erasmus (2011), Preece (2011), Hipwell (2009), Bender (2008), Wong (2004), and Sinclair et al. (2003). However, the issue here is how well these structures were functioning. Despite all the different communication channels in place it was evident from the findings that there was a lack of community representation in the two major committees at the university, leading to the imposition of ideas and activities on the community. The MFG revealed this when they said that the university should consult with them and not impose decisions on them. Another reinforcement of this issue was evident when the university link person who was stationed at the project centre stated he never had the opportunity to report to the university CE committee on issues that were happening at the project centre because of a lack of transport to travel from the centre. There was evidence of formal structures that allowed dialogue but the way in which that dialogue was experienced would vary between the participants. The findings seemed to reveal that there was more of top-down communication instead of a bottom-up communication. Thus, the findings suggest there are implications for how continuous communication can be channelled to become a more interactive process. For instance, Watson (2007) suggests that leaders should listen to the community voice in order to build trust in relationships of CE.

### **6.3.5 Self-reliance in the Community**

According to Nyerere (1984) self-reliance reflects self-sustenance, being able to solve your day to day problems, being able to survive without outside help. It is an evolving process but, as stated, there were signs that the process could have evolved more efficiently than it did. At the inception of this project, there was consultation between the university and the community regarding the types of projects they wanted to engage in. The community was involved in decision-making. However, this period lasted for only a few months. During the ‘messy’ phase, which lasted nearly two years, the community appeared to play a passive role and there was no overall community ownership over decisions.

There were indications, however that the community moved from a stage of passive participation to one of self-motivation, although this was perhaps in reaction to, rather than because of, the university leadership. From the results of the study, this stage could be classified as the ‘(re)organised phase’ whereby the community demonstrated self-determination and self-reliance by developing their own constitution with local committees and appointing a community coordinator to act as liaison between community members and the university. This was in response to a perceived lack of ownership of the project by community members. This was a good example of the community making decisions and drawing on their own assets in terms of understanding and having sensitivity to the local context. They encouraged decision making in terms of getting people to prioritise what they wanted in the way of help. This process at community level showed there was respect for community needs and it enabled a bottom-up contribution towards decisions about land allocation for example. This action illustrated Nyerere’s notion of self-reliance in terms of problem solving. The renewed partnership enabled new skills such as gulley reclamations to save the community environment for future use, drilling of boreholes for personal use in their homes leading them to have their fields green throughout the year. Nyerere (1980), Kadenyi and Kariuki (2011) and Twalo (2010) highlight common concerns for self-reliance. Some of these are that education should encourage the holistic development of a learner which includes critical thinking, skills acquisition, employment creation, reduction of a dependency syndrome and contribution to the social and economic growth of a whole community. In Zindowe Mberengwa, the community did acquire different skills such as bee-keeping, and decision-making skills on issues that concerned them daily. They also acquired gardening and poultry skills which enabled them to afford to send their children to school and have a plate of food on the table. The outcomes of these small businesses meant the community members

had disposable income which changed their life for the better. Such outcomes are similar to the positive outcomes of other CE initiatives (for example Raditloaneng, 2011). However, my study showed a distinctive initiative that was not identified in the literature whereby the Mberengwa community took their own initiative to come up with a constitution to correct the perceived inadequacies in the partnership. All these steps were a strong indicator of increased self-reliance. The implications of this finding are that developmental work and skills acquisition could perhaps have been achieved at an earlier stage if more trust had been built thereby reducing the unnecessary conflicts.

Preece (2013) and Stephenson (2011) have both explored the application of adaptive leadership theory to their practice of university engagement. Stephenson (2011) found that university functions do not just end within academia itself but universities have to provide leadership which encourages relationships, negotiation skills and two-way communication. Preece (2013) highlighted that the principle of dialogue is not a one-off exercise and requires an iterative process of clarifying competing goals and values throughout the engagement relationship because goals and values shift over time. There were indications that the community's goals shifted from being one of passive participant willing to receive new skills, to one where community ownership over decisions became an important aspect of the engagement relationship. This feature of community voice and community decision-making is rarely discovered in CE projects. However, Ferreira and Ebersöhn (2012) demonstrated in their school project on resilience in rural South Africa that engagement relationships which are sustained over time and which encourage communities to realise their assets can contribute substantially to CE and self-reliance. What was unusual in this Zindowe Mberengwa study is that the community came to this realisation by themselves because they became conscious that the formal process was not allowing them sufficient space to manage their own affairs in the project.

### **6.3.6 Challenges in the Community Engagement Process**

The findings revealed that there were a number of challenges, such as transport, poor leadership, location of the plot, work overload and other staff complaints, corruption and nepotism. It would appear that there was limited opportunity given to both the university staff and the community to clarify issues they did not clearly understand. It would appear the university did not always listen to the peoples' views. This then resulted in conflicts of interest at different stages of the project. There was, on the whole, a unidirectional knowledge



transfer from top-down in terms of skills, training and resources. This affirms findings from literature by other authors such as Watson (2007), Erasmus (2007), and Sinclair et al. (2003) who confirm that there is a need to pay attention to the community voice in most CE projects. Humphrey (2012) and Watson (2003) also highlight that universities often fail to reward university staff when they undertake CE activities, a concern that was raised by lecturing staff at the MSU.

## **6.4 FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION TWO**

Chapter Five answered the second research sub-question which asked how does the community respond to the university's involvement (in terms of ownership over decision making, use of community assets and the management of power relations)? The findings are summarised here as decision-making, use of community assets and power dynamics.

### **6.4.1 Decision-Making**

As has already been mentioned, there seemed to be three distinct phases in the project's evolution. Data highlighted that leadership from the university initially solicited views from the community grassroots through various means such as meetings with different individuals such as the council, community, the village chief, and the counsellors. There was a period of turmoil, mistrust and resentment while the community acted as passive participants, followed by a period when the community took over and started to take charge of their own destiny. The second phase of turmoil, resulted in the community acting as passive participants. This was titled the 'messy phase' which was characterised by non-consultation by the university. The university made all the decisions pertaining to the project. For example, there was an enforcement of mixed farming in the gardens of more than four crops in a bed.

Once the community initiated constitution was in place participants reported a change in relationships where community members felt involved in decision-making. This third phase was characterised by bottom-up consultations where the university benefited from the views of the community and the community sought advice from the university on technical and research issues. The project functioned most effectively during this consultative phase because there was open communication such as when the community agreed amongst themselves to appoint a link person as a coordinator. This person would then communicate the community's views to the university. In the process some negotiation and clarification of

views from both parties would take place. This seemed to reflect the recommendations by Heifetz et al. (2009) of continuous communication in change processes.

At university level, formal structures did appear to have been established to allow for cross institutional communication, but the indications of the findings showed that the lecturing staff revealed that when it came to decision-making most decisions were largely taken by senior management, for example who and when to go travelling and the allocation of subsistence allowances for the project. This process is not supported by scholars like Bowen et al. (2014) who say decisions should be taken after a consultation process. Heifetz (1994) also argues that all the concerned parties should be involved at every stage in order to build relations and work in collaboration. Mathie and Cunningham (2009) also highlight that the mapping of assets by the community gives them strength, something to build on enhancing their decision-making. However, this was not the case with this study. There were no indications that asset mapping took place in this project.

