THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT ON THE COMMUNICATION PATTERNS OF THE PARACHUTE PACKING SECTION OF THE SANDF

by

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SUMMARY

The study was undertaken to ascertain whether participatory development (PD and) by implication, the Person Centred Approach (PCA) had an impact on change in the communication patterns in the parachute packing section in the SANDF.

The study was conducted in a military setting where hierarchical authoritarian structures exist. PCA and PD are used as theoretical frameworks for the study which resulted in changes in the communication patterns at the section. Change occured at two levels viz:

- Changes in communication amongst the participants which led to teamwork, cooperation and the avoidance of conflict.

- Changes in communication between management (the Officer Commanding) and the parachute packing section which lead to regular contact with the participants to address their problems.

The study further highlighted the importance of learning from the community in order to avoid misinterpretation which could lead to conflict and dissatisfaction.

KEY TERMS OF THE STUDY

Participatory development, person centred approach, participation, communication, change, needs and perceptions, action, reflection and facilitation.

ABBREVIATIONS

CD   Community Development

DOD   Department of Defence

OC   Officer Commanding

PCA   Person-Centred Approach

PD   Participatory Development

PRA   Participatory Rural Appraisal

SANDF   South African National Defence Force

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CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.1   Introduction

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) is a hierarchical, authoritarian structure which uses a top-down approach to its members. Since 1994 the SANDF has been undergoing major changes in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres and this has had an impact on the organization's communication patterns.

The Joint Standing Committee of Defence on the transformation of the Department of Defence (DOD) (Cape Town Tuesday 11 February 1997) indicated that the SANDF is striving towards changing the management style to include a participatory approach. The DOD states that it needs or demands a work contract of the people based on the people's need to participate in defining what they do and what the essence of the organization should be.

This indicates that the military proposes to use a 'bottom-up' approach and the SANDF views people as having the potential to grow and develop and make their own decisions. This in turn has an effect on the patterns of communication.

In view of the above-mentioned Participatory Development (PD) should be the cornerstone of this entire process. PD focusses on development at grassroots level where people are viewed as possessing the potential to make their own decisions and thus PD implies that a Person Centred Approach (PCA) to the community be followed. In this entire process communication patterns/styles play a crucial role.

This study emphasises the impact of change that PD has on the communication patterns in this hierarchical authoritarian organization. It also highlights the role the

facilitator plays when using the person centred theoretical framework to make the participatory process successful.

1.2 Background information of the study

The study was undertaken to ascertain whether PD and, by implication, PCA has an impact on change in the communication patterns in the parachute packing section in the SANDF.

The parachute packing section is a section of 101 Air Supply which is a unit of the SANDF. The parachute packing section is situated in Valhalla Pretoria. This section consists of 12 ladies and 2 section heads. One section head manages the section and the other section head has other responsibilities.

1.3 Research questions

The research question of this study can be formulated as follows: What impact does PD have on change in the communication structure of the parachute packing section (in view of the hierarchical authoritarian structure of the SANDF)?

1.4 Aims and objectives of the study

1.4.1 To ascertain the effect that the PD process has on the communication patterns among the members of the parachute packing section.

1.4.2 To analyse the changes in communication styles of the various authorities.

1.4.3 To identify the theory which guided the changes in the communication process in the workplace.

1.5   Research methodology

1.5.1   Introduction

The facilitator initiated a participatory community development process in 1997 at the parachute packing section with a group of 12 participants. This process continued for approximately 2 years at this section.

In order to establish the changes in communication which took place, the facilitator decided to do a case study of the PD process which evaluates the nature of communication at each phase of the developmental process.

According to Rubin and Babbie (1997:402) case study research is defined as an empirical inquiry that:

–   investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when

–   the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, in which

–   multiple sources of evidence are used.

A case study is a qualitative method in which the facilitator identifies herself as an observer-as participant. This means that the facilitator interacts with the participants in the social process and makes the group aware that he/she is an active participant

The facilitator enacted the role of a observer- as participant which included getting involved in the a social process by undertaking interviews with the officer commanding (OC), section head, the participants who are responsible for packing the parachutes and also observing them in the work environment.

The case study includes a description of the action learning process which took place. McGill and Beaty (1995:17) define action learning as a continuous process of learning and reflection with the intention of getting things done. Through action learning individuals learn with and from each other by working on real problems and reflecting on their own experiences. Action learning is based on the reflection and action which assists the facilitator as well as the community in the participatory process.

The action and reflection cycles/phases are designed to cater for changes in the plan of action as people learn from their own experiences, contextualize it and reflect on it. From the action phase data can be extracted and this can be recorded and interpreted in the reflection phase.

1.5.2   The research procedure

–   The facilitator discussed the possibility of facilitating a community development process with the OC and the personnel of the parachute packing section. Permission was granted by the OC in August 1997.

–   The facilitator submitted a proposal to the University of South Africa (UNISA) Social Work Department to obtain approval to conduct the research in 1998.

–   The entire process began with action learning which is based on action and reflection. Participatory methods were used in the CD process viz Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques. This approach emphasises learning by the outsiders i.e. the facilitator learns from the participants (Chambers 1983:106).

From the use of the PRA techniques the facilitator decided to undertake action-reflection research by means of a case study to reflect on the process. This process

encompasses the action, reflection, participation and research of the community development process.

1.5.3   Methods of data collection

The following methods and techniques were used:

- Methods
  - Group discussions
  - Interviews
  - Meetings

- Techniques
  - Brainstorming
  - Task oriented exercises such as drawing, collages, time lines and mapping

1.6   Details of the community

The community consists of 12 participants who are employed by the SANDF to pack parachutes in Valhalla, Pretoria. Ten participants are responsible for packing parachutes and two participants repair the damaged parachutes.

There are two authorities that have a direct influence on the section viz the OC and section head. The section head is responsible for the management of the parachute packing section and he is accountable to the OC who oversees the management of 101 Air Supply Unit.

1.7 Limitations

- The study is confined to a group of 12 participants.

- This is a small group and no generalisations can be made though recommendations can possibly be made for future researchers and development workers using participatory approaches.

- The participatory development process is a fairly new approach in the SANDF and there are few studies that have been conducted in SANDF.

- This has been a learning process for the facilitator and the community and it could be possible that I left out important information due to my lack of adequate knowledge.

1.8 The presentation of the study

The study includes the following:

- Chapter 1 – The purpose of the study.

- Chapter 2 – The theoretical framework of PCA and PD as an approach to CD, the facilitation skills of the PD process, the communication skills of the SANDF and action learning are reviewed.

- Chapter 3 – The case study of the parachute packing section. The case study is based on action and reflection of the PD process.

- Chapter 4 – This is the final chapter which includes summary, evaluation, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Introduction

This chapter will explain the theoretical framework of the study.   This theoretical framework will act as a guide to the facilitator in analysing the process of change in the communication patterns between the parachute packing section and the authorities of the SANDF.

The use of PCA and PD as an approach to CD and the facilitation skills that are required to enhance this process, the communication patterns in the SANDF and action learning which was used in the study will be discussed.

These approaches will be linked with the practical work done by the facilitator with the community of the parachute packing section.

2.2   The Person Centred Approach (PCA)

2.2.1   Description of the Person Centred Approach (PCA)

Kirschenbaum and Henderson (1990:135) state that PCA can be described as:

-       A belief that the individual has within himself or herself vast resources for self understanding, for altering his or her self concept, attitudes and self directed behaviour and these resources can only be tapped if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitude can be provided.

Rogers (1977:15) states that PCA is based on the premise that the human being is basically a trustworty organism, capable of evaluating the outer and inner situation, understanding him/herself in her context, making constructive choices as to the next steps in life and acting on those choices.

Both definitions apply to work with individuals which can be adapted to working with communities because in a community there are individuals who make up that community. Furthermore, according to systems theory, the community is viewed as a system which has its own identity, boundary, role, values and norms. This is consonant with Rogers (1987:486) proposition 3 which states that the community does not exist in isolation. There are other components that have an impact on the community e.g. school, churches, values, attitudes and needs. Thus the community can be regarded as an organised whole.

Therefore the facilitator agrees with Schenck (1996:4) who believes that PCA is applicable to communities and the key concepts are as follows:

-       People have the potential to grow and develop.

-       Behaviour, irrespective of how odd it may seem, is a sign of the people's attempt to grow and develop.

-       People have the potential to care for themselves and to survive, provided a conducive climate is created. Therefore people should be respected so that they can discover their potential and change positively.

-       All people have knowledge and this can be discovered in special relationships marked by the conditions of warmth, empathy and congruence.

The above indicates that people have the potential to bring about positive change in themselves and that people themselves should take responsibility for the process. The

facilitator should create a climate where the people feel comfortable to share their knowledge and skills and use their own resources effectively.

The facilitator will discuss the 19 propositions of Roger's (1987) approach and also indicate how these propositions are applicable to working with communities.

Proposition 1

Every individual exists in a continually changing world of experience of which he is the centre. (Rogers 1987:483).

People are unique and they react to the world differently depending on their experiences. The facilitator should acknowledge diversity and respect the community.

