

Title

Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives: a social work perspective

by

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## DECLARATION

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Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives: a social work perspective

I declare that the above dissertation 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.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at University of South Africa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



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SIGNATURE

10 June 2019

DATE

**DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my mother Khashane Sekgobela. She was the first person to plant a seed of cooperation in our family, a dedicated, family-orientated woman and active community member. Kea Go Leboga Mma.

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**ABSTRACT**

Co-operatives are multifaceted as they have different meanings for their members. They are an important passage to sustainable development as they provide their members and communities with the opportunity of joining forces and addressing their needs. Various pieces of South African legislation endorse the establishment of co-operatives and support community members to own co-operatives.

The research findings show that cooperative members are motivated to participate even though they experience challenges in the cooperatives. What keeps them going is the drive to succeed. This is strengthened by cooperative principles to which they adhere. The role of the social worker in initiating and supporting cooperatives, utilizing empowerment and developmental approaches, provides extra benefits for cooperative members, their families and the larger community. One critical benefit is the income generated through economic activities to support members and their families. Based on the research findings, recommendations are made with regard to practice, policy and further research.

Key terms: Motivations, Experience, Participation, Co-operative, Primary co-operative, Perspective, Community Members, Sustainability, Development and Vosloorus

## LIST OF ACRONOMYS

AFRACA-	African Rural and Agricultural Credit Association
ASGISA-	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
B-BBEE-	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Strategy
CBDB-	Central Business Data Base
CCUL-	Cape Credit Union League
CDW-	Community Development Workers
CIPC-	Companies and Intellectual Property Commission
DSD-	Department of Social Development
DTI-	Department of Trade and Industry
FSC-	Financial Services Co-operative
GEP-	Gauteng Enterprise Propeller
ICA-	International Co-operative Alliance
IFAD-	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPAP-	Industrial Policy Action Plan
NASW-	National Association for Social Workers
NGO-	Non Governmental Organisations
NIPF-	National Industrial Policy Framework
NUM-	National Union of Mineworkers
NYDA-	National Youth Development Agency
SABS-	South African Bureau of Standards
SACCOL-	Savings and Credit Co-operatives League
SACSSP-	South African Council for Social Service Professions
SAIT-	The South African Institute of Tax Practitioner
SALGA-	The South African Local Government Associations
SEDA-	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SMME-	Small Medium Micro Enterprises
UNISA-	University of South Africa
USA-	United States of America

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## CHAPTER 1

### GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a general orientation of the study which informed the research process on Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives: a social work perspective is provided. The chapter also provides a brief background, problem statement, rationale for the study and a brief outline of the research methodology.

##### 1.1. Background to the study

According to the South African Local Government Association (SALGA, 2011:10) poverty is prevalent throughout South Africa, across the full range of settlement types, from inner cities to deep rural areas. It is, thus, the concern of all to address the socio-economic imbalances of society. The South African Constitution of 1996 provides a framework for the "progressive realisation of rights" and stresses the need for a developmental approach with the key focus being the eradication of poverty and economic inequality. The South African White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:1) stipulates that the government's welfare-related vision is to create a system which would "facilitate the meeting of basic human needs, release people's creative energies, help them achieve their aspirations, build human capacity and self-reliance, and participate fully in all spheres of social, economic and political life."

The term "co-operative" was originally coined in the United States of America (USA) during 1908 when the Country Life Commission established the existence of co-operatives. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 was passed by the American Senate in order to give co-operatives extension services. The original aims of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 are still relevant today, even outside the borders of the USA. Khan (2001:2) concurs with Swanepoel and De Beer (2011:11) that, in order to empower communities to take part in economic activities across all sectors of life, it is important to achieve international and national goals for

sustainable development, to build stronger economies, and improve the quality of life for all in the community. In South Africa, the Co-operatives Act was officially introduced and passed by the apartheid government in 1981 as the Co-operatives Act (Act 91 of 1981). During the 1980s, civil societies began recognising the co-operative as a tool for alleviating social and economic inequalities amongst the poor people in South Africa. For example, trade unions started developing co-operatives as a vehicle for addressing the economic needs of redundant and retrenched workers. Many of the co-operatives that were established during this time have since collapsed owing to corruption, maladministration, and internal conflict amongst members. Lack of adherence to co-operative principles also aggravated the situation that led to this collapse.

The City of Ekurhuleni, as one of the big metros in South Africa, adopted its own anti-poverty strategy in order to support and promote cooperatives. The strategy seeks to up-lift the cooperatives, reduce poverty and contribute to sustainable development for the people of Ekurhuleni. The municipality has a department of economic development and departments of health and social development that focus on income generation projects, cooperatives and Small Medium Micro Enterprises (SMME) as part of poverty alleviation programmes. Social workers are employed within the department of health and social development to facilitate the processes of registering cooperatives, capacitating cooperative members and ensuring that cooperatives comply with legislative requirements before they are handed over to the department of economic development.

Post-democracy, the Co-operatives Act (Act 91 of 1981) was considered unsuitable in a democratic society. There was a need to develop new policies and laws that enhanced the sustainability of co-operatives and the expansion of co-operatives in all sectors. According to the Integrated Strategy on the Development and Promotion of Co-operatives (2012:32) of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), in 2001 the South African government resolved that the mandate for the promotion and development of co-operatives be transferred to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and removed from the Department of Agriculture. The intention of this was to ensure that co-operatives were allowed to flourish and given recognition in different sectors of the country's economy.

In 2005 the South African parliament passed the Co-operatives Act (Act 14 of 2005). The South African Co-operatives Act (Act 14 of 2005) gave a clear and inclusive definition across all racial boundaries. The Act defined 'co-operative' as "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic aspirations, social and cultural needs through a democratically-controlled and jointly-owned enterprise." The Co-operatives Act (Act 14 of 2005), laid the foundation for a more lively, supportive, and active environment for communities to establish co-operatives in their areas. The spirit of the legislation is noteworthy because it attempted to transform the culture of co-operatives from being mainly white-dominant and agricultural. Compared to previous legislation under the apartheid regime, new legislation in South Africa promotes co-operatives unaffected by racial boundaries and economic status.

The primary aim of facilitating the cooperatives' compliance is to ensure that members are fully aware of what is expected of them, and that they are able to stand on their own and can manage their cooperatives. Some cooperative members are, however, working hard but not progressing much. On the other side, one of the main challenges for social workers is bridging the gap between successful cooperatives and struggling cooperatives. The experience within practice is that there is a gap between the implementation of services by different role players or professionals, such as social workers, and the expectations of cooperative members. There was a need, therefore to check the motivations for, and experiences in, participating in primary co-operatives of community members which became the research goal.

As expected, different role players should assist co-operatives in order for them to be successful and reach members' objectives. These roles create an enabling environment that is needed for the co-operatives and their members to succeed. According to Elliot (2006:70), the government laid down a range of policies that created the legal basis upon which orderly governance can proceed. Co-operatives are not wholly independent of the government; they, like any other any kind of businesses, are regulated by those policies. Moraa (2008:18) states that the government establishes legal and normative frameworks, and co-operatives have to operate within those boundaries.

- **Types of co-operatives**

There are many types of co-operatives, also referred to as sectors of co-operatives. The different types of co-operatives, when closely examined and as mentioned in the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005:8, are as follows:

- Agricultural co-operative (agricultural products).
- Community businesses (businesses that are owned by the community).
- Consumer co-operatives (a group of people who buy goods together in bulk in order to get a discount and other collaboration benefits such as the equitable distribution of labour).
- Financial services co-operative (people contribute money saved for a specific purpose – for example, burial societies, and offer loans to members and/or non-members).
- Housing co-operatives (a group of people who build houses together for co-operative members and also share in the benefit of an equitable distribution of labour).
- Marketing and supply co-operatives (a group of people who sell their products together through one organisation).
- Service co-operatives (provision of technical services).
- Social co-operatives / credit unions (stokvels or savings societies through which people save for a specific purpose – for example, burial societies), which offer loans to members and/or non-members.
- Worker co-operatives (this are co-operatives that are controlled and owned by those who work in them).

Co-operatives are also governed by cooperative principles which will be fully explained in chapter 2. According to Yoshaki (2010:103) and the Co-operatives Act 14 of (2005:7), there are seven cooperative principles: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education/training and information, cooperation among cooperatives; and, finally, concern for community. These principles are regarded as providing the cornerstone of cooperatives worldwide and should be practised daily as they summarize the ethical practice of cooperatives.

- **Challenges of co-operatives**

Co-operatives have not been without their problems. Maintaining a co-operative ethos in the midst of a competitive society is not easy. As a result, many co-operatives have been unable to survive for more than a short time. On the contrary, some co-ops have grown so large over time that they have lost the features of democratic control and have become corporations or public agencies using a co-operative label (Tesoriero, 2010:172). The reality is that, up until now, many co-operatives have failed to be sustainable in the long term. As noted by Innes (1992:143)?, lack of skills poses a serious threat and a challenge in managing the daily activities of co-operatives. According to the DTI (2012:54), most of the newly established co-operatives are initiated by unemployed people from economically marginalised areas, with a lack of business management experience, and often with a low skills level. Owing to a lack of both technical and management skills by co-operative members usually leads to a lesser chance of success.

As indicated earlier, social workers are also expected to play supporting roles for cooperatives. They are trained to play different active and professional roles in assisting and empowering co-operatives so that they succeed. According to Sheafor and Horejsi (2014:51), the roles that social workers play in community development distinguishes social work from other professions. These roles include being enabler, trainer advocate, facilitator, guide and advisor.

### **Role of social workers**

Social workers play an active and professional role in assisting and empowering co-operatives to succeed. Social workers are employed in local municipalities, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), and the private sector. They play a broad and general role in facilitating community development, while others specialise in other fields. The primary concern of social workers is to help communities make rational decisions, assist communities in taking initiative, help them to discover their resources, enable them to participate fully to plan and to implement the project. Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:53-56) further highlight the different roles played by social workers as change agents. The following are social worker roles as community development workers:

- Guide

Leading and guiding involve decisions about getting and keeping things going. This includes enabling the team to make decisions to deal with aspects that can hinder the process, for example, differences and diversity, and lack of motivation (Schenck, Nel & Louw, 2010:248). According to Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:53), social workers usually have a better understanding of what are the likely results of any action that might be taken; hence, they perform a guiding role. Their perspective and views are much broader than those of the communities they are working with; they have a much better understanding of the results of any action, as they need to be aware of possible obstacles and pitfalls that can hinder the developmental efforts of people. It is therefore the community developers' task to guide the community through those pitfalls in order that they may achieve their goals.

- Advocate

Social workers should play the role of advocates only if the situation demands it, and if all individuals concerned are convinced that it is the best option (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:55). Social workers as change agents are expected to have contacts with the external world that communities may lack; they are also well informed or know how to deal with authorities, which channels to follow, and where to go to seek approval and obtain concessions. Sometimes it is also necessary for social workers to defend people's actions, interests, wishes, and their constitutional rights against outside bureaucracy, apathy, or misunderstanding. Sheafor and Horejsi (2014:46) state that the role of advocate requires some activity within the political and legislative arena, and the social worker to be able to build coalitions with organisations that share the same interest with the issue.

- Enabler/catalyst

The role of enabler distinguishes social work from the many other helping professions and has been part of social work since its inception and its inclusion in the practice (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2014:51). The primary aim of the enabler is to "enable" people to do what should be done. Social workers aim to enable people to fulfil their abstract human needs, to help them gain meaningful

empowerment and to enhance their learning processes (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:55). Social workers are also expected to create space for the community to progress, while they act as catalysts to make things happen.

- Facilitator

As a facilitator the social worker is intentionally and actively expected to facilitate the capacitation of group members and supports them to be more confident in executing their tasks (Schenck et al., 2010:190). The community practitioner's facilitation of the group should be such that it empowers the group to function effectively and stimulates their self-confidence (Schenck et al., 2010:204). A facilitator operates in the background and plays a secondary role in assisting and enabling the participants (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:56).

- Advisor

This role is performed on a limited basis, and its sole purpose is to motivate and enable the community to take informed decisions. Therefore, advice from the social worker should be in the form of information on the choices people can make and the possible consequences of each choice (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:54). By playing the above mentioned roles social workers intend to address the challenges, disadvantages and advantages that co-operatives come with.

## **1.2. Problem statement**

A problem statement is used to explain the problem that the research project will try to address. According to Welman, Kruger & Mitchel (2005:12), a problem statement refers to some degree of difficulty that the researcher experiences in the context of either a theoretical or practical situation and about which he wants to obtain an understanding or find a solution. A problem statement can also be regarded as a clear statement about a condition, an area of concern, a difficulty to be eliminated, or a troubling question that exists either in theory, literature or within existing practice that points to a need for meaningful understanding (Bryman, 2007:5).

The establishment of co-operatives is aimed at generating income and creating jobs for participants, as well as promoting social integration and cohesion. Co-operatives have a distinct identity which separates them from other companies that are owned by shareholders or from philanthropic organisations such as non-governmental organisations that provide for a specific target group. Co-operatives are regarded as being user-centred, and they have to be legally registered entities in terms of the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 (Co-operative and Policy Alternative Centre, 2007:5). The aims of establishing a co-operative correspond with those of community development. It can be argued that, perhaps, during the apartheid era, legislation was not sufficiently well developed to address all issues related to co-operatives strategically. Furthermore, Ijaiya and Bello (2011:1) indicate that studies in economic sustainability play an important role in addressing poverty. This is because economic sustainability leads to a decrease in unemployment and it seeks to improve opportunities that produce economic activities for the poor. Against this background, it appears that the establishment of co-operatives is relevant with regard to providing socio-economic freedom and addressing the needs of the poor.

In general, the following problem statement will try to outline the points of the current situation and explain why it mattered to conduct the research project. The problem statement for this study is as follows: There is a lack of information on the Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in the primary co-operatives. This information is necessary to help social workers understand the members of the Vosloorus primary co-operatives. No other study has been conducted on the Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in the primary co-operatives.

### **1.3. Rationale for the study**

While travelling the Vosloorus streets, the researcher has learned and observed that people are looking at the positive side of life and want a better way of living. The people want to make a contribution to society. The mushrooming of different types of business, which include agricultural projects, recycling, street vendors,

and sellers, was also observed. Almost all these people are trying to fight poverty and unemployment by establishing small businesses.

The government continues to try to regulate small business by encouraging people to register for new co-operatives. Within co-operatives, groups of people are encouraged to work together. Co-operatives play a role in addressing three of the biggest challenges that currently face our communities, unemployment, poverty, and crime. The challenges the wider society is facing and the failing South African economy cannot be underestimated. The researcher was interested in exploring and describing the primary co-operative members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives. These community members continue to operate as a collective, even when there is failure, while others thrive in success.

The researcher was interested in this field of study for a number of reasons, stemming primarily from his point of view as a social worker who was employed to facilitate poverty alleviation programmes, and who needed to ensure that co-operatives comply with legislative requirements. The researcher observed that some of the co-operatives could not develop quickly enough, while others seem to fail completely in improving the socio-economic status of their members and society.

The researcher has also helped to facilitate processes that led to many community members registering their initiatives as co-operatives as well as ensuring that these complied with legislative requirements. This experience within practice led to the realisation that there is a gap between the implementation of services by professionals and the expectations of co-operative members. The primary aim of facilitating the co-operatives' compliance is to ensure that co-operative members are fully aware of what is expected of them and their co-operatives. After years of implementing what has been expected by his employer to facilitate the processes of registering cooperatives, capacitating cooperative members and ensuring that cooperatives comply with legislative requirements, the researcher was still faced with the question of ascertaining whether people that he had helped to register co-operatives had achieved socio-economic empowerment or whether they were still in the same position they had been in before participating in a primary co-operatives initiative.

The rationale for study was to explore, describe and gain an in-depth understanding of Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives.

#### **1.4. RESEARCH QUESTION, PRIMARY GOAL, AND OBJECTIVE THE STUDY**

This section provides a brief outline of the research question, research goal, and research objective that will be presented for the purpose of the research project.

##### **1.4.1. Research question**

The research question is regarded as a specific question that provides an explicit statement of what it is that the researcher wants to learn by conducting the study (Bryman, 2012:9). Maxwell (2013:229) argues that a research question serves to impart an ardent aspiration in the researcher in order to find answers to a phenomenon that is not well known. David and Sutton (2011:12) state that the research question can be viewed as the star that guides the researcher to travel throughout the whole process of research. They further contend that a well-formulated research question is one that enables the researcher to continue following the guiding star even during the difficult times, and it helps the researcher to shy away from unnecessary modifications. The research question helps the researcher focus on the study (Maxwell, 2013:229). The research question also helps the researcher to narrow the focus of the study in an appropriate and clear manner as it provides guidance to the researcher on how to conduct the research (Maxwell, 2013:229).

A well-formulated research question must be researchable, feasible, relevant, focused and, most importantly, it must be ethical (O'Brien & DeSisto, 2013:83). The research question will shed light on the focal point, indicate the direction of the investigation in the study and provide the researcher with a focus for data collection (Maxwell, 2013:229). Maree (2007:25) asserts that the primary aim of the research question is to reformulate the research statement with the purpose of ensuring that it forms a question.

The research question for this study was posed as follows: What are Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective?

#### **1.4.2. Goal and objective**

According to Maxwell (2013:28), 'research goal' can be defined as "the researchers intention to accomplish something in the research project, achieving certain research objectives or changing someone's situation". Research goal can also be defined as "the researcher's goal to uncover some reality about the phenomenon under study with the view to providing answers to the research question" (Daymon & Holloway, 2011:368). It can, therefore, be contended that the goal of the research is to find answers to the research questions. According to Grinell and Unran, cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2011:108), the research goal indicates the central thrust of the research study, while Thomas and Hodges (2010:38) refer to a research goal as being the "overarching purpose of the research project which sets the stage for the objectives of the study." According to Schenck et al., (2010:175), a research goal helps "to identify a clearly defined generative focus of a desired future on which action will be based upon."

The research goal for this study was: To develop an in-depth understanding of Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective.

Research objectives are specific issues that a researcher needs to achieve from the research project to be undertaken, and they are the ways of seeking and observing evidence (Rubin & Babbie, 2013:7). The term "research objectives" indicates that the research methods and procedures do not rely on the researcher's personal feelings or opinions, and that specific methods are used at different stages of the research process (Welman et al., 2005:2). According to Brink, Van der Walt, and Van Rensburg (2006:80), "research objectives flow logically from the research problem and purpose, and [that] they refine the problem and purpose and provide greater detail on what the researcher is going to research." The research objectives state what the purpose of collecting data is, and describe the steps taken to accomplish the goals of the study (Gilbert,

2008:53). Kirby, Greaves, and Reid (2006:125) add that the research objective answers the “how” part of the research goal and helps the researcher to manoeuvre through the process of research.

The objective of this study was: To explore and describe the motivations for and experiences of Vosloorus community members in participating in primary co-operatives.

The overall task objectives for the study were divided as follows:

- To identify a sample of participants comprising members of primary co-operatives residing within the area of Vosloorus;
- To conduct semi-structured interviews, aided by open-ended questions contained in an interview guide;
- To explore and describe Vosloorus community members’ motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective;
- To sift, sort and analyse the data obtained according the eight steps for qualitative data analysis as proposed by Tesch (in Creswell, 2009:186);
- To describe the explored findings related to Vosloorus community members’ motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective;
- To interpret the data and conduct a literature control in order to verify the data; and
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations pertaining to Vosloorus community members’ motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective.

## **1.5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This section of the study provides a brief outline of the research methodologies applicable to the study. Research methodology is the process which focuses on the research steps that the researcher has decided to take in this research project (Brynard & Hanekon, 2006:36). A central focus of a research methodology is that it

encompasses all the requirements for the research activities which, amongst others, include planning, scheduling, and the execution of the research (Brynard & Hanekon, 2006:36). According to Fouché and Delport, (2011), as cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport, (2011:73), “there are two well-known and recognized research approaches, namely: the quantitative and the qualitative research approaches.” For the purpose of this study the researcher has utilised the qualitative research approach.

Qualitative research is a research method that seeks to explain the lives of people who are involved in the research process from their point of view (Flick, Von Kardoff & Steinke, 2004:01). According to Fouché and Delport, (2011) as cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport, (2011:74), “the qualitative research approach aims to critically understand social life in a context that participants attach to the meaning of everyday life. In its broadest meaning qualitative research approach is intended to elicit participants’ explanations of experience, perception and meaning to life.” The perspectives of the research participants are important in the research, and the researcher has aimed to understand the phenomenon under study from that standpoint.

According to Braun and Clarke (2013:4), qualitative research seeks to understand and interpret more meanings; it recognises information as gathered in a broader context and it is sometimes capable of producing new knowledge that can contribute to a more general understanding of phenomena. Qualitative research also aims to add value to a better understanding of social realities and to apply a deeper focus into the process, meaning patterns, and structural features. In addition, Creswell (2009:129) asserts that a qualitative research approach steers away from hypotheses or predictions, but asks pertinent research questions.

The following are the common characteristics inherent in qualitative research Creswell (2003:179):

- In a qualitative research, the researcher is considered to be a key instrument in the process of data collection;
- Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting and not in a laboratory;

- Qualitative researchers typically gather data from multiple data sources and do not rely on a single source for data collection;
- Qualitative researchers are interested in the meanings participants ascribe to the phenomenon under investigation;
- In a qualitative research the data analysis is an inductive process;
- In qualitative research, rather than a fixed or predetermined research design, an emergent research design is opted for; and
- Qualitative research is interpretive and holistic in nature.

A qualitative research approach is best suited to obtaining an in-depth understanding of phenomena that is not well known, and the researcher has intended to explore these phenomena by obtaining information and explanations from the participants (Rasmussen, Ostergaardvan & Beckmann, 2006:93; Royse, 2008:270; Nicholls, 2009:528). Owing to a lack of in-depth information on the motivation for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives, the researcher has applied the qualitative research process by focusing his interest on the motivation for and experiences of Vosloorus community members who participate in primary co-operatives.

Interviews were used for the study as a method for collecting data. The interviews were conducted in a place/venue that allowed the participants to feel free, unrestricted and comfortable. The researcher interacted with the participants in their natural setting, interpreted their words and observations and originated themes from the collected data. Since the researcher was interested in exploring the experiences and motivation of Vosloorus community members who participate in primary co-operatives, the qualitative research method was deemed to be the most suitable approach to achieve this goal. A comprehensive presentation on the application of research methodologies will be provided in Chapter 3.

## **1.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This section of the study provides and explains the research ethics applicable to the study. Ethics are defined as the principles which guide how social research should be conducted (Ramcharan & Cutcliffe, 2001:359). David and Sutton (2011:30) allude to the fact that research ethics can be regarded as principles intended to guide researchers to protect participants from potential harm and to preserve their rights. Furthermore, Curtis and Curtis (2011:16) clarify that good ethical principles are based on discovering knowledge of phenomena through participants rather than treating them as subjects of the study. Grinel and Unran, as cited by De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2011:115), raise some of important issues regarding research ethics. The issues regarding research ethics include informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, avoidance of harming participants or deceiving respondents, and not violating participant's privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. The following were the elements of the research ethics that were exercised during the study:

### **1.6.1. Informed consent**

Informed consent refers to the process of research which confirms that participants were afforded the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the relevant information, details, and objectives of the research project, and that they agree in writing to participate. Informed consent also refers to a "procedure that is utilised to safeguard the participants' rights when they approve their participation in the conducted research" (Franklin, Rowland, Fox & Nicolson, 2012:1731). Grinel and Unran, as cited by De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2011:117), explain that informed consent implies several factors, which include that "all possible or adequate information on the goal of the research; the procedures to be followed during the investigation; the expected duration of the participants' involvement; the possible advantages, disadvantages, dangers which participants will likely be exposed to; as well as the credibility of the researcher, will be rendered to potential subjects or their legal representatives."

Informed consent will ensure that respondents agree to participate in the research project, based on the information provided. Informed consent, therefore, is based

on the notion that the participants in the research should be allowed to agree or refuse to participate in the intended study. The researcher will ensure that all the participants received a standardised consent form which will ask them to agree that they have decided to be part of the study of their own free will.

### **1.6.2. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality refers to keeping safe the information that has been shared in trust and confidence where disclosure might cause prejudice (Giordano, O'Reilly, Taylor & Dogra, 2007:264). Gravetter and Forzano (2009:113) highlight that confidentiality ensures that the information obtained from research participants will be kept secret. Goredema-Braid (2010:51) describes confidentiality as a means of assuring research participants that specific details pertaining to what they have shared will not be passed on to others and that confidentiality will be guaranteed.

For the purpose of the study, a principle underlying confidentiality was that the data gathered during the research was utilised only for the intended purposes, which the participants consented to, because the researcher has to generate a research report and publish the research findings. An integral element in the study was, however, to share the findings with other relevant professionals in order to shed light on the experiences for and motivations of members of primary co-operatives. Furthermore, the researcher will disseminate the research findings without identifying the participants or allowing any personal details becoming known.

### **1.6.3. Anonymity**

Anonymity refers to the protection of research participants' identities during and after the research process (Goredema-Braid, 2010:51). In addition, Gravetter and Forzano (2009:113) postulate that anonymity means that the information obtained from participants will not be associated with their real names during the study or in the results of the research report. Moreover, Bryman (2012:14) warns that careful consideration should be given to protecting the identities of participants, especially if anonymity has been guaranteed. It was therefore, critical that the researcher change the participants' real names and assign pseudonyms, codes, or case numbers in the report (Berg, 2009:90).

#### **1.6.4. Management of information**

Management of information refers to the researcher's ability to label recordings properly, taking notes, organising research data, and determining how the data will be made accessible (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:206). Management of information also refers to how the existing information will be identified, how it will be stored, and who will have access to it (Lichtman, 2014:57). The researcher has an ethical obligation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to keep the collected data secure, and also to ensure that the collected information is utilised solely for the purpose for which it was intended (Descombe, 2010:66)

It could be argued that even the finest piece of research will not be useful if it is not properly disseminated. Research is conducted so that it can be documented, allowing others to familiarise themselves with what has been researched and concluded. Results of the study will be published, and careful consideration and attention will be given to the rights of the participants (Brynman, 2012:14). The researcher was cautious when disseminating research results in order to ensure that research participants could not be identified from the findings (Engel & Schutt, 2009:64).

In order to ensure the proper management of information, anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher ensured that the collected data was kept separate from any identifying particulars relating to the research participants, and pseudonyms and code names were assigned to protect their identities. As a result, the audiotapes and the transcripts will be destroyed after the completion of the study (Walliman, 2011:260).

### **1.7. CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

This part of the chapter defines and clarifies the key concepts applicable to the study. For the purpose of study, the meanings and definitions of concepts are explained as they are used in the context of the study:

#### **1.7.1. Co-operative**

Co-operative means an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic and social needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise organised and operated on co-operative principles (International Co-operative Alliance, 2012:10; Co-operatives

Act 14 of 2005:5). Co-operative is also defined as a business organisation that is owned and controlled by members who are drawn from one or more stakeholders and whose benefits go mainly to those members (McDonnell & Macknight, 2012:74). It is an autonomous association of persons united to meet their economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise (Grosskopf, Munkner & Ringle, 2016:47). For the purpose of this study, co-operative refers to any income-generating project which exists and is registered as a co-operative.

### **1.7.2. Primary co-operative**

The concept refers to a co-operative formed by a minimum of five natural persons whose objective it is to provide employment or services to its members and to facilitate community development (International Co-operative Alliance 2012:10; Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005:5). The South African Institute of Tax Practitioners (SAIT, 2010:09) describes a primary co-operative as an enterprise which comprises a membership of individuals, families, or community members; in other words, it is a typical grassroots organisation. For the purpose of this study, primary co-operative refers to any entity registered as a co-operative, operated by a minimum of five active members.

### **1.7.3. Experience**

Experience refers to knowledge that is gained through exposure to, or participation in, an event, which includes attitudes, feelings, perceptions, behaviour, and needs (Grobler, Schenk & Mbedzi, 2013:48). Experience can also be described as the perspectives of individuals on events and their meanings (Parrish, 2010:144). Similarly, Grobler, Schenck, and Du Toit (2003:45) view experience as an umbrella concept that includes all possible experiences. They refer to the needs, behaviour, emotions, values, and perceptions of an individual which are unique to that particular individual. For the purpose of the study, experience was utilised as knowledge gained through participation in the co-operative

### **1.7.4. Motivations**

Motivation denotes the reasons for people's actions, desires, and needs (Rani & Kumar-Lenka, 2012:4). It is short-term and long-term goals that guide and encourage behaviours believed to be important in achieving specific goals (Brown, 2007:7). Motivation can also be defined as an internal state that arouses action,

directs certain behaviours, and assists them in maintaining that arousal and action with regard to behaviours important and appropriate to their environment (Wiseman & Gilbert, 2008:43). The South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (2005:684 s.v. “motivation”) refers to motivation as the reason for people’s actions, desires, and needs to do something. For the purpose of the study, motivation refers to the ability to continue and remain an active member of a co-operative.

#### **1.7.5. Participation**

Participation can be defined as a means to work within one’s realities and the ability to recognise one’s own expertise (Schenck et al., 2010:83). Participation can be regarded as the individual’s engagement in almost all aspects of a certain project, including planning, implementation, evaluation, and decision making (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2016:67). For the purpose of this study, participation means the participant’s ability to take part in the co-operative’s activities.

#### **1.7.6. Vosloorus**

Vosloorus is a township in the Gauteng Province and is part of the Ekurhuleni Municipality. The Ekurhuleni Municipality is located in the eastern region of Gauteng and is popularly known as the East Rand. The Ekurhuleni Municipality is divided into three regions: northern region, eastern region, and southern region. Vosloorus is located at the southern region of Ekurhuleni, and the population of Vosloorus is predominantly Black African. The socio-economic status varies in terms of income, education, and occupation. The researcher is familiar with this township as this is the area where he worked.

### **1.8. STRUCTURE/ FORMAT**

The chapters of the research study will be as follows:

**Chapter 1** will provide an introduction and general orientation to the research report with specific focus on the following: introduction and problem formulation; problem statement; rationale of the study; research question, goal and objectives; research approach and design; ethical considerations; clarification of key concepts; and the content plan of the research report.

**Chapter 2** Theoretical Perspective of primary co-operatives

**Chapter 3** will include a presentation of the researcher's application of the qualitative research process.

**Chapter 4** will present the research findings, subject to literature control.

**Chapter 5** will provide a summary of the research report, and outline the conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF PRIMARY CO-OPERATIVES

#### 2.1. Introduction

The concept of co-operatives has evolved over time. The International Co-operative Alliance (2012:10) defines 'co-operative' as an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic and social needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise organised and operated on cooperative principles. Within the South African context, the definition is also supported by the government because the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 explains that a cooperative is regarded as an autonomous association of community members united to meet their economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. Social workers utilise different methods of social work to assist the community using group work or community work as some of the social work methods that can be employed by social workers to help communities when working with cooperatives.

This section of the of the research report provides a brief history of cooperative development, the legislative framework that guides the cooperative as well as full discussions on the various roles aligned to the to the concept of cooperatives in the South African context. The theoretical perspectives behind the cooperatives and sustainable development are also discussed. Finally, a chapter summary on is provided.

#### 2.2. History of Co-operatives

The establishment of "co-operatives" dates back as far as 1844 when the cooperative society was established in Britain at Rochdale, near Manchester, by mill workers (Yoshaki, 2010:11). This was according to the point of view of Robert Owen, who is considered worldwide as the brains behind cooperatives as movements or organisations. During 1908, in the United States of America (USA),

the Country Life Commission reported on the establishment of co-operatives and the term “co-operative” was then originally coined (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2011:11). As outlined in chapter one, the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 was passed by the American Senate in order to give cooperatives extension services. The co-operative movement and administration was then introduced into many countries, but it was only in 1921 that the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) held a Congress and formally adopted it (Yoshaki, 2010:11).

In addition, Swanepoel and De Beer (2011:11) point out that the Smith-Lever Act passed in the United States of America in 1914 was aimed at instituting community organisations that would, amongst other things, promote better living conditions for farmers, provide education, and improve the livelihood of citizens. The original aims of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 are still relevant today, even outside the borders of the USA. The pioneers of cooperatives were mainly intellectual and wealthy classes with a desire to protect their businesses and living conditions at the time. The initiators intended to introduce cooperation and to enlighten other business people on the cooperative concept (Yoshaki 2010:4).

Furthermore, Kangayi, Olfert and Partridge (2009:50) indicated that the cooperative concept found its way into many countries because “the intellectuals and the well-to-do” in most of the developing countries also wanted to help “the poor and the ignorant” to escape from the socio-economic ills which urbanisation and industrialization had brought to them. Khan (2001:2) concurs with Swanepoel and De Beer (2011:11) that, in order to empower communities to take part in economic activities across all sectors of life, it is important to achieve national and international goals for sustainable development, to build stronger economies, and improve the quality of life for all in the community.