Team work was evident in the production of the constitution by the community. The community was able to map their resources by choosing the coordinator who then became the link person between the university and the community. For example, when the community noticed its plight during the 'messy phase' and identified its strengths, they worked together as a team and reorganised themselves. This helped all concerned to be accountable for their own actions (Stephenson, 2011; Chambers, 2007; Watson, 2003; Heifetz, 1994).

In this particular study consultative decision making was facilitated through the appointment and use of the project coordinator who was a local person at the project centre. The project coordinator then had to create opportunities to support and educate the community on what they intended to do, and helped them to solve conflicts at the project. The coordinator's peace-keeping role helped the community to embrace the Nyererean principles of mutual sharing, dialogue and cooperation for the collective good of society. The principle of dialogue, according to Nyerere (1984), was not just about getting things done but it was about generating a spiritual/caring commitment to each other. This was in line with his theory of African hospitality, which was to extend traditional values and responsibilities within societies. An example in this study of these principles in action was that of community and students working together and showing a team spirit through watering and caring for each other's gardens when other members were not well. Such actions are embodied in the spirit of

the South African concept of *ubuntu*, which aims to achieve dignity and respect between individuals and communities (Waghid, 2014).

#### **6.4.2 The Use of Community Assets**

It was evident from the data that the community had been involved in the needs identification but not in the mapping of their own local resources. The asset-based approach aims to encourage people to see their strengths first in order for them to become creative and constructive in their own development (Chirisa, 2009). This was not the case in this project. The data revealed that the community had felt that the university focused on encouraging communities to identify and prioritise their needs with a view to providing university expertise to fill the needs gap. While the process appeared to engage with the community and encourage community ownership of ideas for development, the community was not encouraged to highlight their strengths before highlighting their needs. This perhaps contributed to the initial passivity of the community members, such as that expressed by the women on male non-attendance. This process was not in agreement with the literature on asset-based community development approach which called for identification of local resources in community development which would help in creating the agreed goals and enacting shared values in order to accomplish a higher-level of participation resulting in positive change in the community, as cited by Ryan and Roche (2016), Mathie and Cunningham (2003), Kretzmann and McKnight (1996). Ferreira and Ebersöhn (2012), in their book *Partnering for resilience*, suggest that it is possible to encourage a more asset-based foundation if community members are encouraged to see their assets before their needs.

Nevertheless, there was evidence of grass roots leadership emerging as a natural progression in response to ownership concerns. Chirisa's (2009) study in Epworth and Ruwa, in Zimbabwe found out that normally when the asset-based community development approach was used people were more likely to become self-sustainable. In this study the community used their indigenous knowledge assets to educate the university on how to make fruit juices and sweets from the marula tree. This knowledge sharing by the community, however, did not seem to be mutually beneficial since the university exploited this knowledge to raise income for the institution rather than community. The findings indicated that community assets were not always used for community benefit. This could have taken place because the MSU (2011) CE plan mentioned the need to find ways of making the project financially

viable for the university. This meant that the university was expected to make money out of the CE projects. Nevertheless, there was no transparent evidence to indicate that such profits were re-cycled for community benefit in the form, for instance, of increased transport arrangements between the university and the community.

Initially, the community offered assets in terms of their free labour, sand, and carts to carry stones and water for gully reclamation, their animals such as donkeys and oxen to pull the carts, their tools such as picks, shovels, wheel-barrows and at times their own bricks. Chambers (2007) and Swanepoel and de Beer (2001) suggest that an asset-based community development approach results in societies spearheading their development processes resulting in enhanced economic opportunities as some assets already exist in the society. Asked why they were giving their assets to the project, the councillor had this to say: *“This is our project and the university is here to help us”*. This would suggest that there was a sense of community ownership, and sense among the community that they had something to contribute. This would suggest that communities can instinctively develop an understanding of their own assets even when the process is not formalised. This finding is also affirmed by scholars like Martin and Mathema (2010), Weber and Smith (2003) and Friedman (2003).

Furthermore, the community asset of self-organisation was a major resource that the community was able to demonstrate in order to show the university that they could contribute to managing the project.

#### **6.4.3 Power Dynamics**

The findings revealed that this project was characterised by power dynamics at many levels. For instance, there were leadership tensions, financial accountability and land issues, particularly during the ‘storming’ or ‘messy’ phase. The drafting of the constitution by the community and the appointment of the liaison officer altered the power dynamics and the project is now on its proposed new trajectory. Brennan (2013), Osman and Attwood (2007) Olowu (2012) and Lincoln (2005) all report that imbalances of resources, ethnic tensions and non-leadership influences are some of the obstacles which affect power dynamics negatively. In this study the researcher identified power imbalances in favour of the educational institution and where certain people held the balance of power because of their status. For example, in this study there was conflict during the ‘messy phase’ between the senior academic staff D3 and the government agent, who was not allowed to carry out his duties.

However, according to Luloff and Bridger (2003) power must be shared for relationships to work and for everyone to participate freely, thereby building trust. This view was also affirmed by other authors such as De Pree (1989) and Thomas and Wilcox (1998) who state that leadership styles should be adapted to the prevailing situation. They argue that recognition of personal characteristics is an essential ingredient in community development projects especially when dealing with adults who require dignity and respect during their learning process. These authors concluded that lack of handling of the community in a hospitable manner will result in dissatisfied participants, with negative comments and the voluntarily withdrawal from activities or result in passive participants. An adaptive leader might build trust by organising the community into groups. For example, in this study the community was put into groups when carrying out different activities such as youths watering in the garden, women weaving mats in relation to their village connections. The groups were then given functions to perform at the project such as choosing leaders, choosing days on which to perform certain tasks such as watering plants in the garden. Included amongst their day to day tasks was communicating and renegotiating. This led to a type of leadership which helped them come up with solutions that suited their own context and helped them understand their own situation better. This increased the influence of the community, making it possible to build respect, dignity and trust to those involved in the engagement (Heifetz, 1994). When the community saw their ideas being accepted and used they felt valued.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS: RESEARCH SUB-QUESTION THREE**

The section discusses recommendations for university-CE in Zimbabwe, MSU and answers research sub-question three which asked: in what ways can the CE process be improved in order to address issues of power, knowledge, decision making and conflicts?

### **6.5.1 Using the Asset-based Community Development Approach and Adaptive Leadership Theory**

Communities can demonstrate their own resilience in the face of conflict by using local consultation structures and collaborating when they see there is a goal to aim for. So while an asset-based community development approach may facilitate this process, it can also happen organically. So, a recommendation might be to allow communities space to grow and have a leadership structure that is not too hands on – hence adaptive leadership – which encourages people to come to their own solutions but in a context that is aiming for change. For example,

although there was evidence of good will from both sides, there was little evidence of a theoretical approach to CE or of the potential contribution an asset-based approach might provide beyond a needs-based approach. There was insufficient dialogue between university and community throughout the project. The adaptive leadership theory calls for continuous dialogue and renegotiating skills which were much needed in this engagement. The asset-based community development theory also fits into this recommendation in that it promotes the aspect of bottom-up communication.