According to Du Toit, Grobler and Schenk (1998:4) the facilitator cannot determine the community's participation from the outside. There must be continuous dialogue and consultation with a number of people to determine the people's needs, perceptions, emotions and skills.

Proposition 2

The organism reacts to the field as it is experienced and perceived. This perceptional field is, for the individual, reality (Rogers 1987:484).

Every individual's construction of reality is different and it depends on his/her experiences. People may live in the same environment but their experiences and problems may be different.

According to Du Toit et al (1998:7) the facilitator should consult with as many people as possible to ascertain their needs and identify their shared realities. Differences may occur which should be respected.

Proposition 3

The organism reacts as an organised whole to its phenomenal field (Rogers 1987:486).

The community does not exist in isolation. There are other components that have an impact on the community viz school, churches and other organizations as well as the emotional needs, values and attitudes of the community. The facilitator should assess the impact these components have on the community and respect them.

Proposition 4

The organism has one basic tendency and striving - to analyze, maintain and enhance the experiencing organism (Rogers 1987:487).

This proposition implies that the community possesses knowledge, resources and skills and the facilitator can play a role in discovering this potential within a conducive environment. Rogers (1977:7) refers to this conducive environment as one where the core conditions of warmth, empathy and congruence exist. The facilitator should respect the community and abide by the decisions that they make because they possess the capability to do so.

Proposition 5

Behaviour is basically the goal directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs experienced in the field as perceived (Rogers 1987:491).

The proposition implies that the facilitator should accept the people's behaviour because it is purposeful for the individuals as it is an attempt to satisfy their needs as they experience it.

The facilitator should explore the behaviour of the community which seems odd to him/her. The facilitator should not draw his/her own conclusions or be judgemental. Through consultation and discussion the facilitator can obtain an understanding of the situation.

Proposition 6

Emotions accompany and in general facilitate such goal directed behaviour, the kind of emotion being related to the seeking versus the consummatory aspects of the behaviour and the intensity of the emotions being related to the perceived significance of the behaviour for the maintenance and enhancement of the organism (Rogers 1987:492).

People will act on concerns that they believe in and also because they feel strongly about these concerns. According to Du Toit et al (1998:19) the facilitator should listen to the people's experiences, emotions and perceptions and identify the need that they are verbalising and jointly decide how they want to change it.

Proposition 7

The best vantage point for understanding behaviour is from the internal frame of reference of the individual himself (Rogers 1987:494).

The facilitator should have discussions with the community as to how they perceive a situation. The facilitator cannot predict the behaviour and attitude of people and no generalisations can be made because individuals are unique beings. The facilitator should learn from the community. Du Toit et al (1998:59) state that there are two levels of learning viz:

- Learning occurs when the facilitator discovers how people perceive a situation and how they create solutions.

- The facilitator listens to the people and explores their feelings and perceptions and in this way he/she will get to know the community's frame of reference.

The communication skills of the facilitator play an important role in exploring the situation fully with the community.

Proposition 8

A portion of the total perceptual field gradually becomes differentiated as the self (Rogers 1987:497).

The self of the community is constructed by the people of the community. The self includes the values, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of the people and the facilitator should respect the self of the community.

Proposition 9

As a result of interaction with the environment and particularly due to evaluational interaction with others, the structure of the self is formed – an organised, fluid but consistent conceptional pattern of perception of characteristics and relationships of the "I" or the "me" together with values attached to these concepts (Rogers 1987:498).

According to Du Toit et al (1998:24), the community does not exist in isolation. There is continuous interaction with others. The community's self may be influenced by media and other people.

Proposition 10

In some instances the values attached to experiences and the values which are part of the self structure, are values experienced directly by the organism, and in some intances

they are values introduced or taken over from others but perceived in a distorted fashion as if they had been experienced directly (Rogers 1987:498).

The facilitator should explore the values of the individual and the community because it will determine how people experience a situation. The facilitator should respect the values of the community because they eventually determine the community's decision making capacity.

Proposition 11

As experiences occur in the life of the individual, they are either:

-       symbolised, perceived and organised into some relationship to the self,

-       ignored because there is no perceived relationship to the self structure,

-       denied symbolisation or given a distorted symbolisation because the experience is inconsistent with the structure of the self (Rogers 1987:503).

The proposition implies that people make their own choices that are consistent with their selves and their values. If the community rejects a project it could mean that the self is being threatened.

According to Du Toit et al (1998:35) members of the community make decisions depending on their frames of reference, values and perceptions.

We cannot decide for the community which is the best way to deal with their concerns. The community will decide for itself.

Proposition 12

Most of the ways of behaving which are adopted by the organism are those which are consistent with the concept of self (Rogers 1987:507).

The community decides what suits the self and this will depend on the values of the community.

Proposition 13

Behaviour may in some instances be brought about by organic experiences and needs which have not been symbolised. Such behaviour may be inconsistent with the structure of the self, but in such instance the behaviour is not owned by the individual (Rogers 1987:509).

The facilitator should explore the situation that exists in the community and get an understanding of it. The community should not be judged but should rather be guided towards growth and development.

Proposition 14

Psychological maladjustment exists when the organism denies to awareness significant sensory and visceral experiences, which consequently are not symbolised and organised into the gestalt of the self structure. When this situation exists, there is a basic or potential psychological tension (Rogers 1987:510).

The community may view themselves as deprived hence they believe that they cannot uplift themselves. They believe that others should do things for them. The facilitator should focus on the needs, emotions and perceptions of people and encourage them to change.

Proposition 15

Psychological adjustment exists when the concept of the self is such that all the sensory and visceral experiences of the organism are, or may be assimilated, on a symbolic level into a consistent relationship with the concept of self (Rogers 1987:513).

This refers to the process of change where the community decides to change. The facilitator can explore the ideas and guide them so that it is in keeping with the self (Du Toit et al 1998:66).

Proposition 16

Any experience which is inconsistent with the organization or structure of the self will be perceived as a threat and the more of these perceptions there are, the more rigidly the self-structure is organised to maintain itself (Rogers 1987:515).

According to Du Toit et al (1998:43) this proposition implies that the community will protect themselves from whatever appears to threaten their values and continued existence. From the outside the community may appear as resistent, apathetic and dependent. This judgement is threatening to the community's self-perception. When this occurs the community will withdraw from all activities; hence this will destroy the development efforts. It is vital that the facilitator try to facilitate processes that will be consistent to the self of the community.

Proposition 17

Under certain conditions involving primarily complete absence of any threat to the self structure, experiences which are inconsistent with it may be perceived, and examined, and the structure of self revised to assimilate and include these experiences (Rogers 1987:517).

The facilitator should respect and accept the people and their value system and understand their frames of reference. If this does not occur, then the community rejects whatever work is being conducted.

Proposition 18

When the individual perceives and accepts into a consistent and integrated system all his sensory and visceral experiences, then he is necessarily more understanding of others and more accepting of others as separate individuals (Rogers 1987:520).

According to Du Toit et al (1998:69) the facilitator should ask him/herself some ethical questions about the involvement in the community. Some of the questions are:

-        What hidden agendas do we have with the community?

-        What do we want to achieve?

-        What happens if we become redundant?

In answering these questions the facilitator can evaluate the whole process and him or herself.

Proposition 19

As the individual perceives and accepts into his self-structure more of his organic experience he finds that he is replacing his present value system – based so largely upon introjections which have been distortedly symbolised with a organismic valuing process (Rogers 1978:522).

According to Du Toit et al (1998:71) the proposition implies that the facilitator must:

-       facilitate the participatory process with the community.

-       respect the values, skills and knowledge of the people.

-       encourage participation in the entire process.

2.2.2   Conclusion

From the aforementioned it can be noted that when working with communities, the facilitator should create an environment that is conducive to the people's growth and development. The people's emotions, perceptions and frame of reference play an important role in ascertaining what the community's perception of their problems are and how they would like to resolve them.

This theory was used in the PD process, to get to know the community, to ascertain their needs and actually find solutions to overcome the problems. The PD process will be discussed in the next section.

2.3   Participatory Development (PD)

2.3.1   Introduction

The facilitator will give a brief description of community development (CD) and thereafter discuss PD as an approach to the CD process.

CD is an inclusive concept and way of working. It is intervention at the community level practised by different disciplines that use the expertise of different participants of which the expertise of the community is the most important. It is an evolutionary and learning process of facilitating transformation. It includes changes in the awareness, motivation

and behaviour of the community towards a better quality of life through initiative, participation and collective action of the community (Schenck 1996:xi).

From the above definition the following can be concluded:

-        CD is a people's process where the participants/members of the community are the most important elements in the process.

-        The participants possess the resources and they are the experts and not the development worker.

-        The end result will be a better quality of life through cooperation and collective action which will bring about changes in areas that they believe need to be changed.

According to Schenck (1996:30) there are 4 goals of CD viz self-help, empowerment, self-reliance and sustainability. These goals are very important to ensure the success of the CD process and to bring about changes in the community so that they can handle future problems if any arise. Each goal will be briefly discussed.

a. Self-help:

Mitchell (1987:112) quoted in Schenck (1996:31) describes self-help as being people and process oriented. Self-help will assist people in learning how to handle their problems.