According to Yoshaki (2010:103), in 1995 the ICA convened a congress in Manchester in order to define ‘co-operative’ universally and establish cooperative values and cooperative principles. Co-operatives are based primarily on the values of equity, self-help, democracy, equality, solidarity and self-responsibility. Traditionally the founding members and ordinary members of the co-operative should always believe in the ethical values of social responsibility, openness,

honesty, and caring for others. There are seven principles of the cooperative that are adopted by ICA and are utilised as guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice. Yoshaki (2010:103) and the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 (2005:4), outline and explain the co-operative principles as follows.

### **Voluntary and Open Membership**

Co-operatives are regarded as voluntary organs that are open to all people who are able to use their services and are willing to accept the responsibilities that are bestowed upon them as member, without racial, gender, political, social or religious discrimination.

### **Democratic Member Control**

Co-operatives are democratically controlled by their members, who are active participants in decision making and setting their policies. Both men and women who are serving as representatives of the cooperative are accountable to the members of the co-operative regardless of the position they hold within the co-operative. In primary cooperatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and at other levels of co-operatives voting is organised in a democratic manner.

### **Member Economic Participation**

All members of the co-operative are expected to contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. Part of the co-operative capital is usually regarded as the common property of the co-operative. The capital used as a subscription for membership can be utilised with minimal conditions to compensate members. The surplus from the capital can be allocated for any or all of the following purposes: setting up co-operative reserves, of which part would be indivisible; developing the co-operative; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions; and supporting other co-operative activities provided they are approved by the co-operative members.

### **Autonomy and Independence**

Co-operatives are autonomous and independent organs that are controlled by their members. Co-operatives are allowed to enter into agreements with other organisations or institutions to raise capital from external sources, but they do so while maintaining their autonomy, and they ensure democratic control by their members.

### **Education, Training and Information**

Co-operatives should always strive to provide education, training and information for all of their members, elected representatives, and employees in order to contribute effectively to the development of the co-operatives. Co-operative members should inform the general public, including the youth and other leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

### **Cooperation among Co-operatives**

Co-operatives should strive to serve their members in a most effective way and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together with other co-operatives either locally, nationally or internationally.

### **Concern for Community**

Co-operatives work to sustain the development of their communities by involving other community members.

The above mentioned principles are regarded as being the cornerstone of the cooperatives worldwide, including South Africa. According to Satgar (2007:20), all the seven principles of the cooperative have to be practiced daily, expressed in day to day cooperative activities and struggles because they define cooperatives identity of and summarize the ethical practice of cooperatives.

As indicated in chapter one, in South Africa, the Co-operatives Act was officially introduced and passed by the apartheid government in 1981 as the Co-operatives Act (Act 91 of 1981). During the 1980s, civil societies began recognising the co-operative as a tool for alleviating social and economic inequalities among the poor people in South Africa. For example, trade unions started developing co-

operatives as a vehicle to address the economic needs of redundant and retrenched workers. In 1986, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) formed the first formal black-owned co-operative in Phalaborwa when 50 former Phosphate Development Corporation Limited shop stewards formed a T-shirt printing co-operative and later practised poultry farming, marketing their products amongst workers at the mines.

According to the Integrated Strategy on the Development and Promotion of Co-operatives (2012:32) of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in the 1980s, the Catholic Church played a pivotal role in ensuring the Cape Credit Union League (CCUL) was establishment. The CCUL was later named the Savings and Credit Co-operative League (SACCOL) which became the first Savings and Credit Co-operative in South Africa. The SACCOL was established in 1993 and, with the assistance of designated management teams, focused solely on the provision and promotion of basic services to co-operatives, including education, registration, and training. In 1994, the first village Financial Services Co-operative (FSC) was established in the North West Province through the initiative of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the African Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (AFRACA).

Many of the co-operatives that were established during this time have since collapsed owing to corruption, maladministration, and internal conflict amongst members. Despite an apparently fertile context for co-operative development in South Africa, South Africa does not have many success stories, although the agricultural co-operatives sector has demonstrated the much needed commercial potential of the model (Phillip 2003:4). A lack of adherence to co-operative principles also aggravated the situation that led to this collapse. SACCOL is an example as one of the few co-operative establishments that have managed to continue existing, even after donor funding had dried up.

Post-democracy, the Co-operatives Act (Act 91 of 1981) was considered unsuitable in a democratic society. As a result, there was a need to develop new policies and laws that would enhance the expansion of sustainable co-operative initiatives in all sectors, as well as promote equity in and greater participation by

communities. In 2001, the South African government resolved that the mandate for the promotion and development of co-operatives be transferred to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and removed from the Department of Agriculture. The intention of this was to ensure that co-operatives were allowed to flourish and be given recognition in different sectors of the country's economy. Consequently, the DTI has continued to coordinate all efforts pertaining to co-operative development and it plays a pivotal role in leading the promotion of co-operatives in South Africa. It was during this period that communities became aware of co-operatives as a way to empower themselves.

In Bangladesh, for example, there is an entire ministerial portfolio with a directorate allocated to a government Minister who is responsible for overseeing co-operatives and capacitating competent officials in various regions. The same model is also used in Kenya where there is a government department fully capacitated with officials and support co-operatives in all regions. In other countries, such as Kenya, already noted above, there are more than 3 000 government officials responsible for the registration, deregistration, auditing, enforcement, and the provision of financial and nonfinancial support services which are carried out throughout the country, and they are fully decentralised (Moraa, 2008:38). Despite Kenya's having had its own challenges with co-operatives, it also provides valuable lessons for people who are eager to strengthen the co-operatives in their regions. Kenya differs from many countries, including South Africa, in many ways because 63% of Kenyans earn their livelihood from co-operatives, and this accounts for 45% of the country's GDP.

Japan is also regarded as one of the countries that is excelling in the co-operative sector. By comparison with western countries, the Japanese co-operative movement has developed only lately, but it rapidly grew after the 1970s, and since then co-operatives in Japan have become significant for consumers and also retail businesses (Yoshaki, 2010:2). The late development of Japanese cooperatives can be attributed to the way some political leaders almost choked cooperatives to death. It was mainly democratic leaders that encouraged the revival and laid the foundation for the rapid rebuilding of co-operatives (Yoshaki,

2010:17). The current Japanese co-operatives owe much of their development to learning from other leading cooperative countries.

In 2005 the South African parliament passed the Co-operatives Act (Act 14 of 2005) which laid the foundation for a more lively, supportive, and active environment for communities to establish co-operatives in their areas. Compared to previous legislation under the apartheid regime, new legislation in South Africa promotes co-operatives regardless of racial boundaries and economic status. The spirit of this legislation is noteworthy in its attempt to transform the culture of co-ops from being mainly white-dominant and agricultural. The Co-operatives Act (Act 14 of 2005) (South Africa, 2005: section 3) clearly indicates that there are certain fundamental principles which apply to co-operatives. They can take many different forms, depending on local needs and local culture. The specified principles of co-operatives which became the basis of the co-operative are voluntary, democratic control; open membership; limited return on capital; education for the members; surplus earnings to be returned to the members; and cooperation between co-operatives (Tesoriero, 2010:172).

The declaration of the Co-operatives Act (Act 14 of 2005) resulted in extraordinary success in registering new co-operatives in South Africa. According to the DTI, the Integrated Strategy on the Development and Promotion of Co-operatives (2012:34), the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) register recorded that, between the years 2005 and 2009, 19 550 new co-operatives were registered in various sectors. Moreover, the total number of registered and active co-operatives, as at 31 March 2016, was 43 062. The main factor which contributed to this escalation was legislation and the relevant spheres of government that provided enabling environments for procurement and support measures. It is, however, worth noting that most of these newly-registered co-operatives require high and sustained levels of support because they remain vulnerable and very weak.

The majority of co-operatives that are registered on the database of the Department of Trade and Industry are found in KwaZulu-Natal Province (KZN). KZN has managed to achieve high levels of performance in terms of new co-

operative entrants, and it has demonstrated best practice on how to increase the number of co-operatives within the country (DTI, 2012:35) successfully. This best practice requires closer examination in terms of emulating lessons throughout the country. In KZN, unlike other provinces, there is a high level of commitment from provincial leadership and politicians to promote and support co-operatives effectively (DTI, 2012:36). The province has managed to create a highly-resourced directorate dedicated to focussing on the promotion of co-operatives. Secondly, each district in the province has a well-resourced office geared towards the promotion of co-operatives. To ensure that co-operatives have access to markets, provincial departments have been empowered to procure services from co-operatives across all sectors. Local government was also instrumental in providing strategic business opportunities and infrastructure support to co-operatives.

According to the South African Local Government Association (SALGA, 2011:11), the KZN model has been proved to be successful in terms of new co-operatives. Nevertheless, there is no model that is immune to challenges, and so there are also some challenges that confront the KZN model. Some of the challenges experienced by the KZN model include the lack of compliance with the Co-operatives Act, poor debt repayment, conflict amongst members of co-operatives and hostility from mainstream businesses. There are, however, some valuable lessons that can be learned from the KZN model. The Umanyano Agricultural Primary Co-operative is one of the successful co-operatives that has benefited from the KZN co-operatives model. The municipality leased them land in Brakfontein in KZN, and they put it to good use for the benefit of co-operative members. This co-operative can serve as a good example of co-operative success through the support of the relevant KZN local government. The co-operative consists of 16 women from the Kwanonkqubela Township. The members of the co-operative use the leased land to cultivate a variety of vegetables that they sell to businesses and the surrounding communities.

Another good example of a successful co-operative supported by the KZN government is the Thuthukamzizi Bakery Co-operative. This co-operative is located in the township of Emazizini in KZN. Besides bread, the co-operative also bakes scones, muffins, rolls and biscuits to sell to the community. The KZN

Department of Economic Development organised workshops and baking lessons that benefited the members of the co-operative. In Gauteng, there are also a number of successful co-operatives. The Khensani Women's Co-operative is a sewing co-operative based in Ekurhuleni, Vosloorus. The co-operative consists of six women from Vosloorus who started the co-operative with their combined savings. The co-operative supplies protective clothing to the municipality and also has a five-year contract with the Department of Social Development (DSD) to supply some of the surrounding schools with school uniforms.

### **2.3. Co-operatives' Policy Framework**

Policies provide an overall plan of action and framework that has been drawn up by government in order to direct public personnel on how to deal with different issues that concern intervention from government (Lawrence & Webber, 2008:57). In the real world not all aspects of policies are transformed into law but most of them are used as a guide to implement the legislation. Policy frameworks are the government mandate which provides a framework within which government, officials, organizations and private sector intervene in certain situations that are subject to regulations (Nicholas, Rautenbach, & Maistry, 2010:50).

Government provides a regulatory environment, through laws and regulations, within which business is required to operate. The government is regarded as a critical role player in designing the policies and legislation that regulate the operations and the existence of cooperatives. The Government's policies should also take into account the protection of cooperatives from unfair competition (Dallago, 2006:16). In July 2003, there was a Presidential Growth and Development Summit which was held in South Africa, and it endorsed special measures to support cooperatives as part of the government strategy in order to create jobs and develop the South African economy (Phillip, 2003:14).

In addition to the above, the South African government passed the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 in order to provide clarity on the legalities and governance of cooperatives. Since the passing of the Act the responsibility for cooperatives in government has been transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Trade and Industry, where these responsibilities were based before

the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 was passed into law. The Cooperative Enterprise Development Division (CEDD) has also been established since the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005, and all those identified as cooperatives are supposed to be registered as such with the Registrar of Cooperatives in order to be regarded as cooperatives (Phillip, 2003:14).

Laws and regulations assist by creating an equal playing field for businesses that compete against one another. For example, insisting that all businesses must meet the same social responsibility standards means that, by complying with the laws and regulations, businesses meet a minimum level of social responsibility standards expected by government (Lawrence & Webber, 2008:57). A policy framework is considered essential for the development of co-operatives by ensuring proper controls to make certain that the true character and purpose of co-operatives are respected. The policy framework should also define, amongst other things, how the boards of cooperatives are elected and how profits should be distributed (Dallago, 2006:16). The government has formulated a number of policies and strategies that have a bearing on the sustainability and development of co-operatives. Some of the key policies and strategies that seek to develop the sustainability of co-operatives are as follows.

### **CO-OPERATIVES ACT 14 OF 2005**

The Co-operatives Act 14 OF 2005 is regarded as the main custodian of the regulation and legal framework of co-operatives in the South African context (DTI, 2012:56). The Act breaks away from the one-sided Co-operatives Act of 1981 which supported one racial group and focused mainly on agriculture. The Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 is inclusive of all co-operative types and sectors while, at the same time, upholding the international values and principles of co-operatives as outlined in the International Co-operative Alliance (Satgar, 2007:4). The Act aims to regulate the formation, registration and management of co-operatives, the establishment of the board, the dissolution of co-operatives and other matters that are related to the operation of co-operatives in South Africa. The Act also provides a legislative framework within which all different forms of cooperatives are accommodated and regulated (Phillip, 2003:14).

### **National Industrial Policy Framework (NIPF):**

According to the DTI (2012:56), the key aims of the NIPF are relevant to the promotion of co-operatives in general. The main objectives of the NIPF are to: facilitate the diversification of commodities and services; intensify South Africa's industries and knowledge of economy; promote job creation initiatives; increase economical participation of historically marginalized and disadvantaged people; and build strong productive capacities (DTI, 2012:56).

### **Integrated Strategy on the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Small Enterprises:**

There is a strong relationship between the National Industrial Policy Framework and the Integrated Strategy on the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Small Enterprises. The general objective of the Integrated Strategy on the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Small Enterprises is to foster entrepreneurship effectively and adequately and to promote small enterprises such as co-operatives (DTI, 2012:57). The relationship between government policies and strategies is to support all government programmes for co-operatives and small businesses (Dallago, 2006:16).

### **Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Strategy (B-BBEE):**

One of the main objectives of the B-BBEE strategy is to increase substantially the number of black people who have ownership of new or existing businesses which also includes co-operatives. The strategy is aimed at increasing the procurement of services from black-owned businesses in order to strengthen the capacity of black-owned businesses through preferential procurement procedures (DTI, 2012:57). According to Satgar (2007:5), although B-BBEE is aimed at redressing the disadvantages of the past, it is populist by nature because its focus is placed mainly on race whereas it is supposed to assist co-operatives in a sustainable way from the ground moving upwards. He (Satgar, 2007:21) further argues that non-racial practices should take place at grassroots because cooperative principles encourage de-racializing the cooperative sector and that can be achieved by cooperatives on the ground.

**Anti-Poverty Strategy:**

The South African Constitution of 1996 provides a framework for the “progressive realisation of rights” and stresses the need for a developmental approach with the key focus being the eradication of poverty and economic inequality (SALGA, 2011:10). The key aims of this strategy are to identify existing interventions that seek to address poverty in South Africa and to examine ways in which these initiatives can be supported through the mainstream economy by different spheres of government (DTI, 2012:57). As such, the development of co-operatives is part of one such intervention to address poverty.

**Strategic Framework on Gender and Women’s Economic Empowerment:**

There is also a need for legislation that seeks to protect the interests of the community members, especially marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as women, and such laws are necessary to encourage their economic participation and assist co-operatives (Dallago, 2006:16). The Strategic Framework on Gender and Women’s Economic Empowerment proposes a huge quantity of government initiatives that are aimed at providing different support systems to businesses owned by women, including co-operatives. The measures include the providing business information, support, education, training and financing initiatives by women (DTI, 2012:58). The strategy has a bearing or influence on the promotion of collective collaboration and the development of co-operatives.

**Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA):**

The AsgiSA clearly outlines various focus areas that seek to tackle constraints that require continuous support and monitoring through relevant strategies, policies and programmes. The areas that focus on the acceleration of the development and growth of cooperatives include easing the regulatory burden on cooperatives, access to market opportunities for cooperatives, and easing the cash flow problems experienced by co-operatives through timely payments by all organs of state (DTI, 2012:56).

**Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP):**

According to Dallago (2006:16), legislation, policies or strategies should ensure that cooperatives are easily absorbed by big retailers and corporate companies that already monopolize and dominate the market, and the Industrial Policy Action Plan is one such policy that strives to ensure that. The IPAP's main focus is to provide the necessary support for cooperatives, training, application of technology for business planning and the upgrade of cooperatives, among other initiatives (DTI, 2012:57).

**Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP)**

The Gauteng Enterprise Propeller was established by the Gauteng Provincial Government to provide non-financial and financial services to small businesses and cooperatives. The GEP offers financial services, such as loans for startup, working capital, acquisition of assets and expansion of assets, while the non-financial services and support include after care and expert services that are offered to co-operatives in order to increase their chances of success (DTI, 2012:58).

**National Youth Development Agency (NYDA):**

The NYDA offers services that are geared towards supporting youth development, ensuring that entrepreneurial skills, talent and experience are nurtured among the youth. It also enhances the capacity of youth to take part in all aspects of the country's economic, social, and community growth (DTI, 2012:58). The NYDA has a dedicated division providing support for co-operatives. The services offered by the NYDA to co-operatives in order to provide a holistic approach to development include business development, providing business support, linking the youth to market opportunities, access to external experts and their services of mentorship and training.

## **2.4. Types of Co-operatives**

As classified by Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005, cooperatives may take the form of being a primary cooperative, secondary co-operative or tertiary co-operative. Both the policy and the legislation that regulate the development of co-operatives ensure that the three different types of co-operatives are able to organize themselves from one level to another and, ultimately, into a national body which is regarded as a tertiary co-operative. The distinction between the three types of co-operatives is discussed below.

### **2.4.1. Primary Co-operatives**

The concept refers to a co-operative formed by a minimum of five natural persons whose objective it is to provide employment or services to its members and to facilitate community development (ICA, 2012:10; Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005:5). The South African Institute of Tax Practitioners (SAIT, 2010:09) describes a primary co-operative as an enterprise which comprises a membership of individuals, families, or community members, in other words a typical grassroots organisation. An example of this is if individuals register a co-operative that is made up of a group of five or more individuals regardless of their purpose to promote community development, provide services or employment for one another then their co-operative will fall into the category of being a primary cooperative. According to Satgar (2007:15), once a primary co-operative has initiated its success its members can later determine whether the co-operative is ready to progress from its primary status and cooperate with another co-operative in order to form a secondary co-operative

### **2.4.2. Secondary Co-operatives**

A secondary co-operative consists of more than one primary co-operative. A secondary cooperative is formed when two or more primary co-operatives come together because they want to promote their services, or they want to venture into a different sector (ICA, 2012:10; Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005:5). The secondary co-operative manages the affairs from which its primary co-operatives operate, and it attempts to promote its member co-operatives by working with different stakeholders (Satgar 2007:15). According to Satgar (2007:15), once a secondary

co-operative has been successful its members can organize themselves before forming or joining a tertiary co-operative.

### **2.4.3. Tertiary Co-operatives**

The third and last level of cooperative type is the tertiary cooperative and the Cooperatives Act 14 of 2005 provides for the establishment of a tertiary cooperative. A tertiary cooperative is formed by two or more existing and operational secondary cooperatives. The tertiary cooperative has to be constituted in a way which ensures that all sectors of co-operatives and co-operative movements or structures are represented (Satgar, 2007:20). The tertiary co-operative is established in order to promote the interests of their members, for capacity building, to provide support, to manage partnerships and to voice the concerns of their co-operative members to the private sector, government, non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders (Satgar, 2007:16). Tertiary cooperatives are also formed to engage in provincial, national and international policy decisions and legislation for the development of co-operatives.

Regardless of the types of co-operative, whether primary, secondary or tertiary co-operatives, there are also what are referred to as sectors of the co-operative. There are many different sectors of co-operatives as identified by the ICA. These cooperative sectors have different priorities, such as tracking records or dealing with challenges, and they differ on how they impact on the society (Phillip, 2003:4). According to the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 (2005:8), there nine types of co-operatives, also referred to as sectors of co-operatives. When closely examined and as mentioned in the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 (2005:8), these types of co-operatives are summarised as follows:

- Agricultural co-operative (agricultural products);
- Community businesses (businesses that are owned by the community);
- Consumer co-operatives (a group of people who buy goods together in bulk in order to get a discount and other collaboration benefits such as the equitable distribution of labour);

- Financial services co-operative (people contribute money saved for a specific purpose, for example, burial societies, and offer loans to members and/or non-members);
- Housing co-operatives (a group of people who build houses together for co-operative members and also share in the benefit of an equitable distribution of labour);
- Marketing and supply co-operatives (a group of people who sell their products together through one organisation);
- Service co-operatives (provision of technical services);
- Social co-operatives / credit unions (stokvels or savings societies through which people save for a specific purpose, for example, burial societies), which offer loans to members and/or non-members; and
- Worker co-operatives (this are co-operatives that are controlled and owned by those who work in them).

## **2.5. Co-operatives Challenges**

Co-operatives are faced with multiple challenges that are related to their business viability and their basic level of business understanding. Their success or failure is mostly determined by their members' ability to acquaint themselves with ways of dealing with challenges that characterize cooperatives as a form of business (Philip, 2003:5). According to the DTI (2012:54), most of the newly established co-operatives are initiated by unemployed people from economically marginalised areas with a lack of business management experience and often with a low skills level. As an example, certain co-operatives, such as housing, production and agricultural, require specialist technical knowledge which is often unavailable. A lack of both technical and management skills by co-operative members usually results in less chance of success. The lack of the above-mentioned skills is one of the major contributory factors that leads to tensions within a co-operative. Could this be a contributing factor to the failure of most of the co-operatives, as noted by Innes (1992:143). The lack of skills poses a serious threat and is a challenge with regard to managing the daily activities of co-operatives. The study conducted by the DTI (2012:55) shows that only a smaller percentage of new co-operatives managed to access funds, whether as a grant or loan. According to the study conducted by the DTI (2012:55), a large proportion of registered co-operatives

(over 64%) had never attended any form of workshop, training, or capacity building since registration.

One of the most common challenges that cooperatives have to deal with is tensions between the short-term desire of the co-operative members to improve their quality of life as opposed to the long-term desire for the co-operative to succeed as a business entity (Tesoriero, 2010:172). Again, one of the key challenge faced by cooperatives seems to be to break into big open markets rather than focusing only on opportunities at the local market (Philip, 2003:21). There are also some situations where some co-operatives have taken both forward and backward steps since their formation, and this on its own is a challenge that needs to be tackled. According to Ogbeide (2015:99), the forward and backward movement as a challenge is exaggerated by different government departments and different agencies that use different concepts or strategies for development while targeting similar co-operatives but working in silos. According to Philip (2003:3), however, despite many challenges and various trials affecting the development of co-operatives, co-operatives have endured as they continue to inspire people and thrive in many countries. From the above discussion on the challenges that are faced by cooperatives it has been clearly indicated that, despite the challenges that are faced by cooperatives, there are some advantages that co-operatives bring to their members and the community at large.

## **2.6. Advantages of co-operatives**

In most of the developing countries, such as South Africa, as a result of the lack of employment opportunities within the formal sector, many people look to a variety of legitimate and illegitimate opportunities existing in the informal sector to survive and to provide for their families (Elliot, 2006:86). Co-operatives have the potential to strengthen the community rather than to weaken community solidarity (Tesoriero, 2010:172). It can be suggested that, even in the supposedly highly competitive world of big business, it is cooperation and joint ventures rather than competition that ensure the continuity of having income (Tesoriero, 2010:172). Within the context of a limited resource base, co-operatives afford their members the opportunity of harnessing collective resources in order to enhance their sustainable development and economic stability. The main strength of co-

operatives lies in the fact that they are capacitated to provide their members with tools that they can utilise for collective economic benefits, which will then enable their members to acquire both natural and human resources that will benefit them over a prolonged period. Moraa (2008:18) argues that, without these vigorous methods of addressing issues of inequality, co-operatives cannot hold on to already meagre resources.

According to the Department of Social Development (2004:27), the objectives of income-generating and related projects are as follows: “alleviating poverty, by making it possible for the poor to have income in order to meet their basic needs; create employment to reduce poverty; create income generating opportunities; and wealth redistribution, and contributing to economic growth by improving innovation and competitiveness.” At local government level within the South African context, co-operatives are regarded as pro-poor in that their establishment is a critical intervention which specifically targets the needs of the poor and disadvantaged (Nel, 2005:26). This is because co-operatives are systems through which communities can organise themselves by pooling production or consumption resources for mutual economic benefit (Tesoriero, 2010:172). Co-operatives can be utilised to assist in the implementation of community-based initiatives and sustainable development. This is because co-operatives have the potential for economic opportunities to devolve to the poor and disadvantaged. The government has continuously advocated the use of the co-operative model for the implementation of social upliftment projects. The cooperatives, however, have a very slim chance of success unless the group receives support and motivation from the government. From the above discussion, it is, therefore, worth discussing further what contributes to the success or failure of cooperatives.

## **2.7. Successes and failures of Cooperatives**

Co-operatives have not been without their problems. Many co-operatives have been formed with widely differing social, economic, political, and cultural contexts. Yoshaki (2010:108) indicates that the main causes of the failure of co-operatives have been premature operations while ignoring investment in their own human and financial resources. Phillip (2003:22) contends that in most instances cooperatives are formed by poor or unemployed people who face the reality of no

prior work experience or little of it and they lack business management skills and even financial literacy. This needs to be seen in the context that it contributes to the wider failure rate of most co-operative start-ups, and it also needs to be recognized that co-operatives are faced with additional challenges that makes it more difficult for them to survive (Philip, 2003:19).

A study conducted by DTI in 2004 has discovered that economic development projects, such as co-operatives, are less successful in terms of earning some kind of income for participants when compared with other projects such as food aid and skills development (Patel, 2005:276). As recorded by Innes (1992:143), new types of job creation schemes and poverty alleviation initiatives, such as co-operatives, which aim to give members control over their incomes and quality of work and life are also failing. The reality is that, up until now, many of these co-operatives have failed to be sustainable in the long term because of differing layers of challenges. Khan (2001:2) also asserts that it is essential to build stronger economies by empowering communities to participate fully in economic activities in order to improve the community's quality of life and to achieve goals for sustainable development.

Maintaining a co-operative ethos in the midst of a competitive society is not easy. As a result, many co-operatives have been unable to survive for more than a short time. For example, a total of 159 co-operatives applied for funding, but only 39 succeeded in accessing funds. It is also worth noting that, during the same period, a total of 181 co-operatives applied for government grants, but only 61 succeeded (DTI, 2012:55). On the contrary, some co-operatives have grown so large over time that they have become more like conventional corporations or public agencies using a co-operative label (Tesoriero, 2010:172). Co-operatives are considered to be an employment option for relatively small numbers of workers who lack the needed skills in a formal market. In terms of the Co-operatives Act (Act 14 of 2005), the principle is that co-operative workers also own and control the co-operative. The principle "member-owner" by implication means that, in co-operatives, members should pool their human and natural resources together and in return the collective transformation of resources creates joint ownership of the co-operative and strong collateral for a sustainable future (Ogbeide, 2005:103).

While many were not successful, others have thrived and this, in the face of the dominance of the competitive ethic, demonstrates the viability and adaptability of the co-operative concept (Tesoriero, 2010:172). Most importantly, the success of a co-operative can be measured when it is deemed able to afford its members independence and a sustainable income (Moraa, 2008:18). Co-operatives naturally are able to generate or increase the community's income because they are locally developed, owned, and controlled and, as such, co-operatives build on the community's human, social and financial capital through access to education, training, skills and experience. Co-operatives also provide members with access to education, training to members while they also provide leadership opportunities at the board level to those who serve on the board and in other areas beyond the core business (Ogbeide, 2005:104).

Most often misconduct by co-operative managers, misunderstanding of the success of the cooperatives and a desire for own personal gain, neglecting the co-operative principles and administration based on members, is a determinant for failure of co-operatives (Yoshaki, 2010:108). It is, thus, important to discuss the structure of co-operatives and the roles played by different stakeholders in ensuring the success of the co-operatives.

## **2.8. The Structure and Management of Co-operatives**

As noted by Rishipal (2014.56), the structure of any business entity including co-operatives can be described as being either flat or tall and the term can also refer to the management levels of the hierarchy of co-operatives. Whether a co-operative has a flat or tall structure can have an influence on the co-operative. The distinction between flat and tall co-operative structures when contrasted is as follows, in a tall structure, there are several levels of authority between employees in contrast to flat structure which has a board of a handful of people overseeing the operations of the co-operative while other employees who are members of the co-operative all have an equal level of authority (Rishipal, 2014.56).

Co-operatives require continuous technical support both internally and externally to succeed. As alluded to by Phillip (2003:23), the internal managerial skills of

members of co-operatives are important, and, if such skills are lacking, co-operatives are bound to have limitations with regards to being effective models for job creation. Chapter 12 of the 2005 Act states that co-operatives, as autonomous institutions, need to make arrangements for their leadership to be empowered, and policy mandates need to be secured from membership at general meetings (for example, such meetings can be scheduled to happen once a month depending on the constitution of the co-operative) and in this regard cooperatives can be highly efficient in their decision making (Satgar, 2007:20). The discussion below shows how the structures and management of cooperatives should operate.

### **2.8.1. Role of manager /leaders**

Regardless of the type of co-operative a leader should be seen to be leading. Maxwell (2007:3) states that the principles of leadership form the foundation of any leader because these can be learned and bear the consequences for decisions made. This means that through learning experiences human actions are developed and individuals learn behavioural patterns based how others receive or react to them. Once the leaders have learned their roles they become more independent in their roles as they will start to demonstrate effectiveness in managing complex situations, managing risks while they strike a balance between control and support (Satgar, 2007:20).

According to Van Wagner (2008:13), there are more than eight types of leadership theory such as the participative theory, the management theory, the trait theory, the "great man" theory, the behavioural theory, the contingency theory, the situational theory and the relationship theory all of which are closely linked with managing the co-operative where management styles often overlap. The role of manager or leaders of any co-operative involves a series of hard tasks to be executed, and, when the co-operative grows, there is a need for leaders to be more transparent in their roles and then number of these roles also escalates (Phillip, 2003:21).

It remains the role and the responsibility of managers and leaders to ensure that co-operative members conform to the principles of the co-operative, execute their duties and conduct their day to day operational tasks. The leaders are also

entrusted to manage possible risks which could impact on the cooperative. They have to identify opportunities that can further develop or grow the cooperative (Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005, 2005:7). The leaders are expected to manage difficult tasks, offer expert advice, setting expectations for co-operative members, while they also model good practice. They have to be accountable to co-operative members and take responsibility for the decisions taken. Furthermore, they should mentor new co-operative members and supervise their work (Satgar, 2007:20). It is not only managers and leaders in a co-operative that have to ensure that they fulfil their roles; co-operative members also have roles to fulfil.

### **2.8.2. Role of Primary members**

According to Van Wagner (2008:13), members of any co-operative should define their roles for themselves, formulate expectations about those roles and encourage one another to act within the scope of the expectations. It remains the role and the responsibility of members of the co-operative to ensure that, as co-operative members, they adhere and conform to the principles of the co-operative. There is an expectation of a high level of direct democracy in a co-operative, and often, when there is a lack of consensus, a decision has to be collectively agreed. (Phillip, 2003:22). According to Kangayi et al., (2009:50), all co-operative members are expected to be equal with regard to decision making while utilising a democratic approach of one vote per one member. In addition, all co-operative members are expected to be able to express their viewpoints and not be overruled, except only in a democratic manner (Broodryk, 2006:64).

### **2.8.3. Role of Board members**

The Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 makes provision for co-operatives to establish a board that will fulfil an advisory role and oversee the running of the co-operative. The board has to be established with clearly defined roles, scope of operation, authority and reporting lines. The established board is also expected to provide input on policies, address challenges, foresee strategic development and other issues related to the cooperative because the main role of the board is to oversee the affairs of the cooperative and to increase the sustainability of the co-operative in a long run (Satgar, 2007:20).

The board is also considered to be an important part of the co-operative governance because it has to ensure that the policies, processes and procedures of the co-operative are adhered to. In the presence of a functioning board that demonstrates characteristics of good leadership, coupled with high ethics and understanding of co-operative functioning, there are good chances that the co-operative will operate smoothly (Van Wagner, 2008:13). During the decision making process between co-operative members, leaders, managers, and the board respect has to be shown for authority, irrespective of whether one agrees with the decision, and the principle of democratic control has to be applied (Broodryk, 2006:64).

## **2.9. Theoretical Approach**

According to Bryman (2008:20), theory is important to social research as it provides the rationale and backdrop of any study. The author adds that the theoretical framework contributes to how research findings are interpreted and a social phenomenon is understood. Phillips and Pittman (2009:20) explain that social workers need theories in order to guide, help, and frame the complexity of their work. In simple terms, social workers can explain and comprehend events through theories because they provide explanations that help in understanding people's behaviour and a framework from which they can operate (Phillips & Pittman, 2009:20). In the field of practice, and as social scientists, social workers employ/rely on different theories, ranging from those that relate to human behaviour, human development and social systems in order to understand and analyse complex situations while they facilitate individual, social and cultural changes (SACSSP, 2017:4). It is, therefore, against this background that the researcher has used the sustainable development theory as a framework for the study. This theory is discussed below.