### **6.5.2 Encouraging more Organic Community Growth**

The project demonstrated that communities can generate self-sufficiency and resilience in the face of conflict by using local consultation structures and collaborating when they see there is a goal to aim for. The university could therefore be encouraged to play a leading role in incubating communities' self-growth by providing education and skills to enable the communities to solve their own problems.

### **6.5.3 Ongoing Process of Asset-mapping**

The university appeared not to have planned how to highlight the community-based assets. Another recommendation therefore is that communities should be encouraged to realise and map their assets as an ongoing process in recognition of the changing dynamics of CE relationships. Communities have more assets than they might realise at first. Asset-mapping therefore should be an ongoing process in order to capture the evolving nature of a CE relationship.

### **6.5.4 Rewarding Academic Staff**

The lecturers clearly indicated that the time consuming nature of community engagement (CE) was not reflected in the working loads allocation or financial incentives which impacted on their motivation. There is need for the university to incorporate university CE into lecturers' teaching loads and reward them with an incentive. Humphrey (2012) and Watson (2007) reached similar findings. For example, they recommended having a relook at the teaching load of lecturers, plus adding an incentive for university CE.

### **6.5.5 Community Engagement Projects to be Located Closer to the Campus**

Projects should ideally be as close as possible to the campus to reduce unnecessary challenges such as transport to take officers to the far away centre, supervision of the projects

at the centre, accommodation for the officers, travel and subsistence for their up-keep. The researcher recommends that sufficient funds are made available for regular liaison and interaction between rural areas and universities.

#### **6.5.6 Training Sessions on Conflict Management and Resolution**

One of the challenges revealed in this study was power dynamics in the relationship. Daft and Marcic (2016) indicate that empowerment includes management of power relations. Data seemed to indicate that after the appointment of the link person at the Mberengwa project, who is the coordinator at the centre, the power dynamics improved between the different participants. The study recommends that training sessions, covering topics on conflict management and resolution, be organised for both university and community members as these are necessary and vital for the CE process to achieve the intended goals.

#### **6.5.7 Continuous Communication and Feedback**

Mathie and Peters (2014), Erasmus (2011) and Hipwell (2009), among other scholars, indicate that continuous communication which includes feedback is important in CE activities. The university leaders need to listen to the community voice in order to build trust in the relationship. This can be done through interactive communication which includes feedback and by inviting the stakeholders to strategic meetings and providing other ways of communicating which might yield results.

The authors further say that there should be a two-way communication which should flow to and from both partners. For instance, the community at the Mberengwa project wanted to be trained on mushroom production. Because of the reasons only known to the university this training did not materialise and no feedback was given to the community who indicated they were more than ready for the activity. This made them lose hope and trust in the university.

#### **6.5.8 Strategic Planning Involving All Stakeholders**

The community explained the need for the university to involve them in strategic planning in order for the university to be relevant. For example, in this study there were frustrations about the lack of communicative planning when it came to the appointment of leadership, appointment of teachers at the Early Childhood Centre, location of the plot and donation of unwanted library books. Stakeholder inclusion in strategic committees between those who craft policies and those who are supposed to implement them would have helped to minimise

misunderstandings and unwanted interventions. For example, there could have been community representatives in the two main CE committees which are CESIK and WRL.

Consulting all the parties involved in the engagement such as the university staff, the community and the students would enable a shared approach to devising appropriate policies to embrace sustainable development. This would ensure inclusiveness and a value driven university CE which would promote high levels of acceptance within the community and university.

The study therefore recommends involvement of all stakeholders from the inception of the engagement and throughout the project in order for the CE to be relevant to the needs of the community. This would help in decision-making, thereby appointing the relevant people to the right posts, avoid wasting the hard-earned resources of people and reducing corruption.

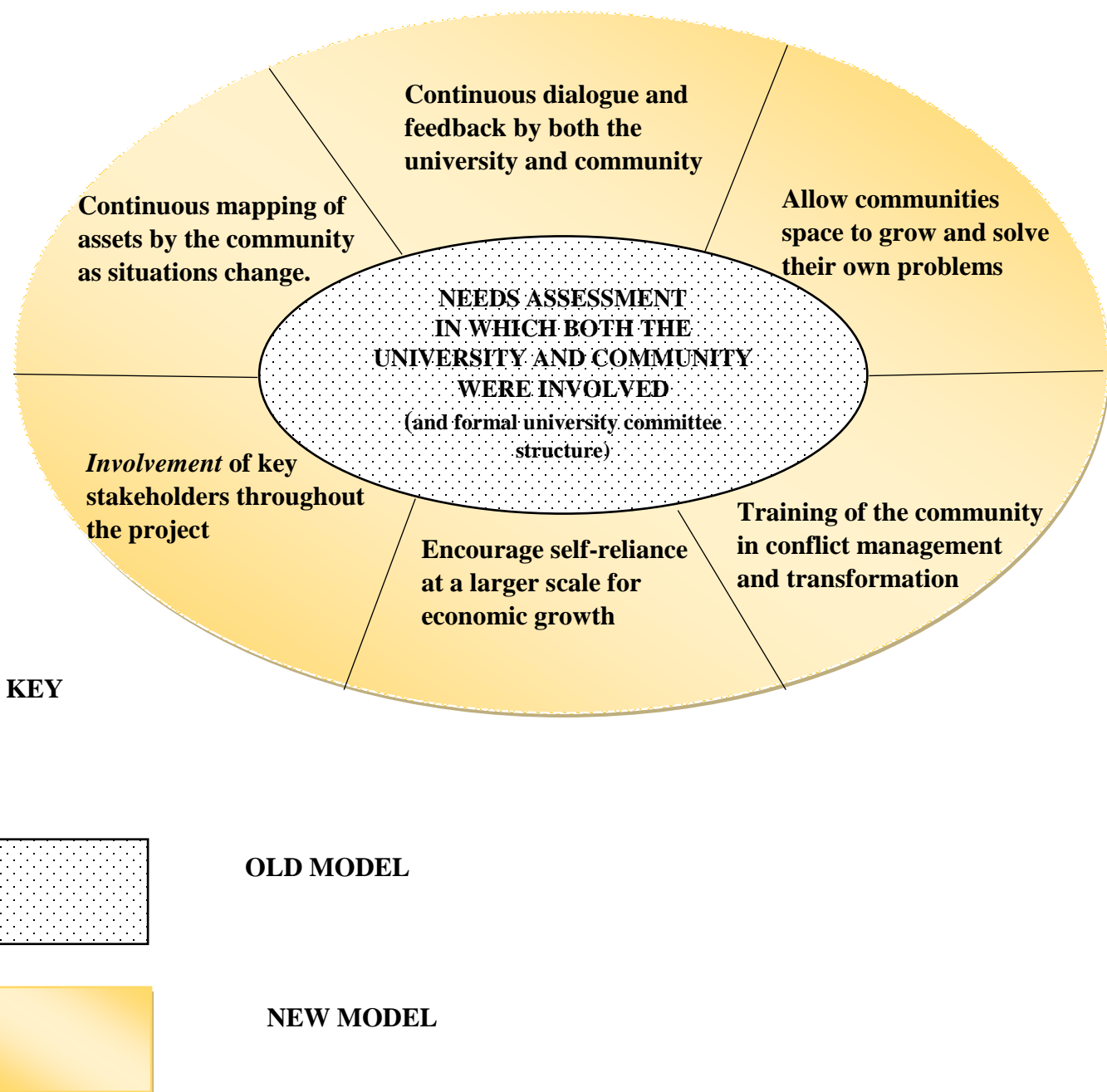
#### **6.5.9 Self-Reliance**

Nyerere (1984) highlights that self-reliance is manifest when one is self-sufficient and able to solve one's problems without outside help. The Mberengwa community did manage to solve many problems through the community engagement process and relationship and at a local level there were clear economic gains. However, there is a need to develop self-reliance on a larger scale in order to facilitate bigger financial gains and contribute economically to the district as well as the nation.