This is a process where people participate in the decision making process and learn from each other.

b. Empowerment:

Schenck (1996:xii) describes empowerment as a process whereby people are enabled to elicit or increase the ability or capacity they have. It is confidence building which is developed through cooperation, sharing, joining hands and mutual learning.

Participation plays an important role in the capacity building process which will make the people believe in themselves. Empowerment can be simply referred to as "handing of power to the people" (Schenk 1996:31).

c. Self-reliance:

Schenck (1996:xii) refers to trust in, or positive perception of their own potential and capabilities that people have so that they can rely on their own strengths and resources.

This is an important goal because it indicates to the people that they do possess the potential and capabilities within themselves to resolve problem situations.

d. Sustainability:

Korten (1990:218) discusses two important uses for the term sustainability:

-       It can refer to sustainable development which means that the community has the potential to continue when the development worker withdraws.

-       Sustainability is achieved through a people centred community development process.

Sustainability also refers to the process where people learn from each other, make mistakes and move on with the process by acknowledging that they are learning from their mistakes.

From the description of CD and the goals of CD it is noticed that participation plays a very important role in this process. Participation assists in identification of problems by the community members and ascertaining of solutions to the problems.

Bopp (1994:24) describes participation as a process where the proposed beneficiaries enact an active role to improve their lives and conditions within which they live. People are active doers in the development process. This process which promotes their development belongs to the people.

Rogers (1987:483) also stresses the importance of the community to participating in the process which will determine their emotions, perceptions and skills.

Participation is a learning process which is people centred. In this process participants' potentials are revealed which assists in confidence building and decision making.

The facilitator will give a brief description of PD then discuss the principles of PD and finally discuss the phases of PD.

2.3.2   Description of PD

Burkey (1993:205) defines self reliant PD as an educational and empowering process in which people in partnership with each other and with those able to assist them identify problems and needs, mobilise resources and assume responsibility themselves to plan, manage, control and access the individual and collective actions that they themelves decide upon.

The definition contains the following proposition (1993:205 - 206):

- Educational: There is an exchange of knowledge and interaction between individual groups and change agents. The interaction is characterised by mutual respect and awareness.

- Empowering: People influence and implement activities which improve living conditions through interaction and concerted effort by individuals and collective action.

- Process: People begin from where they are and what they know. They make a modest start and gradually increase their knowledge.

- Partnership: There is a partnership formed between individuals working together, between groups and change agents.

- Problems and needs: Needs and problems must be identified by the beneficiaries. Only when problems and needs are recognised by individuals and groups will participation in development activities be feasible.

- Resources: Resources should be mobilised from what they have and thereafter they may access outside resources.

- Collective action: This will assist in the empowerment process and address problems requiring resources.

2.3.3   Principles of PD

Bopp (1994:189 - 194) outlines the following principles of PD:

I.   Approach each situation with humility and respect: PD begins with humility and awareness that each person brings unique skills and knowledge. People have lived in the community for a number of years and therefore have vital knowledge to contribute. If they are not shown respect, they will not share their knowledge with the facilitator. Rogers (1987) also stresses the importance of respecting the community.

II.   Understand the potential of local knowledge: There is a need to recognise the importance of local knowledge and the diversity and uniqueness of people's knowledge.

III.   Adhere to democratic practice: It is important to recognise the tensions between democratic ideals and hierarchical structures and work towards overcoming the barriers. In the working world hierarchical structures are in existence.

IV.   Acknowledge diverse ways of knowing: The facilitator should be open to the notion that in communities there are tremendous diversities of knowledge systems whether it is local, experiential or indigenious knowledge. PD recognises the knowledge that the community possesses and uses this as a starting point.

V.   Embrace uncertainty: There are many questions and issues which will come up in the process. The facilitator should accept these uncertainties and view reality through the "eyes" of the community.

VI.   Recognise the relativity of time and efficiency: The PD process cannot be worked out in terms of time prior to the process. The facilitator works at the pace of the people.

VII.   Maintain a sustainability vision: The facilitator should encourage participation which will assist in the people being empowered in order to sustain an ongoing process when he/she withdraws from the process.

2.3.4   Phases in the PD Process

Phase 1: Entry into the Community

This is the most important part of the process because it will determine whether the facilitator gains acceptance into the community or not.

Schenck (1996:82) states that there are 3 important facets to this phase viz:

-        The facilitator gets to know the community.

-        The community gets to know the facilitator.

-        The facilitator gets to know the broad context of the community.

The facilitator needs to gain entry into the community and this can be accomplished in the following ways:

-        An existing group can approach the facilitator for assistance.

-        The facilitator can move into the community by communicating with all types of people.

- The facilitator can make contact with existing organizations and influential people in the community.

Once the facilitator has gained entry he/she should accept and respect the community. He/she needs to inform the community about the context from which the worker is coming i.e. what his/her agency expects, the policy and aims of the agency (Henderson and Thomas 1992).

This implies that the facilitator should be open with the community, get to know their perceptions, values, attitudes, their frames of reference and learn from them (Rogers 1987:338-340).

This is a long process and the facilitator works at the pace of the community. Rogers (1987:516) also states that the facilitator should move at the pace of the community.

Phase 2: Needs assessment

The aim of this phase is to assist the community to identify their needs. The facilitator's communication skills such as listening and probing play an important role.

Needs assessment can be done in a formal or informal way. Whatever procedure is chosen, participation in the community plays an important role throughout the phases. There should be constant cooperation, consensus and feedback between the facilitator and community to ascertain needs.

Swanepoel (1994) outlines an important point. He states that the facililtator should be cautious of using a public meeting to ascertain the needs of the community. People who voice their opinions at the meeting may not reflect the needs of the whole community. Therefore it is important that the facilitator consult as many people as possible to verify the needs.

The facilitator used Max-Neef's (1991:19 to 33) scale of human needs classifications to make a distinction between needs and satisfiers in this phase.

Human needs tend to be finite, few and classifiable. Human needs are the same in all cultures and in all historical periods. What does change over time and through culture is the means by which needs are satisfied (Max-Neef 1991:20).

A satisfier is a means by which a need is met, e.g. food and shelter are not needs but satisfiers of the fundamental human need for subsistence.

Phase 3: Planning

Schenck (1996:119) defines participatory planning as a means of bringing together needs, resources and objectives and then relating them to action. It must indicate what must be done, when and by whom in order to achieve the objectives.

Henderson and Thomas (1992:98) state that the facilitator needs to discover how ready the community is to take action in connection with the problem and what kind of contribution they can make in terms of time, commitment and resources.

It can be concluded from the above that the community should be committed to the whole process of planning and it is a step by step process which needs cooperation and collective action by the people.

Egan (1993:309 - 312) suggests that the community needs to choose the best strategy that fits them. The following are some of the steps to be followed in choosing the best strategy:

-        Assist the client to choose clear and specific strategies: Strategies need to be specific, clarifying and defining the problem situation and setting goals that are clear.

- Help the community choose realistic strategies: The course of action must be within the resources of the community.

- The strategy should be adequate and must contribute in a substantial way to accomplishing the clients' goal of putting a new scenario into place.

- The strategy must be owned by the community and be in keeping with the norms and standards of the community.

- A reasonable time frame needs to be set for the course of action. Furthermore the process of participatory evaluation plays a vital role to ensure that the process achieves all the goals that have been set out. The participatory planning process will ensure that the needs are realised.

Phase 4: Implementation

Schenck (1996:121) states that implementation refers to the implementation of the project. The community determines the needs, plans, proceeds to act and evaluates the process.

Korten & Klauss (1984:182 to 184) describe the implementation of a project according to the learning process approach.

The learning process approach involves learning with the people, building on knowledge and improving the capacity of people through action. The organization should be able to embrace error and learn from this process. There should be a fit between the proposed programme, the community's needs and the capacity of the organization to assist in this process. This can idealistically be described in 3 phases viz learning to be effective, learning to be efficient and learning to expand. The phases can be described as follows:

- Learning to be effective: The beneficiaries of the project must have a clear grasp of the goals and strategy and the project must meet the needs of the community. According to Korten, errors may occur and the community can learn from these errors.

- According to Schenck (1996:121) effectiveness depends on how clear all parties are about what they have to do. The planning and setting of clear goals and objectives play an important role.

- Learning to be efficient: The project is established in the community. The community evaluates the process to ascertain how they can be more efficient by eliminating non-productive techniques. The community members are able to resolve their own problems and their confidence level increases.

- Learning to expand: The community has taken responsibility for the project, they make their own decisions and solve their own problems. They are at a stage where they can deal with other needs in the community (Schenck 1996:122).

The implementation phase makes the people self sufficient, raises their confidence levels and makes them realise that they have the potential for growth and development.

Phase 5: Evaluation

This is an ongoing process and this should not only be used at the end of the project.

Henderson and Thomas (1992:129 - 130) and Feuerstein (1986:x) quoted in Schenck (1996:128) outlined the following guidelines for evaluation:

- First decide what to evaluate: what is the aim of evaluation? Do you evaluate the process or strategy?