### **2.9.1. Sustainable development**

The term "sustainable" refers to continuation over the long term, and "livelihood" refers to what constitutes a means of making a living (Schenck et al., 2010:21). Drexhage and Murphy (2010:02) state that the theory of sustainable development was crafted in 1987 by the United Nations and the Brundtland Commission. They further explain that the commission named the theory "sustainable development"

and they subsequently defined it as a development model that seeks to meet the needs of the present and not put in jeopardy the needs of future generations. Sustainable development is “the concept of needs,” in particular the basic needs of communities to which priority should be given. The report further states that the goals of economic and social development should be defined using the sustainable development theories in all countries, whether developed or developing (Drexhage & Murphy, 2010:02).

The facilitation of sustainable development, often referred to as “sustainable livelihoods”, is influenced by politics, culture, economics, and even the psychological makeup of the people who facilitate it (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:14). At grassroots level, a sustainable model ensures the importance of the community’s participation in poverty alleviation initiatives. In addition, Schenck et al. (2010:31) explain that a sustainable livelihood is an integrated development method which brings individual approaches together to achieve sustainable development. It is, therefore, through these efforts and processes that the community must be put in a position where it can continuously take responsibility for what has been initiated (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:14). A livelihood is sustainable (can continue over a longer term) when it is able to cope with shocks and stresses and recover from them; livelihood is also sustainable if it is able to maintain or enhance the assets and capabilities for the future while it does not undermine the importance of natural resources (Schenck et al., 2010:69). In essence, a particular set of decision making may or may not lead to sustainable programmes.

There is also the Rio Declaration which asserts that “strategies to poverty eradication also contribute to sustainable development” (Kotler & Lee, 2005:45). A major theme of the Rio Declaration is the need to eradicate poverty by giving poor people more access to the resources they need to live sustainably. According to the Rio Declaration, a world in which poverty, lack of education, and inequality are prevalent will most likely be prone to socio-ecological and other crises (Drexhage & Murphy, 2010:02). As mentioned earlier, most of the people who are hungry and poor will often degrade the environment in order to survive, and as such poverty itself contributes to the pollution and degradation of the environment.

According to Nicholas et al., (2010:357), the concept of sustainable livelihood has been developed over the years, and it is practised worldwide because its value is that sustainable livelihood:

- contextualise poverty and recognises its complexity;
- is a process that is holistic in nature;
- focuses on individuals and communities recognising that their perspective on their well-being matters the most in order to be understood;
- is a link between micro and macro levels;
- is consistent with poverty's definition in terms of human dignity, human rights and freedom; and
- recognises the poor as active participants in their development and utilising different coping strategies to manage their complex assets.

Numerous studies that have already been conducted (e.g. the International Co-operative Alliance Report of 2012 and The State of the South African Co-operative Sector of 2007) prove that a number of developmental practices are not sustainable if they do not eradicate poverty. The sustainable development theories regard poverty from the perspective of people as multidimensional because it places households and family members at the centre and focuses on the livelihoods of households in order to acknowledge that not all poor people are the same and that poverty differs from person to person, household to household and place to place (Nicholas et al., 2010:357). Undeniably, it can be declared that "sustainable development is a process that enhances the ability of meeting the needs of people for today, tomorrow and beyond" (Coetzee, Graaff, Wood & Hendricks, 2001:498). Sustainable development can be understood with reference to five types of capital assets that individuals and communities need to possess in order to be sustainable and create wealth. These assets are human, natural, social, political, physical and financial capital (Schenck et al., 2010:357). In order to achieve sustainable development there is a need for practitioners to incorporate community strengths and local knowledge with appropriate technology, contemporary science, investment in education and training, and enabling policies within governance structures (Schenck et al., 2010:31).

There is an illustration provided by Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:14) to demonstrate just how difficult it will be to reach the goal of sustainable development because of the interference of political and economic processes within poor countries. According to Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:14), the World Commission on Environmental Development has listed the following as requirements for attaining sustainable development:

- A government that ensures citizen participate effectively in decision making;
- A productive system that respects the obligation to preserve an ecological base for development;
- An economic system that provides solutions to the tensions arising from inharmonious development;
- A technological system that fosters sustainable patterns of trade and finance;
- An administrative system that is flexible and has the capacity for self-correction mechanisms; and
- An international system that fosters sustainable patterns of trade and finance.

Finally, Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:14) further explain what the concept of “sustainable development” entails and aims to achieve. They listed the following points as to what a sustainable development model can achieve:

- To ensure that the poor are supported as they do not have an alternative other than to deplete, or even destroy, natural resources;
- To preserve natural resources and to maintain the idea of self-reliant development;
- To preserve cost-effective developmental approaches utilising different economic criteria other than the traditional approaches;
- Development should not pollute environmental quality and it should not risk reducing future productivity;
- Development should give attention to issues of self-reliance, food for all, access to clean water, provision of shelter, access to primary health care, and improved technology; and

- Development should acknowledge that people-centred initiatives are a necessity (human beings should be regarded as the primary resources of this concept).

In a nutshell, the theory of sustainable development takes into consideration that government policy is dependent on commitments, and this can come to fruition only in the long-term. Government sets the targets, determines the scope, and identifies the strategy through which development efforts are to be launched in deprived areas (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:14). In order to achieve sustainable development, different approaches or models that foster sustainable development can be utilised. Some of them are discussed below.

### **2.9.2. Developmental Model approach**

The developmental model is regarded as a model that is based on the belief that the community members are ultimately in a better position than anyone else to develop their own communities and themselves in order to eliminate the obstacles that slow down the development process (Weyers, 2011:153). Within the South African context, the developmental model integrates economic and social development and is highlighted in the Constitution of South Africa by principles entrenched in human rights (SACSSP, 2017:25).

According to Hope and Timmel (2007:16), the developmental model as explained by Paulo Freire was based on a strong belief that real liberation and development must rise from the grassroots level. In the same way, Weyers (2011:156) explains that it is appropriate for the practitioners to utilise the development model if they mobilise community members to identify their needs, their impediments and then prioritise them in order to work together on grassroots level towards their development. Hope and Timmel (2007:14) emphasise that transformation is not something that one person can do for another, but they argue that education is a communion between participants in a dialogue characterised by a reflexive, reciprocal, and socially relevant exchange, rather than the unilateral action of one individual agent for the benefit of the other.

According to Hope and Timmel (2007:16), Paulo Freire argues that when it comes to development, development/social workers must understand six key principles that lead to a transformative process. The four key principles that were relevant to the study are:

- **Dialogue:** Grassroots communities need to be engaged in frequent dialogue in order to share their local knowledge and contribute to their own development.
- **Banking approach:** This approach looks at the grassroots community's "empty vessel"; that they have no knowledge and are dependent on an expert or teacher. The communities are to learn from a teacher as they are akin to students with nothing to contribute. The teacher will bank knowledge in them; hence, the banking approach.
- **Problem-posing approach:** This is a process where the facilitator creates a favourable environment for community members to identify their generative themes as a group or community. It links feelings to facts. The group can then relate the generative themes to real-life situations. This process generates the energy for members to act.
- **Reflection and action:** The circle of reflection and action is central to the whole process of community or group transformation, the generative themes, and dialogue; the problem-posing approach opens up discussions. All of these are designed to set this cycle of reflection and action into motion. According to Paulo Freire, as outlined in Hope and Timmel (2007:19), radical change begins when a community experiences dissatisfaction with some aspect of their lives and are willing to take time to look at those issues. In this way solutions can be found in reflection and subsequent action.

As shown above, the involved community members provide direction to the development process, and they also provide the motivation that is required in order to break the cycle of underdevelopment because development should actively involve local leadership, be community driven and should promote the participation of the community in their own affairs (Weyers, 2011:153). For this reason, it is also important to discuss the participatory model in detail. It is discussed below.

### **2.9.3. Participatory models in primary cooperatives**

Participation can be defined as a means to work within one's realities and ability to recognise one's own expertise (Schenck et al., 2010:83). Participation can be regarded as the individual's engagement in almost all aspects of a certain project, including planning, implementation, evaluation, and decision making (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2016:67). The participatory model or approach is regarded as being a variety of methods, approaches, tools and techniques that are used to gather information through reciprocal learning processes between community members and a practitioner (Weyers, 2011:152). Reflecting on some of the paths taken by co-operatives for development internationally, co-operatives use various forms of activities to encourage members to participate and to mobilize participation from community members in order to enhance the quality of their lives (Phillip, 2003:23).

Participative theories propose that leaders should encourage participation from communities and accept contributions made by community members (Van Wagner, 2008:15). This theory further suggests that, in participation, co-operative members become more committed to the process of participation and that participation is also a way in which co-operative objectives are realized. Participation should not limit members to taking part in the activities while they are not involved in decision making. Another important feature of the participatory theory is the that it emphasises the importance of individuals and communities participating in defining and reducing their own poverty and building their own wealth rather than accepting their poverty status (Nicholas et al., 2010:357). It, therefore, means that the deeper meaning of participation is the ability of the members of the cooperative to take part in the cooperative's activities that are designed to change their lives, and this is because participants in a cooperative can be trusted to determine their own destiny (Schenck et al., 2010:83).

Participation in co-operatives also involves creating opportunities for co-operative members and communities to be actively involved by promoting their own development and also that of society at large (Nicholas et al., 2010:52). Participation is important because it clearly demonstrates that for co-operatives to

be effective the community should be consulted at all levels. Because it is not always possible to involve the whole community the representatives from the community should be consulted in major decisions that involve their community. If possible all the representatives from different sectors of the community should be involved and informed about the development that takes place in their community (Schenck, Qalinge, Schultz, Sekudu, & Sesoko, 2015:17). Weyers (2011:152) argues that the participatory model is regarded as a variety of methods and techniques that also entail learning between a practitioner and community members. The learning model is, therefore, discussed below.

#### **2.9.4. Educational model**

The community educational model is based on the belief that collective skills, knowledge, behaviour and attitudes are the determining factors of a community's social functioning because these factors are generally acquired, learned and developed during the socialization process (Weyers, 2011:251). In this case, the educational model can be regarded as the process of enabling cooperative members to learn and find suitable ways to overcome the constraints they experience in order to break the poverty cycle (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2006). Education can, therefore, be regarded as being an integral part of any learning experience. Education provides participants with much-needed information and a foundation upon which communities can develop abilities to cope, to be effective and positively respond to their needs (Doel, 2012:134). The goal of the community educational model is to empower the community with skills, a positive attitude and the knowledge that they lack in order that they are enabled to take charge of their lives and contribute to their wellbeing (Weyers, 2011:251).

According to Hope and Timmel (2007:18) as they outline Paulo Freire's critical awareness on education and development. In their outline they highlight that Paulo Freire based his theory on linking emotions and motivation, the different levels of consciousness, and the importance of having the participants choose the content of their education rather than the experts developing the curriculum for them. In comparison to welfare and relief models that somehow perpetuate poverty situations by unintentionally creating dependency on government, education can capacitate co-operative members and release them from poverty because it

targets the abstract needs of self-reliance and dignity (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2006). Education can be utilised alone as an intervention strategy, and it can also form part of a larger programme that encompasses planning and social action that can make the educational model a flexible and useful tool (Weyers, 2011:25). After the discussion of some of the different models that can be utilized for cooperatives, is it also important to have a closer look at some of the roles that social workers can play in order to achieve the development of the co-operative.

## **2.10. The role of the social worker in supporting the primary co-operatives**

Social workers play an active and professional role in assisting and empowering co-operatives to succeed. Some social workers are employed by government, local municipalities, NGO's and the private sector. They play a broad and general facilitating role in community development, while others specialise in other fields. According to the SACSSP (2017:4), social work interventions range from focus on client-centred, psychosocial support and processes that involve planning, development and a social policy that seeks to have an impact on services rendered. Some of these interventions include clinical work, counselling, family therapy, group work, community work, academic work, social pedagogical work, as well as efforts to help people obtain services and resources in the community. The primary concern of community development workers is to help communities make rational decisions, enable them to participate fully, assist them in taking initiatives, helping them to discover their resources, and helping them to plan and to implement their decisions. Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:53) further highlight the different roles played by social workers as change agents. The following are roles of social workers as community development workers in supporting co-operatives.

### **2.10.1. Trainer**

According to Nicholas et al., (2010:117), most literature uses the terms a 'trainer' and 'educator' interchangeably. When performing the role of a trainer social workers should always bear in mind that education and training provided them with competencies to provide services to individuals, families, groups and communities on a primary or basic level (SACSSP, 2017:19). Schenck et al.,

(2010:190) warn social workers to guard against being “know-it-all” and to avoid giving instructions in order to teach or to educate the community. The role of trainer is paramount to social workers because they provide knowledge and information to community members so that they can have better social functioning (Schenck et al., 2015:17).

The role of a trainer is continuous through all methods of social work and, at some point, it goes beyond the call of duty (Nicholas et al., 2010:117). They indicate that as a trainer, a social worker should bear in mind that a powerful tool in empowering the client is knowledge that is needed to assist the client to address his/her challenges or concerns. They (Nicholas et al., 2010:117) further claim that, as an educator, the social worker is able to teach individuals, clients, groups and communities on how to access services, how to take informed decision, how to solve problems and what the possible consequences of specific behaviours are. When performing the role of trainer, the social worker inherently informs, educates and enables communities to access and utilise physical, human or natural resources. In addition, whenever there is a lack of resources it is appropriate for the social worker to support initiatives to develop the resources (SACSSP, 2017:19).

### **2.10.2. Facilitator**

In performing their professional roles social workers will be involved in facilitating some community projects for the purpose of poverty alleviation or generating income (Schenck et al., 2015:18). In the role of facilitator, the social worker strives to advance the process of social change by stimulating activities that will bring people together with different stakeholders with the aim of channelling resource structures to the community (SACSSP, 2017:18). While NASW (2016:28) indicates that the role of facilitation is to benefit the community by enabling them to acquire resources that will assist them to understand policies, certain requirements, financial and legal issues. As a facilitator, the social worker engages with different stakeholders to identify challenges that the community is faced with, determine the best possible solutions in consultation with the community, and evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions. The role focuses on identifying opportunities for co-operatives in order to develop linkages between the community to resources,

services and opportunities that will develop them and effect change in their lives (Schenck et al., 2015:18). The facilitator is expected to take a lead during discussions or communication channels in order to encourage positive interaction and the modeling of good behaviours (Nicholas et al., 2010:69)

The social worker, as a community practitioner, intentionally and actively is expected to facilitate the capacitation of cooperative members and to support them to be more confident in executing their tasks (Schenck et al., 2010:190). According to Phillip (2003:23), it takes a high level of facilitation from the social worker to bridge the gap between the actual realities of most co-operatives and the ways in which the co-operative is working in an efficient and democratic way in order to be productive and sustainable. The community practitioner's facilitation of the group should be such that it empowers the group to function effectively and stimulates their self-confidence (Schenck et al., 2010:204). In the final instance, community developers need to help communities take rational and informed decisions, enable the community to participate fully in their development, help them to identify resources, and assist them in planning and implementing their actions (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:56). A facilitator operates in the background and plays a secondary role in assisting and enabling the co-operative members to function optimally.

### **2.10.3. Enabler**

The role of enabler has been part of social work since its inception and its inclusion in the practice, it distinguishes social work from the many other helping professions, and it can be used as a method of social work (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2014:51). In this role, the social worker helps people to identify their problems, articulate their needs, clarify their issues, explore alternatives and advance their ability to deal with their issues more effectively (SACSSP, 2017:17). The primary aim of the enabler is to "enable" people to do what should be done. Community development workers aim to enable people to fulfil their abstract human needs, to help them gain meaningful empowerment and to enhance their learning processes (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:55). Social workers are also expected to create space for the community to progress, while they act as catalysts to make things happen while not being active participants themselves.

The social worker cannot only identify challenges in the community but also has to look for positive aspects in the community, such as the natural assets that can enable the communities to develop (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:55). To perform the role of an enabler, the social worker has to dissect what is being communicated by the members in order to identify the plans and concerns of the cooperative and agree with them on an action plan. This is achieved through continuous engagement with the community in a problem solving manner while allowing the community to focus on their strength while the social worker becomes a change agent (Nicholas et al., 2010:69).

#### **2.10.4. Guider**

Leading and guiding involve decisions about getting, and keeping, things going. This includes enabling the cooperative members to make decisions, to deal with aspects that can hinder their progress, for example differences and diversity, and a lack of motivation (Schenck et al., 2010:248). As a guide, the social worker provides the community with guidance in relation to a specific framework that is not limited to information but includes the development of action plans and networking with other stakeholders. In turn the social worker also empowers the community to work together while he/she enhances their cohesiveness and strengths (Nicholas et al., 2010:69)

According to Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:53), social workers as community development workers usually have a better understanding of what the likely results of any action that might be taken are; hence, they perform a guiding role. Their perspective and views are much broader than those of the communities with whom they are working; they have a much better understanding of the results of any action, as they need to be aware of possible obstacles and pitfalls that can hinder the developmental efforts of people. It is, therefore, the task of the community developer to guide the community through those pitfalls in order that they may achieve their goals.

### **2.10.5. Monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring also refers to a process that seeks to check the plan of action continuously, and it provides raw information that also provides answers to what is being monitored (Nicholas et al., 2010:69). Monitoring can be regarded as a social worker's ability to analyze results of a given project and incorporate those results into practice in order to improve interventions and initiatives that advance the social work profession (NASW, 2016:21). Nicholas et al., (2010:222) further contend that monitoring is applicable to all methods and phases of social work interventions because it checks the progress towards the desired outcomes and assesses the overall effectiveness and efficiency of intervention outcomes. It could be argued that the effectiveness of social work services is sometimes not clearly noticed by others, and this calls for social workers to find creative ways of checking the efficiency of their interventions. This process is regarded as evaluation (Nicholas et al., 2010:221).

Evaluation refers to a process that assesses the effectiveness of plans that have been carried out. It also determines the value of projects while providing some learning opportunities that can be utilized to determine recommendations and areas of improvement (Nicholas et al., 2010:69). According to NASW (2016:22), evaluation also entails asking for feedback from internal and external stakeholders on the outcomes of social work interventions. Doel (2012:134) adds that evaluation is essential in assessing the effectiveness of services that are rendered by social workers. In most instances evaluation is connected to the initial plan of the cooperatives and is concerned with assessing whether the objectives, procedures and processes have been achieved (Nicholas et al., 2010:70). As an example, evaluation might be used to assess whether the needs of the cooperative members are met, how effective the social worker's strategies are and to determine whether the strategies have resulted in some unintended consequences.

Monitoring and evaluation have always been part of the social worker's profession and they are regarded as being an objective and practical procedure that assists in improving intervention processes because it may help terminate a fruitless process and prevent the early termination of intervention strategies (Bloom &

Fischer, 2015:476). Both monitoring and evaluation are used to assist decision makers in assessing whether there is any impact or progress made by the intervention strategies and so be able to assess the intervention strategies by social workers (Nicholas et al., 2010:69). Social workers should engage in an ongoing monitoring and evaluation of their practice continuously in order to advance their interventions and assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of their interventions while strengthening and advancing the social work professional services (NASW, 2016:21)

The processes of both monitoring and evaluation needs to be specified from the beginning of the interaction between the social worker and co-operative members in relation to how and what will be monitored and evaluated. According to Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:53), monitoring and evaluation are very important aspects of social work as a profession because they provide social workers with a learning opportunity in co-operatives. It can also be observed that monitoring and evaluation do not only assist the social workers and co-operative members but they also assists the government and funders to learn how to implement informed decisions that address the needs of the community and to improve service delivery (Nicholas et al., 2010:62). In conclusion, the ongoing implementation of formal monitoring and evaluation are vital to ensure that social work interventions are effective, appropriate and enable co-operative members to achieve their goals

### **2.11. Chapter Summary**

This chapter has focussed on theoretical perspectives underpinning the development and sustainability of co-operatives, and there is also a mention of the South Africa context. In the first section of this chapter, a brief history of co-operatives is given and reference is provided to the available literature. It is also worth noting that co-operatives have developed since the late 1880s worldwide and, regrettably, the South African history of apartheid is also believed to have hampered the holistic development of the co-operatives whereas the new political dispensation is still trying to find its way around the concept of co-operatives.

The co-operative as a term and concept is defined as being voluntary, democratic and member controlled while adhering to the internationally acceptable principles

of co-operatives. The different types of co-operatives, together with their sectors, are also discussed with reference to acts, laws and strategies that contribute to the regulation, establishment and development co-operatives within the South African context. The structure of co-operatives, the management of co-operatives and the different roles that need to be played by co-operative members, leaders, co-operative boards and also social workers are also highlighted as part of the discussion in the chapter. Consideration was also given to the theoretical frameworks that inform the development and sustainability of co-operatives.

The following chapter focuses on the application of the qualitative research method undertaken during the study.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. PRESENTATION OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROCESS

#### 3.1. Introduction

As outlined in chapter one, a qualitative research approach was followed in the study. This chapter covers an overview of methodology used in the study, and it focuses on a detailed description of how the qualitative research process was applied. The chapter also focuses on the research approach and design, population and sampling, preparing participants for data collection, data collection, pilot study, data analysis and data verification.

#### 3.2. Research Methodology

This section provides an outline of the research methodologies applicable to the study. Research methodology is the process which focuses on the research steps that the researcher has taken in the research project (Brynard & Hanekon, 2006:36). According to Babbie (2010:4, 2011:04), research methodology can also be regarded as the scientific process of implementing the procedures applied in scientific investigation. According to Creswell (2013:45), the research methodology consists of approaches that try to understand the behaviour and lifestyle of individuals as experienced by them. Braun and Clarke (2013:31) claim that research methodology is a boarder term which is used to indicate the framework within which the methods of research will be conducted. A central focus of a research methodology is that it encompasses all the requirements for the research activities which, amongst others, include the planning, scheduling, and execution of the research (Brynard & Hanekon, 2006:36). A qualitative research methodology was deemed appropriate and considered in order explore Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives.

### **3.3. Research Approach**

For the purpose of the study, the researcher utilised the qualitative research approach. According to Fouché and Delpont, (2011) as cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont, (2011:73), “there are two well-known and recognized research approaches, namely the quantitative and the qualitative research approaches.” Flick et al., (2004:01) explain that qualitative research is a research method that seeks to explain the lives of people who are involved in the research process, from their point of view. According to Fouché and Delpont, (2011) as cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont, (2011:74), “the qualitative research approach aims to critically understand social life in a context that participants attach to the meaning of everyday life. In its broadest meaning qualitative research approach is intended to elicit participants’ explanations of experience, perception and meaning to life.” The perspectives of the research participants are important in the research, and the researcher aims to understand the phenomenon under study from this standpoint. In utilising a qualitative approach, the researcher assumes that the individual’s life experiences can be understood when a researcher explores and establishes the meanings that individuals attach to their experiences (Creswell, 2013:47). The qualitative approach is characterised by the features described in the following paragraphs.

According to Braun and Clarke (2013:4), qualitative research seeks to understand and interpret more meanings; it recognises information as gathered in a broader context, and it is sometimes capable of producing new knowledge that can contribute to a more general understanding of phenomena. Qualitative research also aims to add value to a better understanding of social realities and to apply a deeper focus on the process, meaning patterns, and structural features. In addition, Creswell (2009:129) asserts that a qualitative research approach steers away from hypotheses or predictions, but asks pertinent research questions.

According to Creswell (2003:179), the following are the common characteristics inherent in qualitative research:

- The researcher is considered a key instrument in the process of data collection;
- It is conducted in a natural setting and not in a laboratory;

- Researchers typically gather data from multiple data sources and do not rely on a single source for data collection;
- Researchers are interested in the meanings participants ascribe to the phenomenon under investigation;
- The data analysis is an inductive process;
- Rather than a fixed or predetermined research design, an emergent research design is opted for; and
- It is interpretive and holistic in nature.

Again, according to Burns & Grove (2003:357), some of the special characteristics of qualitative research are that it:

- utilises an inductive form of reasoning because it develops insights, concepts and understanding from patterns in the data;
- uses the emic perspective of enquiry as it derives meaning from the participants' perspective;
- is ideographic in nature; it aims to understand the meaning that participants attach to everyday life;
- regards reality as subjective; reality can be informed only by participants' explanations;
- captures and discovers meaning once the researcher becomes immersed with data; it does not assume reality;
- utilises concepts such themes, motifs and categories;
- seeks to understand phenomena;
- presents rich data; it presents information in the form of transcripts, quotes from documents and words;
- uses a holistic unit of analysis; it focuses on the relationships between concepts, elements and so on;
- analyses data by extracting themes; it uses words as the base of analysing data rather than numbers; and
- considers that the whole is always more than the sum.

A qualitative research approach is best suited to help obtain an in-depth understanding of phenomena which are not well known, and the researcher intends to explore these phenomena by gathering information and explanations in

this regard from the participants (Rasmussen et al., 2006:93; Royse, 2008:270; Nicholls, 2009:528). The researcher applied a qualitative research approach by focusing his interest on the motivation for and experiences of Vosloorus community members who participate in primary co-operatives. The data was analysed, interpreted and presented in this research report. The following section discusses the research design that was utilised in order to achieve the goal of this study.

### **3.4. Research Design**

Research design can be described as the specified way in which data will be collected, created, coded, constructed, analysed, and interpreted in order to enable the researcher to draw an explanatory, descriptive, or interpretive conclusion (Perri & Bellamy, 2012:21). A research design is like a blueprint which outlines the approach to be used to collect data, and it generally provides information about the who, what, when, where and how of the research project (Royse, 2008:29). In addition, Nieuwenhuis (2007:70) states that a research design is a strategy or plan that specifies from where research participants were selected, how the participants were selected, which data-gathering techniques were utilised, and how data were collected. Braun and Clarke (2013:42) express the view that research design can be regarded as “something that researchers utilise in order to incorporate the research methods, goals of the study, research questions, theoretical frameworks, and ethical issues to generate and analyse data.” A qualitative approach tends to be exploratory, descriptive and contextual in nature (Monette, Sullivan, & De Jong, 2011:92). The present study is an exploratory, descriptive and contextual research design as the study sought to develop an in-depth understanding of Vosloorus community members’ motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives.

#### **3.4.1. Exploratory**

An exploratory design is mainly utilised to formulate preliminary inquiries intended to get more information on a relatively new, unknown, unstudied or little-understood area of interest (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:69). Exploratory research studies seek to “explore” and it asks relevant questions about what is happening in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the issue at hand (Gray, 2009:35).

Exploratory research design is suitable when there is little that is known about the phenomena under study (Bhattacharjee, 2012:6). Furthermore, Rubin and Babbie (2005:123) state that an exploratory research design is usually conducted in order to provide an understanding of a topic which is relatively unknown in order to gain knowledge (Zainal, 2007:3). The researcher utilised semi-structured interviews in order to acquire more information from the participants and to gain insights into the phenomenon under study. Because little is known about the Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives an exploratory research design was deemed appropriate for the study.

### **3.4.2. Descriptive design**

In qualitative studies, the term "description" is used to reflect "how it feel to take a walk in the shoes of those who are being described in the study" (Rubin & Babbie, 2005:125). The purpose of descriptive research design is to describe the phenomenon under study, based on the collected data (Zainal, 2007:3). A descriptive qualitative research design is utilised to describe, examine and document an precise image of a phenomenon under study through complex textual descriptions (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:69). Descriptive design also seeks to draw a picture of an event or situation in order to depict how things or events are related (Gray, 2009:35). The descriptive research design assisted the researcher to explore the experiences and motivations of primary co-operative members; it further answers "why" the experience is as described. This is done because the major purpose of social science research is the description of situations and events based on scientific observation (Rubin & Babbie, 2005:124).

### **3.4.3. Contextual design**

Contextual designs broadly seek to understand the phenomena within the participants' natural environment, and the context and meaning of these phenomena are disclosed by the researcher at the completion of the research project (Noor, 2008:1603). In qualitative research design, the researcher takes a holistic view of the context which aims to provide rich explanations of the participants' world (Rubin & Babbie, 2005:123). Marshall and Rossman (2011:91) further state that, in qualitative research, the physical and social setting is also important because the way human beings behave is also influenced by aspects

of the environment such as norms, traditions, values, roles, and rewards. Contextual designs typically explore people's views and perspectives of their life experiences (Gray, 2009:36). The researcher engaged with members of primary co-operatives in their real world in order to glean first-hand knowledge and a better understanding of their experiences and motivations.

In this study, the researcher sought to understand the impact of the social, economic and physical context of Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives. The following section describes the research population and the sampling methods utilised in the study.

### **3.5. Population and Sampling**

In research terms, population is defined as the specified aggregation of study elements (Babbie & Mouton, 2011:173). A population constitutes the total number of subjects in the real world in which the researcher is interested (Gilbert, 2008:167). Population consists of all the participants who share similar experiences that the researcher is interested in studying (Kirby et al., 2006:173). The population for this study was all the members of the primary co-operatives operating and situated in the City of Ekurhuleni, Vosloorus Township, South Africa. Since it was not feasible for the researcher to include the entire population in the study, a sample from the total population was considered and procured. In a qualitative study, the researcher purposefully looks for a sample that will provide insight and rich information about a particular area of interest (Creswell, 2013:156).

A sample can be defined as a subset of individuals drawn from the entire population in order to form part of the study. A sample can also be regarded as people who are selected by the researcher to represent dimensions of interest to the researcher (Bouma, Ling & Wilkinson, 2012:10). A sample can further be defined as a part of the targeted population that the researcher intends to study (Sarantakos, 2013:167). Seale (2004:64) suggests that a sample should be regarded as a small-scale representation of the total population from which it was selected. Sampling was done by generating a list of existing co-operatives at Vosloorus and generating a list of prospective research participants who have had

motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives. A sample can never represent the total population but, in some ways, it will resemble it closely, and it is this resemblance that makes sampling useful (Nicholls, 2009:590). The researcher then opted to utilise the non-probability sampling technique and purposive sampling techniques.

### **3.5.1. Purposive Sampling**

The sampling technique that was utilised for this study is a non-probability sampling technique, namely, purposive sampling. This sampling method is employed where the researcher has knowledge of the participants who are suitable to inform the intended research study (David & Sutton, 2011:232). Purposive sampling is also referred to as judgemental sampling as the researcher intentionally select participants who are able to provide in-depth information about and meaningful insights into the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013:147; Babbie, 2010:193; Nicholls, 2009:640). Delpont and Fouché, (2011:232) as cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, (2011:232) contend that purposive sampling is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher, in that a sample comprises of research participants that mostly conform to the characteristics or attributes of the population that best suit the purpose of the study. This sampling technique involves selecting research participants that the researcher believes would contribute meaningful and rich data relating to the research question (Polkinghorne, 2005:140).

In this study, the researcher selected participants who were able to reflect and describe their life experiences. The researcher selected participants who met the following criteria:

- Participants who were willing to participate in the study;
- Participants who were active members in the co-operative at the time of the study;
- The participants that belong to a co-operative situated in Vosloorus area, Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality;
- A co-operative which has been in existence for more than two years; and

- Since there are different sectors of co-operatives existing at Vosloorus, the researcher included at least one participant from a sector of co-operatives in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and motivations of Vosloorus community members who operate in primary co-operatives.

### **3.5.2. Sample size**

In this study, there was no determination of sample size at the outset as the principles of data saturation were applied to guide the research process, considering both the length of the interview and the number of interviews with the participants (Gilbert, 2008:180). The researcher did not determine the sample size prior to data collection because he was interested in collecting detailed and in-depth information from the participants based on their motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives. Data saturation refers to the point where there is nothing new being contributed and there are no additional emergent themes that are generated from participants (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012:192). Data saturation also refers to the depth as well as the breadth of information that has been obtained (Gilbert, 2008:180). In qualitative research, data adequacy is measured by whether data saturation has been reached. In this study, data was deemed saturated as the principle of inductive reasoning which provided the researcher an opportunity to create research parameters in order to pursue only the areas of his interest was utilised to guide him (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012:192).

The following section provides information on how the participants were prepared for the semi-structured interviews.

### **3.6. Preparing Participants for Data Collection**

As part of University of South Africa (UNISA) policy or protocols, all masters' students are required to submit a detailed research proposal that has to be reviewed and approved by the Research and Ethics Committee of UNISA before a student can embark on a research project. As alluded by Creswell (2013:152), in order to gain access to participants the researcher should compile a research proposal that can be reviewed by authorized boards in order to ensure that the

participants are protected from potential harm. As such the researcher submitted a detailed proposal that was approved by the Research and Ethics Committee of UNISA, and he was granted permission to conduct the research.

One of the initial steps in collecting data is to identify potential participants and to prepare them for data collection. According to Creswell (2013:147), this process includes identifying prospective participants, gaining access to them and establishing a rapport with them. As part of gaining entry and preparing participants for data collection the researcher identified different co-operatives and approached their leaders (executive members) in order to be granted permission for the researcher to have access to the participants who are in their group (Rubin & Babbie, 2010:228).