### **6.6 A RECOMMENDED NEW MODEL FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

In view of the above findings and recommendations the researcher has suggested a model for CE which captures the recommendations in diagrammatic form, whilst at the same time showing how the model expands on the university's original approach. An explanation of the model follows in Figure 13.





**Figure 13: The New Recommended Model for University-Community Engagement**

The old model of university CE is highlighted as the centre circle in Figure 13. It was characterised by needs assessment and a formal committee structure which did not directly engage community members. The old model also made use of committee structures which were meant to involve both sets of stakeholders in the engagement. These were, first the CESIK which was the overall committee in charge of the university CE. Second, the WRL

committee was in charge of the deployment of students from the university to the Zindowe community on WRL. Thirdly, the finance committee was in charge of all the financial issues in the university CE project. Fourthly the planning committee was in charge of what was happening, when it would take place, how it would be done. However, with all these committees in place there was no representation of the community, leading the university to impose decisions on them. Therefore, the committees were not functional. These did not serve a mutually agreed purpose.

The needs assessment approach promoted both top-down and bottom-up approaches in communication. However, this approach did not allow communities to indicate what assets they had which could be used in the implementation of university CE programmes.

The new model – as outlined in the sections surrounding the centre circle in figure 13 emphasises that while the old model's structures can facilitate a CE relationship, in order for this relationship to flourish there needs to be a continuous pattern of dialogue, training in conflict resolution, involvement of representation from all stakeholders across the committee structures and an ongoing mapping of community assets so that community strengths are given due consideration to grow and solve their own problems. These additional considerations need to be woven into the CE relationship and facilitated by the formal committee structures.

As has already been highlighted in Chapter Two, for most rural communities, poverty means hunger, thirst and living without decent shelter (Narayan & Petesch, 2002). Poverty also means being unable to read and write. This explains why in this project functional literacy was a key community demand at the beginning of this project. Poverty also means experiencing chronic sickness, lack of access to education, security or health services and a powerful sense of powerlessness. Most rural communities therefore have very little control over their own lives and often live with constant threats of personal violence. This is why this study has targeted theoretical lenses that address self-sufficiency leading to self-reliance.

According to a Ugandan proverb, poverty passes from one generation to the other, as if the 'child sucks it from her mother's breast'. How can this intergenerational transmission of poverty be stopped? The new model for the university CE might be the answer to this problem. The new model advocates for continuous dialogue and feedback by both the

university and the community. The dialogue will enable all participants to map out the assets which the community has which the university can use to improve the livelihoods of the community. There are many key stakeholders whose involvement in CE could help contribute to community transformation. Their continuous involvement is key to poverty reduction in these areas. Because poor people are said to have no voice, the new model advocates that they be allowed enough space to grow and solve their problems. Self-sufficiency and self-reliance start from this point.

Training is key to any project. Once one is sufficiently trained, one can be the master of one's own destiny. Training is thus a necessity which no serious project should ignore. Conflicts are inevitable in any complex society, so communities should be trained in conflict management and transformation. This will enable them to deal with minor challenges without having to wait for someone from outside. The new model takes into account the fact that once communities are given space to grow and solve their own problems they will do so without help from outside which will indicate they have reached a state of self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Most university CE projects are small scale but the new model advocates for bigger projects which will involve a larger number of community members.

Stakeholders are key in any CE by universities. These stakeholders range from top management at university, lecturers involved in the day to day management of the products, students who have projects running and community members who include chiefs, church leaders, councillors, business people and heads of schools. It is crucial that they should be consulted on a continuous basis to ensure openness and transparency. Top university managers are the ones who make the major decisions in terms of policy matters, funding issues. Programmes and projects can fail because of unsuitable policies. Top managers should therefore consult widely before they finalise policies. Consultation should be at both university level and community level.

Top managers should similarly ensure that lecturers who participate in the university CE are provided with the basic necessities such as incentives for taking part in the programmes, transport to take them to the programmes and suitable accommodation on site. University CE should in turn be considered in academic promotion criteria of lecturers alongside other teaching and research outputs. This has been argued in many CE reports (Watson, 2007 for instance).

The whole idea of CE should be to transform rural communities for the better and the researcher's hope, is that this new model of university-CE will facilitate this process.

## **6.7 FUTURE STUDIES**

While this study has looked at a number of issues around the MSU CE process and community relationships, other studies would be able to shed further light on the dynamics of university relationships for instance. This study therefore recommends further studies in CE which will guide the CE mission of universities, especially in Zimbabwe where the concept is fairly new. For instance, it would be useful to explore in more depth the intra-university dynamics for devising CE policy and implementation which will build on and enhance the understanding of university CE in the Zimbabwean context.

## **6.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The findings were outlined according to the research questions of the study under the following headings: the ideologies, CE structure, communication hierarchy and communication structure, needs assessment and self-reliance. Limited use of the asset-based community development and adaptive leadership theories was evident. A new model for university CE is offered in response to the findings.

It is worth noting that the university was well motivated and its major reason for engaging in this partnership was to assist this community – so any criticism should be taken in the spirit of critical inquiry and trying to improve on the engagement process. The community has clearly benefitted from the university – but there are areas which could be improved – for example, the process of nurturing the community's natural growth. Not everyone dismissed the idea that community members had assets, even if they did not maximise the opportunity to identify them, as highlighted by the senior university academic staff member, D5.

The recommendations for the nature and process of CE were: the need for universities to use asset-based community development and adaptive leadership theories instead of needs assessment which encourage communities to have a donor syndrome. There is need for the introduction of a more open continuous communication system and insurance that the engagement structure is functional in that all laid down procedures are implemented

effectively. More self-reliance activities should be introduced on a bigger scale so as to impact on the region economically.

There is also a need for continuous education and dialogue for all parties involved to remove misconceptions and ensure a better understanding of how to engage with others.

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## APPENDICES

Telephone: 054 - 222426  
Facsimile: 054 - 223200

Ref: ADM/23/I



OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATOR  
MIDLANDS PROVINCE  
Ministry of Rural Development, Promotion and  
Preservation of National Culture and  
Heritage  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Government COMPLEX  
10<sup>TH</sup> Street,  
P O Box 365  
GWERU

4 August 2016

The District Administrator  
**MBERENGWA**



**AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT STUDY ON UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
IN ZIMBABWE : AN ASSET BASED ANALYSIS**

The above refers.