- For whom is the evaluation intended? For the university, sponsor or community?

- When must the evaluation be done, who will do it and how will it be done? Will there be a questionaire, interview? What will suit the community?

All the above questions should be addressed taking into account the culture of the community, level of education and gender issues before a final decision is made on how to evaluate the process.

2.3.5   Conclusion

It is important to note that the process of PD does not occur in compartments or separate phases. It flows from one phase into the next. Throughout the process, the principles of PD, the goals of CD and the participation of the community should always be considered. The facilitator should take into account the community's perceptions, emotions, feelings and frame of reference when he/she is engaged in a CD process (Rogers 1987). The next section will discuss the facilitation skills that the facilitator should possess in undertaking the participatory process.

2.4   Facilitation Skills in Participatory Development (PD)

2.4.1   Introduction

Complex networks exist in communities due to the fact that unique individuals and groups communicate with each other and form relationships. When the facilitator enters the community, he/she is not aware of the communication patterns that exist, therefore the dialogical process with the people should be based on mutual trust, respect and openness.

Freire (1972:11) describes communication amongst people as dialogue. He stated that dialogue enables people to communicate with each other in a context and discuss issues that they feel strongly about.

According to Rogers (1987:338 to 340) the facilitator should possess certain values such as respect, acceptance, individualisation and self determination, which would encourage the community to openly express their feelings and trust the facilitator.

The facilitator expresses these values through communicating with the community which will reflect that he/she is trying to understand them by using communication skills such as attending, listening, probing and empathy.

When working with communities the facilitator should ascertain where, when, with whom and how communication should take place. This will indicate to the community that the facilitator is showing respect for the community's values, traditions and way of functioning.

The facilitator should determine where communication takes place. The interviews or discussions should take place where the people are located e.g. at their place of employment, where people are busy making conversaton or busy with their household chores.

The facilitator should also determine how the communication takes place i.e. taking into account the values and traditions of the community. Respect should be offered for the people's ages, gender and customs.

This is a learning process for the facilitator because he/she is learning from the people/community who are the experts.

The facilitator will first discuss the values regarding the context which, according to Rogers (1987), she should possess and which will assist in the promotion of growth and

development of the community and thereafter discuss the communication skills that can be used in the PD process.

2.4.2 Values of the Facilitator

Du Toit et al (1998:85-121) discusses the following values of the facilitator:

a. Respect:

Respect is regarded as the basic value of PCA. According to Du Toit et al (1994 & 1998:85), respect means that the facilitator believes in the potential of people and he/she indicates this by the way he/she acts towards them. This will assist in discovering the people's potential and it will lead to their growth and development.

b. Acceptance:

The facilitator should accept the people "as they are". She should acknowledge their values, traditions and attitudes and create a climate in which the people can feel free to have discussions.

c. Individualisation (Uniqueness):

Each individual is different and different individuals make up a community. The facilitator cannot make generalisations but should approach each situation in a new way.

d. Self determination:

People have the potential to ascertain their own needs and find solutions to their problems. The facilitator should listen to the people and respect their decisions and not impose ideas on them.

The facilitator should be constantly aware of their values when conversing with the community which will make the community feel comfortable in engaging in the process.

2.4.3 Communication skills

These skills assist the facilitator to obtain a better understanding of the community's problems and convey to the community that the facilitator is interested in their stories. Furthermore, the facilitator can also obtain clarity from the community by engaging in a feedback process with them.

The communication skills are as follows:

a. Attentiveness:

Du Toit et al (1998:121) describe attentiveness as dialogue with the community to inform them that the facilitator respects them and wants to enter their world or life.

Egan (1990:108) suggests that attending conveys two important messages viz:

-       It tells the community that you are with them.

-       It puts the facilitator in a position to listen.

This skill is very important in the initial phase of the PD process i.e. where the facilitator enters the community because it indicates to the community that the facilitator is

receptive to their stories which will encourage them to express their feelings openly and accept the facilitator. The facilitator should use this skill throughout the PD proces. Rogers (1987:483) also indicates that the facilitator should consult with as many of the people as possible to ascertain their needs, perceptions and emotions.

b. Listening:

Rogers (1987:483 - 523) discusses the importance of getting to know the community's perceptions, emotions and frame of reference which will give the facilitator a better understanding of the community's situation.

This can be achieved by listening to the community, learning from them and learning from their indigenous technical knowledge (Chambers 1983:202 to 208). All these aspects are part of the PD process.

There are various factors that influence listening such as language differences and the attitude of the community. Therefore it is important that the facilitator listen or have contact with a number of people in the community to assess the needs and the facilitator should try to overcome barriers that may arise and create a safe and accepting atmosphere where people feel free to engage in discussions.

c. Empathy:

Egan (1990:106) describes empathy as the ability of the worker to hear what the client is saying, to understand what is being said and especially to convey such understanding to the client.

According to Du Toit et al (1998:141 - 145), empathy is a complex skill that requires verbal and non-verbal skills as well as mental skills. This requires that the facilitator spend time with the community getting to know them, listening to them and providing feedback which will demonstrate to the community that he/she understands them.

d. Probing:

According to Egan (1990:121 - 129) probing is a technique that is used to encourage the client to spell out the problem. In this way clarity is obtained on the situation.

Probing in the PD process assists the community and the facilitator to obtain a better understanding of the situation from all perspectives.

e. Immediacy:

Egan (1990:186) refers to immediacy as "direct talk". There are 3 kinds of immediacy:

-   Immediacy focusses on the relationships: Focus is concentrated on the relationship between the members of the community and the facilitator.

-   Immediacy deals with the here and now situation, e.g. "Can you assist me to get a better understanding of the situation? I am confused".

-   Self-based statements: These are comments which also involve the facilitator and challenge the community and empower them in the decision making process.

The aforementioned skills assists the facilitator to understand the community and their needs and to plan jointly with them to overcome their problem situation. The facilitator needs to be very patient, humble, respectful and guide the community towards improving their plight.

All the aforementioned skills should be used by the facilitator to obtain understanding of the community so that the facilitator and the community can jointly identify needs and plan effectively to find solutions to the problem.

Schenck and Makondo (2000:57) outline features of the communication process for facilitating participatory practices. When analysing the features the facilitator became aware they are congruent with PCA theory and are also evident in the PD process. These features are:

i.   People centred process

Focus is placed on the people's experiences, needs, perceptions, skills and values. These experiences and perceptions are different and should be respected and acknowledged as belonging to the people.

This feature relates to Roger's propositions 1 & 2 (1987:483 - 486) where emphasis is placed on people's experiences which are different. Although they are in the same environment they perceive the problems differently. This process is driven by the people.

ii.   Unpredictable open ended process

The process cannot be preplanned. A time limit cannot be set but the end result would lead to self reliance and sustainability.

Rogers (1987:522) states that the facilitator should start and move at the pace of the community. This is also evident in the CD process because the community cannot be "rushed" to complete the process hence the process is not preplanned.

iii.   Dialogical, multiway process

There is communication between the members of the community and the facilitator in which there is co-learning and co-sharing. This communication is

referred to as dialogue (as mentioned earlier) and it is based on a relationship between the facilitator and the members of the community.

Through discussions and conversations, the facilitator and the community can build up a relationship which will assist in the process of getting to know the community. This is also a phase where trust, acceptance and respect become evident (Rogers 1987:338-340).

iv.   Incremental learning process

This is a learning process for the community and the facilitator. Learning is based on mistakes which Korten and Klauss (1984:182-184) refers to as "embracing error". The facilitator and the community acquire skills and knowledge through this process.

v.   Inclusive, democratic process

Focus is on the people's right to have access to resources and be part of the process. Participatory practices require that we should adhere to democratic practices and empower the community.

vi.   Indigenous, local and relevant process

This implies recognition of the importance of local knowledge, the people's culture, values and traditions and that people are unique individuals.

Chambers (1983:202 to 208) states that learning from the poor and learning about their culture and way of life indicates that the facilitator is interested in learning from them. Rogers (1987:338-516) and du Toit et al (1998:7-59) stress the importance of learning from the community, respecting them and acknowledging that they are the experts, thus making it a people's process.

vii.   Needs based process

Participatory work is based on the needs of the people and not on the needs of the organization. It is a people's process.

viii.   Micro/small group process

Participatory practices focus on small group processes where maximum participation can take place.

ix.   Problem posing process

A problem posing process refers to posing questions to analyse problem situations as opposed to problem solving. This encourages the community to learn and find solutions to the process. (Freire 1972:11)

x.   Co-evolutionary process

The facilitator and the community create their story of the community and both are part of the change process.

2.6   Communication patterns in the SANDF

The SANDF is a hierarchical authoritarian organization which functions on a top down basis with personnel responding to orders. In recent discussions at the level of the DOD, the authorities declared their intentions to change the SANDF into a participatory functioning organization. (Joint Standing Committee of Defence on transformation of the DOD - Cape Town Tuesday 11 Febraury 1997).