Upon being granted permission to conduct the study, the co-operative leaders allowed the researcher to continue to contact participants. The researcher assumed the responsibility of contacting participants to explain the research context and to clarify any concerns of participants. The researcher also clarified his relationship with the co-operative leaders and provided clear details regarding the study in order to ensure that participants made an informed decision about their participation in the study (Babbie, 2010:316). The researcher also facilitated initial meetings with the participants in order to discuss the whole research process fully and develop rapport with them (Lloyd, Kalsy & Gatherer, 2007:68). The researcher arranged individual sessions with the participants where he formally introduced himself, and he provided the participants with the opportunity to ask questions or seek clarity. In as much as the researcher needed to prepare thoroughly and plan the interviews with the participants, it was essential to prepare the participants to eliminate any fears they might have about participating in the study (Feldman, Bell & Berger, 2003:23). It is recommended that the researcher should familiarise the participants with the contents and purpose of the interview guide prior to the interview sessions (Rubin & Babbie, 2010:105). Issues that arose from the contact with participants were clarified by the researcher. Once the participants had agreed to participate in the research willingly, the researcher arranged for individual sessions to conduct the interviews.

Informed consent forms were completed and signed at the beginning of each interview session (Berg, 2009:88). According to Creswell (2013:153), informed consent forms should be dated and signed by both the participant and the researcher. The consent forms indicated: the aim of the study; the research procedures; ethical considerations; potential risks or benefits associated with the study; and contact information for further clarification (Creswell, 2013:153). The consent forms should also clearly specify that participants participate in the study voluntarily and willingly and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time without being penalised (Creswell, 2013:153). This enabled the researcher to establish an open and trusting relationship with the participants (Babbie, 2010:317).

The appointments regarding the place and the time to conduct the interviews were negotiated and agreed upon with the participants. Glesne (2011:113) warns that the researcher should guard against his preferences or those of the participants and agree to conduct the interview in a place that is available, appropriate, convenient, private, quiet and comfortable. The researcher encouraged the participants to select a place with few distractions and suggest a reasonable time suitable for them and the researcher to conduct the interview. The participants were requested to ensure that their fellow co-operative members/colleagues or family members were aware of the interview session, and they had to ensure that they minimised the distractions during the interview session. Most of the interviews took place on the site where the participants run their co-operatives while some interviews took place in their own homes.

The following section details the methods and procedures utilised during data collection.

### **3.7. Method of Data Collection**

Data collection refers to how the researcher will get information needed to answer the research question (Maxwell, 2013:147). Sarantakos (2013:192) explains that methods of data collection refer to the way the sample will be used and the manner in which information will be collected. Methods of data collection are regarded as the “steps which include collecting information through semi-

structured interviews, setting the boundaries for the study, sorting visual materials, establishing procedure for recording information as well as documenting information” (Creswell, 2009:189). In selecting data collecting methods, the researcher considers methods that can elicit the data required to yield multiple perspectives, bring insight to the area of study and meet the goal of the study considering the time available (Glesne, 2011:48).

For the purpose of this study, face-to-face interviews were considered appropriate with a list of open-ended questions as informed by the interview guide. Since the study utilised the qualitative approach the researcher focused on the interviews as a technique for collecting data (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2005:292). An interview is best described as a purposeful two-way conversation between a researcher and the participants in which the researcher asks questions aimed at collecting information about participants’ experiences and perceptions (Nieuwenhuis & Smit, 2012:133). An interview is regarded as a conversation between two or more people in which one person assumes the role of the researcher (Gray, 2009:369). Polkinghorne (2005:142) further states that the interview is “a technique of gathering data from humans by asking participants’ questions and getting them to react verbally.” An interview can also be defined as a process of eliciting information from the interviewee by the interviewer by asking questions (Bryman, 2012:209).

The researcher utilised semi-structured interviews aided by an interview guide with open-ended questions in order to fulfil the purpose of the study. Semi-structured interviews are based on an interview guide as a recognizable plan which entails a list of open-ended questions (Nicholls, 2009:640). Bogolup (2010:11) reiterates that “qualitative research employs open-ended questions through semi-structured interviews in order to gather data. Semi-structured interviews are used because they provide the researcher with the advantage of probing the opinions and views of participants in order to expand on their answers (Gray, 2009:373). During a semi-structured interview, the researcher uses the interview to collect data and elicit responses from participants while he respects the way participants respond during the interview (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:144; Babbie, 2010:318).

The researcher utilised an interview guide to ensure that the key focus of the study was not lost. An interview guide is described as a structured list of questions to be asked by the researcher during a semi-structured interview (Bryman, 2012:712). Typically, an interview guide contains broad questions which prompt the respondents to explain their experiences in their own words (Haley, 2001:91). Straits and Singleton (2011:214) aver that the interview guide is limited to certain subtopics and that key research questions are developed in advance in order to guide the researcher. The interview guide was designed to elicit individual's own thoughts and perspectives. Moreover, the questions contained in the interview guide typically flow from the general to the specific in order to allow the respondents to feel comfortable with the interview process (Roulston, deMarrais & Lewis, 2003:645).

In this study, the researcher conducted face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with the participants in their natural setting which is where their co-operatives operate. The interviews were conducted in a place/venue that allowed the participants to feel unrestricted and comfortable. Creswell (2013:45) indicates that, by collecting data within the participants' natural setting, the researcher may make use of interviews as a method of data collection. For this reason, the researcher also become part of data collection, the instrument utilised to analyse data, to interpret it and finally to present it (Nieuwenhuis & Smit, 2012:126). Semi-structured interviews through open-ended questions were included as part of the interview guide. The primary focus of the researcher is to present the research findings as the phenomena are perceived and experienced by participants in their natural setting (Nieuwenhuis & Smit, 2012:126). The researcher utilised the following interview guide for the participants in order to conduct the interview and to elicit responses from the participants of the research study.

## **Interview schedule as a guide**

### **Biographical data**

- Age;
- Gender;
- Marital status;
- Highest qualification;
- Name of co-operative;
- Type of co-operative;
- Year in which you joined co-operative; and
- Current role within the co-operative.

### **Interview guide (Open-ended questions)**

- What are the requirements to become a member in your co-operative?
- What motivated you to become a member of a co-operative?
- Tell me more about the role you have played since you joined the co-operative.
- Tell me more about your experiences in the co-operative (positive and negative).
- What are the benefits of being a member of a co-operative for yourself, family, fellow co-op members, and the community?
- Share with me the support that your co-operative receives from the community / DSD / municipality / Department of Health.
- What advice or guidance can you give to others who want to become members of a co-operative?
- How do you think social workers / community workers could assist co-operatives and the community?

To successfully undertake semi-structured interviews successfully, the researcher used the following interviewing skills and techniques to gather information from the participants.

## **Skills applied in collecting data**

**Establishing rapport:** Rapport means that the researcher has to create a positive understanding between himself and the participants (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2016:197). Rapport can be regarded as one of the means of establishing trust and respect between the researcher and the participants during the study (Gray, 2009:380). Before the researcher can begin with the interview the researcher should attempt to establish rapport with the participants in order for them to feel free, safe, valued and comfortable so that they can share their feelings, experiences, and perspectives (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011:113). Rapport was established in order to help the researcher understand the situation of the participants, display respect for their individuality, and demonstrate that he was concerned about their hopes and interests. The researcher initiated the interview sessions by thanking the participants for taking part in the study and by asking simple biographical questions which enabled the participants to feel at ease and for rapport to be established between himself and the participants.

**Logical order:** Throughout the interview session the researcher was guided by the interview schedule. The questions in the interview schedule were asked in a logical order to avoid confusing the participant and to follow the natural flow of topics, whilst keeping track of questions covered from the interview guide (Hennink et al., 2011:109). In an interview guide, a researcher frames questions that allowed him to explore the phenomenon under study with the responses from the participants (Nicholls, 2009:640). The researcher adapted the sequence and the wording of the questions listed in the interview guide to each particular participant (Rubin & Babbie, 2010:104). The researcher asked questions logically, guided by the interview guide followed by probes for clarification whenever necessary.

**Recording:** In qualitative research, and when conducting interviews, recording the participants' answers *verbatim* is encouraged because the data are detailed and the researcher still has to decode it (Glesne, 2011:115). The use of a audio recorder is ideal because it affords the researcher an opportunity of focusing on the interview, asking questions, listening and observing the participant (Rubin & Babbie, 2010:228). Glesne (2011:117) recommends that immediately after the

interview the researcher should start with listening to the voice recorder, review the interview notes and transcribe them as soon as possible in order for the researcher to identify weaknesses, areas for improvement, and emerging themes. During the study, the researcher ensured that the interviews were recorded and this made it easier for him to collect and manage the data. After interviews the researcher started with transcribes of the interviews.

**Language:** According to Swanepoel and De Beer (2016:77), each language has a meaning and plays an important role in ensuring that a receiver understands what is being communicated. The researcher, therefore, opted to conduct the interviews in English (which is one of the official languages in South Africa). The researcher is naturally Sepedi speaking and not well conversant with most of the indigenous languages spoken around Vosloorus. During the interview sessions the participants were capable enough to express themselves in English. This made it easy for the researcher to collect data for the study as there was no need to employ the services of a translator.

**Active listening:** Active listening implies that the researcher has to listen to what is being said, hear what is not being said, understand implied messages, and also observe non-verbal messages (Schenck et al., 2010:261). Active listening involves listening attentively to the words, tone, and emphasis of the message being shared (Gray, 2009:383). The researcher also demonstrated the use of active listening through eye contact, facial expressions and gestures as part of active listening. Active listening assisted the researcher to understand the contents in which life experiences were shared. Active listening also enabled the researcher to identify new or missing information which was probed further (Gray, 2009:383).

**Attentiveness:** According to Glesne (2011:119), the researcher should always be attentive and pay attention to responses which can be verbal and non-verbal. The the researcher observed the emotions and non-verbal responses that lend meaning to the verbal responses (Nieuwenhuis & Smit, 2012:133). During the interviews, attentiveness was used by the researcher as one of the interviewing skills in order to observe the participants' expressions and non-verbal language that provided sense to the participants' verbal expressions.

**Paraphrasing:** Paraphrasing is a process of selective repetition of the participant's statements without repeating the exact same words (Kadushin & Kadushin, 2013:158). Paraphrasing can be described as the researcher's ability to deduce the crux of the important information as expressed by the participant (Haley, 2001:94). In cases where the participants responded in a way that was not in line with the question, the researcher cross-checked to see whether the problem emanated from the phrasing of the question (Glesne, 2011:119). In cases where the problem was the question the researcher rephrased the question. Paraphrasing was employed to confirm whether the researcher had understood what had been said by the participants.

**Probing:** Probing as one of the interviewing skills was utilised by the researcher. Probing can be defined as questions or neutral statements that encourage the participants to expand on incomplete or partial responses, or to appeal to them to answer questions more fully (Sarantakos, 2013:289). Probing assisted the researcher to obtain deeper meanings of information and expanding individual's thoughts (Haley, 2001:93). Straits and Singleton (2011:243) contend that a researcher should use probing skills to elicit a better and fully explained answer. According to Nieuwenhuis and Smit (2012:133), the researcher should always strive to probe sensitively for further clarification. During the interviews, the researcher probed participants in order to show openness and willingness to collect more data as perceived and experienced by them. In this study, the researcher requested the meanings attached by the participants to their responses for clarification. The researcher also utilized probing techniques in order to encourage the participants to continue sharing their experiences (Hennink et al., 2011:120). Probing skills were also utilised when the researcher believed that a participant had not answered a question fully or to his satisfaction.

**Summarising:** According to Schenck et al., (2010:264), summarising elucidates muddled thoughts and draws together the information that has been shared in an abridged form. Summarising techniques were used to sum up the participants' responses/statements without adding to their answers (Sarantakos, 2013:289).

Summarising was important as it helped the researcher to summarise the information shared.

The following section focuses on how pilot testing was conducted in order to assist the researcher to familiarise himself with the research study methods and procedures.

### **3.8. Pilot Testing**

Pilot testing is used to make sure that methodologies intended for the proposed research study are appropriate to be applied during the research practice. Pilot testing is also conducted prior to the main study in order to assess the feasibility of the study (Kim, 2010:191). Sampson (2004:384) compares pilot testing to “putting a toe in the research waters before diving in.” Pilot testing usually involves a small sample and is aimed at testing research protocols, including recruitment strategies or methods for collecting data (Johanson & Brooks, 2010:395). Moreover, pilot testing can be useful in various ways in that it provides the researcher with a valuable opportunity to make adjustments to and revisions of the main study. Pilot testing also enabled the researcher to uncover ethical as well as practical issues, such as sampling techniques, and it gave the researcher the opportunity to resolve certain issues which might otherwise have impeded the main study. Pilot testing similarly assists the researcher to affirm, revise, or sharpen research tools in order to accomplish the goals of the intended study (Kim, 2010:199).

The researcher conducted pilot testing through the face-to-face interviews. The interviews were based on a list of questions included in an interview guide, and they were conducted in English. After receiving permission from the participants, the interviews were recorded. They were later transcribed and data were analysed in order to ascertain whether the questions had generated the required responses from the participants. During the interviews, the participants were able to respond to the questions and in this way the researcher had the opportunity to familiarise himself with the research questions. The pilot testing also assisted the researcher with regard to anticipating problems and preparing for the main study and practising his interviewing skills.

The researcher conducted pilot testing by involving two co-operative participants who matched the sample criteria of the study. The researcher utilised the same purposive sampling method as that for the main study. The pilot testing exercise assisted the researcher in testing the practicality of the main study. After consultation with the study supervisor, it was agreed that the researcher continued with his research study and collected data from participants. It was also concluded that the questions on the interview schedule were logically presented, well structured, and also elicited the relevant information required for the study. Since pilot testing is not intended to produce research reports, the piloted data were excluded from the main study. The participants used in the pilot testing did not form part of the sample drawn to take part in the main study.

The following section discusses the data analysis process.

### **3.9. Data analysis**

Data analysis is one of the most important steps in the research process and can be referred to as the process of collating the raw data. In general terms, it is regarded as a systematic search for meaning (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007:562). According to Gibbs, cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2011:349), qualitative data analysis implies some kind of data transformation by the researcher. During data analysis, the researcher usually begins the process by processing the bulk of the collected information through analytic methods into clear, understandable, insightful, reliable, and valid data. A mixture of analytic methods is utilised by the researcher involving the interpretation of data through organising, sorting, and reducing the collected data into more manageable sections.

The steps in analysing data cannot be followed rigidly because the researcher has to be allowed to gain knowledge through inference (De Vos et al., 2011:403). These authors further state that most of the steps in analysing data serve as a guideline as they often overlap. For the purpose of the study, the researcher analysed data guided by the following eight steps of Tesch (in Creswell, 2009:186):

- The researcher transcribed *verbatim* the interviews he had audio recorded. Once completed, the researcher read through the entire transcripts carefully, making notes of his ideas as they came to mind in order to get a better sense of what has been said.
- The researcher selected one interview, the most interesting / the shortest and put it on top of the pile. Again he went through it, asking himself the following question: *What is this information all about?* The researcher did not think about the substance or content of the information at that moment, but he had to think about its underlying meaning. The researcher then annotated his thoughts in the margins of the script.
- Once the researcher had completed the above-mentioned tasks, he started generating a list of all the themes (topics). The researcher then put similar themes together. He also listed the themes in columns that might be headed as either “major, unique or leftover themes.”
- The researcher then found a fitting abbreviation for each of the identified topics / themes.
- The researcher found the most descriptive wording for the topics and turned them into proper themes or categories.
- The researcher made a final decision on the abbreviation for each theme or category, and assigned an alphabetic code to each one.
- The researcher utilised the cut-and-paste method to assemble the data belonging under a specific theme and carried out a preliminary analysis.
- Where necessary, the researcher recoded the data and started formulating a research report based on the research findings.

According to Bryman (2004:401), coding is the key process that begins soon after the collection of initial data, after which the data is broken down into components and then assigned code names. This process entails reviewing all the field notes, transcripts and, where necessary, labelling the component parts which are potentially of theoretical significance. The type of coding that was utilised during the study is open coding. This process of coding involves breaking down the available data, examining the data, comparing data, conceptualising and categorising the data according to different themes (Bryman, 2004:402). As part of the method of data analysis, therefore, coding also helped to compare the

motivations and experiences of the participants by examining their challenges, and it assisted in yielding concepts and forming theory. In addition to the researcher's coding, an independent and expert coder was sourced to analyse the data. The findings from the researcher's coding were contrasted to with those of the independent coder's report in order to reach an agreement between the study supervisor, the independent coder and the researcher. The identified themes, sub-themes and categories were also agreed upon.

### **3.10. Verification of data**

According to Lichtman (2014:386), data verification is an activity which determines whether the researcher's conclusions are true and accurate as reflected in the study. Data verification can also be equated to a process that the researcher utilises to validate strategies that were used to demonstrate ways of claiming that the research had been rigorously conducted and that the findings could be declared to be trustworthy (Glesne, 2011:49). In order to verify the data, researchers utilize a naturalistic approach rather than relying on a standardised measure (Creswell, 2013:244). Silverman (2013:279) suggests that quality in qualitative research matters; hence, the research findings should be subjected to objectivity. Lichtman (2014:386) further explains that Lincoln and Guba developed the criteria for data verification that relied on four concepts, credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformity. For the purposes of this study the four concepts to verify the data are discussed below.

### **3.11. Credibility of findings**

Credibility can be defined as being the extent to which research findings can be demonstrated to be based on real evidence as described by participants (Silverman, 2013:444). Credibility also refers to the interpretation and evaluation of the research findings as being credible from the point of view of the participants (Lichtman, 2014:386). Credibility is the element that allows others to recognise the experiences contained in the study through the interpretation of the participants' experiences (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011:152). Silverman (2013:444) contends that, to increase the credibility of the research study, the researcher has to audio record the interviews, keep a logbook or diary during the research project, and verify the truthfulness of all personal accounts. The researcher and the independent coder

independently analysed the qualitative data and, thereafter, as agreed with the study supervisor they reached an agreement on the themes, sub-themes and categories that were identified from the collected data.

In order to enhance the credibility of the study, during the study the researcher utilised the following two data-collection techniques, semi-structured interviews and field notes. Semi-structured interviews focused on gathering data on the participants' experiences and motivations for becoming members of primary co-operatives. The second technique involved the researcher's field notes, which reflected all aspects of the observed behaviour and interactions of the participants in the context of the study. As attested to by Nieuwenhuis and Smit (2012:137), in order to increase credibility the researcher should also ensure that the participants natural setting does not change during the study. The interviews took place in a non-threatening and safe environment which was pre-determined by the participants. The participants also participated in the study voluntarily, and they were willing to talk about their own experiences.

### **3.12. Transferability of findings**

Transferability can be regarded as a process which enables the researcher and other readers to infer the research findings and relate them to other life situations (Descombe, 2010:181). Transferability can also refer to the extent to which the research findings can be transferred to other life settings (Lichtman, 2014:387). Additionally, (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:252) define transferability as a way in which the study findings can be useful to others in similar situations, with similar research questions or practice. Transferability also involves the selection a research sample which allows the researcher to conduct semi-structured interviews on multiple viewpoints and derive meanings (Rubin & Babbie, 2010:89). Descombe (2010:189) contends that qualitative research mostly concerns itself with transferability rather than generalising the findings. This is because transferability is an intuitive process in which the relevance of research findings is imagined to apply more widely and not actually demonstrated.

For transferability purposes the researcher accounted for Research Methodology in chapter 3.2, Population and Sampling in 3.5 and Methods of Data Collection in 3.7. The researcher also provided a detailed account of the research processes in chapter 3 and research findings chapter 4 in order to enable other readers and future researchers with the necessary tools to conduct a transferability audit. After data collection, the researcher compiles a research report in a form of dissertation which provides thorough information as provided by participants on their experiences in a way that convince readers that the phenomenon studied really exists (Rubin & Babbie, 2010:89). The report provides the readers with an opportunity to “walk” in the shoes of the participants, to obtain deeper meaning and the sense of the motivations for and experiences as lived by the participants (Rubin & Babbie, 2010:89). In this study, the researcher provides thick and rich textual explanations of the research findings, thus transferring readers to the setting of the research study and providing readers with an element of experiences shared by participants (Creswell, 2013:252). An in depth discussion on the themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged during the study are presented in chapter 4.

### **3.13. Dependability of findings**

According to Ryan-Nicholls and Will (2009:78), dependability of research findings is important to trustworthiness because it establishes whether the research findings are consistent with the raw data and if tested by another researcher they can be repeatable. Dependability also relates to whether the process of the study is dependable if undertaken by a different researcher utilising the same research methods, data and situation and whether another researcher will reach similar conclusions (Ryan-Nicholls & Will, 2009:78). As explained by Thomas and Magilvy (2011:153), when presenting the research findings the researcher needs to provide detailed and proper descriptions of the research purpose, sampling methods, data collection methods, duration of data collection, data analysis, interpretation and which techniques were utilised to determine the trustworthiness of the collected data. The detailed descriptions of qualitative research procedures are presented in this chapter (chapter three) and the findings are presented in chapter five of this report.

In order to address the issues related to dependability, the researcher should demonstrate accuracy and consistency in data collection, analysis and coding in detail, thus creating an enabling environment for other researchers interested in the phenomena under study to repeat the study and get almost similar findings (Shenton, 2004:71). Dependability can also be achieved when data are coded separately by different individuals, in order to compare and examine the codes and reach consensus (Creswell, 2013:253).

Since there are several techniques that can be utilized to establish the dependability of findings, one of the common ways to establish dependability is to source an independent coder to re-examine the processes of data collection, data analysis, and the findings of the study. The raw data was coded by the researcher and an independent coder and almost similar conclusions were reached on the research findings. Consensus was also reached on the codes, themes, sub-themes and categories. The exercise carried out by both the researcher and the independent coder aimed to verify that the collected raw data is consistent with the research findings. All interpretations and conclusions were examined to determine whether they are supported by the data itself.

### **3.14. Confirmability of findings**

Confirmability refers to the degree to which research findings could be confirmed or corroborated by others in an attempt to describe objective reality (Lichtman, 2014:387). Confirmability can be paralleled to objectivity because it asks whether the researcher has allowed his values to intrude into the research findings (Bryman, 2012:49). Confirmability attempts to bring awareness of the researcher's influence to the study by ensuring that the research findings accurately represent the experiences, ideas, and feelings of the research participants and not the biases of the researcher (Shenton, 2003:72). In order to strengthen the confirmability of research findings, Marshall and Rossman (2011:253) suggest that the researcher should develop an in-depth understanding of the research participants' world.

To ensure the confirmability of the findings, the researcher utilised reflexivity during the study. Reflexivity can be defined as the meaning that can be drawn from the life experiences of others that explains their actions in the context of their daily lives (Sorantakos, 2013:326). Reflexivity also forms part of conformability because it is a process according to which the researcher becomes aware of the preconceptions that may jeopardise the interpretations and validity of the research findings (Thyer, 2001:19). Reflexivity is used to describe the researcher's self-organising character during the interactions with research participants so that they are able to provide explanations in their own context without undue influence from the researcher (Silverman, 2013:447). The researcher made an effort always to use probes to gather more information and to remain neutral during the study.

Achieving a completely objective stance on the social world is not always possible because researchers are themselves part of the world they are studying (Denscombe, 2010:153). The researcher is regarded as someone whose observations are selective and whose interpretations of the shared information might be partial or incomplete (Gray, 2009:498). The researcher will remain objective during the research process in order to gain a better understanding of the situation under study. The researcher will reflect on himself in order to ensure that his personal beliefs and life experiences do not influence the research findings, and that he has clearly understood the research participants' viewpoints. During the processes of data collection and data analysis the researcher kept a record of how he felt, and what his ideas or assumptions which may have distorted reality and be biased towards the findings. Through reflexivity, the researcher was able to consciously and sensitively guard against interference in the analysis and interpretations of data obtained from the participants. The process helped the researcher to gain new insights and meanings into the phenomena under study.

### **3.15. Chapter Summary**

A qualitative research methodology was considered to be the most appropriate for this study since the study sought an in-depth understating of Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives. The qualitative research approach enabled the researcher to engage

the participants in their environment in order to gather information about their motivations and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives. Chapter Three has explored the application of qualitative research methodologies in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the study. The chapter also focused on describing how the qualitative research approach was applied in the study, the utilisation of the research design, population and sampling procedures, and methods of data collection and analysis that were employed in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the study. The following chapter deals with the presentation of the research findings.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 4.1. Introduction

This qualitative research study was conducted to explore and describe Vosloorus community members' motivations and their experiences in participating in primary co-operatives. The research findings are presented in this chapter. They emanated from eight semi-structured interviews conducted with members of the primary co-operatives in Vosloorus. In order to give credibility to the study, the researcher analysed the qualitative data and he was assisted by an independent coder to identify the themes. The researcher and supervisor reached a consensus on the themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged from the analysis and coding. The research findings are discussed below supported by direct quotations from the transcribed interviews and subjected to a literature control.

#### 4.2. Biographical profile of the participants

This section of the chapter presents the biographical profiles of the participants who met the criteria of inclusion as outlined in chapter 3. Prior to data collection the researcher determined the criteria for inclusion of cooperative members. In this study eight participants were interviewed. The demographic data are presented in table form.

**Table 4.1** reflects the participants' information regarding the following:

- Age;
- Gender;
- Qualification;
- Year in which they joined the cooperative; and
- The role in cooperative.

In order to exercise anonymity and confidentiality letters of the alphabet were assigned to participants as pseudo names.

According to Middlemiss (2014:930), members of co-operatives are a group diverse people with different, gender, social groups or class and this will continue to have an impact on people's experiences. By implication, this means that it is, therefore, important to understand who participates in the co-operatives and how the cooperative has an impact on their lives.

**Table 4.1: Biographical profile of the participants**

Participant	Age	Gender	Qualification	Year in which they joined the Coop	Role in Coop
A	58	Male	Grade 11	2009	Chairperson
B	47	Female	Grade 12	2005	Chairperson
C	62	Male	Diploma	1999	Deputy chair person
D	55	Female	National Certificate	2006	Deputy chair person
E	54	Male	National Certificate	2012	Public relation office
F	47	Male	Diploma	2000	Marketing manager
G	67	Female	National Certificate	1999	Chairperson
H	50	Female	Grade 12	2009	Chairperson

#### **4.2.1. Age distribution of the participants**

Age is an important factor in any study and so it is included in the biographical profiles of participants (Moore & Govender, 2013:633). The White Paper on Social Welfare (1997) defined a youth as any male or female between the ages of 14 and 34 years and an adult as any man or woman above the age of 35 years. The participants in this study were all above the age of 35 years. In South Africa, people above this age group fall within the adult category. In this study, though, there was no determination of age, but the researcher noted that age plays an important part in determining the participation in co-operatives because most of the co-operatives consist of people who are considered adults. There is a notable trend that most of the people join the cooperatives as well as the income-generating projects late in their adulthood. This is because most of young people are faced with uncertainties about their future, contemplating decisions, studying, and looking for jobs while adults are faced with the responsibilities of looking after their children and maintaining the households (Shulman & Connolly, 2013:31).

#### **4.2.2. Gender distribution of the participants**

Gender is considered to be an important factor on its own in the society and its inclusion in the study is crucial as it provides an insight into who the most likely people are to participate in cooperatives. According to Swartz, De la Rey and Duncan (2007:530), gender refers to the biological differences between men and women that determines a notion of power equality or inequity in which status, power and access to resources is instilled. Of the eight participants, there are four males and four females. It should be noted that the balance of gender was not determined during the study. The distribution of gender indicates that, since the beginning of democracy in South Africa, both men and women enjoy equal rights. This is clearly defined in the constitution and is also provided by policies that protect and promote people's rights to access to economic activities and the labour market. Gender appears to make no difference with regards to participation in cooperatives unless the situation requires hard labour which at times might interfere with demands on females for household chores or child rearing (Haggblade & Tembo, 2003:36).

#### **4.2.3. Highest level of Qualification**

Of the eight participants, two have diplomas, three have national certificates, another two have grade twelve and only one has grade eleven. As observed by Phillip (2003:22), most of the co-operatives depend mainly on members with some sort of qualification, skills and experience in order for them to survive and to be sustainable. According to Khumalo (2014:71), if co-operatives are dominated by members with low education levels, characterized by limited skills, this can result in challenges in the management of the co-operative.

#### **4.2.4. Duration of the participants in the cooperative sector**

Part of the criteria for inclusion in the study was that participants should have been involved in co-operatives for a period longer than two years in order to elicit deep experiences and motivations for being a member of a co-operative. The demographic profiles of the participants reveal that all of the eight participants have been involved in the co-operative sector for over five years.

All the participants were able to recall the exact year in which they joined the co-operative, the earliest being 1999 and the latest 2012. The participants recounted different motivating factors towards joining the co-operative. This will be discussed fully in the presentation of research findings. According to Haggblade and Tembo (2003:39), it is important to determine the duration that co-operative members have been actively involved with the co-operative. He further indicated that co-operative members should be able to remember how much time they had spent on co-operative activities. The findings are in agreement with the widely held view that experience, which refers to knowledge that is gained through exposure to or participation in an event, including attitudes, feelings, perceptions, behaviour, and needs can assist to elicit deep meanings as experienced by the participant (Grobler et al., 2013:48).

#### **4.3. Role in the co-operative**

All eight participants related that they fulfilled different roles since joining the cooperative sector. During the interview, four participants indicated that they are currently holding the position of chairperson. Two are deputy chairpersons, one is a public relations officer while the other member holds a marketing manager's position. With the exception of one participant who owns a catering company, all seven members did not have any other business. Their main focus is in the cooperative. The participants' roles resonate with the trend that the cooperatives depend strongly on members who can perform different roles within the cooperative (Phillip 2003:22). According to Van Wagner (2008:13), the presence of inherent leadership and a good understanding of cooperative functioning affect the running of the cooperative.

#### **Table 4.2: Biographical profiles of co-operatives**

Table 4.2 reflects the following demographics for co-operatives:

- The historical data of the co-operatives that each participant belonged to;
- The types of produce/products the co-operative handles;
- The year in which the cooperative was formed;
- The total number of members in the co-operative;
- The point of entry to the co-operative;

- The support offered to the co-operative; and
- The motivation and driving force behind being a member of the co-operative.

Sector of co-operative	Produce/Products	Year formed	Number of members	Point of entry	Support offered	Motivation and Driving force for membership
1.Agriculture	Crop producing (e.g. vegetables)	2009	6	Team and self-support	Training, tools & access to funding	Passion about Farming
2.Agriculture	Crop producing (e.g. vegetables)	2005	5	Educate, neighborly and self-support	Training & access to funding	Passion about Farming
3.Manufacturing and Cleaning Material	Manufacturing of household cleaning materials Domestos Pine Gel Handy Andy Dish washers	1999	7	Passion and team work	Training, machinery & technical support	Support and get to know one another Nurture one another's skill and capabilities Build strong teams
4. Agriculture	Crop producing (e.g. vegetables)	2006	5	Neighborly, team work	Training and technical support	Nurture one another skill and capabilities  Build strong teams
5.Waste Management	Recycling and waste management	2012	9	Educate, care for environment and Promote Awareness?	training	Passion and Interest
6. Agriculture	Crop producing and Fish farming	2000	6	Family /Kinship and self-support	Training and access to market	Develop Interest an Knowledge the business
7. Sewing and Clothing	Dresses Trousers Clothing	1999	8	Self-support and team work	Training, machinery & access to funding	Self-motivated and self-driven
8. Sewing and Clothing	Traditional dresses Shirts Clothing	2009	6	Self-support and team work	Training and machinery	self- driven Passion with interest

### **4.3.1. Sector of co-operative & produce/products**

According to the Co-operatives Act No 14 of 2005 (2005:8), there are nine types of cooperatives, also referred to as sectors of cooperatives. Khumalo (2014:66) notes that most co-operative in South Africa are agricultural cooperatives and are dominated by women. It is not, therefore, a surprise that the above table has four agricultural co-operatives, two sewing and clothing, one cleaning materials and one recycling co-operative.

### **4.3.2. The year in which the co-operative was formed and the number of members**

The demographic profiles of the co-operatives show that all eight co-operatives have been established and registered for over five years. The oldest co-operative was registered in 1999 and the latest in the year 2012. It is important to establish the year in which co-operatives were registered. The other important factor to be taken into account was determining the number of members per co-operative. The Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 (2005:5) points out that the concept 'co-operative' refers to a co-operative formed by a minimum of five natural persons whose objective is to provide services to its members and to expedite community development.

### **4.3.3. The Point of Entry**

Since there are different reasons co-operative members gave for how they gained entry into the co-operative sector, it was, therefore, essential to summarise these reasons. There are also co-operatives that do not offer other members easy access to entry or to be part of the cooperative, because they feel strongly about protecting their co-operatives (Philip, 2003:24.). Most of the participants indicated that their point of entry into the co-operatives ranges from being able to support themselves, passion, teamwork, family or kinship, to care for one another and for the environment. The different points of entry are supported by Yoshaki (2010:114) as he indicated that co-operative members enjoy being in a co-operative because, besides working in a co-operative as a hobby, they take part in teamwork and group activities. Khumalo (2014:68) argues that co-operative

development is not about numbers or income but about people understanding their circumstances and working with a wide range of members.