Authority is hereby granted for Mrs Loveness Museva to carry out Research in your District for the period August to December 2016.

F. Maposa  
**for: PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATOR – MIDLANDS**

P Bag 9055  
GWERU  
Zimbabwe  
Telephone: 260464/260450  
shavan@msu.ac.zw  
Fax :263-054-260233

Deputy Registrar – Academic Affairs



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## MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

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2 August 2016

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT STUDY AT MIDLANDS  
STATE UNIVERSITY - LOVENESS MUSEVA**

**TOPIC: "UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN ZIMBABWE: AN  
ASSET-BASED ANALYSIS"**

---

Your minute of 21 July 2016 refers.

Permission has been granted for Loveness Museva to carry out the above study with  
Midlands State University.

Mr N Shava

Acting Deputy Registrar – Academic Affairs





#### Gatekeepers LETTER OF INFORMATION

---

The District Administrator  
Ministry of Local Government  
P. O. Box 365  
Gweru

12 July 2016

Dear Sir

#### **RE: Permission to carry out a research study in the Ministry of Local Government**

I am a student pursuing a PhD study through Durban University of Technology. I am writing to seek permission to carry out a research in your Ministry in Mberengwa District. The title of my study is "University community engagement in Zimbabwe: An asset based analysis". The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which the university-community engagement relationship facilitates community ownership over decision making and shared ownership of knowledge with a view to developing greater self-reliance and sustainable development in the Mberengwa community.

I intend to hold interviews with the chief, head men and councillors of the Mberengwa district in chief Nyamondo village on university community engagement. I will also do focus group discussions with the women, men and youths involved in the university community engagement project. I hope to collect data between September 2016 and May 2017. The findings of the study will be available to your Ministry.

For more information, you may contact my supervisor whose contact details are below.

Julia Preece  
Professor of Adult and Community Education  
Unit of Adult and Community Education  
Faculty of Arts and Design  
Indumiso, Midlands Campus, Durban University of Technology  
Pietermaritzburg  
Email: [juliap@dut.ac.za](mailto:juliap@dut.ac.za)

I look forward to hear from you soon.

Your faithfully

Loveness Makhosazana Museva

## LETTER OF INFORMATION - PARTICIPANTS

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**Faculty of Arts and Design**  
Durban University of Technology  
Room 30, City Campus  
Durban, 4001

PO BOX 1334  
Durban, South Africa, 4000  
Tel: 031 373 6517/6  
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Call Centre: 0860 10 31 94  
[www.dut.ac.za](http://www.dut.ac.za)

### LETTER OF

INFORMATION – Lecturers/youth/chief/councillor/ focus group/ village head / registrar

Title of the Research Study:

Principal Investigator/s researcher      Museva Makhosazana Loveness (21649060) [museval@msu.ac.zw](mailto:museval@msu.ac.zw) (M Ed.)

Co-Investigator/s supervisor/s      Professor Julia Preece: PhD

#### **Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:**

The purpose of this study is to investigate University community engagement in Zimbabwe paying special attention at the processes, relationships and structures, with the intention of improving the community engagement.

Participants in this study will be only those who are participating in the community engagement programme. Their responsibilities will be free/voluntary participation. The participants are entitled to question anything that is not clear during the interview, discussion or any form of participation. They are allowed to consult other people about certain points expressed in the documents. They have the right to withdraw from the study anytime they so wish. Observations; transect walk, focus group discussions, interviews and documentary analysis will be the instruments in this study.

Follow ups will be carried out in order to verify information where necessary. Interviews will be conducted within a time frame of 30 minutes to one hour per interview. Participants are expected to participate freely without any force.

#### **Risks or Discomforts to the Participant**

You will not experience risks or discomforts since permission will be sought before interviews are carried out and photos are taken.

#### **Benefits**

##### **To participants**

Participants' voices will be heard as they share their experiences in the university community engagement project.

Participants will gain some experience through their involvement in the project and they will get feedback on the study.

**To the researcher**

- a) Publications and visibility
- b) Build on existing knowledge and develop research skills
- c) Gain experience in research work

**Reason/s why the Participant May be withdrawn from the study**

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time with no repercussions to yourself

**Remuneration**

Participants will receive expenses remuneration of \$5.00 (R75.00)

**Costs of the study**

Participants are not expected to cover any costs towards the study. All the costs will be borne by the researcher.

**Confidentiality**

All data will be kept with the highest degree of confidentiality.

Participants have the right to remain anonymous in the course of reporting findings of the study. This will be achieved by using pseudo names. All the information will be kept under lock and key.

**Research-related injury:**

There will be no research related injury to you as a result of participation in this study.

**Persons to contact in the event of any problems or queries**

Supervisor : Professor Julia Preece: PhD

0734657609

[juliap@dut.ac.za](mailto:juliap@dut.ac.za)

Researcher: 263773642663

Research ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC Prof. F Otieno on 031 373 2382: TIP, or [dvctip@dut.ac.za](mailto:dvctip@dut.ac.za)





## CONSENT

### Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Loveness Makhosazana Museva, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study – Research Ethics Clearance Number:
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me..

Name of Participant	Date	Time	Signature/Thumbprint	Full
.....	.....	.....	.....	
Full Name of Researcher	Date		Signature	
.....	.....		.....	
Full Name of Witness (If applicable)	Date		Signature	



## **DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

### **APPENDIX 1.**

#### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

**Date**

**Time**

**Number of participants**

**Age**

**Education**

**Religion**

1. What is your role in the community engagement project with the university?
2. Why did you get involved?
3. What were your expectations from this university-community partnership?
4. What are the day-to-day activities of the project?
5. Who are the people involved in the project?
6. How are the people involved in the project?  
Moulding bricks, gardening poultry, bee keeping etc.
7. How was the project set up? - What happened in terms of negotiations, consultations, decision making, and educational input?
8. How have you gained/benefited from the project/university partnership?  
e.g: In terms of mobilising community leadership; new skills knowledge and understanding;  
In terms of using local knowledge to contribute to providing solutions to identified problems; In terms of working together; acquisition/application of work related skills
9. Who else benefited and how?
10. Who makes decisions and how do you contribute to these decisions?
11. How do priorities get decided?
12. How do all viewpoints get taken into consideration?
13. What is the time spent at the project by the community members?
14. How were the objectives of the project set up [who was involved in setting those objectives and what happened]
15. What are the university contributions to the project?
16. What is/will be the contribution of the community?
17. What are the long term goals for this project?
18. What signs will the project have to indicate that it is proceeding in the direction the community wants?
19. If you could change how this partnership was set up what would you do differently?
20. What are the community benefits so far from this university-community partnership?
21. How could the community and university develop this arrangement/partnership?
  - a) In terms of helping people to meet their goals
  - b) In terms of making this kind of activity more useful for all concerned

- c) In terms of continuing the partnership over the next few years (if this is possible)
- 22. What are the challenges in this partnership?
- 23. How are these identified?
- 24. How are these solved?
- 25. Does the project have a peace-maker?
- 26. What are the recommended solutions?