The facilitator is of the view that it will take a number of years for this to materialise because personnel would need to be educated and socialised regarding the new process.

According to Hartley (2000:38-39) there are formal communication patterns in the SANDF which manifest as follows:

- The primary function of formal internal communication in the SANDF is related to formal task development, coordination, cooperation and the achievement of the SANDF's objectives e.g. formal communication is used to give members task instructions, task orientation messages, to send messages about work activities to workers and to send and receive messages in the SANDF hierarchy.

The flow of internal communication in the SANDF is upwards and downwards and horizontal. Downward communication flows from management to employees and from policy makers to executive personnel. Employees are informed of the SANDF's rules, practices, procedures, history and objectives. It takes the form of written, spoken and non-verbal communiques.

Upward communication occurs when management requests information from lower organizational levels. Employees talk to management about themselves, their work, ways in which it is performed and the perception of the SANDF. This includes written, spoken non-verbal communication and presentations.

Horizontal communication is described as communication between workers on the same hierarchical level and the primary method of attaining coordination. Members communicate freely with one another.

The communication system at the parachute packing section consists mainly of downward communication i.e. information flows from the section head to the employees.

This is normally conducted verbally and no discussions are held. The employees are given instructions or given information.

When a comparison is made about the communication patterns of the SANDF with the communication process described by Schenk and Makondo (2000:57) it can be concluded that it is not participatory because:

- In the SANDF there is no co-learning and co-sharing amongst the workers and management. The communication pattern consists of disseminating of information to the workers from the management level and a request for information from the workers.

- Focus is placed on the achievement of goals and objectives and this is achieved through sending and receiving messages through the various levels.

- However communication does exist amongst workers who are on the same hierarchical level and this allows for co-sharing and co-learning.

2.7   Action learning

The entire process of CD in this project was based on action learning. According to McGill and Beaty (1995:21) action learning is a continuous process of learning and reflection supported by colleagues with the intention of getting things done. Through the action learning process individuals learn with and from each other by working on real problems and reflecting on their own experiences.

Action learning is based on the relationship between reflection and action. We learn through experience by thinking through past events, seeking ideas that make sense of the events and this helps us to find new ways of behaving in similar situations in the

future. The reflection process is an essential link between past action and more effective future action (McGill 1995:21).

An important point to note is that action learning is an intentional strategy based on normal but unusual effective practice.

Marais, Taylor and Kaplan (1997:2) formulated the action learning cycle. This model consists of four elements viz, action, reflection, learning and plannig. A pictorial representation of the cycle is as follows:

THE ACTION LEARNING CYCLE
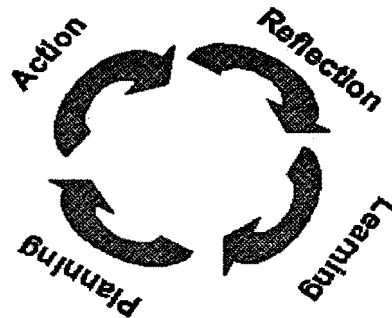
The cycle is a simple, powerful tool of helping individuals and groups to understand the basic idea of action learning. The process does not always follow the same steps viz action, reflection, learning and planning. It could start with any step. This model is valuable for planning, facilitating and explaining the action learning process.

2.7.1 Explanation of the Steps: (Marais et al 1997:4 - 7)

a. Action:

This is the central feature in action learning. Action means carrying out tasks or engaging in process. When people commit themselves to action, it increases the

opportunities to learn. People learn from the experience of performing tasks and these experiences are rich in beliefs and attitudes.

The advantages of learning from experiences are as follows:

- People build on knowledge and experience,

- They put their experience in words,

- They understand the importance of the task and put this into action.

b. Reflection:

Reflection involves re-examining and thinking about events. Reflection involves experience which is consciously analysed, evaluated and understood. People spend time reflecting upon experiences to draw out the learning.

c. Learning:

Reflection does not always lead to learning. People assume that knowledge gained through reflection can have an impact on the way things are done in the future. This may not be so because past experiences may never be repeated. Learning from one situation cannot always be applied to another (sometimes it can). A large number of organizations plan year after year but end up with the same problems. These organizations fail ro realize that they leave out the learning phase.

d. Planning:

Planning is the link between past learning and future learning. A plan includes what should happen to achieve your goals.and it also takes into account past experiences

and what can be learnt from them. Planning assists people to be pro-active and to anticipate the situation before it happens.

The facilitator will use the elements of action and reflection in the case study to describe the process that occured within the community where the research was executed.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY OF THE PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF THE PARACHUTE PACKING SECTION

3.1   Introduction

This section will focus on the description of the case study of the influence of PD on the communication patterns of the parachute packing section of the SANDF. The process will be analysed by means of describing the action and reflecting on the process. This reflection incorporates learning which took place.

3.2   Description of the study

101 Air Supply Unit is a unit of the SANDF which is located in the Lyttelton area in Pretoria. This unit is made up of two sections viz the air supply section and the parachute packing section. The parachute packing section is located approximately 15 km from the headquarters which is in Valhalla, Pretoria.

The parachute packing section is divided into two sections viz the packing section and the section that reparis the parachutes. These are 10 women who are responsible for the packing of the parachutes and 2 women who repair the parachutes.

The facilitator was introduced to the OC in August 1998 by the unit's social work officer. Discussions were held with him which indicated that the unit was experiencing the following problems:

-          Members were constantly expressing a need to be transfered to units close to their home.

- there were false allegations that the OC assaulted two personnel on the parade ground and there was a ministerial inquiry being conducted at the unit.

- there were severe communication and conflict problems at the parachute packing section and one member was transferred to headquarters.

- the people did not trust each other and there was also lack of trust between them and the management.

The facilitator informed the OC that she would have to get to know the community and build up a relationship with them so that she could ascertain with them the problems that they were experiencing.

3.2.1   Reflection

The facilitator was concerned that the OC had identified serious problems that the community were experiencing. She conveyed to him that she could not assure him that all the problems would be resolved but she would work with the community to ascertain their perceptions of the problems and how they intended resolving them.

3.3   Entry into the community

3.3.1   Action

The facilitator obtained entry into the community after her initial contact with the OC which, according to protocol in the SANDF, was necessary before meeting the participants. The facilitator walked in the an area with the view of getting to know the people and obtaining information about them and also to share information about the facilitator.

The facilitator met the group at the parachute packing section on the 21 August 1998. They were resistant and did not engage in a conversation with facilitator they did not trust her. They also believed that nobody listened to them and they did not receive any assistance in the past.

From 21 August 1998 to the end of October 1998, the facilitator used task oriented exercises, interviews and group discussions which assisted the members to share their feelings. Examples of the exercises are timelines (to get to know the history of the community) and mapping (to get to know the components of the community) (Chambers 1983 : 117-120).

The facilitator also had two interviews/discussions with one section head who had been delegated the responsibility for the ladies by the OC.

From the discussions with the community, the section head and the OC, the following issues emerged:

- Management's lack of respect and concern for its personnel.

- Inadequate communication channels between workers and management.

- Communication problems between workers and management not being resolved.

- Lack of respect amongst the members.

- Communication problems between workers.

- Lack of time management and planning of work hence they finished their work very early in the day and they got bored.

-        Lack of trust among members and also between members and the
         management.

-        Wrong information about participants' reasons for being on sick leave, injury
         on duty and the relationship amongst the participants.

3.3.2   Reflection

a. Participation:

The members of the community found it difficult to engage in discussions because they
were used to responding to orders rather than talking about issues.

As the members acquainted themselves with the PD process, they began to express
their feelings openly.

The principles of PD were adhered to by the facilitator (facilitator) viz respect, humility,
understanding and acknowledging the importance of the knowledge of the people
(Bopp 1994:189 - 194).

The facilitator got to know the community through discussions with them and in this
process she got to know the people's frames of reference, perceptions and emotions
(Rogers:1987:483-520).

Rogers (1987:483-520) discussed the importance of the facilitators possessing certain
values such as respect, acceptance, warmth and individualisation. The facilitator was
aware of these values whilst she worked with the community to get to know them.

The facilitator's communication skills such as listening, attending and probing also
assisted in getting a better understanding of the community.

b. Change in communication:

The duration of this phase was approximately two and a half months and during this period the facilitator and the community noticed the following changes:

-   The members began to trust each other and the facilitator. The task oriented exercises assisted them to share their emotions and perceptions of about the problems in the community.

-   The section head believed that he would not change because his only concern was the productivity at the section and he also believed in workers responding to orders.

3.4   Needs assessment

3.4.1   Action

Discussions were held with the community about the issues that arose from the initial phase. This phase took place from November 1998 to December 1998. The facilitator used Max-Neef's matrix of needs and satisfiers (1991:33) to identify the following abstract needs and the satisfiers that could fulfill these needs. The needs and satisfiers are as follows:

NEED	SATISFIERS
Affection	Respect, tolerance, solidarity, method of right management and communication.
Identity	Self-esteem, sense of belonging and assertiveness.
Freedom	Self-esteem, boldness, roles and responsibility.
Creativity	Imagination, arranging activities.