#### **4.4. Support offered**

There are many different kinds of support that co-operatives receive from government and private entities that helps to strengthen their operation and existence. The support offered or the lack of such support can be a determining factor in the survival of the co-operative. The findings in this study shows that co-operatives received some form of support from government. Support can be in a form of training and other resources. Of the eight co-operatives, five did receive support of machinery, tools and access to funding. According to the DTI's Integrated Strategy on the Development and Promotion of Co-operatives (2012:34), most of the co-operatives received some form of support from government that strengthened them and eliminated their vulnerability.

#### **4.5. Motivation and driving force to membership**

There are a number of factors that motivate one to join and remain in the co-operative. The different factors for joining co-operatives are highlighted in this section. The motivation and driving force with regards to membership in the short-term and long-term determines the goals of co-operatives and encourages co-operative members to behave in a way that is believed to be important in achieving their goals (Brown, 2007:7). The participants highlighted the following as important when joining a co-operative, passion, ability to work with other people, skills, experience and knowledge, and capabilities. The sentiments shared by participants are in agreement with Broodryk (2006:22). He outlines that needs do not only motivate community members to form co-operatives, but they also provide them with various opportunities to address some of their challenges. Middlemiss (2014:944) alludes to the fact that people's life experiences are different and how they impact upon their decisions that motivate them to determine their social relations is important to understand.

#### 4.6. Overview of the themes, sub-themes and categories

In this section various themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged from data analysis will be presented and subjected to available literature. In order to maximise the credibility of the findings, the researcher analysed the qualitative data and an independent coder was also sourced to help with coding. A discussion on the outcome of the analysis between the researcher and the supervisor was held in order to reach a consensus on the themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged. The findings of the study will contribute towards social work knowledge and discourse. The themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data are presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Summary of themes, sub-themes and categories**

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
Theme 1: A description of co-operatives	Sub-theme 1.1: Nature of a co-operative	Category 1.1.1: Importance of understanding the nature of a co-operative
		Category 1.1.2: Personal attributes that contribute to participation
		Category 1.1.3: The Coop structure and team work as part of participation
		Category 1.1.4: Obtaining support to encourage participation
Theme 2: Roles within the co-operative	Sub-theme Category 2.1: Management and leadership roles	
Theme 3: Motivations for being a member of a co-operative	Sub-theme 3.1: Identifying an opportunity to partake in economy	Category 3.1.1: A way to make a living from a personal passion
		Category 3.1.2: Cooperatives as means to address unemployment
		Category 3.1.3: Addressing environmental issues and community needs to improve quality of life
		Category 3.1.4: Cooperatives influenced by "Vukuzenzele" ideas and government support
Theme 4: Experiences of being a member of a co-operative	Sub-theme 4.1: Positive experiences in the co-operative	Category 4.1.1: Recognition and positive support for cooperatives
		Category 4.1.2: working together with other community members as a support system that strengthens the participation
		Category 4.1.3: Support from the community

	Sub-theme 4.2: Negative experiences in the co-operative	Category 4.2.1: Lack of corporate and stakeholders support to cooperatives
		Category 4.2.2: Lack of governmental support
		Category 4.2.3: Lack of resources
		Category 4.2.4: Lack of access to land
Theme 5: Co-operatives as a social work initiative	Sub-theme 5.1: Benefits of co-operatives as a social work initiative	Category 5.1.1: Benefits for self
		Category 5.1.2: Benefits to co-operative's members
		Category 5.1.3: Benefits for family
		Category 5.1.4: Benefits to the community
Theme 6: Suggestions for practice	Sub-theme 6.1: Suggestions for prospective members of a co-operative	Category 6.1.1: Understand the principle of 'for the greater good'
		Category 6.1.2: Identify type of co-operative to join or to start
		Category 5.1.3: Explore the type of skills, resources and products needed to make a success
	Sub-theme 6.2: Suggestions for social workers and/or community workers to assist the community through co-operatives	Category 6.2.1: Previous experiences of social work involvement
		Category 6.2.2: Working with the community at large
		Category 6.2.3: Understanding community needs and functioning
		Category 6.2.4: Introducing the concept of co-operatives
		Category 6.2.5: Giving information and guidance

The following section discusses the research findings based on the above mentioned themes, sub-themes and categories and extracts from the transcribed interviews are provided where applicable and subjected to literature control.

## Discussion of findings and literature control

### Theme 1: A description of co-operatives

The theme focuses on individuals' descriptions of their understanding of the concept 'co-operative'. The concept co-operative is understood differently by different people, and there seems to be no clear cut understanding of what seems to constitute a co-operative from a layman's perspective. According to Grosskopf et al., (2016:47), however, a co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united to meet their economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. The International Co-operative Alliance (2012:10) and the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 (2005:5)

defines a co-operative as an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic and social needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise organised and operated on co-operative principles. McDonnell and Macknight, (2012:74) define co-operative as a business organisation that is owned and controlled by members who are drawn from one or more stakeholders and whose benefits are for its members. Most of the co-operative members understand what the concept co-operative means and what it entails. Co-operatives mostly start as informal structures and, over time, when members feel comfortable with one another they register it. Once it is registered it becomes a formal entity and then starts slowly to build on the co-operative's efficiency and effectiveness.

### **Sub-theme 1.1: Nature of a co-operative**

The nature of co-operatives is underpinned by local economic development processes. Co-operatives form part of a participatory process that encourages local communities to shape their future, to facilitate partnerships between the local stakeholders and implement strategies that utilize local resources. The co-operative's aim is to create decent living conditions and sustainable economic activities (Khumalo, 2014:65). Co-operatives, therefore, exist as a form of self-help for local communities as demonstrated by the following storylines from the two participants:

*“Co-operative is all about being neighbourly and about humanity. Co-operatives are formed for members to assist each other and to ensure that no one goes to bed hungry, it is there to assist people to be self-reliant.”*

*“If I was to give an example when planting a fruit tree the ultimate goal is to reap the fruit, but what is important is to look after the tree. Because people need to start learning how to help themselves and look at ultimate goals rather than always expecting the government to help them. They form or join cooperatives.”*

*“People don't understand the concept of co-operatives. Even our government does not understand the concept of co-operatives but they*

*initiated it. Co-operatives are all about people who come together with a sole purpose or one mind that they are going to do A, B, C, and D. And we're all equal irrespective of what position you hold in co-operative.”*

The above story lines is in agreement with what Satgar (2007:20) indicated that cooperatives have a direct impact on the economic development of a community. Co-operatives are able to ensure that communities do not socially distance themselves from one another; hence, people from the local community are important. The communities in which cooperatives are located must always strive to uplift themselves. As Swanepoel and De Beer (2011:11) emphasise, in order to empower local communities to take part in economic activities across all sectors of life it is important to achieve goals for sustainable development, to build stronger economies, and improve the quality of life for all in the community.

#### **Category 1.1.1: Importance of understanding the nature of a co-operative**

To understand co-operatives fully and to establish strong co-operatives, it is important for co-operative members to understand the basics and critical factors that have a bearing on the success and/or the failures of co-operatives fully (Rena, 2017:7). It is worth noting that co-operatives also provide the members with an alternative ideal for implementing community-based initiatives that contribute to a sustainable livelihood. The DTI (2010:53) highlights that, within the South African context, co-operatives were established many years ago and they reflect the bigger problem of the under-developed countries that affect the majority of people. Participants reflected on the importance of understanding the co-operative principles from the beginning when they sign in. This is because many members, when they join a co-operative, think of it as an employment entity that should speed up helping them to receive an income. These are some of the views from participants;

*“The problem usually starts at the beginning when new members join the co-operative. They think co-operative is a scheme like this miracle scheme that you put in money and boom next week money is generated. With the co-operative you need to go step by step.”*

*“The problem with members is that they don’t adhere to the systems and the policies of the co-operative that everybody has to work, not sit in the offices of the co-operative. That is why we are losing members, because when we emphasise to them to adhere to the principles they rather say “kuncono ngiyohlala edladleni” (Loosely translated as: I rather stay home).”*

*“They think when they are coming to join the co-operative is extremely nice here and everything is smooth they think their life will be settled quickly, because the old members are fine, forgetting that there are policies here. It is like when am looking at you working in the department of social development you been a social worker and suddenly I also want to be a social worker and when I get there, I realise that things are tough and that is not what I thought it will be”*

*“From the beginning I did not know how the co-operative work, but as I attended the trainings I became more and more interested.”*

According to the co-operatives principles, co-operatives are owned and controlled by their members. Any agreement entered into by the co-operative and another party must always ensure democratic control by the co-operative members. Co-operatives are also strengthened by working together with other co-operatives to ensure that co-operatives co-operate among themselves (Rena, 2017:6). Co-operatives are autonomous and independent organs that are controlled by their members. All members of the co-operative are expected to contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative (Yoshaki, 2010:103). It is, therefore, important that all members of the cooperative are introduced to the co-operative principles and be made aware of what constitutes the co-operative.

### **Category 1.1.2: Personal attributes that contribute to the participation**

According to Haggblade and Tembo (2003:60), the first step for a person to become a member of a co-operative is simply to have the right personal attributes that are reflected by their passion. Gender, religious belief or sexual orientation do not make any difference because what matters the most is the personal attributes and willingness to yield results. According to Swartz et al., (2007:533), personal

attributes play an important role because they determine why individuals voluntarily join the co-operative because they identify themselves as such and they are willing to gain knowledge by being actively involved as a part of the co-operative. Some participants in the study indicated the following as some of the attributes that they expect co-operative members to have:

*“Things like respect, team spirit, punctuality and observing principles of the co-operatives. We are also looking for those kind of attributes in a person but those are mainly guided by our constitution.”*

*“We will train that person, but the main thing we need a person who is, unemployed and committed to work and to gain the skills so that they can be independent.”*

The above sentiments are consistent with what Haggblade and Tembo (2003:23) mentioned and that is that members of the co-operative required personal attributes such as willingness to work hard, willingness to learn and decision-making because co-operatives require careful and thorough planning and the careful implementation of tasks. Rena (2017:8) indicates that trust amongst members is essential for a co-operative because attributes, such as trust, social cohesion, social links, shared vision and financial literacy, are needed to create a strong bond between members. Their absence weakens the relationships amongst members. It is, therefore, important for co-operative members to identify their personal attributes and match them to the expectations of the co-operative as a whole.

Passion for co-operatives is also considered important. The different cooperative members observed that passion is a driving force enabling members to accomplish their desires and those of the entire co-operative. Members shared the following regarding passion for co-operatives:

*“We need a person that has a passion for farming.”*

*“When one person joins a co-operative; they must come to the Co-operative with passion. If they do not have passion, they must forget. The co-operatives field is not where they belong.*

*“Is either they come here and become passionate. They need to live, dream and eat co-operative, then they will make money. But if they don’t live, eat and dream cooperatives, then they must just forget they won’t survive.”*

According to Yoshaki (2010:114), the greatest value of a co-operative to its members is that they must enjoy being members while taking part in co-operative activities and be passionate about them. Phillip (2003:15) also indicates that because of the commitment and sacrifice stemming from member’s passion and willingness to survive, the co-operative offers its members a decent and sustainable livelihood if they aspire to achieve it. It is, therefore, important to recognise that co-operatives are not only designed for socializing but rather provide an opportunity for members to engage in activities that they enjoy doing (Haggblade & Tembo, 2003:23).

Some participants alluded to the fact that prior knowledge and experience to make a contribution to the success of the co-operative is equally important. As these participants explain:

*“We also need a person that knows something about the co-operative sector and that have been to some sort of training.”*

*“We will have to take them for training first, or we will train them ourselves in our co-operative and explain everything that is needed to assist them.”*

According to Middlemiss (2014:932), experience and knowledge are important for cooperative members because they reduce failure while they open up opportunities that lead to self-realization. He further indicated that the ability to

cope with the co-operative way of life can increase effort, time and energy available for participation in co-operatives. In the busy life we have these days, experience plays an important role because co-operative members can understand, plan, and act in a meaningful way that can contribute to collective co-operative activities. The co-operative members must be willing to work with others. The difference between co-operators can be massive but members are encouraged to find ways to optimize working relations and support one another. This will allow for diversity (Philip, 2003:25). One participant indicated that:

*“They really are looking forward to working with other people to bringing in the change that is needed in the co-operative.”*

According to Ogbeide (2015:105), it can be argued that co-operatives have made a contribution to the process of teamwork, growth and developing members' mutual interests and shared values. Middlemiss (2014:931) outlined that usually co-operative members identify more strongly with one another to a point where they become compatible, attached to one another and willing to support and work as a collective. The centrality of members' self-determination and willingness to work with one another plays out in people's daily lives while they 'live a life of their own' and working with others in a team.

As much as the co-operative members must be willing to work with others they should also be willing to take risks that can contribute to the success of the co-operative. In order to take the risks, members should be knowledgeable about what action to take when they are presented with a set of challenges (Kikuchi, 2014:28). Some co-operative members shared the following:

*“One has to make sure that you take calculated risks, because without risks we will never sustain the business.”*

*“They do not understand that you need to put money in, lose some money before you start to make money. I know it because I risked my precious money, but we finally managed to make some money.”*

One of the authors, Philip (2003:22) echoed the view that, in the situation of persistent cash flow emergencies, some of the co-operative members sacrifice their earnings to keep the co-operative thriving. He, however, warns that the risk, if taken many times, can lead to conflict or unhappiness. It is Kikuchi (2014:28) who noted that the outmost level of knowledge is to “know why” certain risks have to be taken because this involve a deep understanding of effects of taking the risk and includes experience and conventional wisdom. It is, therefore, important that the co-operative members are knowledgeable about how to decide on appropriate times to take a certain risk.

It also important that cooperative members know and understand one another in order to minimise risks as was shared by one participant:

*“If a new person wants to join us, we cannot just take a person that we don’t know because we don’t want to bring extra problems to our cooperative.”*

The findings strengthen what Abdallah, Bressers and Clancy (2014:216) reiterated that the characteristics of co-operatives are underpinned by the fact that co-operatives are built on social trust and interrelationships. In order for co-operatives to prosper and survive, members need to have strong social bonds because that is what is needed for sustainable development and social cohesion. The findings are also in line with what was expressed by Rena (2017:9) that there are many attributes that can lead to participation and, ultimately, the success of the co-operative. Those attributes are linked to openness, honesty, caring, concern for community and the environment. Khumalo (2014:68) states that, beside trust and interrelationships, co-operative members also need to have a sense of responsibility and determination because they are key to the success of co-operatives. Furthermore Middlemiss (2014:935) explains that some personal attributes are ideal for participation and fit to build a sustainable future because individuals should be willing to collaborate with others to reach decisions and modify their lifestyle in order to accommodate others.

### **Category 1.1.3: Structure and team work as part of participation**

The structure of any business entity can be described as being either flat or tall. This also refers to the management levels of a co-operative's hierarchy. Whether a co-operative has a flat or tall structure can have influences on the co-operative. As noted by Rishipal (2014:56), the distinction between flat and tall co-operative structures is in the layers of management. According to Rishipal (2014:56), in a tall structure there are several levels of authority between employees in contrast to a flat structure which has a board consisting of a few people overseeing the operations of the co-operative, while other employees who are members of the co-operative all have an equal level of authority. Vaxjo (2017:64) points out that members in flat structures are responsible for creating rules and values which are then passed to the board that is responsible for them. In tall structures it is the other way round because the board is responsible for creating rules or values and filtering them down to the members.

According to Yoshaki (2010:103) and the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 (2005:7), the co-operative principles outline the fact that co-operatives must be democratically controlled by their members, who are active participants in decision making and setting their policies. Those who are serving as representatives of the co-operative are accountable to the members of the co-operative regardless of the position they hold within it. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and at other levels of co-operatives voting is organised in a democratic manner. It can be contested that, in order to achieve their goals, it is important for co-operatives to have a proper flat structure as guided by the following principles of the co-operative:

- Democratic Member Control: co-operatives are democratically controlled by their members;
- Member Economic Participation: All members of the co-operative are expected to contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative; and
- Autonomy and Independence: co-operatives are autonomous and independent organs that are controlled by their members.

According to Rishipal (2014:56), some of the paths taken by co-operatives in order to encourage teamwork and participation are the use of various forms of activity to encourage members and to mobilize participation from communities in order to enhance their quality of life. Phillip (2003:23) indicated that it is important for co-operative members to participate in co-operative activities and to work as a team. Cooperatives are regarded as an entity that is able to bring people who possess different skills together in order to meet their common objective while working as a team (Rishipal, 2014:56).

In co-operatives, teamwork is seen as a distinguishing feature different from other business entities because co-operatives are predominantly linked with community participation while supporting democratic ideals and team solidarity (Phillip, 2003:3). The following extracts highlight the importance of team work in cooperatives:

*“What is very good about the co-operative is that working together we can achieve more.”*

*“Once people group themselves together with one idea and one objective chances of them being successful are high.”*

*“The good thing that I like about the co-operative is that we are working together better than before, I am not the only one ensuring its success but the whole family is involved. There is also co-operation, respect, commitment, dedication and the members are hands on.”*

*“I have also gained knowledge on how to work with people, we all know that people are not the same. I have gained knowledge on how to engage with people and be a problem-solver.”*

The experience of team work shared by participants is well documented because cooperatives attest to be amongst the major contributors to spontaneous team work as members are keen to work together as they share skills and knowledge which are also essential for team work (Haggblade & Tembo, 2003:23).

According to ICA (2012:10), when compared to other groupings co-operatives offer members a sense of ownership through participation, which makes them naturally more engaging, useful and relevant. Finally, all forms of co-operatives should consist of members that are willing to accept responsibilities delegated to them through the co-operative in order to enhance team work (Rena, 2017:5).

#### **Category 1.1.4: Obtaining support to encourage participation**

It is equally significant for co-operatives to get support and to have a wide-range of networking with others in the co-operative sector in order to enhance their participation and success. According to Han, Chung and Park (2013:331), most members of the co-operative view the support they receive as a chance for them to form strong social cohesion, and in this way they become more active, and enable members and other stakeholders to participate and work together. The ICA (2012:10) explains that co-operatives offer an improved approach of doing business because participation, support and sustainability are some of the unique features within the co-operative model. Within the South African context, the DTI (2010:55) noted that since co-operatives have a limited resource base it is paramount that support be provide to potential co-operatives to enhance their power. Some participants expressed their view as follows:

*“A lot of things has happened in terms of seeing the good things you know, I received quite a lot of assistance as well. Even from the side of municipality.”*

*“And we went for training in poultry. It was a very good experience.”*

*“One of the good experiences is that it also helped us to secure funding for our youth to go and study agriculture. Because we also have youths in our co-operatives and we encourage them to establish their co-operatives. We managed to secure funding for them from Social Development to study permaculture and agriculture.”*

*“While we are in the co-operatives, we’ve managed to gain skills.”*

*“We received a grant to study agriculture at Tshwane University of Technology, the grant was from the Social Development, we selected women to study agriculture.”*

*“But then the nice thing about these trainings is that they provided us with the knowledge on how to look after our plants and also how to work with people.”*

As illustrated above, the government and different stakeholders do support the co-operatives. The support they receive should not hinder or disturb the co-operative’s development and democratic control. Co-operatives should always encourage participation to strive to remain autonomous and for its members to sustain it (Rena, 2017:6). This view is also supported by the DTI (2010:55), as it states that co-operatives should be supported because their popularity provides members with a means for collective economic action and this can assist members to acquire considerable benefits in the marketplace. Khumalo (2014:66) points out that, for co-operatives to receive support, they need to start creating a sound governance environment that will create a solid foundation. Rena (2017:11) further indicates that good governance is likely to attract different partnerships. A successful and developed co-operative that complies with legislative requirements is most likely to receive support.

## **Theme 2: Roles within the co-operative**

The roles that co-operative members play within the co-operative emerged as one of the themes. The following discussion outlines the roles played by different members within the co-operative structure. Participants shared their views around their roles and the personal experiences within the co-operative.

Co-operative members perform various roles from being an ordinary member to managing the finances of the co-operative. This sparks the debate about which roles are most important because the co-operative activities of members are often seen as a continuum behind the co-operative. According to Moriarty, Baginsky and

Manthorpe (2015:7), there should be a well-established role differentiation not exclusively with regard to the co-operative executive. This is because role confusion can have a negative effect as it can lead to conflict and role ambiguity and, hence, co-operative members perform multiple roles within and outside the co-operative activities. Van Wagner (2008:13) states that the presence of a good and inherent leadership that understand co-operative functioning will greatly affect the running of the co-operative.

### **Sub-theme 2.1.1: Management and Leadership Roles**

From the moment the co-operative is established until it is fully developed in to a registered entity some of the co-operative members will need to assume certain responsibilities. These responsibilities include management and leadership roles. When the co-operative grows, the co-operative leader's role also intensifies. Members start to engage in a range of difficult tasks and this will require transparency in leadership (Phillip, 2003:21). The participants explained that, since they started engaging in co-operative activities, they had performed different roles within the co-operative structure. They further indicated that they executed those roles without disrupting the activities of the co-operative. The following excerpt explain how they handled and performed different tasks:

*“I am currently the chairman, but initially when we started with three or four members in 2009 I was the marketing director.”*

*“I used to be the public relations officer (PRO) and facilitated trainings. The trainings that I facilitated includes explaining the different roles of executive members such as the role of chairperson, secretary and treasurer. I also used to train members on co-operative governance.”*

*“Our executive consist of three people. The chairperson, secretary and treasurer. My role was to assist the treasurer with finances since I was trained on how to manage finances.”*

This confirms that, in the co-operative, members perform different roles in the best interests of the co-operative (Deloitte & Touche, 2013:3). Phillip (2003:22) explains that, in some instances, co-operative members are faced with the reality of little or no work experience (business management, basic numeracy and even financial literacy) but, if there are other co-operative members who are able to execute those roles within the cooperative and assist, then the cooperative will succeed.

The participants described how they were able to move from one role to another while, at the same time, juggling the different roles that needed to be performed because of limited resources or manpower.

*“Being a deputy chairperson you oversee the running of the co-operative. The chairperson is only responsible for chairing and controlling meetings. The deputy chairperson assists the chairperson, I decided to remain in the deputy chairperson position”*

*“When the co-operative was established, I was nominated as the chairperson for the co-operative. I have been the chairperson since then, but in between I assisted the treasurer and the secretary.*

Another participant who is also the chairperson explained this:

*“As a chairperson you cannot always limit yourself to perform one role you have to understand the responsibilities of the whole executive committee so you can assist when needed.”*

This participant who is also a chairperson explained that:

*“The chairperson has to mentor and identify where mentorship is needed. The knowledge that we have has to be filtered down to other members, because people come and go, members need to know the operations of the co-operative.”*

One of the participants who occupies the role of marketing officer shares his view:

*“I am the marketing officer of the co-operative. As a marketing officer I have to make sure that whatever that we are doing as a co-operative is known by other people and we get customers. I was also a director of the co-operative but we realised that the role of a marketing officer is important in order for us to grow our business. Since I was in this field of co-operatives for a long time and I know different people the executive decided that is better for me to market the co-operative and that is what I am doing.”*

The above extracts confirm that management of any co-operative encompasses a variety of demanding tasks, and, when the co-operative grows, the roles also escalate creating a need for co-operative managers to perform their roles in a more transparent manner (Phillip, 2003:21). Van Wagner (2008:18) indicates that there are many co-operative leaders who seem to understand that the functioning of the co-operative relies mostly on decision-making powers especially when the co-operative is growing in order to drive the co-operative forward.

There are also some instances where some co-operative members seem to undermine the leadership or confuse the leadership roles with performing the co-operative duties. One participant indicated that:

*“People sometimes like to take advantage of the fact that one of the co-operative principle is that we are all equal. Yes, we are equal in terms of the principle but when coming to doing the work it is not the same, at some point some members are absent from work for a long period but come month end, they want to get paid the same as the other members who were here Monday to Friday nine o’clock till five o’clock it does not work that.”*

As highlighted by Van Wagner (2008:13), it is important for co-operatives to have good and inherent leadership that will ensure that members understand the functioning of the co-operative. This should be coupled with discipline and ethics that will positively affect the running of the co-operative. Satgar (2007:18) also highlighted that some co-operative members concentrate their effort on

undermining both the leadership and internal processes of the co-operative in an opportunistic way that can wreak havoc with the management of the co-operative.

Co-operative management and those who occupy leadership roles are obliged and expected to promote the success of the co-operative. They are also expected to act in the best interests of the co-operative. There are some co-operative members who are competent and able to master the different roles within the co-operative (Philip, 2003:19). The building blocks of a successful co-operative rely on the management and leadership roles. Leaders must be willing to perform their duties and utilise their experience and skills to the best advantage of the co-operative (Deloitte & Touche, 2013:3). It can, therefore, be contested that, if responsibility and accountability can be embedded at a grassroots during the establishment of the co-operative, it will be easier for management or leadership to perform their roles and to be accountable to the co-operative members (Satgar, 2007:20).

### **Theme 3: Motivations to become a member of a co-operative**

Most co-operatives were started with a mission to address individual or community needs. As the five different cooperative Vosloorus members explained, some of them started the co-operative as they found themselves unemployed and were looking for alternatives to survive. Others saw a need in the community that confirmed and challenged them to establish co-operatives. According to Swartz et al., (2007:533), motivation is an internal desire that provokes and channels behaviour towards a goal or direction that results in self-satisfaction. Besides the direct impact co-operatives might have on the economic development of community, it is still important to ensure that co-operatives uplift the community and this will motivate people to join. The following sub-theme outlines the reasons why participants decided to join the co-operatives.

#### **Sub-theme 3.1: Identifying an opportunity to partake in economic activities**

According to Moraa (2008:38), most co-operatives are established to address a certain need and, over a period of time during their development, co-operatives should secure the means to foster the economic independence of their members

while they take part in the activities of the co-operative. Most of the people who take part in the activities of the co-operative do so because there is a belief that the poor and vulnerable will benefit more from the economic activities through co-operatives than by themselves (Rena, 2017:1). The following extracts relate to members identifying an opportunity to take part in economic activities:

*“I think I started to be involved in co-operatives in 1996. Yes, I was an informal trader and administrative secretary at Johannesburg park station back then. I saw people selling their stuff, other were selling sweets the whole eight hours... I was selling “vetkoek” (fat cakes) and scones. I decided to get involved in farming to sell vegetables, I then invited few people for us to start and register a co-operative because we wanted to grow our economy as farmers or as agricultural co-ops.”*

*“What made me join the co-operative it’s the name itself because in our country we have this problem of poverty. The name attracted me as I understood it to mean that people coming together to address poverty in their lives and for their communities.”*

*“We all know that most poor people are unemployed. Unemployment make people to be prone and to be more vulnerable I was previously employed at Ekurhuleni, but I resigned and joined some community members to establish cooperative. We started the vegetable gardens and buying the vegetables from the people at informal settlements and selling them at our township. By doing this we were also supporting the people from the informal settlement, because at least we were buying vegetables from them and on our side we were selling them to make profit.”*

This confirms that the co-operatives exist to nurture the economic capacity of their members and they are meant to better the quality of their lives (Khumalo, 2014:65). While Yoshaki (2010:103) explains that the co-operative members are expected to contribute towards the capital of their business, they are also expected to benefit from co-operative surplus. The surplus can be allocated to benefit the members financially and to support their economic activities.

### **Category 3.1.1: A way to make a living through personal passion**

There are a number of motivational drivers that determine the basis for personal passion. Individuals commit to a cause of action for a solution to satisfy their passion or to address challenges that need immediate and lasting solutions (Swartz et al., 2007:166). According to Moraa (2008:40), the co-operative concept makes members understand that it is not just a social business but also passion that can help them to develop co-operatives. The following participants stated how their passion motivated them to join cooperatives:

*“When I grew up, I used to watch my grandparents farming and I was always involved in the farming. And later when I started with the co-operative... I realized that farming is life more than anything. Farming motivates me more than anything because when I look at farming I see life which really makes me want to go on with life and continue.”*

*“When you put down the seeds and you look at the seedling coming up, that experience excites me. It is like therapy to me, because you can see that there is life coming out of what you put down in the soil. And that motivates me to really want to continue to plough and plough more, because when those seedlings are grown and they are vegetables there are people that are now living a good life and better life with those vegetables from the soil.”*

*“You see my brother most people at that informal settlement are unemployed and hungry. Because I am originally from Mpumalanga, the knowledge that I gained during my youth days helped me a lot and that is why I was always interested in farming. I even have fruit trees in my yard here in Gauteng.”*

According to Yoshaki (2010:114), one of the greatest values for co-operative members is that they are enjoying taking part in activities while working as a hobby or enjoying a way of living that increases their quality of life. Similarly Satgar (2007:15) indicated that the greatest advantage that a co-operative offers its

members is full participation in activities they like while they make a living from them.

### **Category 3.1.2: Cooperatives as means to address unemployment**

In the developing countries like South Africa, most of the community members are unemployed and underdeveloped. South Africans are noticing the potential of co-operatives as a means that can provide them with long-term sustainable employment (Phillip, 2003:19). Most cooperatives and group enterprises are, therefore, initiated by unemployed people with the hope of changing their status to being self-employed, and it is under these conditions that co-operatives give them the opportunities to succeed (Han et al., 2013:333). For most people who are unemployed the task of continued existence is so great that any opportunity that offers them employment is embraced. These opportunities are from different angles across a range of livelihood strategies such as subsistence farming, entrepreneurship, family businesses and co-operatives. All these opportunities offer unemployed people the chance of employment (Haggblade & Tembo, 2003:23). The participants confirmed this and shared their views as follows:

*“Being in the cooperative, I am surviving and even doing well or much better than others who are full time employees.”*

*“It is when we worked hard and have sold all our produce. You see that hey actually farming is exciting and it is really exciting to me. Last year we worked very well and we made quite a bit of money with the co-operative and those were the good experiences.”*

*“The good thing is that I can also contribute or manage to provide for my family and it has helped me grow as a woman and as a person.”*

This confirms what Phillip (2003:3) explained that co-operatives have substantial potential to contribute towards the reduction of unemployment and poverty. Co-operatives are capable of creating jobs and increasing social mobility. The participants in this study confirmed that they are self-employed and have created opportunities for job creation in the communities. This is supported by Rena

(2017:11) and Ogbeide (2015:105) as they explain that co-operatives are an alternative to job creation and contribute towards addressing unemployment and poverty reduction in communities. Members of co-operatives are in farming, have established re-cycling projects, and been involved in sewing, including manufacturing cleaning materials.

### **Category 3.1.3: Co-operatives as a tool addressing environmental issues and improving the quality of life of communities**

There is a need for the ordinary people and communities to take part in reducing the effects of environmental damage. The starting point for reducing the damage is through changes in lifestyle and sustainable development (Middlemiss, 2014:930). Some co-operatives are established as an alternative to protect the environmental, to further address environmental sustainability, eradicate hunger, gender inequality and unemployment (ICA, 2012:11). As such, co-operatives should be supported because their key purpose is to advance the quality of life, while members are guided to contribute to sustainable development and find solutions to climate change. According to Moriarty et al., (2015:7), it is part of a social worker's responsibilities to encourage the communities to control unacceptable behaviours. This will further minimise the probabilities of communities harming themselves or the environment and to maintain social order. According to the SACSSP (2017:17), as part of community development, the community should focus on addressing their needs, developing themselves while protecting the environment. This is because the environment has a reciprocal relationship between individuals and their survival, and, therefore, the participation of communities is needed to lessen environmental damage. The following are some of the extracts from participants addressing environmental issues:

*“We observed and realised that looking after the environment and recycling is very important for our community. Our cooperative was formed basically around the issues of illegal dumping and the question of what is it that we can do about waste or waste management.”*

*“Initially when the co-operative was established we saw a possibility and an opportunity for our kids and community to be educated about recycling or what is recyclable. We went door to door and we conducted a survey, we interviewed most members of our community and explained to them that glasses, papers, and all the plastic rubbish stuff should be recycled.”*

According to the SACSSP (2017:7), it is important that co-operative members understand how human behaviour has an impact on the environment. They also need to be knowledgeable about the skills that are needed to intervene in order to address community needs and damage to environment. Again, while co-operatives are economic in nature, their sustainability has to do with the combination of protecting the environment in creative ways and achieving their economic independence. Khumalo (2014:66) posits that there is a need for participation in environmental issues, protecting the environment and sustaining natural resources so contributing to sustainable development. Amongst the issues that were described by the participants is the emphasis on how co-operatives deal with the needs of the community and challenges. Some participants explained the following:

*“There are many reasons why I joined the co-operative. But the key reason we formed the co-operative was that we wanted to deal with issues of unemployment, poverty alleviation and the challenges that depletes our community.”*

*“You see initially at the time when the co-operative was started we have observed that once we work together in numbers we can always deal with issues of poverty and other challenges.”*

*“Once the co-operative start growing we intend to allow members of the community to be part of the business and as such we will be employing community members.”*

It is apparent that, regardless of what kind of development is created, a motivation to care for the environment provides members with satisfaction that is conducive

to enhancing the quality of life and reaching their basic needs. Co-operatives are capable of winning a lot of local acceptance because they are locally based, they respond to socio-economic crises and they provide opportunities for local communities. Co-operatives provide members with an opportunity to face their challenges ranging from poverty, unemployment and environmental issues such as pollution (Khumalo, 2014:65). Support that is delivered by government institutions for co-operative programmes can rapidly and significantly contribute to human resource development, the creation of employment, and encourage local economic ownership (Rena, 2017:11).