## **APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY STAFF**

**Date**

**Time**

**Registry and Dean**

1. What is your role in the community engagement project with Mberengwa community?
2. How did you get involved? - Who decided that you should be involved?
3. What is the purpose of community engagement at Midlands State University?
4. What are the day's activities of the project? (e.g. principles and practices)
5. How do people decide what needs to be done in the community? (e.g. are there any community based committee procedures; public gatherings; does the community or the university take the first initiative?)
6. What is the university curriculum approach to community engagement?
7. Is there co-creation of knowledge in this partnership?
8. How is the community engagement structure, duties cascaded down to all levels in the university?
9. Who is involved in the project and what do they do?
10. Give a typical example of how you have worked with the community – in terms of decision making; consultation, skills development; talking to the community about what resources they have etc.
11. How do members of the Mberengwa community get involved in the project? (e.g. do they get invited; do they come to the university etc).
12. What is the role of the student in university community engagement?
13. How does the university address any cultural/other differences between the academy and the community?
14. What ways have you identified to equalize power relations between university and community members?
15. How much time does the university spend at the project?
16. How did you agree on objectives with the community members?
17. What are the milestones envisaged in the life of the project?
18. What does self-reliance mean to you?
19. How is this partnership contributing to building self-reliance in the community?
20. What are the benefits of this university community engagement project?
21. What are the challenges of this university community engagement project?
22. How are the challenges identified?

23. How were the challenges resolved?
24. Who is the peace-keeper in this relationship?
25. How can learning from working together be improved now and for future practice?
26. How can the university deepen the partnership?

### **APPENDIX 3:**

#### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY STAFF & Director Work Related training**

**Date**

**Time**

**Lecturers**

1. What is your role in the community engagement project with Mberengwa community?
2. How did you get involved? - Who decided that you should be involved?
3. What is the purpose of community engagement at Midlands State University?
4. What are the day's activities of the project? (e.g. principles and practices)
5. How do people decide what needs to be done in the community? (e.g. are there any community based committee procedures; public gatherings; does the community or the university take the first initiative?)
6. How are all viewpoints taken into consideration?
7. How do priorities get decided?
8. Give a typical example of how you have worked with the community – in terms of decision making; consultation, skills development; talking to the community about what resources they have etc.
9. What is the university curriculum approach to community engagement?
10. Is there co-creation of knowledge in this partnership?
11. How is the community engagement structure, duties cascaded down to all levels in the university?
12. Who is involved in the project and what do they do?
13. Give a typical example of how you have worked with the community – in terms of decision making; consultation, skills development; talking to the community about what resources they have etc.
14. How do members of the Mberengwa community get involved in the project? (e.g. do they get invited; do they come to the university etc).
15. What is the role of the student in university community engagement?
16. How does the university address any cultural/other differences between the academy and the community?
17. What ways have you identified to equalize power relations between university and community members?
18. How ethical issues of power and shared decision making are addressed in the university-community interactions?
19. How much time does the university spend at the project?

20. How did you agree on objectives with the community members?
21. What are the milestones envisaged in the life of the project?
22. What does self-reliance mean to you?
23. How is this partnership contributing to building self-reliance in the community?
24. What are the benefits of this university community engagement project?
25. What are the challenges of this university community engagement project?
26. How have these been solved?
27. How are you involved in solving the challenges?
28. Is there a peace maker in this relationship?
29. How can learning from working together be improved now and for future practice?
30. How can the university deepen the partnership?

#### **APPENDIX 4: QUESTIONS TO GUIDE DISCUSSION ON TRANSECT WALK**

**Date**  
**Time**

1. What is the name of the area?
2. What resources do you have in this area?
3. Which resources give the community most problems?
4. How does the community benefit from the resources?
5. Where does the community get water?
6. What problems does the community encounter?
7. What opportunities does the community have in terms of development?
8. How does the university community engagement affect the different areas in the community?
9. Is there a special criteria used for apportioning land to the people?
10. Where does the community get firewood?
11. Where do cattle graze?
12. Illustrate changes that have taken place overtime.

#### **APPENDIX 5: Observation & informal questions during site visits:**

1. How do the university/community organisations engage with the project?
  - a. In terms of negotiations, consultations, decision making, educational input
2. How is the project gaining from the university's involvement?

- a. In terms of mobilising community leadership; new skills knowledge and understanding
  - b. In terms of using local knowledge to contribute to providing solutions to identified problems
- 3. How are university students and staff gaining from the involvement?
  - a. In terms of working in teams; acquisition/application of work related skills
  - b. In terms of enhanced understanding of and learning from communities
- 4. How are ethical issues of power and shared decision making addressed in the university-community interactions?

#### **APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE Vice Chancellor**

1. Does the Midlands State University have a policy on community engagement?
2. What is your role in the community engagement project with Mberengwa community?
3. How did the university engage with the project?
4. Who decided that you should be involved?
5. What is the purpose of community engagement at Midlands State University?
6. What are the day's activities of the project? (e.g. principles and practices)
7. How do people decide what needs to be done in the community? (e.g. are there any community based committee procedures; public gatherings; does the community or the university take the first initiative?)
8. What is the university curriculum approach to community engagement?
9. Is there co-creation of knowledge from this partnership?
10. How is the community engagement structure, duties cascaded down to all levels in the university?
11. Who is involved in the project and what do they do?
12. How do members of the Mberengwa community get involved in the project? (e.g. do they get invited; do they come to the university etc).
13. What is the role of the student in university community engagement?
14. How does the university address any cultural/other differences between the academy and the community?
15. What ways have you identified to equalize power relations between university and community members?
16. How are ethical issues of power and shared decision making addressed in the university-community interactions?
17. How much time does the university spend at the project?
18. How did you agree on objectives with the community members?
19. What are the milestones envisaged in the life of the project?
20. What does self-reliance mean to you?
21. How is this partnership contributing to building self-reliance in the community?
22. What are the benefits of this university community engagement project?
23. How is the project gaining from the university's involvement?
24. What are the challenges of this university community engagement project?
25. How are the challenges identified?
26. How were the challenges resolved?



27. Who is the peace-keeper in this relationship?
28. How can learning from working together be improved now and for future practice?
29. How can the university deepen the partnership?

## **APPENDIX 7 INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE STUDENTS**

**Date**

**Time**

**Students**

1. What is your role in the community engagement project with Mberengwa community?
2. How did you get involved? - Who decided that you should be involved?
3. What is the purpose of community engagement at Midlands State University?
4. What are the day's activities of the project? (e.g. principles and practices)
5. How do people decide what needs to be done in the community? (e.g. are there any community based committee procedures; public gatherings; does the community or the university take the first initiative?)
6. How are all viewpoints taken into consideration?
7. How do prioritise get decided?
8. Give a typical example of how you have worked with the community – in terms of decision making; consultation, skills development; talking to the community about what resources they have etc.
9. What is the university curriculum approach to community engagement?
10. Is there co-creation of knowledge in this partnership?
11. How is the community engagement structure, duties cascaded down to all levels in the university?
12. Who is involved in the project and what do they do?
13. Give a typical example of how you have worked with the community – in terms of decision making; consultation, skills development; talking to the community about what resources they have etc.
14. How do members of the Mberengwa community get involved in the project? (e.g. do they get invited; do they come to the university etc).
15. What is the role of the student in university community engagement?
16. How does the university address any cultural/other differences between the academy and the community?
17. What ways have you identified to equalize power relations between university and community members?
18. How ethical issues of power and shared decision making are addressed in the university-community interactions?
19. How much time does the university spend at the project?
20. How did you agree on objectives with the community members?
21. What are the milestones envisaged in the life of the project?
22. What does self-reliance mean to you?
23. How is this partnership contributing to building self-reliance in the community?