The facilitator and the group had a brainstorming session to confirm the needs of the community and also to prioritise the needs as follows:

- The need for affection, identity and freedom could be addressed by:

  - Life skills course for the group.
  - Management/life skills course for the section heads and OC.

- The need for creativity could be met by arranging activities and tasks that the group could undertake when they have no work.

- The need for identity could be addressed with the life skills course.

The members participated actively in this phase because they believed that their needs should be addressed.

Feedback on this phase was given to the OC and section head because they were two important authorities in this phase. The facilitator will only discuss the life skills course in this study.

3.4.2   Reflection

a. Participation:

The group members participated actively and they engaged in open discussions. They mentioned that they felt comfortable with each other and an atmosphere of trust and acceptance prevailed.

The members also believed that because there was no authority figure present this made the participation process much easier.

b. Communication skills:

Probing, immediacy and listening were the most important skills during this phase. The facilitator gave the group feedback and respected their ideas and views. The group members mentioned that they were aware of the manner in which they communicate with their colleagues and the management members.

c. Changes in communication:

The members began to trust each other and they communicated with each other more tactfully and effectively.

Cooperation, consensus and compromise were evident amongst the members. The members noticed this and they were very pleased with this change in themselves.

The members expressed appreciation of the fact that the OC decided to meet with them on a monthly basis at their work place. This was confirmed at a feedback session with the participants during this phase.

The change in the OC's response to the community's needs was evident when the facilitator gave him feedback and he was concerned that their needs should be addressed, e.g. the OC had been concerned that the members were taking sick leave too often for no apparent reason. The OC was informed that the members had severe lower back problems due to the weight of the parachutes i.e. they had to carry the parachutes and put them on the table and this caused lower back problems. Therefore the members because of being ill had to take sick leave. The OC had misinterpreted the members absenteeism seeing it as malingering. The facilitator gave the OC feedback and also informed him that the group suggested that the male personnel should assist them to carry the parachutes. The OC agreed and this was implemented.

The section head's response was in line with his own frame of reference and management style, because he believed that his only concern with this section was to ensure that the daily work was completed and productivity was improved. He also believed that personal problems should be resolved away from the work situation.

The facilitator learnt through the processes that she would be faced with positive and negative responses in attempting to bring about change. This led her to believe people cannot make changes to the way they function especially if they believe that they have the correct style, and are fixed in the way they function. This relates to Rogers' (1987:515) proposition 16 which suggests that if the individual's or community's values or continued existence are threatened then they may withdraw or become defensive. The section head in this situation became defensive of his management style with the group.

3.5 Planning

3.5.1 Action

Possible ways of addressing needs which the facilitator and participants had previously identified were presented to the group in January 1999 again i.e.:

- Life skills course for the group.

The facilitator used Swanepoel's (1992:79) three elements of planning viz needs, resources and objectives and related this to action:-

Need: Need for affection, freedom, understanding and identity.

Resources: Trained facilitators could be used to present the life skills programme viz the facilitator and a co-facilitator, Mrs Mathibe.

Venue: The venue of the SANDF could be used.

Meals: Meals would be provided by the SANDF.

Time: The programme could be conducted during office hours.

a. Objectives of the life skills course:

By the end of the course the members should:

-       Develop trust between themselves.
-       Respect each other and communicate effectively.
-       Understand their roles and responsibilities in the SANDF.

3.5.2   Reflection

a. Participation:

All the concerned parties participated in planning i.e. OC, section head, group and the facilitator. The parties worked separately.

b. Section head:

The section head believed that the facilitator was wasting her time with this group because they would not change. Nevertheless, he did give the members three days of leave from work to undertake this course. The section head continued to believe that his prime concern was the section's productivity.

c. The OC:

The OC was given feedback throughout the process. He did make changes such as meeting with the ladies, listening to the facilitator's feedback and informing her that there should be changes made at the section. The OC assisted with the administrative tasks concerning the payment of meals.

The OC also received feedback from the section head that there appeared to be changes in communication amongst the group. There were fewer arguments and the group tended to work more cooperatively in accomplishing their work activities. This feedback was not given to the facilitator by the section head.

d. The group:

The members worked together in this phase to sort out administrative tasks. They believed that they had made changes to the way they functioned at work and that they would make further changes and they would benefit from the programme. They engaged in fewer arguments between themselves. They were instead holding discussions to sort out issues which resulted in less conflict.

e. Organization skills:

The facilitator played a major role in organising the programme. The members assisted with setting up the venue and sorting out the meal arrangements. The OC arranged for the venue and the administration tasks related to the payment of meals.

f.   Tasks of the facilitator:

The following were the tasks of the facilitator:

- Organising of the programme for the three days so that the objectives could be met.

- Negotiating with the OC to attend part of the programme because there were issues that the group wanted to address with him.

- Tactfully negotiating with the section head to obtain three days of leave for the members to attend the programme.

- Contacting the various parties concerned to coordinate the entire programme.

3.6 Implementation

3.6.1 Action

The life skill course was held on 18 to 22 February 1999, at the Gauteng mess in Valhalla. (Refer to Appendix for details of the programme).

3.6.2 Reflection

a. Planning of the life skills course:

The programme was evaluated jointly by the community and the facilitator. The programme had to be changed due to the need that the group presented of wanting to meet with the OC which was part of the programme. However, the participants were very nervous and the facilitator had to role-play the meeting before it actually transpired.

After the meeting with the OC was completed on 18 February 1999, the group wanted to meet to address follow-up issues and to make certain decisions, so time was allocated for this. The programme was people driven and the needs of the people were considered (Rogers 1987).

b. Confidence building:

The role-plays assisted in building confidence of the people. This also assisted in enhancing the members' communication skills which enabled them to handle the issues of concern tactfully with the OC.

c. Facilitation skills:

The facilitator and her colleague co-facilitated the programme. The problem posing approach was used which stimulated group discussions and introspection.

The exercises used to facilitate discussions were brainstorming, discussion, drawing, feedback sessions and role-playing.

d. Participation:

The nature of the programme (i.e. problem posing approach) facilitated participation and stimulated reflection for the facilitator and the group. The members participated effectively and felt comfortable in expressing their feelings on all the topics that were discussed. The facilitator believes that the topics for discussion had a direct impact on them hence participation was so active.

e. Programme:

The programme focussed on the people's communication skills and how they could improve their work situation. The programme was not conducted in a lecture form. It involved people's thinking, brainstorming, having discussions and giving feedback. This encouraged the group to find solutions to their problems and also prepared them to face diverse situations.

f. Change in communication in the OC:

The OC was very accomodating and listened to the group. He was disturbed by some of the concerns at the section and he did reassure them that he would be attending to them as soon as possible.

Some of the concerns were:

-   Injury on duty was not attended to correctly i.e. not according to the standard working procedure,

-   Salary: The group[1] had to write a motivation for salary increase,

-   Union: The group had to appoint shop stewards and time would be allocated to them to attend meetings,

-   Time management: The group needed to come up with ideas as to what they could do in their idle time.

The OC acknowledged that he had not been aware of exactly what had been happening and that he had received incorrect information from the section head.

He informed the group that they could have direct communication with him and that there was no need for them to contact the section head in the future to obtain access to him.

He encouraged them to join the union in order to improve their conditions of service as well as their salaries. The group are not uniformed members and only the union can address these issues.

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[1] group - refers to the ladies of the parachute packing section.

It appeared that the OC's attitude had changed towards the people and he did believe that the group were experiencing problems. He also realised that he had been misled by some of the reports from the section head.

The facilitator is of the view that changes in the OC were the result of changes in the community which then had an affect on him. The group was polite, tactful, honest and showed respect to the OC. There was consensus and cooperation amongst the members and they presented a united front to him.

The group had learnt through the PD process, to believe in themselves and to builld up their confidence in addressing their concerns. Their communication skills also improved.

It became clear that a participatory approach did bring about change in the OC and the group. The OC noticed that the group was committed and that they wanted to help themselves. The group did not expect the OC to change.

The changes in the OC relates to Rogers (1987:483–517) propositions 5 and 17. Proposition 5 refers to behaviour and attitude which is goal directed i.e. the OC wanted to ensure that he had a happy and content group of workers hence he decided to get involved in the process by obtaining feedback from the group as well as the facilitator. In the process he realised that he needed to make certain changes which did have a positive impact on the community.

Proposition 17 relates to the frame of reference. The OC began to understand the group and the problems that they were experiencing. He also realised that he was given wrong information about them. Due to this indepth understanding of the group situation, he decided to make changes in the way the problems should be addressed and changed the management style towards this section.

g. Changes in the Communication of the Section head:

The section head was invited to the meeting but he could not attend because he had another important meeting. The group took a decision that the facilitator should give the section head feedback. The facilitator also realised that the OC would give him feedback.

h. Changes in the Communication of the Members:

The members respected and trusted each other and could talk to each other in a tactful manner. They also believed that they should approach the section head in a tactful manner which might bring about change in their communication with him. They resolved that they would not allow the section head to stir up conflict between themselves.