Among the many benefits that co-operatives provide they have been rediscovered as an effective method of confronting long-lasting problems generated by the environmental changes and global warming both of which are not yet resolved by the industrial revolution (Han et al., 2013:328). Co-operatives can be utilised at grassroots by a multifaceted approach led by the community itself to address different community needs such as environmental dilapidations, poverty and unemployment.

#### **Category 3.1.4: Co-operatives as influenced by “Vukuzenzele” ideas and government support**

Vukuzenzele is a Zulu word which means, in simple terms, “Let’s wake up and do things for ourselves”. It refers to self-help. In most cases the “vukuzenzele” pattern emerges as co-operatives bring people together to address their needs. The South African government does encourage communities to establish co-operatives and to start their own businesses. According to the DTI (2010:53), the “Vukuzenzele” approach is an initiative that influences communities to do things for themselves. The government’s role is to create a conducive environment for these businesses to be established, enact fair legislation, and provide funding and technical assistance to co-operatives and small businesses. The communities are encouraged to take the initiative of developing themselves and utilizing their own resources for their good cause. This in turn motivates both the developed and developing co-operatives to grow and to create more jobs (ICA 2012:15). According to Abdallah et al., (2014.219), the government is dedicated to offering

support, guaranteeing that co-operatives remain sustainable and capable of achieving their objectives and fulfilling their members' needs. The participants in the study explained how Vukuzenzele influenced and motivated them:

*“But all in all, because of vukuzenzele I started at home. I established a small household garden; the other community members joined us and started producing different vegetables from their gardens and we worked together as a collective.”*

*“The concept of co-operatives is not a new one, but the essence of it is that older person in the community refer to it as “ilima” this means one member donate a cow, while the other member comes with seeds or manpower. Everyone has to contribute something to the group to make it work whatever that they can bring and they group themselves on the basis of their objectives.”*

The participants' experiences are in support of what Khumalo (2014:62) outlined that the co-operative characterizes the African community's way of life because their establishment is not new to South Africa and African practices. Although co-operatives have evolved over time, they still continue on the same model whereby people can effortlessly support one another to succeed. According to Broodryk (2006:22), the belief in community involvement is common within the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* where "humanness, caring, sharing, respect and compassion" contribute to a sustainable livelihood. Moreover, the powers of the community in decision making offer a precise convenient base for establishing co-operatives as collective way of life. In addition, the DTI (2010:53) notes that co-operatives provide an alternative model for the implementation of sustainable development. This is the reason why the South African government encourages communities to establish co-operatives.

Vukuzenzele is the starting point for most of the co-operatives that are initiated by the community driving their own development. For the concept of vukuzenzele to be successful they require some form of support from government and the private sector. The government can then fund or support those who take the initiative to

develop themselves. The current reality is that, in most instances, many co-operatives are not sustainable unless there is government support. The participants also indicated the importance of financial and practical support to Vukuzenzele:

*“We also received some money from the grant in aid of the municipality. We got R150 000.00 so that we can do more and develop our co-operative further.”*

*“The municipality has helped us a lot with the seeds, the tools, training and the grant in aid that we are receiving is also coming from the municipality and the municipality is part of government.”*

*“The sewing machines that we are currently using we got them as a donation from the government Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP), and we also have got tools from the government.”*

*“From government the tenure of the former mayor they gave us R100 000.00 for starter pack when we were still fifty people. Then the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) also gave us the resources valued at R300 000.00 and we even bought a van. Then we also received from grant in aid money from the municipality then we bought some machine, computers, laptops.”*

The findings confirm that, to a certain extent, the government provided the necessary financial and technical support that make sure that the strengths of co-operatives are harnessed and that the necessary conditions are put in place for co-operatives to make a significant contribution to sustainable development (Abdallah et al., 2014:219). At the same time, the government encourages the community effectively to take responsibility for their development so that the state can assist co-operatives and also that co-operatives can provide services that the government can utilise (Middlemiss, 2014:938). In order for co-operatives to succeed, a supportive environment that consists of financial support, technical and institutional support is necessary for sustainable development and the creation of

new jobs (Phillip, 2003:24). It is, therefore, important that various support methods for co-operatives within the government and private sector be continued and strengthened for sustainable development because supporting co-operatives is a shared responsibility for different stakeholders.

Since most of the co-operatives are established as part of self-help (vukuzenzele), it is important that members are trained to empower them. All of the participants alluded to the fact that they attended different trainings in order to be empowered with regard to the operations of the cooperatives:

*“There was some kind of intervention from the part of Economic Development. They intervened at the time that we established this co-operative they trained us, on co-operative itself, what is a co-operative, what needs to happen in terms of members and management of our co-operative. They only offered us trainings.”*

*“There were a lot of training that we attended like financial management, business management, capacity building but those were short term trainings because we attend for one day or two days.”*

*“The Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) normally send us to trainings. We have done a lot of trainings. The trainings we have done include business administration, project management, development, budgeting, sales, marketing, health and safety, basics of IT and manufacturing.”*

*“There are many trainings that we attended including governance, the ethics of the co-operative and the systems.”*

*“So far we got the support of training, we have been send to different trainings for more than a week and some training have taken more than two weeks and we also do study groups with the Department of agriculture.”*

*“I went to some normal trainings from municipality when we were trained on management co-operatives”*

The findings concede that training for members of co-operatives is very important (DTI, 2012:34). Most of the newly-registered co-operatives require training and support because they remain vulnerable and very weak. According to Yoshaki (2010:3), the training is important because co-operatives can develop and expand fully after the members have received support and training with regard to co-operatives. Phillip (2003:24) argues that the provision of skills through training and institutional support is essential for co-operatives to succeed in South Africa. The findings and the literature clearly conclude that training for co-operative members is essential in order for co-operatives to be successful.

The following theme discusses the Vosloorus community members' experiences in participating in primary co-operatives.

#### **Theme 4: Experiences of being a member of a co-operative**

The theme discusses the Vosloorus community members' experiences in participating in primary co-operatives as lived by the participants. According to Yoshaki (2010:108), lack of experience in the co-operative sector is the main cause of the failure for most of co-operatives because they start operating prematurely ignoring the importance of experience and neglecting the co-operative principles. By participating in the activities of the co-operative the members benefit from a range of experiences that allow them to grow on the basis of stature and character (Philip, 2003:14). One way to overcome the challenges to the co-operatives is through the experience that members amass through direct participation, services offered, learned skills and opportunities gained. This means that all co-operators, as well as government, need to appreciate that co-operatives by definition have an ethical basis grounded on the idea of self and collective empowerment; it is an empowerment tradition of learning from experience and practice that would also have to be passed on to the next generations (Satgar, 2007:20).

### **Sub-theme 4.1: Positive experiences in the co-operative**

The presentation below is based on the participants' positive experiences in the co-operative which includes recognition and positive support for co-operatives, working together with other community members as a support system that strengthens the participation and, finally, support from the community.

#### **Category 4.1.1: Recognition and positive support for cooperatives**

In the preamble to the Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005, there is recognition afforded to the establishment, recognition and support of co-operatives. The ICA (2012:14) recognizes the economic importance of co-operatives and government support. There are other contributions by co-operators, such as the impact of co-operative development, modelling good behaviour that highlights co-operative principles, innovative approaches that create networks between co-operatives, sharing of information, business opportunities and exposure that affords members visibility to the world of co-operatives.

According to Khumalo (2014:69), in South Africa co-operatives are recognized by government as a self-sustaining and self-reliant venture that plays a major role in the social and economic development of the country. Co-operatives are able to play a major role through economic empowerment, income generation, job creation, and the eradication of poverty. The majority of people belong to co-operatives as a matter of necessity; in many cases they are a person's only means to gain recognition and support from others. Recognition was highlighted as one of the positive experiences by the participants:

*“I can now rest in peace knowing that what I struggled for is at least prospering, we did not struggle for nothing.”*

*“The good experiences that I gained number one is that the members have confidence in me. The members also appreciated the work that I do for them I. now can see the benefit of our hard work”*

This excerpt confirms that there is undoubtedly recognition of co-operatives in South Africa. Co-operatives offer an opportunity for disadvantaged people to participate more meaningfully in the economy, and it is assumed that they are an instrument through which the disadvantaged people can organize themselves and be recognized (Rena, 2017:2). According to Abdallah et al., (2014:216), the recognition of co-operatives also contributes to their success because of the strength that comes from co-ordinated support and partnership with stakeholders.

For any co-operative the recognition that comes from the ideology of self-establishment and sustainable business is a crucial part for its survival. This means that co-operatives require some level of recognition and appreciation as they are rooted in collective effort and self-empowerment. The experience of co-operative members deserves to be passed on to other generations. The long-lasting growth and development of co-operatives is possible only with government assistance and recognition because positive reinforcement does strengthen them (Chen, 2009:717). The findings are supported by Rena (2017:11) that recognition of co-operatives is fundamental to their success because, for any successful co-operative, there should be a recognised mutual need that is being addressed collectively.

**Category 4.1.2: working together with other community members as a support system that strengthens the participation**

For improved participation, it is better for communities to work together to create inter-dependence among members and bridge the gap that creates social division. Community members could join the co-operatives independently or through a facilitator provided for the enhancement of sustainable development (Abdallah et al., 2014:216). The desire for members' collective participation is an integral component for the success of co-operatives and a sustainable livelihood. The desire to embark on collaboration with community members for co-operatives as a platform for sustainability is the main reason for working together and strengthening participation. As observed by Kangayi et al., (2009:53) "people want to be part of a team". The following extracts shed light on this:

*“So that was the idea; rather than working alone going out to sell the stuff that was the thing that motivated me to join the co-operative.”*

*“Once we work in isolation we will always have these common challenges.”*

*“Currently what becomes a challenge is that now everybody wants to do recycling, but people are doing recycling in isolation or on individual basis.”*

These findings are in line with participatory theories that emphasise the importance of individuals and communities participating in defining and reducing their own poverty and building their own wealth rather than accepting their poverty status or working alone (Nicholas et al., 2010:357). Yoshaki (2010:96) adds that co-operatives are established in order for the members of communities to co-operate with one another and to participate in their own development, while Phillip (2003:4) states that co-operatives are formed on the basis that members need to participate fully on what was agreed by them but linked to community needs.

#### **Category 4.1.3: Support from the community**

In the absence of a strong support environment from the community, enterprises such a co-operatives stand to lose because, with much better support from the community, they have improved chances of assisting people to generate income and contribute to community development (Haggblade & Tembo, 2003:25). The community is sometimes in a much better position to provide guidance and advice to community development initiatives. Some of the participants indicated the following as part of guidance and advice from community members:

*“We also get ideas and information from other people whom we call them non-executive directors.”*

*“What we do, the Co-operatives Act always allow people who can be non-executive directors. We mean a person who is not our member, but who sit in our meetings and giving us some advices and ideas. I am talking of the teachers, the local teacher’s, there’s also a principal of one of the primary schools he is an accountant by profession. There is also a person who is*

*working for Rand Water. Those are the people who are helping us in order for this co-operative to move forward.”*

*“The Chinese invited me to their business workshop at Gallagher Estate in September to go and learn about import and export trading because this thing of export has many regulations. They are also teaching us on how to look after the fishes and how to take care of them. They are just throwing us with ideas and some information. We do have their support through information and they keep us updated almost weekly via emails.”*

The findings confirm the view that co-operatives, as part of a community initiative, have an ability to stimulate the attention of people or other organisations which contribute to pooled resources that address challenges faced by the community (Fazzi, 2010:1467). To add to the importance of support from the local community, Satgar (2007:15) argues that one of the determining factors for community initiatives to be successful is the willingness of members to form support relations with people and institutions that would not undermine the autonomy of the cooperatives. Philip (2003:25) mentions that the members of the co-operative should be able to find means that enhance the support given to community initiatives in ways that encourage diversity while avoiding the temptation to instruct the co-operatives in how to operate their activities.

Members of co-operatives should also take cognisance of their ability to create a market and not only rely on the local community to support them. Many emerging co-operatives attempt to utilise community demand as a basis for development, but this might not always be sustainable in the long run and so co-operatives have to find other channels to promote their products (Satgar, 2007:21). Participants mentioned the importance of receiving support from the community and creating their own market:

*“The community support us in terms of buying our crops such as spinach, because we always specialise with spinach. At least they sympathise with us to buy.”*

*“It is more with the people that have businesses around and also with our people and our hawkers here and yes, my community does support me.”*

*“So far we have been supported by the man on the street, our community, and the schools around. We just need to continue to build the relationship with the schools, with crèches, and with all these home-based care institutions. Those are the people who are mainly supporting us and buying our products, because we deliver to them.”*

According to Kikuchi (2014:64), besides the local market co-operatives should produce goods that are necessary to expand the local market and goods that can attract communities not to rely only on retailers since they have to push for a stake that is dominated by retail business. Fazzi (2010:1467) states that, to have a share in the market, co-operatives should be outstanding in their activities by learning from other businesses in order to discover ideas and strategies for adapting to the market. Finally, co-operatives could improve their business opportunities by finding new ways or opportunities that retail business does not use for marketing.

#### **Sub-theme 4.2: Negative experiences in the co-operative**

According to Swartz et al., (2007:531), an experience that does not follow a desired outcome is usually regarded as a negative experience. The presentation below is centered on the accounts of participants’ negative experiences in the co-operative which included a lack of corporate and stakeholder support, a lack of governmental support, a lack of resources and a lack of access to land.

##### **Category 4.2.1: Lack of corporate and stakeholders support to co-operatives**

Sometimes the lack of corporate or stakeholders support is possible because of the mismatch that emerges from social responsibility goals or conditions provided by donors. Some co-operatives lack clarity on the same issues and economic rationale for their existence, and it, therefore, becomes challenging and complex to support a co-operative that does not have a clear economic and social rationale (Rena, 2017:9).

*“The banks treat the co-operatives as if is something that does not exist they do not recognise co-operatives.”*

*“Some people do not respect members of the co-operatives I do not know why. They do not regard co-operative as a business, they think we are just pushing time.”*

In the current period, co-operatives also face the problems that come from outside and within their own management as described by the participants:

*“The other challenge is this big retail stores, because they say they don’t deal with co-operatives. We went to Pick and Pay head office in Bedford View for a meeting. We went with our products, the certificate of approval from South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) and they said our documents are in order. They offered us a piece of stall in the shelf but they needed half a million rands upfront for security reasons. They mentioned that is required in case our stock is not bought, is stolen or there is fire”*

*“We went to Shoprite; they indicated that they are central in terms of procurement. They indicated that they are buying bulk stock and distribute. They said if we want to sell our produce at their shops, we need to bring money for insurance.”*

*“The large companies need a huge upfront money as a security. They say they are paying lights, they are paying the security, they are paying staff and when our products are not bought who is going to pay?”*

These responses confirm the findings in Kikuchi (2014:64) that many retail businesses are on the rise daily and they have their distribution centres covering all the stores in the country and that it is not favourable for co-operatives to enter the retail world. According to Fazzi (2010:1467), the problem is worsened by the fact that most co-operatives have not developed methods of managing their activities and, moreover, most of their goods are traded at larger prices than those of the retailers.

Competition is also rife in the marketing sector since most of established retailers and businesses are focusing on increasing profits while co-operatives are more concerned with social cohesion and sustainable development. In this era of high competition in the innovative economy, co-operatives need to advance and grow in order to succeed (Kikuchi, 2014:27). To survive in the market, co-operatives need to be efficient as illustrated by the following participants:

*“And also the competition with the people are coming from outside of South Africa who goes anywhere, anyhow and they don’t have a problem selling cheap or fake products.”*

*“Another challenge is that the company that is doing waste collection within our communities is also doing recycling. We are struggling to get assistance from the recyclers and the big companies to assist as they are in direct completion with us”.*

*“When we started we did not have big capital; we saw an opportunity to operate a business. So we realised in the process of everything that the company that is supposed to be assisting us is our competitor.”*

These findings are in line with what Khumalo (2014:68) indicated when he said that the history of co-operatives in South Africa reflects the significant role played by businesses in supporting co-operatives to enter the market by working together rather than competing with them. This is to allow communities to be developed and to create economic benefits with strong social cohesion and sustainable development. Other scholars (Han et al., 2013:332) say that it is important that various stakeholders participate in the ownership of co-operatives in order to create strong bonds in neighbourhoods. This will directly contribute to the governance and effectiveness of co-operatives to sustain local development rather than competing. According to Abdallah et al., (2014:222), for many co-operatives the local markets are poor because retailers are able to buy mass-produced products at low cost, already branded and price sensitive. This is making it hard for local producers such as co-operatives to compete because competition levels

are much higher. It is, therefore, important for big businesses to work together with co-operatives rather than see them as competition. This is because retailers are more concerned with profits while co-operatives are more concerned with participation and social cohesion.

#### **Category 4.2.2: Lack of governmental support**

For co-operatives to be successful there is a need for government support whether from local, provincial or national government. A lack of government attentiveness to the co-operative sector is most likely to generate laws that are not favourable to co-operatives but favour other kinds of enterprises thus making it more difficult for co-operatives to thrive (Fazzi, 2010:1469). It is also worth noting, as Rena (2017:8) indicated, that different sectors of co-operatives have a need for assistance from all levels of the government throughout their stages of development. According to Khumalo (2014:66), for co-operatives to succeed they must depend on their skills and support from government to develop strategies, and they need the availability of the legislative frameworks to set up local institutions. Co-operatives should, however, be able to sustain themselves in the long run without relying much on government support.

*“Challenges that we are facing is the regulations by the council. When we talk to officials they refer us to different officials and different departments without taking any responsibility. If you query that, they begin to say this is not our responsibility go to that official or go to that department and we always find the change of personnel and that affect us negatively.”*

*“Yes we want to expand. Every year when there is a state of the nation address by the president they will say thirty percent of government procurement will go to co-operatives, but practically it is not happening.”*

*“One of the bad experience that we are facing is that we are standing on our own. We are supposed to be helped by the government because if you pay attention to government policies they say 30 percent of government procurement should go to co-operatives and the 70 percent for these big companies. Until today that 30 percent it has never been implemented.”*

Three of the participants also voiced their frustrations with regard to government departments not paying for their services on time or at certain times services are not being paid at all:

*“You know sometimes our government gives us lot of questions instead of answers. When they place the orders they put you under pressure that the order has to be delivered at a certain time, but when they have to pay is another task. You submit all the documents and the invoice but it will take them forever to pay, we have been in this co-operative field for a long time even currently none of our invoices has ever been paid within thirty days never. Eskom will never understand that our government has not paid our invoice they will come and cut the electricity and the same government will be saying we are failing to deliver their orders on time.”*

*“You know, before you do business with government they require the co-operative to register at Central Business Data Base (CBDB) and to comply with many things, but when they have to pay for the services that is a headache to us. Something needs to be done by these late payments, a month is understandable, but not six month or even a year that is very frustrating.”*

*“Our government does not pay for their services. Imagine they give you specifications and also the government decide the prices, is either you take it or leave it.”*

Although there are several government departments that can positively support co-operative development, their roles on how they contribute is not clearly defined. Khumalo (2014:65) points out that the failure of the government to intervene at the local level by not recognising that every community is made up of multiple local economies and that all are different in their own way and each community needs to be nurtured in its own way. Abdallah et al., (2014:225) are of the opinion that co-operatives will not be able to realise their full potential and have an impact on local economic development for as long as the government’s interventions fail to

be spatially cognitive and to commit departments to developing co-operatives for local economies. The government should put an emphasis on the idea of partnering with co-operatives in order to create more competitive co-operatives in the economy.

### **Category 4.2.3: Lack of Resources**

Co-operatives are faced with additional sets of challenges specific to the co-operatives sectors that make it harder for them to stay alive (Philip, 2003:19). According to Khumalo (2014:72), the low asset base and complete lack of natural and human resources among communities is a huge cause restraining the success for most co-operatives. Yoshaki (2010:108) states that one of the main causes of the failure for co-operatives is associated with their lack of human, natural and financial resources to invest in their operations. Participants accounted as follows to demonstrate how the lack of resources affects them:

*“As individuals, we were given tools but we talked as members to say: ‘people let’s all go and get these tools so that we can have something to work on’. But as a co-operative we never got any tools. We are very much eager to get those tools and the fencing so that cattle cannot destroy our plants and we also need a water tank.”*

*“The other challenge we are currently facing is where to get the raw materials?”*

*“At some point we were given letters and permission to use the space where we operate by the municipality. But now we have challenges in terms of who owns the place that we are operating in, because the municipality does not own that space. We don’t have access to water; we don’t have access to offices.”*

*“We need to change the environment where we operate to be a workable environment. We cannot be able to do that, because our lease is no longer valid. We do not have toilets, we do not have water and we cannot withdraw*

*our contractual agreement with this people. That's what we are struggling with."*

*"One of our members used to belong to NGO. She then indicated that the NGO was occupying the municipal building and she heard that they are no longer using that place. We went to the NGO to ask them to allow us to use the place and they agreed. We used that building for some time at the municipal offices and we pretended to be that NGO. We then bought some extra machines with the little money that we made. While we thought that at least we are progressing for some reasons we were told that because we are not that initial NGO we have to vacate the building and find an alternative place"*

The findings confirm what Khumalo (2014:70) indicated that, despite the social and economic contributions of co-operatives, evidence confirms that co-operatives are vulnerable and most are short-lived because they lack the resources to be competitive. Owing to a lack of resources co-operatives face numerous problems, such as an inability to grow, managerial problems and lack of competitiveness to compete with large stores (Kikuchi, 2014:29). According to the DTI (2012:34), the main factor which has contributed to this is the relevant spheres of government that should provide resources, enabling environments and support measures. It is worth noting that most of the newly-established co-operatives lack the basic resources to run their daily operations and, for this reason, they remain vulnerable and very weak.

#### **Category 4.2.4: Lack of access to land**

People have different needs, but what is common is that in one way or another their needs have to be actualised and satisfied. In order to satisfy their needs people require access to productive resources such as land, knowledge, capital and the ability to participate economically, politically, intellectually, socially and spiritually (Nicholas et al., 2010:369). Most members indicated the lack of access to land as being one of their negative experiences:

*“You know what, we want to expand. We do not want to stay small and remain small scale farmers. We want to go commercial, we got the potential and we can grow, but because we are working in a one and half hectare land we are not able to expand.”*

*“I am leasing at this land at the moment. My lease agreement is expiring at the end of October. To be honest I am looking for a bigger land, but I have not found anything yet which is a challenge for us. We spoke to the landlord and he said he’s not renewing because he wants to do something different on the land.”*

*“We are not getting much support because we needed a place to operate from. We need a land, a bigger land. We needed a plot or a farm where we can plant our vegetables and grow our co-operative. We went to Department of land affairs and applied for the land, but unfortunately we were not successful.”*

*“The other main challenge right now is land, right now we are using my yard for the fish project and we have our meetings in my house. I hope you are aware that the space in townships is small, we need a bigger space because the one we are using here in Vosloorus is too small. You know for a fact that the municipality and the neighbours will soon start to complain and we might end up getting warnings or fines from the municipality.”*

*“We are now busy trying to establish who the legal owners of those pieces of land are because we want to make sure that we notify the municipality of our intention to get in to the land because we can’t keep waiting.”*

The findings are consistent with the view that in urban areas there are more laws, norms, rules and regulations on land use than in rural areas (Nicholas et al., 2010:369). In urban areas bureaucratic rules and regulations always have more influence on access to basic services and resources such as land. For agricultural purposes there is a greater need to access arable land in order to be able to plant while other sectors also struggle to get access to adequate space to rent or lease.

## **Theme 5: Co-operatives as a social work initiative**

The following theme outlines how co-operatives were initiated as a social work projects. The sub- theme focus was mainly on benefits for individual members, cooperatives, family and the larger community. The theme emerged during the discussion with participants on Vosloorus community members' motivations and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives.

### **Sub-theme 5.1: Benefits of co-operatives as a social work initiative**

There is a concern with regard to the industrial revolution and urbanisation as to how they brought about a dramatic change in how community members relate to one another and how members understand the different roles they need to play in the upliftment of their own communities. According to Restakis (2010:42), the industrial revolution polarised the community in such a way that earning more and profit became the motivation for communities to participate in initiatives. This disturbing rupture in social relations has displayed itself worldwide in declining social cohesion, individual unhappiness, increased levels of poverty and environmental destruction. In turn individuals became self-focused and there is a greater need for social workers as a helping profession to intervene and address social problems in a more collective manner (Conaty, 2013:27; Restakis, 2010:42). In order to have very lively co-operative sectors there is a need for co-operatives to be surrounded by institutions that provide support. According to Conaty (2013:27), the institutions need to be reinforced by the availability of professionals that are focused on community development and that will be part of the reason why co-operatives will be successful in sustainable way.

#### **Category 5.1.1: Benefits for self**

Co-operatives are spreading through many countries and this emphasises the multifunctional activities whereby the aims of co-operative members are being linked with the pursuit of social ends and self-worth (Fazzi, 2010:123). Restakis (2010:24) demonstrated that co-operatives are able to address Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The third level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is associated with a social level which covers love and belonging. According to Restakis (2010:24), if members do not experience respect from others, a "low esteem" is experienced

but, if they experience respect, their self-worth improves. In return love and respect allows them to develop and becoming drivers of motivation as demonstrated by two participants:

*“The good experiences that I gained number one is, the members have confidence in me and that motivated me.”*

*“Without letting me know they (members) gave me a certificate of appreciation to say ‘in our co-operative we appreciate whatever you are doing for us.’”*

The finding confirms that the ultimate image of co-operative members is self-built in an atmosphere that is determined by their ability to achieve a realistic self-appraisal (Swartz et al., 2007:531). This is because co-operatives assume an approach centred on rebuilding self-worth that is beneficial to individual members and social function (Fazzi, 2010:124). Conaty (2013:27) explains that with strong bonds an expected element of one’s life is valued, and so members are able to manage themselves to the highest extent possible as a way of life.

As part of community development social workers should engage in poverty alleviation initiatives, and co-operatives can be used as one such initiative. Restakis (2010:24) is a critique of the capitalist society, and he argues that, before the emergence of economic disorder, co-operatives were entrenched in social relations. Social relations served to alleviate poverty and served the common good of communities as described by the following participants:

*“I benefitted on how to survive in life and how to stay alive, because of being in a co-operative.”*

*“I am also surviving by being a member of a co-operative. At least I am doing something legitimate and something legal. Yes, the co-operative is putting food on my table, even though is not as much as I anticipated but I am surviving.”*

These findings confirm the view expressed by Fazzi (2010:9503) that co-operative members are resilient and survivalists in their fight against poverty. Most members worldwide participate as initiators of co-operatives, and they are the pillars of strong co-operatives. According to Nicholas et al., (2010:357), the sustainable livelihood theories view poverty as multidimensional. These theories further recognise the poor as active participants in their own development. Communities utilise different coping strategies to alleviate poverty.

### **Category 5.1.2: Benefits to members of co-operatives**

According to Rena (2017:6), co-operatives should be in a position to benefit their members so that they are able to contribute positively to their development. The DTI (2010:55) also states that a successful co-operative is able to benefit its members and to provide them with a sustainable source of income as an honest and fair system. This view is shared by members in this story line:

*“The good thing about our co-operative is, there is no corruption, there is information sharing. Even if it’s a small information we share it and that’s a good thing.”*

*“All these years we were planting peanuts while other years we planted maize. After we have paid the expenses, like the tractor, the seedlings, and the diesel, then we share the dividends.”*

*“We are surviving, we are not struggling because of this co-operative and we are able to put food on the table.”*

*“We are able to feed our family members without spending money on vegetables. When we plant, we plant extra for ourselves so that we don’t buy vegetables.”*

The findings are consistent with the observation made by Rena (2017:6) that co-operatives should always put the interests of all members above any other individual interests. According to Kikuchi (2014:64), systems should be planned to safeguard the co-operative and individual member’s interests. Co-operatives must

also provide their members with a learning opportunity. As outlined by Swartz et al., (2007:534), co-operatives have a learning experience that is coupled with trial and error. This is part of laying a foundation for a successful experience. The participants indicated the following as part of their learning experience:

*“We also benefitted because we have learned a lot. Like now we've got an idea on how to use information technology, how to use computers and laptops.”*

*“We do not get paid regularly so we learned how to budget. Once we get a big pay cheque we assist each other on how best to use the money because in most cases we are not sure when we are going to get paid again. We now know how to budget for the co-operative and we also know how to budget for our families.”*

*“If people group themselves together like to do manufacturing or whatever that they want to do they will see the benefits sooner than working alone, that is what I also learned from being a member of a co-operative. However, people must be mentored thoroughly because co-operative is a way to go and communities are surviving.”*

The findings confirm the assertion that it is important to empower disadvantaged people with information and allow them to take part in a learning process through co-operation (Moriarty et al., 2015:7). Another way to emphasise the learning process is by motivating members to share acquired knowledge and help others to process information so that they can continuously improve in performing their duties (Kikuchi, 2014:27). The ICA (2012:9) also recognises that co-operatives contribute to the learning of their members so that they can significantly improve and sustain the co-operative activities. Learning is part of acquiring new knowledge and empowering members is essential for the development of co-operatives. From this viewpoint, learning is regarded as one of the key ways in which the co-operative can be improved and be sustainable (Kikuchi, 2014:27).

### **Category 5.1.3: Benefits for family**

The sustainable livelihoods theory places households and family members at the centre. The focus on household livelihoods acknowledges that not all poor people are the same and that poverty differs from person to person and household to household (Nicholas et al., 2010:357). According to Chen (2009:716), co-operatives are not only new forms of economic emancipation but they are also an alternative to securing the household livelihood. Co-operatives are able to assist families especially women to overcome the financial problems that they face. This is because co-operatives are inclusive in nature and have access to limited resources. The eight participants indicated the following as a benefit to their families:

*“For a person to be part of the co-operative, that individual should be coming from the same family tree with us. Even the people we hire when we need services are family members. We also focus on relatives.”*

*“The co-operative helped my family a lot, I cannot even manage to explain the things that this co-operative helped me with. My partner died a long time ago, I am a single parent and my children are not working, how do you think I survive?”*

*“The co-operative has benefited me and my family.... We are working and making money.”*

*“Currently my husband is no longer working, now I am the one who is able to provide for my family. What I get from the co-operative is assisting us here and there.”*

*“Through this co-operative my family is surviving, even when I go home without something in my hand, my family understands that and they won’t ask me anything. They know that one day I will bring something from the co-operative. But when I come back with something bathi madala uphetho zinto (Loosely translated as: Daddy brought us something) and they are all*

*happy, because they know that the co-operative supports them and maintains them.”*

*“I was unemployed, and I saw the opportunity through the co-operative to provide for my family.”*

*“It (co-operative) helped me a lot because what I learned I took it with my family to teach them the way of living. We also learned the way of doing things together and encouraging my children that when they encounter problems they can consider co-operatives.”*

*“As a matter of fact my children have never gone hungry because of this co-operative, and I am sure that even other members feel the same because they are not employed somewhere else but they depend on the co-operative to feed their families.”*

Co-operatives do not focus solely on profit making. They are also designed to bring family members together and leave a lasting legacy for the family (Dallago, 2006:17). Four participants mentioned that:

*“The other reason, it was going to make a change or a difference to my family.”*

*“The co-operative that I belong to is a family co-operative because we want to build a legacy for our clan and for our children.”*

*“There is no use to say that we want to build a better community and eradicate poverty whereas we leave family members behind while they continue to live in poverty. They will still remain part of our responsibilities.”*

*“I ended up saying to myself no, let me commit and establish a family co-op because I have children to look after. Together with my siblings, relatives we can assist each other and develop one another in order to improve our life through the family co-operative.”*

These excerpts suggest that co-operatives are vibrant for helping families and communities not only to feed themselves, but also to compete in the market place (ICA, 2012:12). According to Chen (2009:717), co-operatives serve as an alternative for families because they are developed at grassroots level they foster efforts to integrate the family as an institution, and they benefit the family from an economic point of view. The economic features of the co-operatives are embedded in the government approaches for family reintegration that in its pursuit of co-operatives which promote participation by families for their development (Chen, 2009:717). The debate is further elaborated by Restakis (2010:27) who indicates that, in order to achieve sustainable development, the society depends on its ability to reconnect with families and to re-examine their behaviour to achieve financial stability. According to Middlemiss (2014:936), in most instances people assume that all individuals are coming from a family structure with a “breadwinner” or “adult”. The reality dictates that this is not always the case. There are family structures that work together without an outright breadwinner. For this reason, the co-operative model encourages families to work together to address their own needs while they attempt to promote social cohesion.