24. What are the benefits of this university community engagement project?
25. What are the challenges of this university community engagement project?
26. How have these been solved?
27. How are you involved in solving the challenges?
28. Is there a peace maker in this relationship?
29. How can learning from working together be improved now and for future practice?
30. How can the university deepen the partnership?

## SHONA TRANSLATIONS

### APPENDIX 1: MIBVUNZO ICHABVUHZWA KUNE VANOGARA MUNHARAUNDA IYI

1. Unoiteiwopamushandira pamwe uyu uri pakati penharaunda iyi ne Yunivhesiti?
2. Neyi wakadawo kuvawo mumushandira pamwe uyu?Ndiani akati unofanira kuva pamushandira pamwe uyu?
3. Zvii zvawaitarisira pamushandira pamwe uyu ?
4. Zvii zvinoitika zuva nezuva pa purojekiti iyi?
5. Ndivanani varimowo mu purojekiti iyi?
6. Vanhu vakapinda muchirongwa ichi sei?
7. Hurongwa uhwu hwakatangwa sei? Chii chakaitwa tika maererano nekuwirirana,kubvunzwa,kupa maonero nekutenderana?
8. Zvii zvikuru zvinodikanwa maererano nepurojekiti iyi?Ndiani akapawo maonero aya?
9. Zvii zvakatauriranwa pakati pako nevekuYunivhesiti ?
10. Vanhu vanosvika pakutenderana nezvinoda kuitwa munharaunda sei?(Tingati: pane vakuru vanenge vachifanira kutanga vaziviswa here, panova nekuungana kwevazhinji here,venharaunda kana kuti veyunivhesiti ndivo vanotanga nhaurirano here?)
11. Vanhu vemunharaunda iyi vemhando dzakasiyana- siyana vanoitei pamushandira pamwe uyu?
12. Vanhu veyunivhesiti vemhando dzakasiyana-siyana vanoiteipamushandira pamwe uyu?
13. Ipawo muenzaniso wekushanda kwawakaita neYunivhesiti, maererano nekupawo mazano, kubvunzira,dzidziso yemibatoyemaoko,kutaurira neYunivhesiti maererano ezvingadikanwa pakati penyu kuti muve munoshandisa pamwechete.
14. Chii chawakafarira maererano nemushandirapamwe unoitwa neYunivhesiti ne nharaunda yako?
15. Chii chausingafarire pamaitirwo ezvinhu neyunivhesiti pabasa iri?
16. Wakawaneirwo, kana kuti wakabatsirikanawo sei pamushandirapamwe uyu. (Tingati: maererano nokuti iwe ungati wakabatawo basa pakuti purojekiti ibudirire, kukudzawo vatungamiriri vemunharaunda, kudzidzawo mibato-yemaoko yawanga usati waziva,njere nenzwisiso,mushandirapamwe,kugonawo kuita zvawakadzidziswa,kuonawo kuti ruzivo rwemunharaunda rwunobatsirawo pakugadzirisa zvinonetsa, kugadzirisa zvinonetsa pamwechete.
17. Zvikanzi ushandurewo mamirire emushandirapamwe uyu,chii chaungaita chingasiyanisa maitiro akaitika nemaitiro aungaita ?Tingati maererano nekuti unoona sekuti wakaitawo zvikuru pabasa iri kuti ribudirire,kuva neutongi munharaunda; kudzidzawo nezvemibato yemaoko mitsva, nzwisiso, kugonawo kushanda pamwe nevamwe,kudzidza nekuitawo zvawakadzidziswa zvemaoko,kuonawo kuti ruzivo rwemunharaunda rwunobatsirawo pakugadzirisa zvinonetsa, kugadzirisa zvinonetsa pamwechete.
18. Nharaunda neyunivhesiti zvinganatsurudza hurongwa hwesushadirapamwe uyu sei?
- a) Maererano nekuti pave nekunzwisisa pane vese vari mumushandirapamwe uyu?
- b) Maererano nekuti vagari vemunharaunda vave vanokwanisa kuzviriritira.
- c) Maererano nekubatsira vagari vemunharaunda kuti vave vanogadzirisa zvinovanetsa vega.
19. Ndezvipi zvigozhero zviripamushandirapamwe uyu?
20. Zvii zvamungada kuti zviitwe kugadzirisa zvigozhero izvi?

### APPENDIX 2– TSAMBA YENZWISISO NEKUBVUMIRANA

#### TSAMBA CHIBVUMIRANO

Ini.....ndinobvuma kuvawo mutsvakiridzo iyi irikuitwa na Loveness Makhosazana Museva, Mudzidzi weku Yunivhesiti yeDUT (Registration No:R21649060)  
Inonzi “**University Community Education in Zimbabwe: An asset based analysis**”.  
Ndinonzwisakuti :

1. Maonero angu andichapa aha rekodhiwa agoshandiswaseruzivo ruchange ruchidikanwa naMs Museva pazvidzidzo zvavo.
  2. Hapana mifananidzo yangu ichatorwa ndisina kuzvitendera.
  3. Zvandichavaudza zvichava pakati pangu navo uyezve hapana umwe achazviva uyezvezita rangu nepandinogara hazvikanwi mutsvakiridzo iyi;
  4. Kuva kwangu mutsvakiridzo iyi kuda kwangu;
  5. Ndine kodzero ye kuregedza kuva patsvakiridzo iyi panguva yandadira
  6. Ndinotenderwa kubvunza zvandinenge ndisina kunwisisa pa interview, nhaurirano kana pamwe pandingadikanwa.
  7. Ndichapiwonguva uyezve ndakasungunuka kubvunza vamwe vanhu maererano nezvimwe zvezvakanyorwa munhaurwa iyi.
  8. Ndichapiwawo mukana wekuona zvinenge zvabudawo mutsvakiridzo iyi gwaro rekupedzisira retsvakiridzo iyi risati ranyorwa; uyezve
  9. Ndichaudziwa zvinenge zvabuda patsvakiridzo iyi, kana ndichinge ndada; uyezve
  10. Kana ndichinge ndada nzwisiso yekuva kwangu mutsvakiridzo iyi, ndakasungunuka kuona mutungamiriri wetsvakiridzo iyi, Muzvinafundo Julia Preece P O Box 1334 Durban, South Africa, 4000 kana kuti ve Prof. F. Otieno pa Nhare 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za
- Zvichienderana nezvataurwa pamusoro, ndinobvuma kuva mutsvakiridzo iyi.

Zita rakakwana.....

Saina :..... Zuva.....

### APPENDIX 3

#### TSAMBA YEPUROJEKITI YETSVAKURUDZO NEVACHABATSIRA PATSWAKURDZO IYI

1. Zita retsvakurudzo neMudzidzi mutsvakurudzo iyi.

DEPARTMENT :Adult and Community Education

ZITA REPURUJEKITI: Hurongwa hwemushandirapamwe pakati pemuunivhesiti nevanhu muZimbabwe kuMberengwa.