The members also informed the facilitator that they would approach their personal situations differently because they believed that they could bring about change in their families so that they could function effectively.

i. Facilitator's view:

The facilitator observed changes in the OC and the members. Both parties respected each other and they communicated effectively. They reached consensus on issues in a way that had not been evident in the past.

The OC listened to the group whereas in the past he only gave them instructions. He allowed them to have direct access to him which meant that he would not be using the "correct" channels of communication in the structure because the participatory approach had not yet been implemented in the SANDF.

The PD process, the task oriented exercises and the life skills programme had a positive impact on change in the communication patterns between the groups and the authorities.

j. Ongoing process:

There were issues that needed to be resolved from the session viz:

- the group had to write a motivational letter to request the SANDF to assess if their salaries could be improved.

- the members had to discuss the possibility of joining the unions in order to address their conditions of service and salaries.

- the facilitator had to give feedback to the section head.

3.7   Addressing the Ongoing Process

3.7.1   Action

a. Problem one:

Motivational letter – salary increase. The planning of this letter by the group began at the life skills programme. They completed the letter and consulted with the facilitator about the details. The letter was submitted to the OC. The group received a response from the OC stating that he could motivate for their salary increase but he could not assure them that every individual could receive an increase because a certain percentage is allocated to each section. He told the group that they should also discuss this issue with their union.

b. Problem two:

Becoming members of the union. The members registered with the unions. They appointed shop stewards on a six monthly basis and they would attend the union meetings in pairs. The shop stewards would give feedback on meetings to the rest of the members during lunch time.

c. Problem three:

Report back to the section head. The section head was given feedback about what transpired (including the meeting with the OC). He was informed that the OC would be meeting with him to discuss some the issues that had not been handled correctly e.g. injury on duty. He was told that the OC also informed the group that they could contact him directly and it is not necessary for them to follow the usual channels. Furthermore, the OC would be meeting with the group on a monthly basis.

The facilitator explained to him how the PD process was used in the section and asked whether he had noticed were changes. He had noticed that there was more team spirit and cooperation amongst the women; that there was no conflict and that they were not rude and abrupt towards him. He did believe that there were changes in the section and that it could be due to the social work service being introduced.

The facilitator informed him that the Department of Defence could be introducing a participatory approach towards the workers so that the needs of the people are known and this will assist the authorities to improve productivity in the SANDF. The facilitator discussed the possibility of the section head adopting this type of management style to maintain a happy and content group of workers. The section head believed that he had the correct management style and workers should respond to orders. His only concern was to ensure that the section's work is completed i.e. the parachutes are packed.

He also believed that the OC should follow the correct channels and not allow the group to have direct contact with him. He also stated that the social work officer should not interfere with his work.

3.7.2 Reflection

a. The group:

The group made a concerted effort to make changes in themselves and the section. They followed up their problems from the life skills programme. They appeared to be working together and there was cooperation and consensus amongst them.

The problems that were discussed affected them personally hence they were concerned with finding solutions. They worked on these problems which does indicate that they could manage without the facilitator.

The changes in the groups relates to Rogers (1987:483 – 513) propositions 4, 10 and 15.

Proposition 4 implies that the community possesses knowledge, resources and skills and they discovered this through the PD process. The participants had become assertive and tactful in the way they communicated with each other and the management and they believed in themselves which had an impact on change in the workplace.

Proposition 10 refers to the exploration of values of the individuals and how they experience a situation which eventually determines their decision-making capacity. The group worked together to sort out the motivational letter for their salaries and the union problem. They also decided to work together when undertaking tasks at work.

Proposition 15 relates to the process of change. The community decided that they wanted to make changes to avoid conflict, to improve their communication skills and resolve the problems that they were experiencing. The facilitator guided them through this process.

b. The section head:

The section head was aware of the changes but he believed that he could not make changes. This relates to Rogers (1987:483 to 494) propositions 2, 5, 6, 7 and 11.

Proposition two refers to the aspect where every individual's construction of reality is different and it depends on his/her experience. The section head had been in the SANDF for a number of years. He believed strongly in responding to orders and following channels of communication.

Proposition 5 relates to the fact that the section head believed that his behaviour and attitude is goal directed i.e. to ensure that the work at the section must be completed and he believes that this can materialise through responding to orders This may seem odd to the group and facilitator but this is how he feels that his goals can be achieved.

Proposistion 6 refers to emotions and perception that an individual feels strongly about and he will react accordingly. The section head believed strongly in maintaining a militaristic way of functioning.

Proposition 7 refers to the individual's frame of reference. The section head's management style was dependent on the way he perceived the situation from his frame of reference hence he uses a top down approach.

Proposition 11 implies that when the self is threatened, one of the reactions could be withdrawal. The section head appeared to feel threatened by the changes that were occuring hence he believed that he could withdraw from the processes by being

congruent in terms of his management style until he feels the need for, or is ready to change. He also believed that he possesses the best management style which he will not change.

The section head also believed that the South African Defence Force possessed the correct management style and that the SANDF (since 1994), has made unnecessary changes which has affected productivity negatively.

c. Facilitator's view:

The facilitator believed that the women had a positive attitude and that they had made changes in communication in their work situation as well in their personal lives.

She is hoping that the section head's own perceptions of management will motivate the group to work harder in convincing him that alternative management procedures would positively be integrated in the military culture.

3.8   Conclusion

This chapter clearly indicates the changes in the communication patterns in the parachute section and relevant authorities brought about through the PD process. The group believed in themselves and the process. The facilitator played the role of a guide thereby learning from the community and using the local knowledge of the people as resources to assist her and them. She had to be very tactful with the authority figures such as the OC and the section head because they allowed her access to the community. They could be regarded as the gatekeepers (Hope and Timmel 1984).

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, EVALUATION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE STUDY

4.1   Introduction

The purpose of the study was to illustrate how participatory development methodology had an influence on the communication pattern in the parachute packing section and the relevant authorities of the SANDF.

The summary, evaluation and conclusion are derived from the analysis of the interaction with the community, literature review, consultation with the supervisor and the facilitator's personal learning.

4.2   Summary

The facilitator will summarise the process using Schenk's (2000:57) features of the communication process for facilitating participatory practice.

4.2.1.   People's process

The facilitator focussed on the people's perceptions, emotions and needs. She also had discussions with other authorities such as the OC and section head because they were the important "gatekeepers" in the community. Respect and acceptance was afforded to all parties concerned hence it can be regarded as a people's process. The community took responsibility while the facilitator guided the process.

4.2.2.   Local knowledge and resources

The community possessed the resources and capabilities within themselves. The facilitator created a conducive environment so that the people could discover their knowledge and become aware of their resources e.g. the group were aware that they had the expertise to pack parachutes and that people's lives are dependent on them.

4.2.3.   Multi-cultural group

The facilitator respected the multi-cultural diversity that existed and made the group aware that their values and cultures are different which does have an impact on their communication patterns. The group and facilitator acknowledged this diversity and respected each other.

4.2.4   Needs based process

The needs were ascertained by the community through a process of task oriented exercises and discussions.

4.2.5.   Unpredictable open process

The facilitator could not predict the length of the process in advance. The process was initiated in August 1998.

4.2.6.   Incremental learning process

The facilitator learnt from the community. This assisted her in understanding the community and the needs. Chambers (1983:202-208) suggested that the facilitator learns by sitting, listening and learning from the community.

4.2.7. Action and reflection

From the inception of the process the facilitator and the community were involved in action and reflection which assisted them in evaluating the process from the perspective of the community and the facilitator. Through interaction and reviewing the process they were able to identify their needs and also find alternative ways of resolving them.

4.3 Evaluation

The facilitator will evaluate whether the objectives of the study were met and the process that relates to these objectives.

Objectives were as follows:

-       The first objective was to ascertain the effect that the PD pocess has had on the communication patterns between the members of the parachute packing section.

When the facilitator was introduced to the group the members were constantly engaged in arguments with each other. There was no cooperation and teamwork amongst them and they did not trust each other.

The facilitator entered the community and she used the PD process with them. She had to use task oriented exercises to encourage the people to participate because they were used to responding to orders and they found it difficult to get involved in discussion. The initial phase was long and difficult. The members eventually began to trust each other and maintain conversations without engaging in conflict.

The identification of needs and addressing the needs with a life skills programme assisted in improving communication patterns. The members were able to address each other more tactfully.

Teamwork, consensus and cooperation which was not evident previously was noticed by the section head.

The group was able to approach concerns and problems very tactfully and they were empowered not to allow a process in which the management style of the section head affected them in the same way as it previously did. They realised that they had allowed a process in which they reactively respond with conflict to the management style of the section head, hence they began to discover alternative processes and ways that could empower themselves, and the same time allow the section head to discover how and when he would be ready to implement a new management style.

The PD process also assisted them to become self sufficient and encouraged them to take responsibility for themselves as a group, e.g. the group met and wrote a motivational letter for their salaries to be improved and they appointed shop stewards who would attend union meetings and give them feedback in their lunch breaks.

- The second objective was to analyse the changes in the communication styles made by the various authorities.