#### **Category 5.1.4: Benefits to the community**

One of the principles of the co-operatives is “concern for community”. co-operatives work to sustain the development of their communities by involving other community members (Yoshaki, 2010:103; Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005:4). These principles were adopted by the ICA (2012:1) which also highlighted that co-operatives contribute in vigorous and innovative ways to the development of the communities in which they operate. There is also a general certainty that co-operatives are able to put a brake on economic inequalities because they keep wealth within communities, and they offer equity to members (Restakis, 2010:27). Three participants reflected on the benefits to the community:

*“I will advise people that it is good to start a cooperative, because when they get a job a cooperative doesn’t focus on individuals it supports a lot of community members. Many families will benefit from that cooperative because is not an individual thing.”*

*“In 2010 when South Africa was hosting the soccer world cup we managed to help other ladies. We taught them how to do the beads, they were doing beads to sell at the stadiums and that is how we managed to help them. We have one of our co-operative members who is now exporting different goods including the beads.”*

*“Sometimes we outsource certain services from the community. If there are services that are needed and we are unable to provide we go to the community and ask them to do it on our behalf.”*

The findings in this study are consistent with the view of Khumalo (2014:73) who suggests that the general winners and benefactors of co-operatives are the community itself. This is because the critical component for co-operative development is that communities become the real owners of the cooperatives. In addition, Middlemiss (2014:944) mentions that an understanding from the perspective of sustainable development is that communities benefit from co-operatives because they bring them closer together and they are able to ‘do’ something for themselves in a socially sensitive manner. Finally, Conaty (2013:6) declares that co-operatives are vehicles for holding on to resources, making a difference to communities on a larger scale, and they encourage society to co-operate rather than to compete.

### **Theme 6: Suggestions for practice**

The following theme focuses on suggestions for practice for members of co-operatives and social workers. The sub-theme suggestions for prospective members of a co-operative and suggestions for social workers to assist the community through primary co-operatives is discussed below.

#### **Sub-theme 6.1: Suggestions for prospective members of a co-operative**

According to the ICA (2012:1), co-operatives contribute vigorously and in innovative ways to the development of the communities in which they operate. The self-identity of members effectively contributes to the development of the co-

operative. Co-operative members know and understand the defining characteristics that talk to their co-operatives. One participant suggested the following to prospective members:

*“In terms of starting or opening up a cooperative, I will advise the community members that it is a good thing to do. When they get a job to do, a co-operative doesn’t benefit only individuals, many community members will benefit from that cooperative”.*

Co-operatives work to sustain the development of their communities by involving other community members, and this is entrenched in one of the of the co-operative’s principles that is “concern for community”, (Yoshaki, 2010:103; Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005:4). Chen (2009:717) further explains that a co-operative is capable to grow and gain sustainability when members understand co-operative principles. In addition, the long-term growth of cooperatives is achievable when the government recognizes them and provides assistance.

#### **Category 6.1.1: Understand the principle of ‘for the greater good’**

Cooperatives should strive to serve their members in a most effective way, and to strengthen the co-operative concept by working together with other co-operatives for the common good of the community (Yoshaki, 2010:103; Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005:4). It is worth noting that the leading limitation in acting for the common good is the unpopularity of how co-operatives exist, how they operate and how they can contribute to many South Africans for economic development. According to Rena (2017:3), it is well known that co-operatives are considered worldwide as a third force in community development and some stand to collapse if they compete rather than co-operating among themselves. According to Ogbeide (2005:103), the understanding of a greater good relies on the fact that community members pool their human and natural resources together. In return the collective transformation of resources creates joint ownership of the co-operative and strong collateral for sustainable development. The following extracts untangle what participants highlighted as a reference to “greater good”:

*“You need to create a co-operative or join a co-operative with intention to create wealth and to contribute to our economic revenues. That will also enable the city to build infrastructures in our townships because co-operatives are contributing to their income.”*

*“The people who will be working at the co-operative will be able to pay rent, to pay the municipality rates and then the municipality will have money to build some roads in our townships. The municipality can be able to do some developments because the co-operative will contribute to economic revenues of the municipality.”*

*“A person also has to associate themselves with the community, because a co-operative is all about changing the lives of ordinary community members. It is always best to associate with the community because every business need the support of community members for it to grow. Co-operatives play an important role because it uplifts the community and it is more concerned about the community.”*

As alluded to by Yoshaki (2010:103), one of the main principles of the cooperatives is “concern for the community” and co-operatives work to sustain the development of their communities by involving other community members for the “greater good of the community”. These findings are consistent with Middlemiss (2014:935) who stated that it is relevant for sustainable development that communities should consistently participate in collective action as a starting point to “concern for the community”. This will allow people to make changes in their day-to-day lives for the sake of the “common good” that is aligned to co-operative principles.

According to Satgar (2007:20), the principles of the co-operative have to be practised daily, expressed in day-to-day co-operative activities because they define the co-operative’s identity and they summarize the ethical practice of co-operative members. Furthermore, Middlemiss (2014:935) adds that some member’s participation is ideal and fit for building a sustainable future because, in collaboration with others, they can reach decisions and modify their way of living

for the greater good of the communities. The principles of co-operatives capture the basic practice of the co-operative as they define the true identity of a cooperative. For this reason, those co-operative principles must always be practised, stressed continuously in all activities and even during the struggles of the co-operative.

**Category 6.1.2: Identify the type of co-operative to join or to start**

Identity to participation is also paramount because it is believed that the way to include people in change is through a deliberative democracy whereby people will themselves identify where they want to be involved. According to Middlemiss (2014:934), the assumption is that when people are actively involved in self-identity they recognize the advantages of different resources and treat them with greater care. Phillip (2003:25) advises that the key issue to identify is for prospective members to identify what will work for them to enhance their lives in a particular situation, rather than promoting the co-operative's model for its own sake. The following are quotations from participants advising other prospective co-operative members:

*“They need be sure before you going in to cooperative that the people they are working with is the people they can trust.”*

*“They need to identify the type of a co-operative they need to join. Like for instance you can't just say you want to join a cooperative, which is next to your area when you are not familiar with what the cooperative is doing”*

*“At least you need to identify a business opportunity before starting a cooperative. For instance, if there are clinics next to you and you check if there are no people who are selling scones if you want to sell scones.”*

*“I will advise that person don't just go into a co-operative because you have seen there is a cooperative. Start a cooperative after identifying a business opportunity or you identify a gap that there is a need of this service.”*

*“My advice will be to people who don’t have skill to be employment, they can go in to cooperative in order to get income.”*

*“People need to have a background of cooperatives so that they know where to start with the activities and to understand the cooperative sector.”*

It is important for members to identify and make a choice of the type of co-operative they want to join or to start. Abdallah et al., (2014:2155) confirmed that the type of a co-operative people wants to join is in the hands of prospective members. This is attributed to many reasons, one of them being that a co-operative as a social enterprise develops its strength from social interaction. Besides drawing from their members’ capabilities co-operatives depend largely on trust and other social attributes presented by its members. Rena (2017:9) warns that a failure by co-operative members to identify the type of a co-operative they want to join can bring the co-operative to its knees, and this can ultimately lead to the collapse of the co-operative. A solid foundation that is encapsulated the by identity of the members can ensure the survival of the co-operative.

### **Category 6.1.3: Explore the type of skills, resources and products needed to make a success**

According to co-operative development policy for Gauteng province (2004:5), skills development, technical training and learning are an ongoing process in a co-operative and they are to be promoted. Skills, such as governance skills, management skills, decision making and life skills, will eventually guarantee that members are multi-skilled. Rena (2017:7) states that is important for members to identify skills, such as financial management, managerial skills, and technical skills, since they are required for any co-operative member as they will be expected to contribute to and participate in the activities of the co-operative. Rena (2017:7) further warns that the failure to possess some technical skills or experience by members is likely to lead to the collapse of the co-operative.

Co-operative members need to have a clear vision of what they want to do and what they want to achieve. Some participants indicated as follows during the interviews:

*“People who want to start a cooperative must come with one vision.”*

*“You must know what you want to achieve and what you want to transform within.”*

*“People must know what commodity they going to work with and they must know that what are the advantage and the disadvantages of belonging to a cooperative.”*

*“What I can say is that before they can even think of registering a co-operative they must have a meeting and decide what they want to do. From there they can start registering their cooperative.”*

The experiences shared by participants confirm that the lack of a clear vision and understanding of the co-operative can badly affect those who participate in cooperatives because without vision they will lack direction and be prone to drawbacks (Abdallah et al., 2014:224). In addition, Han et al., (2013.331) mention that co-operative members should expand their vision to other stakeholders and communities because a unified vision is crucial to meet the economic and social needs of the community.

In order to meet their goals, co-operatives should create structures and principles of some kind in order to organize their members. Vaxjo (2017:55) indicates that organizational structures and principles are needed in order to minimize confusion over roles. According to Rena (2017:6), organisational structures, policies and systems are designed in order to protect the interests of co-operative members and the co-operative itself. The participants accounted as follows in relation to forming structures:

*“Members of a cooperative must not be less than five, they must be five and above to constitute a legal cooperative.”*

*“Members must not be afraid to discuss who is bringing what or how much because that is important so that each member can contribute something towards the cooperative.”*

*“Now they must know in a cooperative everybody is equal there’s nobody who is more equal than the other.”*

*“When you go in to a cooperative you must make sure that you put systems in place, without paper work you won’t go anywhere. That is why most cooperatives fail, because they do not maintain themselves administratively. Administration skills will assist to know where they are losing or gaining, which product is selling fast and which product is slow.”*

Every organization, including co-operatives, has some goals to achieve. According to Rishipal (2014:56), in order to accomplish these goals it is important for co-operatives to devise appropriate structures and principles. It also takes combined efforts of various resources, such as the separation of duties, to achieve these goals. Vaxjo (2017:55) highlights that organisational structures maximise performance if they are matched with appropriate human resources and capabilities. Kikuchi (2014:28) advises that the processes of a co-operative’s structures should be closely related to “continuous improvement” through the development of policies and quality control for “best practices”.

Members should also seek guidance from others and mobilise to obtain resources. The DTI (2010:55) noted that co-operatives are democratic, widespread in many areas and it is not uncommon for members to pool resources with others and seek guidance from other co-operators. Some participants shared the following:

*“They must conduct research to find out where they are going to get the land.”*

*“I would also say that, if they want to start a co-operative or establish a co-operative they must go and ask the people who have been in the co-operative field before them. “*

*“They must go and see the people that are already in cooperatives. They must check if really what they intend to do is what they want to do and they must ask for advice from those already working.”*

These findings are in line with Rena (2017:1) that co-operators should pool resources and work with one another. Only then will noticeable development and changes be observed within co-operatives as economic alternatives.

Obtaining knowledge and skills through time is also part of a continuing sequence of members' improvements because it is embedded in co-operative activities (Kikuchi, 2014:28). These processes are laboriously developed over a long period. Some participants shared the following in relation to knowledge and skills:

*“People should not be afraid to ask, they should not be afraid to conduct their research, they should attend workshops and trainings. Even if they think that some workshops are meaningless they will get something out of that workshop or training”*

*“The other advice is that they need to make a research, register their cooperative and also go for trainings. They also need to talk to their social workers who does poverty alleviation to be capacitated and understand about cooperatives.”*

*“They need to know how to use a computer or even how to use the tablets to access certain information. There should be someone who understand this new technology, I am old but I know how to use a computer and how to use the tablet devices.”*

The experiences shared by participants are consistent with the view of Phillip (2003:22) that co-operatives depend on members with skills and knowledge to be

sustainable and the lack of those skills creates a toxic environment that impacts on their survival. According to Khumalo (2014:66), the co-operative model supports members acquiring knowledge and skills development because these are fundamental for development. The sharing of information and the promotion of education and training are also encouraged for co-operatives. The importance of knowledge and skills cannot be over-emphasised because they are important.

Being passionate and dedicated to co-operative activities has the potential to assist the success of a co-operative. Most co-operative members enjoy participating in co-operative activities because it is their passion that created the interest in belonging to a co-operative (Yoshaki, 2010:114). Passion has an impact on the success of the co-operative since active participation in co-operative activities demonstrates dedication as observed by Jimoh and Van Wyk (2014:55). Participants stated that:

*“Be sure of what you want to do and love what you are doing, because if you don’t love what you are doing there is no use of you going in to cooperatives.”*

*“Dedication and commitment starts when members know why they wanted to belong to a cooperative. They also need to have a background of what the cooperative is all about.”*

*“In a cooperative if you want to be successful number one you must have passion.”*

*“You can’t only form a cooperative for the purpose of accessing funds. Funding will come on the process, but one need to fulfil their burning desire to change and do what they love.”*

The findings confirm that passion enhances commitment to activities and that funding is secondary to passion as members develop trust and this creates social cohesion (Han et al., 2013:341). Besides the support that is provided by the government, co-operative members are expected to show commitment by regular

attendance at co-operative activities (Jimoh & Van Wyk, 2014:58). According to Abdallah et al., (2014:215), members' participation is equally important as it stimulates their commitment. During their participation, they will be willing to resolve challenges themselves and it will become easier for the communities to achieve sustainable development. Another important level of all co-operatives is to be able to work with others and solve problems as they are initiated to support relations among community members (Satgar, 2007:15). The participants indicated the following:

*“Once people work as a group at least something will happen in the process.”*

*“Respect is important because it start at home and then filtered down to other cooperative members.”*

*“Members should respect each other and work together as a team to face challenges, because there are lot of challenges in life. If they need their cooperative to be successful they need to be dedicated and respect other members then their cooperative will be successful.”*

According to Han et al., (2013.332) the findings suggest that it is vital that the barriers, such as issues relating to trust, goal difference and general problems, be addressed. Such barriers can influence interaction and working together within the co-operative. Available resources and social cohesion can be leveraged to solve problems to address those issues.

In most instances, co-operatives are also faced with risks that are associated with their sectors. It is important for members to understand the risks associated with co-operatives as a joint venture:

*“When getting in to this cooperative of farming, make sure that you are going to make a living out of it. Because sometimes the rain doesn't come that much and sometimes there is no water and you relying on the water to produce.”*

*“People need to understand that cooperative is like an investment. You do not get the rewards immediately there are risks involved but one need to be patient and work hard in order to get the results.”*

The findings are consistent with what has been articulated by Rena (2017:9) that the co-operatives should take advantage of their resources and fully utilise all those identified resources to maximize their productivity at all times. In order to minimise risks members need to ensure efficiency, enhance their capabilities, and advance the socio-economic status of their members to sustain themselves.

### **Sub-theme 6.2: Suggestions for social workers to assist the community through cooperatives**

Social workers' skills and knowledge are particularly important in helping communities. Their experience enables them to differentiate between situations in which they should make a contribution to people's lives while adhering to professional ethics, values and legislation that guide their practice (SACSSP, 2017:25). As facilitators, social workers are able to establish direct contact with other officials who should assist and effect change for the effective governance of co-operatives. According to Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:53-56), the primary concern of community social workers as community development workers is to help communities make rational decisions, enable them to participate fully, assist them in taking the initiative, help them to discover their resources, and help them to plan and to implement their decisions.

#### **Category 6.2.1: Previous experiences of social work involvement**

Community development work incorporates economic and social development as is underlined by principles that are rooted in human rights. As endorsed by the Constitution of South Africa, social workers are trained to facilitate community work in integrated, comprehensive programmes that promote sustainable development and the social functioning of communities (SACSSP, 2017:25). Again social work is associated with actions that are meant to help community members to achieve change (Moriarty et al., 2015:7). And, finally, the SACSSP (2017:25)

mentioned that, in order to help communities to achieve change, social workers need to be experienced in the creation of conditions that facilitate growth and the development of communities.

At some point one participant indicated a negative experience that she had had while sourcing help from social workers:

*“To my disappointment the social worker did not know how to help, imagine if they knew how to help. Maybe we could be owning a land as a co-operative.”*

The finding does not correspond with what community members expect from social workers. According to Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:53-56), the primary concern of social workers is to help communities make rational decisions, enable them to participate fully, assist them in taking the initiative, help them to discover their resources, to plan and to implement. In order to overcome such negative experiences, social workers as trained professionals should be able to direct skills, services and opportunities back to the community (Co-operatives Act: South Africa & Phillip, 2003:14).

There were other participants who were positive about social work services:

*“We will always check with our social workers, because they deal with a lot of issues in terms of our background, as a community and the society. So they are our point of reference, they can assist us and their contribution means a lot to us.”*

*“From the social workers, we received a lot of support to get the space that we are using, they helped us to get it.”*

*“We also have women who are abused. The social workers are helping us by giving them counselling that is how they are supporting us.”*

*“Sometimes social workers give us some jobs to do if they have functions. They normally give our cooperatives jobs to offer services when they have workshops.”*

The findings confirm that social workers play an active and professional role in assisting and empowering co-operatives to succeed. According to the SACSSP (2017:4), social workers play a broad and general role in facilitating community development and others specialise in therapeutic work. Social work theories and practices recognise that community actions need the support of social workers for sustainable development (Weyers, 2011:29). According to Middlemiss (2014:934), during practice social workers are expected to have a multitude of initiatives at local level to address different issues and to promote sustainable development.

#### **Category 6.2.2: Working with the community at large**

According to NASW (2016:22), in working with the community at large a social worker’s experience of indigenous knowledge of the local community informs their choice of indicators and this means they are also responsible for their actions. Conaty (2013:63) commented that working with the community unites both means and ends because an involved community feels appreciated for their opinions. This could work well with co-operatives for their development and collective efforts. Some participants indicated the following:

*“Once social workers can work with our Community Development Workers (CDW) and start to have programmes, campaigns and interact with communities that can work better for everyone.”*

*“Their (social worker’s) interaction with the community is important, they cannot only limit their interaction to cooperatives. They need to interact with everyone in the community then they will know more about cooperatives and everything that is happening in the community.”*

*“Seriously they (social workers) need to venture in to the community, go to the informal settlement in order for them to see and understand what poverty is.”*

*“Social workers learned how to interact with communities and how to help the community. The challenge becomes when they enjoy sitting in their offices, not going out and I will advise them not to sit in the offices.”*

From a radical perspective, social workers will be regarded as conservative by being office based. Social workers need to go out to fight unequal economic and social systems by being in touch with the community’s pulse (SACSSP, 2017:8).

Three participants indicated that:

*“It seems social workers enjoy staying in their offices and do not go around the township to see what is happening. They need to look around our township even if it means taking one street and starting something in that street.”*

*“It might not come as a surprise to me that some social workers do not know Vosloorus as a whole but they only know their offices. Social workers should travel the streets of Vosloorus, they should enter into hostels to know the challenges and find out what is happening there.”*

*“Social workers can be able to assist if they decide not to be office based. The issue is with our officials not only social workers because they do not make themselves visible to the community. Even when you talk to them, it becomes a challenge because they don’t go out to the community”*

There is a need for social workers to form working relationships with individuals, families, groups and communities in order to assist them in obtaining services and developing their wellbeing (SACSSP, 2017:8). Social workers were also advised by one participant to encourage communities and co-operatives to work together:

*“Look at the database to see how many cooperatives exist in Vosloorus and group people together. Whatever that is happening in terms of the education, training and skills development, people must be grouped together to achieve what they want. Once this groups and structures work*

*together to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and they will be able to deal with a lot of challenges.”*

The findings confirm that social workers must know or have a better understanding of the background upon which the community is built, and they must understand how stakeholders are involved in community development processes (Han et al., 2013:342). This also includes understanding the complexities of historical, political, social and economic local stakeholder involvement in the ever changing-community needs.

At grassroots level a sustainable model ensures the importance of the community participating in poverty alleviation initiatives. According to Schenck et al., (2010:31), sustainable livelihood is an integrated method which brings different individual approaches together. Additionally, Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:14) mentioned that it is through the efforts of individual approaches and processes that the community is put in a position where it can continuously take responsibility for what has been started. This is why Abdallah et al., (2014:215) regard the approach by social workers to work with communities as being useful because the ownership feature of the co-operative members would adapt to meet their needs.

Social workers are also expected to network, coordinate community programmes and to facilitate communication between different stakeholders. According to Ogbeide (2015:105), it is important for professionals to link the community to broader networks that are interested in their development. This is to allow information to flow in order to mobilize, train, link and develop interested community members to the broader economy. The participants relayed the following regarding how they can benefit from networks that are created by social workers:

*“Social workers can play a major role by pointing co-operatives to the right directions, referring cooperatives to proper offices and referring them to capable people who can help.”*

*“Social workers should know departments that can help the co-operatives; they should also know how those departments work. All what they can do is to call co-operatives and those departments to one place and say co-operatives here are the departments that can help, take down their details and ask them questions then co-operatives will be empowered with that kind of information.”*

*“They (social workers) should keep on trying to get opportunities for cooperatives even if is training, workshops or if they know clients that we can use our services let them refer them to us; we will do the job.”*

The shared experiences by participants clearly indicate that one of the critical determinants of success in the co-operative sector is strong and meaningful networks (DTI, 2012:54). These networks of organisations need to be brought together to strengthen and benefit co-operatives to develop further. According to Satgar (2007:20), the appearance of numerous government departments and different institutions to support the development of co-operatives creates the strength of the emerging support system.

As observed by Satgar (2007:15) and Restakis (2010:43), one of the critical factors to determining the success of co-operatives is the willingness of different institutions to build support and relations with co-operatives without undermining their autonomy. One participant expressed that:

*“I want to emphasise that as much as we will always have this deployed officials, but once the officials and department work together in terms of the cooperative objectives and not interfering in its management the challenges that they face will be lessened.”*

Participants also expressed the view of working together by identifying their common commodities. That view is supported by Moriarty et al., (2015:7) who indicated that an approach that focuses on a common product can improve the community’s exposure to bigger markets through targeted professional interventions:

*“If we can be grouped according to our commodities and work together as cooperatives, we will be able to reach the target market out there.”*

*“If we can work together so that the social workers know us better because we as cooperatives got the list of everybody. So if we can be grouped according to our commodity when we want the contracts we will be able to reach the target market if we work together.”*

*“We are currently trying to organise cooperatives in Vosloorus to get them together in order to establish an association of cooperatives. Not only getting them in one place, but they must also bring their products and display them in order to encourage each other that cooperatives are really working. We need to start show casing our products.”*

*“And because of the challenges with the issue of the land, we do not really reach the target market. But if we are grouped together with other cooperatives that are working with the same commodity, then we will be able to enter the big markets.”*

The findings support the view that using the co-operatives for bargaining with others has the prospect of representing co-operatives as a collective for the bulk supply of products (Khumalo, 2014:66). In addition, Restakis (2010:43) indicated that co-operatives can use their “strength in numbers” and other relationship approaches to their benefit in order to access the markets while they advance community well-being and sustainable development. In the meantime social workers need to facilitate the communication and information flow between different stakeholders and co-operatives with the view to broadening development through collective and co-ordinated efforts (Ogbeide, 2015:105). According to Han et al., (2013:333), it is important to note that working in partnership with others to facilitate community development can achieve greater benefits. According to Nicholas et al., (2010:69), social workers should provide the community with guidance that is not limited to information but includes networking to empower the co-operatives to work with other stakeholders to enhance their sustainability.

### **Category 6.2.3: Understanding community needs and functioning**

It is not ideal to limit co-operatives to wealth accumulation and the formation of capitalist ends especially given the history of South Africa as discussed in chapter two of this study. According to Rena (2017:7), co-operatives should first seek to meet the human needs and not be regarded as a means to wealth accumulation or as a vehicle to foster capital accumulation. Needs are not the only things that motivate community members to form co-operatives, but co-operatives also provide the members with various opportunities to address some of their challenges (Broodryk, 2006:22). As a base to understanding community needs and functioning some participants mentioned the following:

*“Social workers need to have the database of each ward, they cannot be working at one ward and leaving other wards. It will be easy for them when they work on a ward base, having a ward profile and working in relation with the councillors, the schools and identifying the challenges of different wards”*

*“The community profile will tell you how many people who are unemployed and you can start there as base.”*

*“The government should mandate the social workers to go door to door, to go to the community and find out what lacking in the community.”*

*“Social workers need to have workshops with cooperatives or meetings with the community to find out what is it that they need social workers to help them with because there are people who don't talk about their problems.”*

These findings are consistent with the SACSSP (2017:8) that is important for social workers to profile the community they serve in order to understand community needs and functioning. Social workers need to engage in social actions that impact on development, effect change and eliminate inequalities. The South African White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:1) stipulates that the government's welfare-related vision is to create a system which facilitates “meeting basic human

needs, release people's creative energies, help them achieve their aspirations, build human capacity and self-reliance, and participate fully in all spheres of social, economic and political life.” In addition, as observed by Yoshaki (2010:3), co-operatives are capable of fully developing and reaching their potential when they respond to a community's ever-changing needs.

#### **Category 6.2.4: Introducing the concept of co-operatives**

Introducing the idea of co-operatives to community members is important. According to Erickson (2002:52), the connotation attached to the co-operative will be derived from the context in which it is interpreted by the community. Any changes brought in to the community by the co-operative will have to be acknowledged and established to address the needs of participating communities. After consulting with the community and having determined whether initiating a co-operative is worth considering as a viable vehicle to improve the community's functioning since assistance should be provided on defined criterion a social worker can recommend that a co-operative be established (Moriarty et al., 2015:7). It is essential for social workers to acquire the needed information for establishing a co-operative as noted by the participants:

*“And the social worker should conduct a mass meeting to determine those who need training or workshops on cooperative in order to promote the food security and healthy environment in our wards.”*

*“Cooperative as a concept, at the time that it was introduced it was good. We should now go back to basics of it and make it the role of our community leaders like ward committees, our councillors and social workers to talk about cooperatives. People must begin to learn about cooperatives and the importance of working together because you go to homelands like Transkei, Eastern Cape or Limpopo cooperatives have always been there.”*

In order to build strong co-operatives from below it is important to confront crucial policy challenges and consolidate both the policies and legislation for co-operatives in South Africa to succeed (Satgar, 2007:22). The participants highlighted the following relative to government officials:

*“If and only if it cooperatives can be taken to the upper structures to begin to say that it is important to support cooperatives, because cooperatives work in countries like Denmark, Sweden, China and Japan.”*

*“What I am pleading for is that we need a strong support from government. If they can give us jobs, let them try us because they never tried us and they never tested us.”*

*“If we can have strong support from the government by procuring from... or they must start giving us jobs so that we can be involved working for government projects we won't go wrong. You will see that the cooperatives will be sustained “waya-way” (loosely translated as forever).”*

*“You see the face-lifting and refurbishing of community parks, management of parks or cemetery for example, tree plantings along our roads, roads maintenance can be done by cooperatives. Simply put these things should be given to cooperatives to maintain. If they can be given to communities to manage in a form of cooperatives most of community members will benefit but the starting point is for communities to establish cooperatives.*

*“If they can give existing cooperatives unoccupied buildings or land to utilise at least they will have taken a step towards the right direction. This will also make the job of government officials easy because they will know where cooperatives are operating from and where to find most of the cooperatives. As it is now when the officials need the cooperatives they have to drive around the townships getting lost because cooperatives are scattered all over.”*

The findings confirm the view of Dallago (2006:16) that, for co-operatives to be sustainable, government should create legislation that protects the interests of co-operatives while addressing community needs. Laws are required to encourage and assist the sustainability of cooperatives. Strategies, policies and legislation

should ensure that co-operatives are not swallowed by big corporations that already dominate the market.

According to Nicholas et al., (2010:357), a sustainable livelihood can be understood with reference to five types of assets, which are human, natural, social, physical and financial, that people need to possess, and there is also a need for the political will to support co-operatives. Government support through policies and procurement from co-operatives is important in order for them to be sustainable. Chen (2009:719) states that this will provide small co-operatives with an opportunity to join forces with community members to ensure the needs of the community are served and co-operatives can be sustainable for many years to come.

In order to ensure that co-operative members receive training of quality and a long-term nature the community educational model can be utilized. According to Weyers (2011:251), the community educational model is based on the belief that collective skills, knowledge, behaviour and attitudes are the determining factors of a community's social functioning. These factors are generally acquired, learned and developed during the socialization process. It is, therefore, important to ensure that co-operative members receive quality training as stated by one participant:

*“If cooperatives can be well trained and thoroughly mentored things will be easy. The township has entry points, this entry points should be maintained and managed by co-operatives not by departments or people from outside but by the community itself in a form of co-operatives provided they are trained to be able to manage.”*

One of the features of co-operative entities as identified by Khumalo (2014:66) is that there is a need to promote the education of co-operatives in the form of training their members which, in turn, will help the members to advance their skills. If the basic training and skills are lacking within the co-operative, then members must ensure that they receive extensive practical training. According to Phillip (2003:23), this training should not be once off as co-operatives will require

sustained support over time and, in most instances, co-operatives cannot afford to pay for such services. It was, thus, not surprising that three participants alluded to a situation where they felt some training was not enough:

*“They (government) must just be willing to train people around cooperatives and within the cooperatives’ themselves. The government must guard against the element of outsourcing trainers because outsourcing is sometimes wrong when one has to follow up on trainings”.*

*“Government officials should be deployed and allocated to train cooperatives and be able to deal with the issue of mentoring. These officials will then be able to give themselves time to indicate that in three months they will mentor, train this people, develop them further and educate them enough before they leave the cooperatives to stand on their own.”*

*“Some of the trainings that we attended were not enough to empower us. Some of them we are still waiting for our certificates of attendance from Ekurhuleni municipality and Department of agriculture, they offered us trainings but they did not give us the certificates.”*

Two of the participants also identified the need to empower the youth with co-operative training at schools:

*“I think the education of cooperatives should also be taken to our schools.”*

*“Let’s educate learners, educate our kids about cooperatives and to work as a group for whatever they want to achieve.”*

The findings are supported by Satgar (2007:22) that for co-operatives to be skilled our education curriculum in schools needs to provide for an understanding of the co-operatives. There is a need for the national government to set up cooperative colleges or a curriculum in South Africa which can be used to train co-operators and government officials about the practice of cooperatives.

The above storyline confirms that the educational model can be considered to enable co-operative members to learn and find suitable ways to overcome the constraints they experience (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2006). In this regard, Satgar (2007:22) highlighted that tertiary institutions need to consider developing a curriculum or qualifications for co-operatives in order to encourage research and promote the ideas around co-operatives as part of education. Schenck et al., (2015:17) observed that there is a need for training to provide an understanding of the co-operatives and their part in sustainable development. This training is paramount because it provides knowledge and information to community members so that they can function better socially.

#### **Category 6.2.5: Giving information and guidance**

Social workers should be objective when consulting, exchanging information and intensifying the interest of community members with regard to ventures such as co-operatives (ICA, 2012:17). Social workers should also ensure that developed co-operatives abide by legislative frameworks. According to Kikuchi (2014:32), by giving information and guidance social workers are showing a willingness to hold themselves accountable and to be open to inspection in order to get feedback from the co-operators. By giving valid information, social workers reduce the likelihood of deception, pressures, distortion of information and they are broadening the scope of the community's information base. According to Moriarty et al., (2015:7), the information sessions are important because they empower the disadvantaged and oppressed to take part in the process of co-operatives and learning.

*“Social workers need to show cooperatives the directions of where to start and where to go. A person who has never been involved in cooperatives it will be difficult for them to prosper without information from social workers.”*

*“We know that cooperatives have to be started by the community but social workers have the connections and know the information of where cooperatives can go to get help.”*

*“We cannot be mentored by someone who does not know the dynamics of the community and someone who does not understand the complex nature of a person, which is where now social workers come in.”*

The sentiments shared by participants confirm what Nicholas et al., (2010:69) indicated that, as a guide, the social worker provides the community with guidance with regard to specific frameworks and information that include the development of action plans and networking with other stakeholders.

Social workers also empower the community to work together while they enhance their cohesiveness and strengths. According to Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:53), social workers as community development workers have a better understanding of what the likely results of any action that might be taken are and so they perform a role of guider and enabler. This includes enabling the co-operative members to make decisions, to deal with aspects that can hinder their progress, differences or diversity, and lack of motivation (Schenck et al., 2010:248). Guiding involves decisions about getting things done and keeping things going.

According to Phillip (2003:23), it takes a high level of motivation from the social worker to bridge the gap between the actual realities of most co-operative members and the ways in which the co-operative can be productive and sustainable. Members shared the following:

*“The social workers must start motivating us as co-operatives members.”*

*“Social workers should encourage and motivate co-operatives to not give up.”*

*“I believe that social workers know how to help the community to face challenges. They (social workers) need to motivate people so that they should not give up, they should know that in life there will always be challenges and there are also challenges when coming to the field of cooperatives.”*

The findings strengthen the fact that the social workers are expected, intentionally and actively, motivate and capacitate co-operative members and support them to be more confident in executing their tasks (Schenck et al., 2010:190). The social worker's engagement with the co-operatives should be such that it empowers co-operative members to function effectively and stimulates their self-confidence (Schenck et al., 2010:204). According to Nicholas et al., (2010:69) social workers as facilitators are expected to take a lead during discussions or communication channels in order to encourage positive interaction and modeling good behaviours.