Mutsvakiridzo: Museva Makhosazana Loveness (21649060) [museva@msu.ac.zw](mailto:museva@msu.ac.zw)

#### Chikamu chinokukokai

Munokokwa kuti mupewo maonero enyu mutsvakurudzo iyi. Musati manditendera kuti ndiite tsvakiridzo iyi, zvakanakosha kuti munzwisise kuti neyi tsvakiridzo iyi irikuitwa uyezve ichasanganisireyi. Munokumbirwa kuti muverenge chinyorwa chino zvakanaka uyezve makasungunuka kuonesana nezvenhaurwa iyi nevamwe kana muchida. Zvekare makasungunuka kundivhunzawo kana pane zvisina kujeka kana kuti mungave muchida kujekeserwa nezvetsvakiridzo iyi. Torai nguva yenyu muchifunga nezvazvo kuti muve munoshandawo neni kana kusashanda neni patsvakiridzo iyi.

Ndinokutendai nekuverenga kwamaita chinyorwa chino.

#### 3. Chikonzero chetsvakiridzo iyi ndecheyi?

Chikonzero chetsvakiridzo iyi ndechekuda kutsvaka nezvemamiriro nemaitikiro emushandirapamwe wakatanga ne Midlands State University nevanhu pa purojekiti yeku Mberengwa zvine hurongwa hwekuti pave nenzwisiso yekuti vese vari pamushandirapamwe uyu mu mutsvakiridzo iyi kuti vanonzwisisa sei hukama uhwu maererano nematongerwo, kutsvakwa kwenjere nekuva varidzi vezvimbo nekuunza neshanduko inoita kuti vanhu vakwenise kuzviriritira.

Sei chikoro changu kana kuti nharaunda yangu zvakasaruudzwa.

Yunivhesiti yangu yakasarudzwa nekuda kwekuti ine nhoroondo yemushandirapamwe mukupa mazano ekuunza shanduko yakanaka munharaunda. Tsvakiridzo iyi munhu umwe akazvimiririra achabvunzwa maonere ake uyezve vanhu vanogara munharaunda iyi, vadzidzi nevashandi vari pamushandira pamwe uri pakati peyunivhesiti –nenharaunda vachabvunzwa vari mumapoka. Ndichange ndichiitawo tsvakiridzo yezvimwe zvinoitika munharaunda iyi.

#### 5. Yunivhesiti kana kuti nharaunda zvine chikamu here mutsvakiridzo iyi?

Zviri kwamuri kuti muve munoda kana kusada kupawo maonero enyu. Kana mukabvuma, ndichakupai bepa iri kuti muchengete uyezve ndichapa mumwe nemumwe kuti ave ano saina magwaro ewirirano. Kana muchinge mabvuma kuvawo mutsvakiridzo iyi, makasungunuka kusiya pamunodira musingapi zvikonzero. Kuregedza kwenyu hakuna zvakaipa zvakanounza kune anenge asarudza kuregera.

#### 6. Chii chichaitika kuyunivhesiti /nharaunda yangu kana ndikava mutsvakiridzo iyi?

Address: DUT P O Box 1334 Durban, South Africa, 4000

Website: [www.dut.ac.za](http://www.dut.ac.za)

Ndichabvunza mibvunzo kumunhu akazvimiririra nemapoka evanhu vanogara munharaunda iyi, vadzidzi nevashandi veyunivhesiti (nhaurirano), Nevanotendera kuva mutsvakiridzo iyi maererano nemamiriro e hukama hwe mushandirapamwe uyu.



Misangano ichava pakati pangu nemi ichatora pakati pe (hafu yeawa) kusvika awa rimwechete. Ndicha rekodha nhaurirano kana muchinge manditendera uyezve ndichanyorawo zvandichange ndichiona .Ndingangotorawo mifananidzo yenharaunda yenyu nepanoitirwa mapurojekiti enyu asi mifananidzo ndinoitora kana muchinge mazvitendera kuti izvi.

Tsvakiridzo iyi ichaitika pakati pemwedzi wa Kubvumbi gore ra 2016 naGumiguru 2016

**7. Kuve kwangu mutsvakiridzo iyi kuchachengetedzwa here pasina umwe angaziva zvisina mvumo yangu?**

Hongu, mutsvakurudzo ino hapana zita remunhu richanyorwa kana paanogara. Ndichaita izvi kuti pasave neanogona kuziva vanhu vanenge vapawo maonero avo .

**8. Chii chichaitika kune zvinenge zvabuda mutsvakiridzo iyi?**

Zvichabuda mutsvakiridzo zvichawanikwa paYunivhesiti yeku DUT .Zvichabuda mutsvakiridzo iyi zvichataurwa nemunyori pane umwe wemisangano zvigobuditswawo mumagwaro anowanikwa pachikoro apa. Handinyori zita remunhu kana paanogara pachinyorwa chipi zvachok.

**9. Ndiani arikuronga kana kubetserawo nemari patsvakiridzo iyi?**

IYunivhesiti yeku DUT

**10. Ndiani akanzwawo akatendera tsvakiridzo iyi?**

Research Funding Committee neEthics Committee zvepaUniversity yepa DUT.

**11. Vangaonekwa kana pane anoda kujekeserwa**

Kana mune zvamungada kunzwisisa maererano nezve tsvakiridzo iyi kunzwa kuna:

Muzvinafundo Julia Preece: Muzvinafundo weAdult Education panodzidzwa zve Adult and Community Education, KuUniversity yepa DUT, P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4000 and Tsambambozha: Preecej@dut.ac.za  
Institutional Research Ethics Administrator Nhare 031 373 2900.

Ndinokutendai

Zita:..... Zuva:.....

Munokumbirwa kusaina tsamba iyi yekutendera kuti muve mutsvakiridzo iyi

**APPENDIX4: MIBVUNZO ICHABVUNZWA PAKUTAIRIRANA MAERERANO NEZVE TRANSECT WALK**

1. Nzvimbo yaunogara inonzi chii?
2. Ndezvipi zviwanikwa zvamuinazvo munzvimbo yenyu?
3. Ndezvipi zvinoshaikwa munzvimbo ino zvinoita kuti musangane nezvigozhero?
4. Nharaunda yenyu irikubatsirikana sei nezviwanikwa zvirimuno?
5. Munharaunda yenyu mvura inowanikwa kupi?
6. Ndeapi madambudziko amunosangana nawa mudunhu rino?
7. Ndeipi mikana iri munharaunda ino ingaita kuti ibudirire?
8. Mushandirapamwe uyu pakati peyunivhesiti nenharaunda yenyu unobata-bata sei dzimwe nzvimbo dziri munharaunda yenyu?
9. Pane maitiro anozivikanwa here anoitwa pakupiwa nzvimbo kuvanhu munzvimbo ino?
10. Nharaunda ino inowana huni kupi?
11. Mombe dzinofurira kupi?
12. Tsanangura sha nduko ingava yatora nzvimbo panguva yaunoziva?