4.3.1   The OC

In the past the OC did not meet with the parachute packing section very often. He obtained reports from the section head which were negative and responded to the reports in a punitive way which resulted in further problems at the section. After the facilitator initiated the PD process at the section, there were definite changes noticed by the community and the facilitator.

The OC has arranged monthly meetings with the group. If he is unable to keep his appointment, another appointment be arranged. The OC has responded to the letter that the group sent in connection with their salaries and joining the union positively. This

indicates that he is interested in the section making changes and his attitude towards them has changed. He also had discussions with the section head about the management of this section but his response again confirmed that he was not ready and possibly uncertain on how to move beyond the traditional management style within the military culture.

4.3.2. The Section Head

When the facilitator met the section head, he stated that he believed that he possessed the correct management style and way of handling people. He believed that there was no need for him to change.

He continued to react in the same manner as discussed above. He believed that the group should respond to orders and this would improve the productivity.

He did acknowledge that there were positive changes in the group and this could be due to the social work intervention.

4.3.3. The Change In The Internal Communication Patterns

Initially, the parachute packing section's form of communication was only "downward" i.e. information filtered from the section head to the employees. After the PD process was introduced, the communication patterns changed to upward, downward and horizontal communication. This means that upward communication was introduced i.e. where the group had discussions with the OC about their work, the management system and how they believed this should work.

Horizontal communication occurred as the group members have open communication with each other.

Downward communication still continues in terms of policy, rules, practices, history and objectives being communicated from the management to employees.

-        The third objective was to identify the theories that guided the changes in the communication process in the workplace.

The PCA theory and PD played an important role in the community development process. Rogers' (1987) propositions assisted the facilitator to obtain an understanding of the community's perception, emotions, needs and their frame of reference. As a result, the community began to trust the facilitator which assisted in their participating openly.

Du Toit et al (1998:85 - 145) also discussed the values that the facilitator should possess i.e. respect, acceptance, individuality and confidence. The facilitator worked according to these values which assisted in promoting the process.

The facilitator's communication skills played a role in facilitating the PD process. These included listening, attending, probing, facilitating and empathy (Egan:1990).

The facilitator learnt from the people about how to pack a parachute, about the history of the community, the milestones in the community's lifespan and about the problems that they were experiencing.

The SANDF is a hierarchical authoritarian structure and the facilitator was impressed that despite this, the PD process based on PCA worked with the community. There have been changes in the communication patterns amongst the workers and the management i.e. the OC. The group have developed self confidence and trust in each other and their communication skills have improved. There have been changes in the formal channels of communication due to the PD process.

4.3.4. The Facilitator's Learning

The facilitator maintained a good relationship with the group based on acceptance, respect, warmth and trust. The facilitator believes that the success of her good relationship is based on her reaching out to the people on their level and also observing the values that Rogers (1978) states a facilitator should possess.

The facilitator's attitude and values are very important. The facilitator knew that she was entering a community who were the experts on their situation and that they possessed the knowledge and resources and she was learning from them. Chambers (1983:201) refers to this as reversal of learning.

The facilitator had to consult with literature as well as her supervisor because this is a new experience for her. Furthermore, the SANDF has not used this method i.e. community development very often due to the rigid structures and the expectation of immediate results. The facilitator did experience some obstacles but this was resolved by explaining to the authorities the process of PD.

4.4 Conclusion

The PD process is characterised by active participation by all the concerned parties. It is a process that cannot be imposed on the community but rather it is the community's initiative, expertise, perceptions, emotions and needs that determine the process.

From the study, the facilitator cannot generalise that the PD process will have an influence on all hierarchical organizations, but in this specific study it was noticed the PD methodology did have an infuence and changed the communication patterns of the parachute packing section.

It encouraged participation, open lines of communication, facilitated communication of certain channels that were not operational but in existence, i.e. the upward and

horizontal channels of communication, developed trust and acceptance amongst the members and also assisted the community to be more tactful and handle their conflict amicably.

4.5 Recommendations

The facilitator recommends that future community developers or researchers working in authoritarian hierarchical organistations should:

- Market the idea of PD at management level. In terms of the DOD policy the SANDF has decided to introduce PD in the future. Therefore it is advisable that the PD process is marketed at management level and the DOD becomes aware of the process of PD so that they are aware of the unpredictable timespan attached to the process and the implications that it would have because results cannot be expected immediately. Emphasis should be placed on facilitation skills and building relationships with the community which will enhance interaction amongst participants and lead to the development of trust. This will be a new concept in the SANDF because people are used to responding to orders.

- The necessity of bringing about change but at the same time respecting the stability that the organization needs to retain when using the PD process needs to be understood by the management. The people may become assertive, expressive, want to take decisions in the work place, and also have input in the policy of the organization. However the organization should be able to accommodate the need for stability as the changes in the personnel occur.

- The action-learning process is an apt process to use, because continuous learning takes place through people sharing their experiences. The action-learning process includes reflection which links past events with

finding more effective future action. This will result in people learning from experiences and action.

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APPENDIX
Programme of the Life Skills Course

DAY 1

ICE BREAKER:

AIM

To create an understanding of the goals of the life skills programme.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ICE BREAKER

This ice breaker incorporates teamwork and cooperation and it is used:

1.   To explain the goals and objectives of the session.

2.   To provide an opportunity for the participants to discuss their expectations of the programme.

3.   To create an environment that encourages participation and teamwork for the sessions.

EXERCISE 2

1.   The OC was expected to visit the members and they decided to discuss the problems they are experiencing at the unit with him.

AIM

To role play the meeting so that participants would feel comfortable and confident to discuss their problems with the OC.

OBJECTIVE

To discuss each issue in detail and the facilitator to assist them through this process.

EXERCISE 3

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

AIM

To assist the members to verbalise what are their roles and responsibilities towards the SANDF and themselves.

OBJECTIVES

1.   To provide opportunities for members to understand the conflict that arises between one's own expectations and the SANDF's expectations.

2.   To ascertain the members' expectations of the section and what they want to change in themselves so that they can function effectively.

EXERCISE 4

MEETING WITH THE OC

AIM

To highlight problems that the members are experiencing and look at possible solutions.

OBJECTIVE

1.   To address issues individually.

2.   To obtain the participation of all members so that certain members will not be victimised for being vocal.

EXERCISE 5

1.   Request from the members to have brainstorming session so that they could write a letter to the OC pertaining to their increase in salaries. They requested the facilitator to assist with the facilitation of the process.

EXERCISE 6

EVALUATION OF THE DAY'S PROGRAMME

AIM

To ascertain whether the members benefitted from the programme for the day.

OBJECTIVE

To obtain feedback from all members to ascertain their feelings and views.

DAY 2

EXERCISE 1

COMMUNICATION

AIM

To orient members to the problems that emerge in sending and receiving messages.

OBJECTIVES

1.   To build group cohesion and a warm and accepting climate.

2.   To stimulate awareness of communication as comprising the elements of sender, message, receiver.

3.   To differentiate between verbal and non verbal communication.

4.   To explore the obstacles in communication.

EXERCISE 2

TIME MANAGEMENT

AIM

To highlight the importance of time management.

OBJECTIVE

1. To create an awareness of each day containing 24 hours.

2. To do daily planning is needed in order to fit all the activities into 24 hours.

3. To understand the time allocation and its consequences whether good or bad.

4. To foster an awareness and acceptance of the link between an individual's values, customs, interests and time allocation.

5. To focus on what you can do for your self as well.

DAY 3

EXERCISE 1 (Follow up from exercise 2)

OBJECTIVES

1.   To create an awareness of time management.

2.   To teach tools of prioritization e.g. separation of tasks into "need for now", "need for later" and "nice to have".

3.   To teach the process of time logging.

4.   To plan flexibly so that there is time to handle crises and urgent demands on time.

EXERCISE 2

EVALUATION OF THE COURSE

AIM

To acertain whether the members benefitted from the course.

THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT ON THE COMMUNICATION PATTERNS OF THE PARACHUTE
PACKING SECTION OF THE SANDF

by

SARAVANI GOVENDER

SUMMARY

The study was undertaken to ascertain whether participatory development (PD and) by implication, the Person Centred Approach (PCA) had an impact on change in the communication patterns in the parachute packing section in the SANDF.

The study was conducted in a military setting where hierarchical authoritarian structures exist. PCA and PD are used as theoretical frameworks for the study which resulted in changes in the communication patterns at the section. Change occured at two levels viz:

-       Changes in communication amongst the participants which led to teamwork, cooperation and the avoidance of conflict.

-       Changes in communication between management (the Officer Commanding) and the parachute packing section which lead to regular contact with the participants to address their problems.

The study further highlighted the importance of learning from the community in order to avoid misinterpretation which could lead to conflict and dissatisfaction.

KEY TERMS OF THE STUDY

Participatory development, person centred approach, participation, communication, change, needs and perceptions, action, reflection and facilitation.

"I declare that **the influence of participatory development on the communication patterns of the parachute packing section of the SANDF** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references".

Govender
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SIGNATURE
(Mrs S Govender)

17 /05/2001
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DATE