The ongoing provision of life skills is vital to ensure that services provided to clients are appropriate, effective, and timely in helping clients to achieve their goals (NASW, 2016:22). The participants requested that the social workers provide them with various life skills:

*“You have to teach these cooperatives the skills of how to work with each other, people do not have self-esteem. What are you doing about that?”*

*“Teach us how to approach people, where to go when we need help and which doors knock? If social workers can teach us about respect, how to listen to people so that we do not judge people, we do not undermine other people and that we can understand each other as different people.”*

*“Can the social workers give us the ideas of how to approach people or where can we go and knock if we need help? Can they do that?”*

The findings are in line with the fact that the social workers need to stimulate critical awareness and self-reflection on the part of the communities regarding their social reality and their ability to transform their situation by their own actions and to yield successful results (Nicholas, et al., 2010:359). This is achieved through continuous engagement with the community in a problem-solving manner while allowing the community to focus on their strengths (Nicholas et al., 2010:69). According to Haggblade and Tembo (2003:23), social workers are able to pay

attention to details as they are in a good position to provide co-operative members with the skills that are necessary to excel and achieve.

#### **4.7. Chapter Summary**

Chapter Four has presented the research findings stemming from the transcribed interviews with eight Vosloorus community members participating in primary co-operatives. The biographical profile of participants, together with the demographics and historical data of the cooperatives that each participant belonged to, were provided. A discussion of six themes, eight sub-themes and twenty-eight categories, providing direct quotes from the transcribed interviews and subjecting them to literature control, were provided.

The first theme looked at the description of co-operatives from the participants' general understanding. In the second theme roles played by members within the co-operative were presented. This was followed by theme three which outlined the motivations for being a member of a co-operative. The fourth theme presented the participants' experiences of being a member of a co-operative which included both positive and negative experiences. The fifth theme focused on the establishment of co-operatives as a social work initiative. Finally, theme six dealt with the suggestions for practice made by participants. The next chapter will provide the summary, conclusions and recommendations from the research study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Introduction

The research goal for the study was: To develop an in-depth understanding of Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective. Chapter five provides a brief summary of the preceding chapters, the qualitative research process that was followed and the research findings. Conclusions and recommendations are also drawn, centred on the qualitative research processes and the findings.

#### 5.2. Summary of the Previous Chapters

Chapter one provided a general introduction and orientation to the research study. The chapter described the background and motivation for the study, and the research question and research goals which are connected to the research topic were provided. This was followed by research objectives and the qualitative research methods. Informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and management of information, as being central to ethical considerations that guided the researcher's conduct, were explained. Finally, the key concepts that were utilised in the study were also clarified.

Chapter two provided a literature review and the theoretical perspectives underpinning the development and sustainability of co-operatives. Consideration was also given to the theoretical frameworks that inform the development and sustainability of co-operatives. A brief history of co-operatives was given and reference to them was provided in the available literature. The co-operative as a term and concept was defined. The different types of co-operatives together with the sectors were also discussed with reference to acts, laws and strategies that contribute to the regulation. The different roles that co-operative members, leaders, and boards of co-operatives play were outlined. The role of the social workers was highlighted as part of the discussion in the chapter.

Chapter three focused on the application of the qualitative research method which was presented in Chapter one. Chapter three explored the application of qualitative research methodologies in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the study. The chapter also focused on describing how the qualitative research approach was applied in the study; the utilisation of the research design, population and sampling procedures, methods of data collection and analysis were employed in order to ensure validity and reliability of the study.

Chapter four presented the research findings stemming from the transcribed interviews with eight participants from Vosloorus that are the primary co-operative members. The biographical profile of participants, together with the demographics and historical data of the co-operatives that each participant belonged to, were provided followed by a discussion of six themes, eight sub-themes and twenty-eight categories, providing direct quotes from the transcribed interviews and subjecting them to literature control.

Chapter five summarises the first four chapters of the research report. A summary and the conclusions reached based on the qualitative research process and major research findings are presented below. Recommendations based on the major findings are also presented in chapter five.

### **5.3. Summaries, conclusions and recommendations of the research study**

This section is based on the summaries of the qualitative research process and the major research findings, the conclusions reached, and the recommendations for practice and future research.

#### **5.3.1. Summary and conclusion of the research process**

A qualitative research method coupled with the explorative, descriptive and contextual research designs was employed in order to realize the research goal for the study. The exploratory research design helped the researcher to unearth elements that influenced the participants' motivations for, and experiences in, participating in primary co-operatives, an area with limited information in the South African context, was explored as well. The descriptive research design afforded

the researcher an opportunity to provide thick descriptions of the participants' motivations for and experiences in co-operatives, and focused on the areas which were explored during the study. The participants' motivations and experiences were compared and contrasted with the literature. The contextual research design allowed the participants to share with the researcher their lived experiences which were influenced by their motivations to participate in primary co-operatives within the South African context that impacted differently on different individuals and communities.

This process enabled the researcher to collect rich data from the participants on Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives. The overarching research question was: What are the Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives? The research goal was: To develop an in-depth understanding of Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective. The aim of the research study was attained as rich data were collected from the participants through semi-structured interviews aided by an interview guide.

The research objective that guided the research process was to explore and describe Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective, and this was accomplished through the application of the qualitative research approach as outlined in Chapter Three and the findings presented in Chapters Four.

The research goal emanated from the following task objectives for the study:

- To identify a sample of participants comprising members of primary co-operatives residing within the area of Vosloorus;
- To conduct semi-structured interviews, aided by open-ended questions contained in an interview guide;
- To explore and describe Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective;

- To sift, sort and analyse the data obtained according the eight steps for qualitative data analysis as proposed by Tesch (in Creswell, 2009:186);
- To describe the explored findings related to Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective;
- To interpret the data and conduct a literature control in order to verify the data; and
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations pertaining to Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective.

The task objectives enabled the researcher to follow a well-structured process in order to accomplish the research goal successfully. A qualitative study was conducted to develop an in-depth understanding of Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective. Qualitative data were obtained from the eight participants through semi-structured interviews. The data analysis took place by applying the eight steps as proposed by Tesch (in Creswell, 2009:186). Six themes, eight sub-themes and twenty-eight categories emerged from the data, and the data verification was conducted, following Guba's model (in Krefting, 1991:214).

The employed qualitative research methodology was appropriate and valuable for the study as it enabled the researcher to engage with participants and to gather in-depth information. The goal of the study was: To develop an in-depth understanding of Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives from a social work perspective. The following conclusions are drawn from the qualitative research process that was applied in this study:

- The purposive sampling methods which were utilised to select the sample were appropriate for the study as the participants who possessed rich data took part in the study.

- Preparing the participants for data collection was an important process as it enabled the researcher to establish a trustworthy relationship with the participants which resulted in the participants being willing to offer valuable time and voluntarily participate in the study. The participants also expressed their experiences, thoughts and feelings freely.
- The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to explore the phenomenon under study.
- The themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged from the analysis of the data provided broad descriptions of the participants' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives.
- Data verification was conducted, following Guba's model (in Krefting, 1991: 214), and this was useful in the demonstration of the trustworthiness of the findings.
- The ethical considerations were applied during the study, and they guided the researcher's conduct throughout the study.

It is, however, important to note that the research study was limited to a particular geographical area which is Vosloorus in Ekurhuleni Municipality, Gauteng Province and limited to Vosloorus community members participating in primary co-operatives. The findings cannot, therefore, be generalised to other areas.

### **5.3.2. Summary and conclusions based on the research findings**

A brief summary of six themes, eight sub-themes and twenty-eight categories that emerged from the qualitative data analysis, followed by the researcher's conclusions, are presented below.

#### **Theme 1: A description of co-operatives**

The participants' description of the co-operatives concept is almost similar to the one provided in the ICA (2012:10) and Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 (2005:5). Generally, they understand the aim of the co-operative and the concept that a co-operative is formed by a minimum of five natural persons, whose objective it is to provide services to its members and to facilitate community development initiatives. Most of the participants are aware of the requirements to establish co-operatives and also the expectations from their members.

## **Theme 2: Roles within the co-operative**

The participants gave an account of the different roles they had performed within the co-operative since they joined the sector. Most of the participants had performed various roles in order to fulfil the co-operative's expectations and to ensure its sustainability. The participants mentioned that they had performed or executed different roles since joining the co-operative sector such as being a secretary, deputy chairperson and a treasurer. Furthermore, some started as simply as being members and then occupied roles such as marketing manager. The different exposure they had had allowed them to grow, to fulfil the co-operative's expectations and to ensure its sustainability at different levels. Members fulfilled different roles without disrupting the activities of their co-operative. It can, therefore, be concluded that:

- It is important for co-operative members to take responsibility and assume allocated roles;
- Some members fulfill more than one role at a time;
- Other members draw back from fulfilling executive roles; and
- When the cooperative grows, the roles also expand and allow members to grow.

The traits expressed by the participants indicate that role confusion has a negative effect and it can lead to conflict. While members grew from one role to the next there can be role ambiguity. The study showed that the presence of a good leader will positively affect the running of the co-operative and the fulfilment of different roles and activities. Members were able to fulfil one role or the other and still manage to support one another emotionally, financially and socially.

## **Theme 3: Motivations for being a member of a co-operative**

Most co-operatives had been started with a mission to address specific, individual needs. The members had varying motivations for joining the co-operative. This differed from one individual to another. Generally, the participants were motivated to being members of a co-operative because they identified opportunities to partake in different economic activities. Members joined a co-operative as a space

and place to make a living. They are mostly driven by personal passion. Most members joined the co-operative with the purpose of addressing unemployment, while others saw a niche to give attention to specific environmental issues. The ultimate goal for most members was to improve their quality of life and that of their families including addressing community challenges.

Besides the direct impact that co-operatives have on the economic status of the participants, the researcher concluded that the participants enjoy being members of a co-operative, and that they had a certain desire to be fulfilled as human beings. The participants felt that there is lack of fulfilment and effectiveness within the co-operatives and, therefore, their success could not be determined outright. The researcher concludes that co-operatives are essential to economic programmes that can lead to sustainability. Members are able within this setting to address socio-economic needs. Co-operatives have the potential to contribute meaningfully in various ways towards sustainable development. Members are driven to achieve set goals as a collective and they have democratic systems that allow for each member to grow.

#### **Theme 4: Experiences of being a member of a co-operative**

The participants shared both the positive and negative experiences of being a member of a co-operative. The participants' positive experiences in the co-operative are mostly linked to recognition and support for the co-operative's activities. The members worked together with other community members while supporting the co-operative. The support from the community strengthened their participation in the co-operative. The negative experiences of being a member of a co-operative are mostly driven by external factors such as a lack of corporate support and limited or no support from the government. The co-operative had challenges such as a lack of resources, access to land and limited financial support. The findings point to the fact that there is no easy way around co-operatives. There are some accomplishments that participants are happy about while they still have multi-faceted problems that they continue to experience.

**Theme 5: Co-operatives as initiatives from social workers**

The following theme focused on co-operatives as an initiative from, or by, social workers. This emerged during the discussion with participants on Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives as discussed below. The participants' experiences on co-operatives initiated by social work is that they do not benefit them only as individuals but that they also benefits:

- All the co-operative's members;
- Their families; and
- and they also benefit the community at large.

Social workers use different approaches to initiate community development programmes, and co-operatives are one of these. Social workers are also skilled and capacitated to address different community needs as they guide, facilitate and advocate for the poor and the disadvantaged. The participants highlighted the importance of social workers in working with different community leaders, community structures and stakeholders in order to ensure the sustainability of co-operatives. This is because social workers are able to create networks that can benefit individuals, groups and the community at large. Co-operatives, therefore, serve as a good platform for social workers to showcase their skills and professionalism as expected by the co-operative members.

The sustainable livelihood theories suggest that all developments should benefit everyone who is directly involved including those who are not directly involved, such as other members of the community. Based on the above-mentioned benefits of co-operatives, the researcher concluded that co-operatives should be in a position to benefit members. This is to ensure that members are able to contribute positively to the development of the whole co-operative while contributing to the sustainability of their households, family members and the community. It is also apparent that co-operatives work to sustain the development of their communities.

### **Theme 6: Suggestions for practice**

The following theme focuses on suggestions for practice by participants relative to co-operative members and social workers. For the co-operative members the participants' suggestions can be summarised as:

- Members should understand the principles of the co-operatives 'for the greater good' of the co-operatives and the community at large;
- Members should identify the type of co-operative that they want to join, or to start before they can establish the cooperative; and
- In addition, members should explore the type of skills they possess against the type of skills needed by the co-operative. Furthermore, members should identify the type of resources and products needed in order to ensure that the co-operative will be sustainable.

Based on the above summary of the findings, the researcher concluded that the participants know and understand what is needed to establish a sustainable efficient and effective co-operative. There appears, however, to be confusion among the participants regarding the first steps to take before a co-operative is established. The initial stages of establishment are critical to understand as they will guide the members on how best to develop a sustainable programme. For the social workers to assist the community through the establishment of primary co-operatives the participants in the study outlined the following as being critical:

- Social workers working with income-generating projects or having knowledge and experience with co-operatives should be encouraged to facilitate the establishment of cooperatives.
- The training of social workers in community work must, and should, cover project planning and development and include the understanding of how co-operatives are formed and established. This should be incorporated as part of holistic approach to development and a model for integrated sustainable development.
- Social workers should first understand through facilitating the process of identifying individual needs, community needs and resources. As part of

community work process the social workers are encouraged to know the community.

- Social workers need to analyse and support the community through motivating them to know their social, physical, economic and financial resources. Economic, financial and other resources should be mapped out through community mapping together with the community. Knowing and identifying the needs and resources and how the community function will motivate community members to form co-operatives and to address their individual, group, family and community challenges.
- A proper introduction of the idea of establishing co-operative to community members is important because it is essential for both the social worker and community members to get the much needed information for establishing a co-operative as noted by some of the participants.
- Social workers should intensify the interest of community members in co-operatives by giving them information that will empower them. Information is likely to widening the scope of the community' about co-operatives and their benefits.
- Working with the community at large is important because the involved community feel appreciated for their experience and they possess indigenous knowledge which could work well for their development.
- Social workers need to establish professional but trustworthy and reliable working relationships with individuals, families, groups and communities in order to assist each other for their sustainable development.

#### **5.4. Recommendations based on the research study**

Based on the research process and research findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations: for practice, policy and research.

##### **5.4.1. Recommendations for practice**

- The education of social workers in the provision of developmental services to cooperatives should be given adequate attention by institutions of higher learning. In particular, the training should pay attention to co-operatives specifically as required by The Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005 and not only

as part of income generating projects. Training in community work and sustainable development should include co-operatives as programmes that drives communities to do things for themselves .

- Apart from training social workers, other role players such as community development workers, ward committees, ward councillors and community at large should receive crash courses on sustainable development and be on co-operatives.
- Critical training is necessary for government officials on co-operatives and the roles they as officials can play to strengthen community development in local municipalities. Social workers can partner with different units such as economic division and the finance unit in local municipalities to address joint support for co-operatives in local urban setting. The same should happen in rural setting where other departments like agriculture can support programmes such as local co-operatives.
- Monitoring and evaluation is critical to ensure effective and efficient programmes on the ground. The social workers should encourage co-operatives functional boards to oversee the operations of the co-operative and for accountability. This is not in place as there seems to be a lack of functional boards in most cooperatives sites.
- Attention should also be focused on social workers to study community programs such as co-operatives and to answer to questions that are related to whether these co-operatives are doing what they are supposed to be doing.
- Social workers that are employed to work with co-operatives should be taken to further training to know how to support the co-operatives. This through a process will enable the social workers to implement co-operatives processes that are successful. They can learn from other Provinces where co-operatives are functional, operational and successful.
- Success stories on co-operatives working with social workers and other departments or business must be documented for learning purposes so these models can be replicated in other areas where they are needed. Social workers must study where best practice in co-operatives exist and share the success stories.

#### **5.4.2. Recommendations for policy**

The policies on the regulation of co-operatives and provision of services to co-operatives exists as indicated The Co-operatives Act 14 of 2005, National Industrial Policy Framework, Integrated Strategy on the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Small Enterprises, Strategic Framework on Gender and Women's Economic Empowerment and Industrial Policy Action Plan. However, a closer examination of policies does not clearly clarify the lead actors or department and integration of these policies in the provision of services to co-operatives as such, the researcher recommends that:

- A standardized, proper and cost effective monitoring and evaluation instrument need to be developed and implemented by the social workers involved with co-operatives in order to determine the level of services provided to co-operatives and their members.
- As a continuum care for sustainability there should be a lead department or directorate within government that is dedicated to co-operatives and such department/directorate should provide ongoing workshops to social workers on the establishment and sustainability of co-operatives.

#### **5.4.3. Recommendations for further research**

- Further research should also be conducted in other geographical areas to determine the social and economic effectiveness of co-operatives and other characteristics of good practices in other areas.
- Evaluation research on co-operatives is also necessary to determine the impact that cooperatives are making in their members and their families.
- More research on reasons why most co-operatives are failing to be sustainable and not contributing to broader community development might be conducted as it will be useful to identify the strength, weakness, opportunities and threats attributed to co-operatives within the South African context.
- Future research should focus on exploring and describing the experiences of social workers in providing services to co-operatives.

### **5.5. Chapter summary**

In conclusion, the study began with an outline of the research study which included introduction, problem formulation and introduction to the research process. The research questions were answered, a comprehensive reflection on the research findings was done and conclusions made. Therefore, this chapter is the conclusion of the research report, it entails a brief summaries of the previous chapters and it also presented conclusions based on the themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged. The recommendations on practice, policy, and further research is also provided based on the outcome of the study.

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## ADDENDUMS

### ADDENDUM 1



#### A PREAMBLE TO AN INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant

I Lebogang Moropana, the undersigned, am a student social worker/social worker in service of Ekurhuleni Municipality in Vosloorus, and a part-time master's student in the Department of Social Work at the University of South Africa. In fulfilment of requirements for the master's degree, I have to undertake a research project and have consequently decided to focus on the following research topic: Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives: a social work perspective

In view of the fact that you are well informed about the topic, I hereby approach you with the request to participate in the study. For you to decide whether to participate in this research project, I am going to give you information that will help you to understand the study (i.e. what the aims of the study are and why there is a need for this particular study). Furthermore, you will be informed about what your involvement in this study will entail (i.e. what you will be asked/or what you will be requested to do during the study, the risks and benefits involved by participating in this research project, and your rights as a participant in this study).

This research project originated because of, Co-operatives play a role in addressing three of the biggest challenges that are currently facing our communities, namely; unemployment, poverty and crime. Their developmental contribution to the wider society and economy cannot be underestimated. The researcher is interested to explore and describe the primary cooperative member's motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives as these community members continue to operate as a collective even when they fail. The

aim is to develop an in-depth understanding of Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives

The information gathered from this study will contribute towards building knowledge for social workers. Should you agree to participate, you would be requested to participate in one face-to-face interview that will be conducted at a place of your convenience. It is estimated that the interview will last approximately an hour. During the interview, the following questions will be directed to you:

- What are the requirements for one to become a member in your co-operative?
- What motivated you to become a member of a co-operative?
- Tell me more about the roles you played since you joined the co-operative
- Tell me more about your experiences in the co-operative (The positive and the negative).
- What are the benefits of being a member of a co-operative for yourself/ family/Co-op members and Community
- Share with me the support that your co-operative receive from the community/ DSD/ Municipality/Department of Health
- What advice/guidance can you give to other people who want to become members of a co-operative?
- How do you think social workers/community worker could assist the community and co-operatives?

With your permission, the interview will be audiotaped. The recorded interviews will be transcribed word-for-word. Your responses to the interview (both the taped and transcribed versions) will be kept strictly confidential. The audiotape will be coded to disguise any identifying information. The tapes will be stored in a locked study room at 08 Saffraan Avenue, Boksburg and only I will have access to them. The transcripts (without any identifying information) will be made available to my research supervisor/promoter, a translator (if they need to be translated into English), and an independent coder with the sole purpose of assisting and guiding me with this research undertaking. My research supervisor/promoter, the translator and the independent coder will each sign an undertaking to treat the information shared by you in a confidential manner.

The audiotapes and the transcripts of the interviews will be destroyed upon the completion of the study. Identifying information will be deleted or disguised in any subsequent publication and/or presentation of the research findings.

Please note that participation in the research is voluntary. You are not obliged to take part in the research. Your decision to participate, or not to participate, will not affect you in any way now or in the future and you will incur no penalty and/or loss to which you may otherwise be entitled. Should you agree to participate and sign the information and informed consent document herewith, as proof of your willingness to participate, please note that you are not signing your rights away.

If you agree to take part, you have the right to change your mind at any time during the study. You are free to withdraw this consent and discontinue participation without any loss of benefits. However, if you do withdraw from the study, you would be requested to grant me an opportunity to engage in informal discussion with you so that the research partnership that was established can be terminated in an orderly manner.

As the researcher, I also have the right to dismiss you from the study without regard to your consent if you fail to follow the instructions or if the information you have to divulge is emotionally sensitive and upsets you to such an extent that it hinders you from functioning physically and emotionally in a proper manner. Furthermore, if participating in the study at any time jeopardises your safety in any way, you will be dismissed.

Should I conclude that the information you have shared left you feeling emotionally upset, or perturbed, I am obliged to refer you to a counsellor for debriefing or counselling (should you agree). You have the right to ask questions concerning the study at any time. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study, contact these numbers, 0721093065.

Please note that the Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Work at Unisa have approved this study. Without the approval of this committee,

the study cannot be conducted. Should you have any questions and queries not sufficiently addressed by me as the researcher, you are more than welcome to contact the Chairperson of the Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Work at Unisa. His contact details are as follows: Prof AH (Nicky) Alpaslan, telephone number: 012 429 6739, or email [alpaslan@unisa.ac.za](mailto:alpaslan@unisa.ac.za).

If, after you have consulted the researcher and the Research and Ethics Committee in the Department of Social Work at Unisa, their answers have not satisfied you, you might direct your question/concerns/queries to the Chairperson, Human Ethics Committee, College of Human Science, PO Box 392, Unisa, 0003. Based upon all the information provided to you above, and being aware of your rights, you are asked to give your written consent should you want to participate in this research study by signing and dating the information and consent form provided herewith and initialling each section to indicate that you understand and agree to the conditions.

Thank you for your participation.

Kind regards

Lebogang Moropana



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Signature of researcher

Contact details: (Tel) 072 109 3065  
(Fax) 086 270 8515  
(Email) [Lebogang.Moropana@ekurhuleni.gov.za](mailto:Lebogang.Moropana@ekurhuleni.gov.za)

**ADDENDUM 2**

**INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives: a social work perspective

REFERENCE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/RESEARCHER: Lebogang Moropana

ADDRESS: 08 Saffraan Avenue Dawn Park, Boksburg.

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER: 072 109 3065

**ADDENDUM 3****DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE PARTICIPANT**

<p>DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE PARTICIPANT:</p> <p>I, THE UNDERSIGNED, _____ (name), [ID No: _____] the participant or in my capacity as _____ of the participant [ID No _____] of _____ (address)</p> <p><b>A. HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:</b></p> <p>1. I/the participant was invited to participate in the above research project, which is being undertaken by Lebogang Moropana of the Department of Social Work in the School of Social Science and Humanities at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>2. The following aspects have been explained to me/the participant:</p> <p>2.1 Aim: The investigator(s)/researcher(s) are studying: to develop an in-depth understanding of Vosloorus Community Members' experiences of and motivations for participating in primary co-operatives.</p> <p>The information will be used to fulfil for the qualification towards Master of Social Work</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>2.2 Risks: The researcher does not anticipate that the research will have adverse effects on the participants since the study does not deal with sensitive issues that could unearth stress.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>Possible benefits: As a result of my participation in this study to contribute to knowledge of social workers</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>Confidentiality: My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the investigators/researchers.</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>
<p>Access to findings: Any new information/benefit that develops during the</p>	<p><u>Initial</u></p>

course of the study will be shared with me.	
Voluntary participation/refusal/discontinuation: My participation is voluntary. My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect me now or in the future.	<u>Initial</u>
3. The information above was explained to me/the participant by _____ (name of relevant person) in Afrikaans/English/Sotho/Xhosa/Zulu/other _____ (indicate other language) and I am in command of this language/it was translated to me satisfactorily by _____ (name of the translator). I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answered satisfactorily.	<u>Initial</u>
4. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participate and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage from the study without any penalty.	<u>Initial</u>
5. Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to me.	<u>Initial</u>
<p><b>B. I HEREBY CONSENT VOLUNTARILY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE PROJECT.</b></p> <p>Signed/confirmed at _____ on _____ 20__</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature or right thumbprint of participant</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature of witness</p>	

**ADDENDUM 4****CONSENT FORM REQUESTING PERMISSION TO PUBLISH INFORMATION**

CONSENT FORM REQUESTING PERMISSION TO PUBLISH PHOTOGRAPHS, AUDIOTAPES AND/OR VIDEOTAPES OR VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTS OF AUDIOTAPE/VIDEOTAPE RECORDINGS	
As part of this project, I have made a photographic, audio and/or video recording of you. I would like you to indicate (with ticks in the appropriate blocks next to each statement below) what uses of these records you are willing to consent to. This is completely up to you. I will use the records only in ways that you agree to. In any of these records, names will not be identified.	Place a tick [✓] next to the use of the record you consent to
1. The records can be studied by the research team and quotations from the transcripts made of the recordings can be used in the research report.	
2. The records (i.e. quotations from the transcripts made of the recordings) can be used for scientific publications and/or meetings.	
3. The written transcripts and/or records can be used by other researchers.	
4. The records (i.e. quotations from the transcripts made of the recordings) can be shown/used in public presentations to non-scientific groups.	
5. The records can be used on television or radio.	
_____ Signature of participant	_____ Date

**ADDENDUM 5**

**STATEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS**

<p>STATEMENT BY OR ON BEHALF OF INVESTIGATOR(S)</p> <p>I, ....., declare that</p> <p>I have explained the information given in this document  to _____ (name of participant);</p> <p>he/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions;</p> <p>This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.</p> <p>Signed at _____ on _____ 20__</p> <p>(place) (date)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature of investigator/representative</p>		<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of witness</p>
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**ADDENDUM 6**

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- What are the requirements for one to become a member in your co-operative?
- What motivated you to become a member of a co-operative?
- Tell me more about the roles you played since you joined the co-operative
- Tell me more about your experiences in the co-operative (The positive and the negative).
- What are the benefits of being a member of a co-operative for yourself/ family/Coop members and Community
- Share with me the support that your co-operative receive from the community/ DSD/ Municipality/Department of Health
- What advice/guidance can you give to other people who want to become members of a co-operative?
- How do you think social workers/community worker could assist the community and co-operatives?

**ADDENDUM 7**

Request for debriefing services

Moropana Lebogang  
08 Saffraan Avenue  
Dawn Park  
1459  
08 January 2018

T Mogaladi  
City Of Ekurhuleni  
Vosloorus CCC  
Treasury Building

**RE: REQUEST FOR DEBRIEFING SERVICES**

As discussed telephonically kindly receive the letter. I Lebogang Moropana would like to request you to offer debriefing to the research participants. The purpose of the research is to capture Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives with the aim of assisting social work professionals to improve intervention strategies that will benefit the co-operatives. I would therefore like to invite you to offer debriefing services to the research participants should the need for such services arise.

The involvement in the research project might open up emotions and feelings to some of the participants. Should that be the case, your services will be required to debrief the participants with your consent. Should you agree to the request of providing debriefing services, kindly respond with a letter of acceptance to the request as well as your CV. Please do not hesitate to ask for clarification on the above mentioned matter. Your positive response is anticipated

Regards,

Moropana Lebogang



## ADDENDUM 8

Confirmation for providing debriefing services



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**VOSLOORUS CUSTOMER  
CARE CENTRE**

Treasury Building  
Bierman Road  
Vosloorus

P O Box 215  
BOKSBURG  
1460

Tel: (011) 999-5444  
Fax: (011) 906-4569

[www.ekurhuleni.gov.za](http://www.ekurhuleni.gov.za)

**DATE:** 08 January 2018

**TO:** Moropana Lebogang

08 Saffraan Avenue

Dawn Park

1459

Dear Lebogang

In response to your request of providing debriefing and counselling session to your research participants. I take the pleasure of informing you that, I agree to the request and I shall avail myself in case there is a need to debrief and counsel your Research participants.

Cordially

Tshoane Mogaladi

Senior Social worker

**ADDENDUM 9**  
Independent Coding  
**Summary of independent coding**

Dr M.A. van der Westhuizen  
(DPhil in Social Work)

Date: 15 November 2019

Box 16  
Hugonote Kollege  
Wellington  
7656  
Tel: 021-8731181  
E-mail: [mvdw@hugonote.com](mailto:mvdw@hugonote.com)

**Regarding:** Independent coding for Lebogang Moropana

Research topic: Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives: A social work perspective

I hereby confirm that I acted as independent coder for the qualitative data of Mr Moropana's research. The data consisted of eight transcripts. Data saturation was identified after 7 transcripts.

I made use of the framework for qualitative research by Tesch (1990) as described by Creswell (2009). I identified themes, sub-themes and categories and placed the verbatim quotations from participants under each.

I identified 6 themes and a variety of sub-themes and categories under each theme. It must be noted that Sub-theme 4.5: Experiences regarding secondary co-operatives does not relate directly to the research topic. However, the data relates to the rest of the story-line and it is my opinion that it could add value to paint a true picture of the experiences of the participants.

Please note that some of the data overlap between themes, sub-themes and categories; for instance training opportunities – needed and received. In my opinion it confirms consistency. Additionally, under several categories, different focus areas were identified and indicated. For instance: Category 2.2.2: Personal attributes consists of the following sub-descriptions: General description, Passion, Prior knowledge and experience to make a contribution, Want to work with others, Willing to take a risk, Family or kinship, and Members must know each other.



Dr M.A. van der Westhuizen

## ADDENDUM 10

### Certificate of Veracity

The Reverend David Swanepoel  
BA (Rhodes), Hons BA, Hons BTh, HED (SA)  
The Hermitage  
P.O. 70729, The Willows, Pretoria, 0041, South Africa  
Telephone and Fax +27 (0)12-8074256  
Email: [davidswanepoel@wol.co.za](mailto:davidswanepoel@wol.co.za)

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29 May 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that I have completed the English language Editing as far as has been possible of the text only of a dissertation to be submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Social Sciences in Social Work

at the

University of South Africa

The dissertation is entitled

Vosloorus community members' motivations for and experiences in participating in primary co-operatives: a social work perspective

by

Lebogang Moropana

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Bachelor's degree in English from Rhodes University, Grahamstown, an Honours Degree in English and HED with English as prime teaching subject from the University of South Africa, and having taught English to Matriculation, First Year University Level, GCSE and A level in both South Africa and the United Kingdom of Great Britain for over 40 years, as well as having been Senior (English) Associate Editor of a national magazine for two years. I have edited Master's Dissertations and Doctoral Theses for several years for several universities and institutions in South Africa and abroad as well as editing documents/papers for publication for various publishing concerns and a number of international academics.

I trust that this declaration is satisfactory.

DAVID JOHN SWANEPOEL

ADDENDUM 11  
Ethical Approval



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH AND ETHICS REVIEW  
COMMITTEE**

29 January 2018

Ref#: R&EC: 21/11/17/58538984_15 Name of Applicant: Moropana, L Student#: 7536070
---

Dear Mr L Moropana

**DECISION: ETHICAL APPROVAL**

Name: **Mr L Moropana**

Address & contact details: **08 Saffraan Avenue Dawn Park, Boksburg 1459**

Cell phone number: **072 109 3065 / 081 803 8896**

Supervisor: **Dr MP Sesoko**

Title of Proposal: **VOSLOORUS COMMUNITY MEMBERS' MOTIVATIONS  
FOR AND EXPERIENCES IN PARTICIPATING IN PRIMARY CO-  
OPERATIVES: A SOCIAL WORK PERSPECTIVE**

Qualification: **Master of Social Work**

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Department of Social Work Research and Ethics Review Committee.

The application was reviewed in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics by the abovementioned Committee at a meeting conducted on 21 November 2017.

**Final approval is granted for the duration of the project.**

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:



- 1) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the Department of Social Work's Research and Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested of there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the participants.
- 3) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.

Kind regards,

Signed by:  Date: 29 January 2018  
 Professor AH Alpaslan  
 Chair: Department of Social Work Research and Ethics Review Committee  
 alpasah@unisa.ac.za

Signed by:  Date: 29 January 2018  
 Prof MPJ Madise  
 Manager Postgraduate Studies: College of Human Sciences

